



Diversity And Inclusion In FIFA Leadership: The Perspective of Female Footballers



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Abstract

This dissertation delves into the intricate dynamics of diversity and inclusion within FIFA's leadership framework, with a specific focus on the perspectives of female footballers. The study emerges from recognising FIFA's historical engagement with women's football and its evolving stance towards promoting gender equality within the sport's governance. Despite commendable strides, disparities persist, particularly in the representation and participation of women within FIFA's leadership echelons.

The "Saunders Onion Research" framework facilitates a comprehensive exploration of this research. A mixed-methods approach is adopted, integrating quantitative analysis through a survey distributed among fifty participants and qualitative insights gleaned from semi-structured interviews with five female footballers. This methodological triangulation ensures a holistic understanding of the complexities surrounding diversity and inclusion in FIFA leadership, combining statistical data with nuanced personal narratives.

The study uncovers multifaceted insights into female footballers' experiences, challenges, and aspirations navigating FIFA's governance landscape. It reveals systemic barriers hindering their equitable representation and participation, including entrenched gender biases, limited opportunities for leadership development, and a lack of institutional support. Additionally, the research sheds light on the intersecting factors of race, ethnicity, and socio-economic background, which further compound the challenges female footballers face in accessing leadership roles within FIFA.

The research findings provide a deeper understanding of promoting diversity and inclusion in football governance. They serve as a call to action for FIFA and other stakeholders to redouble their efforts in advancing gender equality and amplifying the voices of underrepresented groups. Ultimately, the dissertation aims to catalyse meaningful change within FIFA's leadership structures, fostering an equitable and more inclusive future for females in football governance.

Declaration and Statements

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed (candidate)

03rd May 2024

Date

STATEMENT 1

This work results from my own investigations, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed (candidate)

03rd May 2024

Date

STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my work, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

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03rd May 2024

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1. Introduction

FIFA, or the Fédération Internationale de Football Association, is a worldwide governing body for football; founded in 1904, FIFA aims to promote and develop football as its primary objective globally, oversee the rules, and organise international competitions. With a membership of 211 national associations, FIFA is one of the most influential sporting organisations on the planet. Over the years, "FIFA has had a significant impact on shaping the world of football", from standardising rules to organising prestigious tournaments such as the FIFA World Cup, which remains the most-watched sporting event globally.

Beyond competitive football, FIFA has been instrumental in driving social and cultural initiatives utilising football as a tool for positive change. These initiatives include grassroots development programs, humanitarian projects, and campaigns promoting diversity and inclusion.

FIFA's influence extends beyond football, encompassing social and cultural aspects of life. The organisation's focus on using football as a tool for positive change has helped it become a force for good worldwide, and it works, reaching millions of people globally. FIFA's commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion has been creditable, with the organisation working tirelessly to create a more inclusive world (UEFA 2024).

Football is a sport that enjoys immense popularity, particularly in Europe, with the UK being one of its main proponents. This industry is intrinsically intertwined with the politics of production, reproduction, and promotion of culturally recognised diverse identities. (FIFA Publication, 2024). Football clubs worldwide have policies, procedures, plans, and insurance levels. However, despite significant progress, inequality is still pervasive. This is evident in Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests and movements aimed at addressing unsatisfactory behaviour in the sport and the broader context of Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion (DEI) in corporate settings (Anderson, 2023).

In recent years, diversity and inclusion have emerged in public discourse in several different areas, particularly representation and uncritical consensus within the leadership of global organisations. Like many international organisations, FIFA has studied diversity and inclusion in its administrative structure, making it a subject of debate and an instrument of change (FIFA, 2024).

1.1 The Evolution of Women's Football within FIFA

FIFA's early years were primarily devoted to men's football; however, the organisation has gradually acknowledged and embraced the significant growth of women's football globally (FIFA, 2022). The first FIFA Women's World Cup in 1991 marked a considerable milestone in women's football history, providing a platform for female players to showcase their talents internationally. Since then, women's football has experienced exponential growth, with FIFA investing resources and efforts to support its development and expansion worldwide (Editorial, 2023).

1.2 Challenges and Opportunities for Diversity and Inclusion

Despite the advancements in promoting women's football, persistent challenges remain concerning diversity and inclusion within FIFA's leadership structures (Bryan et al., 2021). Although the organisation has taken steps towards increasing representation and empowering women in various roles, such as governance, coaching, and administration, a significant gender gap still exists at the highest levels of leadership (Hoyt, 2010). This underrepresentation reflects systemic inequalities within the organisation and impedes the realisation of FIFA's potential as a genuinely inclusive and diverse governing body (Lindsey and Chapman, 2017).

1.3 The Importance of Diversity and Inclusion in FIFA Leadership

Diversity and inclusion are ethical obligations and essential requirements for FIFA's continued success and relevance in the 21st century. A leadership team that reflects the diversity in the community brings a broader range of perspectives, experiences, and ideas to the table, resulting

in improved decision-making, innovation, and overall governance (Woods and Stokes 2019). Additionally, promoting diversity and inclusivity within FIFA's leadership is crucial for building trust, credibility, and legitimacy among its stakeholders, including players, fans, and member associations (Ahn and Cunningham, 2020)

1.4 Research Aims and Objectives

This research aims to thoroughly investigate diversity and inclusion dynamics within FIFA leadership, mainly focusing on women's place in football clubs. The main goal is to promote equitable representation and create an inclusive environment within one of the world's most influential sports organisations. It aims to analyse their unique experiences and identify any barriers, challenges, and achievements within FIFA's leadership structure. By amplifying their voices, this research hopes to make actionable recommendations for FIFA to foster equal representation for women in the sport and representative leadership structure. This research will contribute significantly to diversity and inclusion in business and academia and hopes to accomplish the following primary objectives:

- To analyse women's experiences in football leadership.
- To identify challenges and barriers individuals face in attaining leadership roles.
- Exploring the perspectives of women regarding football initiatives.
- Develop recommendations based on research findings to enhance women's leadership prospects in football.

This study will investigate the current state of diversity and inclusion in FIFA leadership, particularly emphasising the views and experiences of female players. By highlighting the challenges, opportunities, and potential solutions in this crucial area, this research hopes to contribute to the ongoing conversation on gender equality and representation in football governance and to advocate for positive change within FIFA and beyond (GovUK, 2023). To

better understand diversity and inclusion and women's leadership role in football, the researcher surveyed fifty individuals and interviewed five actively engaged females to investigate the various aspects of inclusivity, barriers to participation, and attitudes towards diversity initiatives. The research findings were analysed thoroughly, and the results provide valuable insights for stakeholders in football organisations to create more inclusive environments. The research also explores their perspectives on the organisation's diversity and inclusion initiatives to offer insights to inspire and motivate positive change.

1.5 Research Questions

The study will address the following research question:

What challenges and barriers do underrepresented individuals like women encounter while achieving their leadership roles within football?

1.6 Rationale

According to Williams (2007), the professional women's football game industry is growing very fast and producing many of the best players, coaches, and leaders to empower women in sports; international standards to protect the rights or interests of women must be developed and implemented (Kabeer, 2003). The following key points that form the basis of the rationale for this study:

1.7 Global Importance:

FIFA's decisions and policies hold significant sway over the global football community, profoundly impacting worldwide nations' social and cultural fabric (Bodin and Sempé, 2011). Given this, FIFA bears a great responsibility to serve as a leading exemplar in promoting diversity and inclusion on a global scale. As such, it is incumbent upon FIFA to take a proactive stance in advancing these values and upholding them as guiding principles of its operations and governance (Taylor et al., 2015).

1.8 Underrepresentation in Leadership

Throughout its history, FIFA has faced scrutiny over the absence of diversity in its leadership roles. Specifically, concerns have been raised regarding the underrepresentation of women, ethnic groups, and individuals with disabilities in decision-making positions (Ahn and Cunningham, 2020). Despite recent initiatives aimed at enhancing gender diversity and fostering inclusion, women still find themselves marginalised in key decision-making roles within the organisation. The need for further progress remains evident, as diverse voices are essential for shaping the future of football governance (Dennissen et al., 2018). FIFA must continue prioritising diversity and inclusion in its leadership to maintain its legitimacy as a global governing body (Valenti et al., 2023).

1.9 Unique Insights from Underrepresented Groups

The voices and experiences of underrepresented groups provide unique perceptions of the challenges, opportunities, and effectiveness of diversity and inclusion initiatives in football. Understanding their attitude can give actionable suggestions for improvement (Clarkson et al., 2022). Empirical research gap: Despite the emphasis on diversity and inclusion, there is a need for empirical research that examines explicitly these issues in the context of international sports leadership and FIFA.

This study will fill the existing research gap by addressing the identified issues and providing practical insights for the football industry. By identifying barriers and opportunities, inclusive leadership structures can be established.

The representation of women in leadership positions in national sports governing bodies is a topic of great significance for policymakers and sports analysts. Ahn (2020) provides a comprehensive analysis of this issue using a multi-level perspective to understand better the factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in national football bodies' leadership positions. This study examines the relationship between gender discrimination and sports,

considering socio-cultural factors, organisational characteristics, and the representation of women in leadership roles. Additionally, it sheds light on the experiences of current and former female managers in national and international football governing bodies. It compares their percentage to that of their male colleagues in the field. From a global perspective, budgeting and planning incorporate gender policies into national institutions. Political decision-makers and athletes should note that democratic practices, space for citizen participation, and ideological values of religious freedom contribute to developing active and diverse leadership in national sports governing bodies (UNESCO, 2021). In the decision-making process of mirror rock and gender stereotypes in sports, female executives or leaders should be aware of the risks associated with new leadership positions in times of crisis or recession. Ultimately, this protects them and their sports governing bodies and allows them to manage high-risk situations and develop and adopt gender-sensitive goals and practices within their organisations (Kulich and Ryan, 2017).

1.10 Importance of Investigating Women's Representation

The investigation into the representation of women in leadership positions within FIFA, the international governing body of association football, is crucial for several reasons. Scholars and practitioners have long discussed this issue due to its significance for gender equality, diversity, and inclusion in sports organisations. Moreover, the lack of female representation in FIFA's leadership has far-reaching implications for the sport's development and global outreach. Therefore, addressing this challenge requires a systematic and comprehensive approach considering various factors, including cultural, societal, and historical contexts. Doing so makes it possible to promote a more inclusive and equitable environment that benefits all stakeholders involved in the sport (Evans and Pfister, 2021).

1.11 Promoting Gender Equality

Guthridge et al. (2022) stated in an article that gender equality is a fundamental human right and a significant principle of sustainable development. Examining the presence of women in

leadership positions within FIFA can help achieve the broader objective of promoting gender equality in sports governance and other areas (Mikkonen, 2023).

1.12 Impact on Organisational Effectiveness

Guyan et al. (2019) identified that more diverse leadership teams are more effective and innovative. Therefore, it is essential to understand the barriers hindering women's leadership within FIFA and devise strategies to overcome them. Addressing these challenges can contribute significantly to the organisation's effectiveness and success (APA, 2023).

1.13 Influence on Policy and Practice

The composition of leadership teams within organisations can significantly influence their policies and practices. Investigating women's representation within FIFA's leadership can provide valuable insights into how gender dynamics shape decision-making processes and outcomes within the organisation. This analysis can aid in developing a better understanding of the significance of gender diversity in leadership and its impact on organisational performance (Baron, 2021).

1.14 Role Modeling and Inspiration

Improving the representation of women in leadership positions within FIFA can serve as a source of inspiration and motivation for aspiring female leaders in the sports industry and beyond. Research studies in this field can illuminate success stories and identify the factors that contribute to the promotion of women to leadership positions. Such efforts can highlight existing challenges and help us develop strategies to overcome them (Mayfield and Mayfield, 2017).

1.15 Addressing Knowledge Gaps

Despite growing recognition of the importance of gender diversity in leadership, there are still significant knowledge gaps regarding the factors influencing women's representation in sports governance. Velija and Piggott (2022) stated that investigating women's representation in

leadership positions within FIFA is essential for advancing gender equality in sports governance, enhancing organisational effectiveness, and promoting inclusive decision-making processes. By understanding the barriers women face in accessing leadership roles and identifying strategies to overcome them, we can create more equitable and sustainable sports organisations for future generations (Burton and Leberman, 2017).

1.16 Focus on the Existing Study

Using the Saunders Onion Method as the theoretical framework, this research aims to peel back the layers surrounding the issue of diversity and inclusion in FIFA leadership. This methodological approach involves a systematic and iterative process, beginning with exploring the external environment and examining various factors influencing the phenomenon under study. Ultimately, this culminates in the development of meaningful insights and recommendations. The research design incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. A survey involving fifty individuals within the football community will be conducted to gather quantitative data, allowing for the statistical analysis of trends and patterns related to diversity and inclusion in FIFA leadership. Additionally, in-depth interviews with five female players will be conducted to capture the nuanced perspectives and lived experiences of those directly impacted by FIFA's leadership structures. By employing this mixed-methods approach, this dissertation seeks to contribute to the existing body of literature on diversity and inclusion in sports governance while offering practical insights that may inform policy and decision-making within FIFA and other sporting organisations worldwide. Ultimately, it is hoped that this research will catalyse positive change, fostering more significant equity and representation for female players within the highest echelons of football leadership.

In conclusion, FIFA's pursuit of diversity and inclusion within its leadership structures represents a complex undertaking that demands a profound understanding of historical contexts,

contemporary challenges, and potential solutions. As the governing body of football, FIFA holds significant influence over the global football community and, consequently, has a profound responsibility to serve as a beacon for promoting diversity and inclusion worldwide.

However, FIFA still faces persistent challenges, notably concerning the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions within its governance structures. Promoting gender equality, enhancing organisational effectiveness, influencing policy and practice, serving as role models and sources of inspiration, and addressing knowledge gaps are critical drivers fueling the investigation into women's representation in FIFA leadership. FIFA's commitment to diversity and inclusion within its leadership structures aligns with ethical obligations. It is a strategic imperative for maintaining its legitimacy as a global governing body. By dismantling barriers, promoting representation, and empowering female players, FIFA can work towards fulfilling its mandate of being a truly inclusive and progressive governing body for the beautiful game, catalysing positive change within the football community and beyond.

2. Literature Review

This Literature Review chapter aims to comprehensively explore diversity and inclusion in FIFA leadership from the perspective of female footballers. It seeks to provide an overview of existing research, theories, and literature while identifying key themes, debates, and gaps in knowledge. By critically examining academic articles, books, reports, and journals, the chapter synthesises this existing knowledge to provide a foundational understanding of the complexities surrounding diversity and inclusion in FIFA leadership. The objective is to advance scholarly discourse and inform policy and practice in sports governance and leadership by critically analysing the literature, pinpointing key themes, and outlining areas for further investigation (Kryger *et al.*, 2021).

2.1 Overview of the Significance of Diversity and Inclusion in Sports Governance

The importance of diversity and inclusion in sports governance cannot be overstated; these values are essential for promoting fairness, equity, and representation within the sporting community. By ensuring that decision-making bodies reflect the diverse perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds of all participants, including athletes, administrators, and stakeholders, diversity and inclusion help create a more just and equitable society (Hahn & Kühnen, 2013). In the context of FIFA's leadership, diversity and inclusion take on even greater significance due to football's global reach and immense cultural and societal impact. FIFA's diverse and inclusive leadership structure fosters greater legitimacy and credibility, helping the organisation better represent the football community's diverse needs and interests. It also facilitates more informed and effective decision-making processes, benefiting the football community (Sherry *et al.*, 2024).

Moreover, (Velija and Piggott, 2022) suggested that promoting diversity and inclusion in FIFA's leadership is essential for addressing systemic inequalities and barriers faced by

underrepresented groups, such as female footballers, in accessing leadership positions and shaping the future of the sport. By creating more opportunities for diverse voices to be heard, FIFA can help drive progress across the sport and build a more inclusive and equitable future. Women's football has been a topic of discussion for many years. The sport has come a long way since the early days of women's football, when it was considered taboo for women to play football. Today, women's football is a growing sport with a large following. However, there are still many challenges that women face in the world of football (FIFA, 2022). One of the biggest challenges women face in football is the lack of funding and support; women's football is often overlooked and underfunded, making it difficult for women to compete at the highest level. This lack of funding also affects the quality of the game, as women cannot train and compete at the same level as men (Bryan et al., 2021). Another challenge that women face in football is the lack of representation. Women are often underrepresented in the media, which makes it difficult for them to gain exposure and recognition (Pape, 2019). This lack of representation also affects the number of women participating in the sport, as many young girls do not see women's football as a viable career option (Williams, 2007).

Despite women's football's obstacles, noteworthy advancements have occurred in recent years. In particular, England's Women's Super League (WSL) has experienced a substantial boost in attendance and viewership. This is an encouraging sign for the growth and development of women's football and suggests exciting possibilities for the future. Additionally, the FIFA Women's World Cup has become one of the world's most-watched sporting events, which shows a growing interest in women's football (Ruth, 2014).

Over the last decade, women's football has undergone significant changes aimed at promoting diversity and inclusion. The 2012 Olympics in London served as a landmark moment for women's football, with over 70,000 fans in attendance to watch Team GB face off against Brazil in Britain's largest-ever women's football match (Magrath, 2016). Since then, women's football has made considerable strides, culminating in the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023, a global

event that seeks to promote diversity, inclusion, and women's empowerment through football. FIFA has taken several measures to promote gender equality in football, such as tripling the 2023 Women's World Cup prize money to USD 150 million from 2019. FIFA has also launched the "Football Unites the World" campaign to highlight significant gender equality issues during tournaments (Al-Khalifa, 2023).

Nowy and Breuer (2019) stated that football associations worldwide have also developed policies and practices to promote diversity and inclusion in football. For instance, the Football Association (FA) has launched a new three-year equality, diversity, and inclusion strategy to create a game free from discrimination. The plan includes policies such as hiring more women in leadership roles, providing equal pay and opportunities, and creating safe spaces for women to participate in the sport (FA Association, 2021).

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks and Conceptual Models in Sports Governance

Understanding diversity and inclusion in sports governance is essential for creating an environment that values and respects individuals from all backgrounds. This understanding requires exploring theoretical frameworks and conceptual models that shed light on the underlying dynamics shaping organisational structures, processes, and outcomes. Several pertinent theoretical perspectives, including symbolic interactionism, social identity theory, and critical race theory, offer valuable insights into this complex issue (Akintunde, 2013).

There are various concerns related to diversity and inclusion for women in football, both in theory and practice. This indicates the need for more research on gender discrimination in football and the development of strategies to address this issue (Bernstein et al., 2020). Social identity theory provides a framework that can be used to understand diversity and inclusion in football. According to this theory, individuals derive their sense of self from their membership in social groups, such as gender, race, and ethnicity. Using social identity theory can help

understand how gender discrimination in football can affect women's sense of self and their participation in the sport (BBC, 2020).

2.2.1 Symbolic Interactionism:

Symbolic interactionism is a sociological perspective that emphasises the role of symbols, meanings, and interactions in shaping social behaviour and identity formation. Within sports governance, this theoretical framework can be particularly insightful in illuminating how social identities, such as gender, ethnicity, and other markers of difference, are constructed and negotiated within organisations such as the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). Researchers can better understand the complex social dynamics by examining how individuals use symbols and language to negotiate their identities and relationships within sporting organisations. This, in turn, can inform more effective strategies for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in sports governance and beyond (Jarvie, 2006).

2.2.2 Social Identity Theory:

According to social identity theory, people's sense of belonging or exclusion within groups like FIFA is influenced by their identification with specific social categories, such as gender, ethnicity, or nationality. This theory highlights the significance of acknowledging and valuing diverse social identities within sports organisations (Carrington, 2010). It helps comprehend how gender discrimination in football can impact women's self-concept and sports involvement. The theory suggests that individuals derive their sense of self from their social groups, such as gender, race, and ethnicity. When individuals encounter discrimination based on their social identity, it can adversely affect their self-esteem and sense of belonging to the group. (Grabow & Kühl, 2019).

2.2.3 Critical Race Theory:

Critical race theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework that examines the intersection of race and racism with social power structures, focusing on how these interactions perpetuate systematic

inequality and marginalisation. In the context of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) leadership, CRT can be employed to reveal how race, ethnicity, and colonial legacies influence representation, decision-making, and resource allocation patterns. Applying CRT in this context can provide valuable insights into how racism and power dynamics can affect organisational structures and practices and, ultimately, shape the experiences of those involved (Masiga, 2022).

2.2.4 Critique of Theoretical Perspectives:

The present theoretical perspectives offer valuable insights into diversity and inclusion in sports governance. However, these perspectives are not invulnerable to limitations, and it is vital to evaluate them critically. Doing so will help refine our comprehension of the issue and enable us to prioritise more inclusive practices within organisations such as FIFA. Acknowledging these limitations would have better positioned us to advance our understanding of the complex relationship between diversity and inclusion in sports and make informed decisions supporting these objectives. (Adamson et al., 2021).

Several theoretical and research issues are related to diversity and inclusion for women in football. A study conducted by women in football found that two-thirds of women who work in football have experienced gender discrimination, and 34% of respondents had witnessed gender discrimination. This highlights the need for more research on gender discrimination in football and the development of strategies to address this issue (BBC Sport, 2020).

2.3 Challenges Faced by Women in Football

Women who work in football face numerous challenges, such as gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and abuse. According to a survey conducted by Women in Football (2020), representing over 4,000 women working in the football industry, 66% of respondents said they had personally experienced gender discrimination in the workplace. However, only 12% chose to report it, although 66% of respondents felt supported by their employer, 82% said they had

faced obstacles in their football career, and 81% had faced gender stereotyping. Additionally, 52% had been overlooked for career progression, while only 14% believed women were encouraged to pursue top careers in football.

The survey also revealed that when problems were reported, they were often dismissed as "banter", with 52% of respondents saying they had personally experienced or witnessed this form of discrimination. According to the survey, these issues were often overlooked or "brushed under the carpet". Despite this, 78% of women said they felt supported by their colleagues in the workplace, and more than half (59%) said that their organisation celebrated female talent (WIF, 2023).

Pfister (2015) has advocated for a more equitable allotment of resources to ensure the advancement of women's football. However, resource allocation does not solely relate to economic resources. As noted by Pope (2010), despite the fact that newly constructed stadiums are intended to accommodate family supporters, including women, the insufficiency of women's facilities and the substandard state of existing facilities are notable concerns; he argues that women football fans are often perceived as 'inauthentic' in their support and are represented as 'new consumer' fans, which is a problematic perception. Through her qualitative interviews with women fans, she discovered that they have diverse and heterogeneous perspectives on their fan engagements. Women football fans are not a homogenous group, and their experiences and engagement with football differ significantly. They have unique and diverse reasons for supporting their teams, and their level of involvement varies. By stereotyping women, football fans are undermining their love and dedication to the sport, which is unfair and unjust. Therefore, addressing these concerns and improving the facilities and representation of women football fans in the sport is crucial (Aluko, 2023).

Ebru Koksal, the chair of Women in Football, said that the feedback on the issues women face in the football industry was "heartbreaking reading". She added that Women in Football would continue to play a vital role in addressing these problems and harnessing the collective expertise,

knowledge, skills, and experience to create a better future for everyone in the industry (BBC, 2020).

Sociological theories of sport can be analysed to determine how football has become a professional sport. Although the term "professionalisation" has been studied in different sports contexts, it lacks consistency in research. According to Domínguez et al. (2017), It is common for many studies to leave out the precise definition of sports professionalisation, the unit of analysis used, and how the concept is operationalised. This leads to several interpretations of what the term means. Taking a sociological approach, some key features often appear in theoretical interpretations. These include investing significant time, money, and resources into athletes' development and an increased emphasis on expert knowledge to improve performance, sports leadership, and management. For example, Guttmann (1978) highlights the influence of specialist knowledge as a defining trait of modern sports. Furthermore, Guttmann (2004) argues that the traits of specialisation and professionalisation overlap in modern sports. He contends that professionalisation is more than just making money from the sport. With rules and standards in place, everyone has an equal opportunity to participate and compete in sports, regardless of background, gender, or ethnicity. By embodying these defining characteristics, they achieve athletic excellence and inspire future generations to do the same. Equality is further highlighted in studies of the professionalisation of women's sports; for instance, Bowes & Culvin (2021) defines the process of professionalisation as underpinned by progressive gender ideologies. Recently, women's sports organisations have adopted a more formal approach towards their administration and structure by setting up policies and practices. This has led to establishing a formal system of hiring women as athletes in exchange for financial compensation, commonly called professionalisation. However, it should be noted that this process is not always straightforward and coherent, as pointed out by Williams in 2013. Moreover, the professionalisation of sports is not gender-neutral, as evidenced by FIFA requiring female players to have a contract written and earn more from their activity than the expenses incurred

to be considered professional athletes (Williams, 2013). However, Bowes and Culvin (2021) argue that not all women with a formal contract are professionals, especially as athletes are often unpaid or underpaid for their hard work.

2.4 Perspectives of Female Footballers in FIFA Leadership

Over the years, numerous research studies, interviews, and surveys have been conducted to capture the perspectives of female footballers on FIFA leadership. These efforts aim to understand the experiences, perceptions, and challenges women face within FIFA's governance structures and assess the impact of diverse leadership on the development, growth, and visibility of women's football globally. Through these studies, researchers have sought to gather insights on various topics, including equal pay, gender equity, discrimination, and representation of women in leadership positions. The findings of these studies have contributed to ongoing efforts to promote gender equality and inclusion in the world of football and have helped to inform policy decisions aimed at addressing gender-based disparities in the sport (Cunningham, 2019).

2.5 Research Studies

Numerous research studies have delved into the perspectives of female footballers concerning FIFA leadership using qualitative and quantitative methods. These studies have explored various issues, such as representation, decision-making processes, and the inclusivity of FIFA's governance structures. The aim has been to provide insights from the female players' viewpoint (Valenti et al., 2018).

2.6 Interviews and Surveys

Primary research has been conducted through interviews and surveys with female football players to gather firsthand insights into their experiences within FIFA's leadership framework. These qualitative and quantitative data collection methods enable researchers to explore diverse viewpoints, perceptions, and experiences of female players regarding their interactions with

FIFA's governance bodies. For example, the Football Association (FA) has recently released a three-year plan to encourage equality, diversity, and inclusion in English football. This strategy is set to continue until 2024 and is a crucial part of the FA's promise to create a game that is free from discrimination. The plan outlines vital initiatives and actions to promote a more inclusive environment for football (Association, 2021).

2.7 Survey conducted of ‘Challenges Faced by Women in Football.’

BBC (2020) reported that women in football have faced numerous challenges on and off the field. A comprehensive survey conducted by Women in Football sheds light on women's experiences working in the industry. Here are some of the key findings from the study:

2.7.1 Gender Discrimination:

- Two-thirds of women in football have personally experienced gender discrimination within the footballing workplace.
- 34% of respondents have witnessed such discrimination, but only 12% have reported it.
- The term “banter” is often misused as discrimination and is the most common type reported.

2.7.2 Career Obstacles:

- 82% of respondents agree they have faced obstacles in their football careers.
- 81% acknowledge encountering gender stereotyping during their careers.
- 52% have been overlooked for career progression¹.
- Only 14% believe women are actively encouraged to pursue top careers in football.

2.7.3 Social Media Trolling:

- Social media trolling remains a current issue for female players. Former England footballer Alex Scott has faced sexist abuse for her role as a football pundit.

- Despite the negativity online, grassroots players continue to be inspired by professional players like Alex Scott, motivating them to participate in the sport.

2.7.4 Diversity and Support:

- Diversity within women's football needs improvement. Representation of the black and minority ethnic community remains a challenge.
- Encouragingly, 66% of respondents feel supported by their employers, and 78% feel supported by their colleagues.
- Organisations that celebrate female talent are making strides in the right direction.

Resilience and solidarity within the football community are crucial in the face of adversity, as women persistently strive for equality and recognition in this dynamic world of football.

2.8 Discrimination Against Women Playing Football

Continuous gender discrimination in women's football across many regions of the world is causing too many female athletes to face adverse working conditions. An article on BBC Sports (Garry, 2020) presented the findings of Fifpro's report that the World Players' Union released a report highlighting the prevalence of sexism in football and the poor working conditions that many female players face. The report found that "discrimination, sexual harassment, and abuse" are significant issues for female footballers across the world. The union surveyed 186 players from the 2019 Women's World Cup, and over half said their clubs did not provide adequate supporting staff. The report calls for global standards for female footballers, as adverse labour conditions remain an issue in the sport. 51 % said their clubs lacked staff to fulfil their playing needs. Additionally, 41% said they did not receive health insurance from their clubs, and only 3% of players received relocation help after a transfer.

2.9 Women Changing the Representation in Sport

Saudi Arabia secured a victory against Argentina in the 2022 World Cup; their celebration included a powerful act: prostrating on the pitch (Hannah, 2022). In Islam, prostration is a form of prayer to express gratitude to God. For football enthusiast Fathiya Saleh, this moment held immense significance. It marked the first time she felt represented globally as a Muslim athlete. Saleh, who co-founded Sisterhood FC, embodies the spirit of change. Based in South London, Sisterhood FC is the UK's pioneering football team exclusively for Muslim women. Its mission is to enhance participation and diversity within the sport. A recent survey conducted by the Muslimah Sports Association and Muslim Census revealed that nearly one-third of Muslim women in Britain refrain from regular sports activities. Additionally, 33% of respondents cited negative past experiences as a barrier to their sports involvement (Furvah, 2022).

The World Cup in Qatar has reignited discussions about representation in football. As the first major sporting event hosted by a Muslim-majority country, it provides a platform for ethnically and religiously diverse teams such as Morocco and Senegal to display their skills to the world. This spotlight also fuels a collective push for better representation in sports (MacKay, 2022). Simultaneously, the recent triumph of the England women's football team at the Euros adds momentum to this movement (Shah, 2022).

According to Ward and Gilham (2022), Saleh reflects on the journey of Sisterhood FC: "Our team faced challenges in being taken seriously by other teams, coaches, and sponsors. Nevertheless, we are witnessing exciting progress, a difference being made for sports groups like ours and the women who play with us." She established Sisterhood FC in 2018, driven by her discomfort and exclusion from previous sports teams. The lack of spaces for women who looked like her or preferred modest attire such as trousers or long sleeves motivated her to create a safe place. Many practitioners (Elliot & Hoyel, 2014) stated that Muslim women dress modestly to their faith. However, it is unfortunately sometimes perceived negatively as a barrier to sports

participation. Sisterhood FC has flourished over the past four years, attracting over one hundred regular players spanning various skill levels. The team has competed in local tournaments and collaborated with renowned brands like Adidas, Nike, and Puma (JAWOREK *et al.*, 2021). As the World Cup unfolds and the echoes of England's victory reverberate, Muslim athletes seize this moment to be seen, heard, and respected. Whether on football, track, or elsewhere, they break barriers and inspire future generations (Carr *et al.*, 2021).

Walker (2022) mentioned in a BBC sports article that when comparing the UK women's football team with Muslim teams regarding diversity and inclusion, there are distinct cultural and societal factors at play. In the UK, the Football Association's strategy aims to create a game free from discrimination, focusing on equality, diversity, and inclusion. However, there is still an underrepresentation of ethnic minorities within England's elite women's game (Chin & Trimble, 2014).

2.10 FA Ban on Women's Football

Skillen *et al.* (2022) discuss the history of women's football in Wales, particularly around World War One and the 1921 English Football Association ban. Women's football in Wales was significantly influenced by England, with teams emerging in the late 19th century. The British Ladies Football Club also toured Wales in 1895 and 1896, further contributing to the growth of women's football in the country (The Cambria Daily Leader, 1918).

However, after the challenges faced during World War One and the 1921 English Football Association ban, women's football in Wales demonstrated resilience and continued to thrive. Despite the initial objections from religious sectors, Welsh teams like Llanelly Ladies' Football Club and Pengam Garden Village Girls persisted in playing and raising funds. Their determination paved the way for the eventual resurgence of women's football, leading to further growth and opportunities for female players in Wales (Western Mail, 1918).

2.11 FA Ban lifted after 50 years on Women's Football

- **FA Ban Lifted:** The Football Association (FA) lifted a 50-year ban on women's football in 1971, marking the start of transformative changes for the sport in England.
- **Growth and Coverage:** Women's football gained TV coverage in the 1970s, with Channel 4 broadcasting games regularly by 1989. The Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 further propelled progress, making it easier for women to become professional referees.
- **Professionalisation:** The Women's Super League (WSL) turned professional in 2018, with players like Alex Scott previously working additional jobs to support themselves. By 2022, the average WSL player earned £47,000 annually.
- **International Success:** The Lionesses' victory at the UEFA Women's European Championships in 2022 and their performance in the 2023 Women's World Cup reflect the significant growth in popularity and professionalisation of women's football. Spectator numbers have soared, with 87,192 attending the European Championship final at Wembley Stadium.

2.12 Grassroot Initiatives

According to (Williams, 2007), Grassroots initiatives played a vital role in promoting women's football in Wales. These initiatives created numerous opportunities for female players through local clubs, leagues, and the hard work of passionate individuals. They encouraged women and girls to actively participate in the sport through organised teams or informal matches. By building networks that connected players, coaches, and supporters, these initiatives fostered a sense of community and shared purpose. They also advocated equal access to facilities, training, and resources, challenging gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices. To promote visibility, local events, tournaments, and friendly matches were organised to raise awareness about women's football, showcasing talent and dedication (Kay & Dudfield, 2013). Overall, the

grassroots initiatives were the driving force behind the recovery of women's football in Wales, ensuring that the passion for the game continued to thrive.

2.13 The Presence of Women's Football on Social Media

Women's football is becoming increasingly popular, especially on social media platforms like TikTok, Facebook, and Twitter. However, women still face challenges such as sexism, misogyny, sexualisation, and gender-based violence from some fans and critics. Several articles discuss these issues in detail:

Rich (2015) reported in 'The Conversation' that social media plays a crucial role in advocating for change, especially during major sporting events like the Olympics and Paralympics. Unaccredited media participants use these platforms to highlight aspects of the games that might otherwise go unnoticed.

England's women have achieved a historic milestone by reaching the World Cup semi-final for the first time. This accomplishment is expected to boost the momentum of women's football, which has been rapidly growing in popularity across the country. Factors contributing to this growth include the introduction of The Football Association (FA) Women's Super League in April 2011 and the increased visibility of women's football during the London 2012 Olympics. England's success represents a significant moment in the cultural narrative surrounding women's football, potentially raising awareness and inspiring greater participation. England's historic achievement in women's football raises hope for progress, but addressing gender inequalities remains an ongoing challenge.

Despite progress, discriminatory treatment of women in football remains pervasive. Notably, a decade ago, former FIFA president Sepp Blatter controversially suggested that female players should wear "tighter shorts." While there have been positive developments, including player endorsements, increased participation, and the growth of the FA Women's Super League, challenges persist (McDougall, 2020).

Rasul (2022) suggested a supportive environment for women in football is essential. This can be achieved by providing mentorship and networking opportunities, allowing women to share their experiences and concerns, and promoting positive role models for women in the sport.

An article by Gore in 2024 revealed that despite the progress made, women's football still faces many obstacles. One of the most significant challenges is the lack of investment in the sport. Women's football receives substantially less funding than men's football, which directly impacts the quality of the game. Due to this lack of investment, female footballers' salaries are also considerably lower than those of their male counterparts.

The Women's Super League (WSL) in England has seen a significant increase in viewership since it became professional in 2018. The FA has also provided £70,000 to each club in the league's first two seasons, increasing investment. The league has also introduced new license criteria for clubs, which has helped to spread the stars across the teams (Diekman & Eagly, 2000).

2.14 FIFA Inclusion Strategy

The football industry strives to create a more inclusive and diverse environment for women. To achieve this, The Football Association (FA) has launched a new four-year project called Inspiring Positive Change, which aims to create a sustainable future for women and girls in the football industry (BBC, 2020). It consists of over 4,000 women working across the football industry who have called for a whole-game strategy for equality, diversity, and inclusion (Purdon, 2021). Although there is no specific theoretical framework for diversity and inclusion related to women in the football industry, the FA has recently published a new three-year equality, diversity, and inclusion strategy that will run until 2024. This strategy forms an essential part of their long-term commitment to using their influence across English football to create a game free from discrimination (FA Association, 2021). It is worth noting that normalising women, groups from under-represented ethnically diverse backgrounds, and groups from other under-represented groups in football's leadership are essential ways to tackle toxic behaviours. Implementing this

approach and fostering diversity in leadership roles can enhance decision-making processes and establish a sense of authenticity and trust within sports (Fulp, 2018).

In conclusion, the historical overview of FIFA's leadership highlights the progress made in governance structure, leadership transitions, and diversity and inclusion initiatives. Despite the achievements in expanding representation and addressing disparities, gender equity and inclusivity continue to pose challenges within FIFA's leadership hierarchy (MacInnes, 2023). Continued efforts are required to ensure that FIFA's leadership reflects the diversity of the global football community and fosters a culture of equality and fairness for all stakeholders, including female footballers. The growth of women's football since its inception is noteworthy; nevertheless, much is still to be accomplished. The lack of investment and media representation are significant challenges that must be overcome to provide exposure and recognition. However, with the sport's increasing popularity, there is a positive outlook that these challenges can be addressed, and women's football can continue to flourish. FIFA's leadership evolution illustrates the organisation's commitment to improving diversity and inclusion. While the progress achieved so far is commendable, it is imperative to continue working towards achieving gender equity and inclusivity in FIFA's leadership hierarchy. Women's football has come a long way, and there is still a long way to go. Overcoming the challenges and promoting the sport's growth will require persistence and dedication.

This literature review examines the importance of diversity and inclusion in sports governance, focusing on women's leadership in FIFA. It highlights the critical role of diversity and inclusion in promoting fairness, equity, and representation within the sporting community. The review explores theoretical frameworks and conceptual models to understand better the dynamics shaping organisational structures, processes, and outcomes in sports governance. It also discusses discrimination against women playing football and highlights initiatives to change representation in the sport. Overall, this review provides valuable insights into the complex

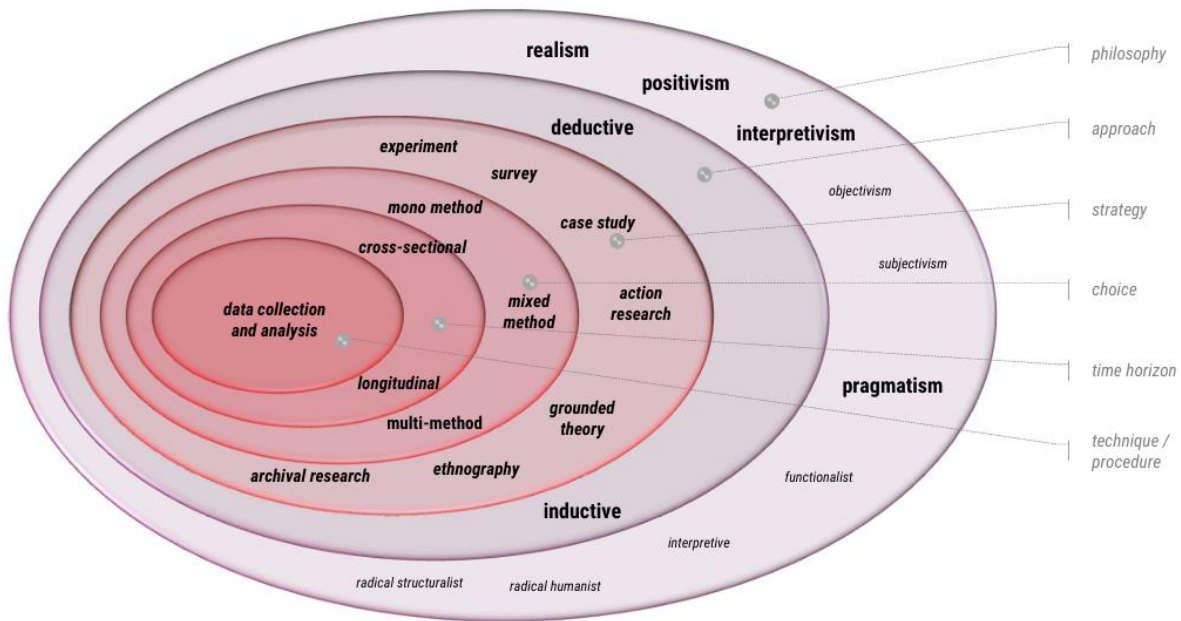
issues surrounding diversity and inclusion in women's football within FIFA leadership and emphasises the need for stakeholders to work together to create a more equitable and inclusive future for the sport.

3. Methodology

This chapter outlines the research methodology for investigating diversity and inclusion dynamics in women's football. The Saunders Onion Research Method will be used as a primary research method, and the aim is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing diversity and inclusion within the context of women's football players in the sports sector (Cunningham, 2019). The primary research will collect data from key stakeholders such as football players, coaches, managers, and officials in women's football. Enhancing this approach will involve executing qualitative and quantitative research methods such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, and case studies. Collecting primary data will help this research explore the complexities of diversity and inclusion within sports settings.

The Saunders Onion Research Method, commonly referred to as the Research Onion, is a highly regarded conceptual framework developed by Mark Saunders, Adrian Thornhill, and Philip Lewis. Their "onion method" offers a structured framework for conducting research widely applied in academic and practical contexts (Saunders et al., 2019). This framework provides a structured and systematic approach to conducting research, breaking down the process into different layers. The onion metaphor represents the various layers involved in research inquiry (Grbich, 2004). It involves initially exploring broad areas and gradually peeling away the outer layers to reveal deeper insights. This method emphasises a systematic and iterative approach to research, where each layer builds upon the previous one to uncover a more profound understanding (Saunders et al., 2009). This will enable the research to identify patterns, trends,

and relationships within the data and draw meaningful conclusions from it (Hahn and Kühnen, 2013).



(The Research Onion adapted from Saunders et al., 2009 – p-138)

Applying the Research Onion model to this research in the context of diversity and inclusion in women's football involves a structured approach that delves into various layers of research methodology (Gilbert and Pratt-Adams, 2022). At the outermost layer, the research philosophy, this study will be focused on the interpretive stance, which seeks to understand the subjective experiences of female footballers within their social contexts. Moving inward, the research approach will be exploratory, aiming to uncover new insights into the challenges and opportunities for women in football; descriptive, to detail the current state of affairs; and explanatory, to understand the causal relationships within the sport. The choice of approach will guide the formulation of the research questions and objectives. The next layer, the research strategy, involves choosing between various data collection methods. (Saunders et al., 2009).

In this study, a survey will capture broader patterns and attitudes across the sport, which can challenge women's place in sports. Following this, Qualitative methods, such as interviews with players, coaches, and administrators, can offer rich, detailed data on personal experiences and

perceptions. Quantitative methods, like questionnaires distributed to many participants, can provide statistical evidence of the state of diversity and inclusion in women's football. Furthermore, the time horizon is another critical layer, and this research will be cross-sectional, capturing a snapshot of the current situation. This decision has significant implications for understanding the evolution of diversity and inclusion within the sport.

At the Research Onion's core are data analysis techniques and procedures. Qualitative data will be analysed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes related to diversity and inclusion. In contrast, quantitative data will be subjected to statistical analysis to determine the prevalence and significance of certain factors. Throughout this process, ethical considerations will be at the forefront, ensuring that the research respects the rights and dignity of all participants. This is particularly important when dealing with potentially sensitive issues such as discrimination or exclusion (Shaw et al., 2020).

Therefore, applying the Research Onion model to study women's football in the context of diversity and inclusion provides a comprehensive framework for designing and conducting research. It ensures that the study is methodologically sound and that the findings are robust and reliable, contributing valuable insights to the ongoing efforts to make football a more inclusive and equitable sport for women. This structured approach aligns with the broader objectives of sports research, which seek to advance academic knowledge and inform practical interventions to enhance the sporting experience for all participants, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or background (Cairns-Lee et al., 2023).

3.1 Research Paradigm

When examining diversity and inclusion in women's football, choosing an appropriate research paradigm within the onion research method is essential. The most suitable approach is an interpretive or social constructivist paradigm (Cooper, 2019). In the case of women's football, this paradigm will allow the exploration of different attitudes, experiences, and socio-cultural

factors that influence involvement and participation. Qualitative methods of in-depth interviews, focus groups, and observation will be used to investigate the subjective experience of female footballers. Furthermore, the social constructivist paradigm recognises that people view the world through cultural and social lenses. Therefore, this paradigm will enable an understanding of how social and cultural factors influence the participation and inclusion of women in football. In summary, interpretive and social constructionist paradigms provide a comprehensive approach to understanding diversity and inclusion in women's football. These paradigms can be used to explore the lived experiences, perceptions, and meanings of female football players and the socio-cultural factors that influence engagement and participation (Cottrell 2014).

3.2 Interpretive Paradigm – Description and Discussion

Incorporating Interpretivism as a research methodology for exploring diversity and inclusion represents a notable departure from the conventional approach of seeking objective, quantifiable data. Instead, it prioritises comprehending the subjective, nuanced experiences of individuals. Interpretivism is particularly suitable for this field of study as it facilitates a more profound exploration of the intricate social constructs and personal narratives underpinning matters of diversity and inclusion (Lim, 2023). By adopting an interpretive approach, researchers can contribute substantially to advancing knowledge and understanding of diversity and inclusion within sports. This can inform the development of more inclusive and equitable practices and policies in women's football.

3.3 Understanding Subjective Experiences

Interpretivism emphasises understanding social phenomena from the perspective of the individuals involved. This research on women's football means recognising the diverse experiences and perceptions of players, coaches, administrators, and other stakeholders regarding diversity and inclusion initiatives (Helkkula, 2021). In this study, Interpretive research

allows a researcher to delve into the subjective meanings and interpretations that individuals attribute to their experiences within the sport sector.

3.4 Exploring Multiple Perspectives

Diversity and inclusion in women's football are complex and multifaceted issues influenced by various social, cultural, and institutional factors. Interpretivism enables researchers to explore these issues from multiple perspectives, including those of different demographic groups, levels of involvement in the sport, and organisational roles (Spaaij et al., 2020). By acknowledging and valuing diverse viewpoints, interpretive research can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities for promoting diversity and inclusion in women's football.

3.5 Contextualising Social Constructs

Interpretivism highlights the importance of understanding social constructs within their specific contexts. In the context of women's football, this means recognising in this study the broader socio-cultural and institutional dynamics that shape perceptions and experiences related to diversity and inclusion. Interpretive research allows this study to contextualise social constructs such as gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality within the unique cultural and organisational context of women's football, thereby providing insights into how these constructs influence participation, representation, and access to opportunities within the sport (Ahmad, 2012).

3.6 Facilitating Participatory Research

Interpretivism encourages engaging with participants in a participatory manner, involving them in the research process and valuing their contributions as co-creators of knowledge (Carter et al., 2023). In this research, this approach can empower players, coaches, and other stakeholders to actively participate in the research process, share their perspectives, and contribute to developing strategies for promoting diversity and inclusion in the future. Participatory research methods

such as surveys and interviews can effectively engage stakeholders and foster dialogue and collaboration around diversity and inclusion initiatives in women's football (Spaaij et al., 2018).

3.7 Generating Contextually Relevant Insights

This research aims to provide relevant and applicable insights into the experiences of individuals in a football organisation, particularly regarding diversity and inclusion for female footballers. By using interpretive research in the context of women's football, this study aims to uncover the unique challenges female players, coaches, and administrators face regarding diversity and inclusion. Additionally, the research will highlight the most effective strategies and initiatives that promote inclusivity and equity within the sport. By basing the research on the first-hand experiences and perspectives of those involved, interpretivism research can inform the development of relevant policies, programs, and interventions to advance diversity and inclusion in women's football (Banister et al., 2011).

3.8 Advantages of the Interpretive Paradigm

One of the advantages of the interpretive paradigm in this research is that it is an essential tool for exploring individual experiences and perceptions in women's football. Its effectiveness lies in its ability to capture the diverse perspectives of women in football, providing a critical richness for understanding the nuances of diversity and inclusion. The commentary contextualises the meaning and explains how socio-cultural, historical, and organisational factors influence diversity and participation in women's football. Commentary Paradigm empowers marginalised voices by empowering women to share their stories and perspectives and contribute to a more inclusive understanding of diversity in football.

3.9 Disadvantage of the Interpretive Paradigm

The emphasis on subjectivity in interpretive research can lead to researcher bias, as one's interpretation dramatically influences the results. Findings from observational studies cannot be

easily generalised to larger populations. The context-specific nature of the research may limit its applicability beyond the group studied, making it difficult to generalise to other groups or situations.

Qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and extensive participant observation, often used in interpretive research, can be time- and resource-intensive. Collecting and analysing data comprehensively requires a lot of time and resources.

Different researchers may interpret the data differently, making it difficult to reach a consensus on the meaning of the findings. Therefore, it is essential to consider the potential for multiple interpretations and try to get a consensus among researchers.

3.10 Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

Qualitative and quantitative methods are mixed methods for data collection and analysis. This approach allows for an in-depth understanding of the topic by collecting subjective personal opinions (qualitative) and objective numerical data (quantitative) (Gliner et al., 2009). This study uses a mixed-methods research design to comprehensively understand perspectives and groups not represented in FIFA leadership.

3.11 Qualitative Data Collection

This research collects data through in-depth interviews with women's football team members who hold management positions within the football club. These interviews were designed to explore their experiences, challenges, and recommendations regarding diversity and inclusion in leadership roles. Liberal or vast-approached questions will allow participants to freely express their opinions and experiences (Gratton and Jones, 2010). An online survey was created to access 30-50 people, increasing the chances of obtaining meaningful results.

3.12 Quantitative Data Collection

Survey Questionnaire: A structured questionnaire was sent to various local football club members, including management members. The survey includes closed-ended and Likert-type questions to measure their experiences and opinions on diversity and participation. It also provides a basis for statistical analysis (Baron, 2018).

3.13 Segmentation of Survey

Segmentation in the context of a survey on diversity and inclusion, particularly for women players in sports, is a strategic approach that categorises the survey population into meaningful, relatable groups to understand better and address their specific needs and experiences.

- To apply segmentation effectively, key demographic variables such as age, ethnicity, playing level, and geographic location are identified. This allows for examining how diversity and inclusion policies affect different groups within the female player population.
- Further segmentation is based on this research on psychographic factors, which include attitudes, aspirations, and other psychological criteria. For instance, understanding the motivation behind why women play football, their professional aspirations within the sport, and their experiences with discrimination or support can provide deeper insights into the inclusivity of the football environment.
- Behavioral segmentation is another layer that can be applied to this research. It focuses on the actual behaviours of female players, such as their participation patterns, loyalty to clubs or teams, and response to diversity initiatives. This can reveal the effectiveness of current strategies and highlight areas needing improvement.
- Geographic segmentation is applied in this research, asking the local women's football in the context of diversity and inclusion to assess the issue. Cultural norms and support

systems for women in sports can vary by region; this can help tailor interventions to be more culturally sensitive and effective.

- Lastly, segmentation by benefits sought can uncover what female players seek in their sports experiences, such as professional development, social interaction, fitness, or competition, and how well current football programs meet these desires.

By applying these segmentation strategies to a survey on diversity and inclusion for women players in the football industry, this research can gain a nuanced understanding of the landscape. This, in turn, can inform more targeted, practical strategies to promote inclusivity and ensure that football, and sports in general, are welcoming and accessible to all women, reflecting the diversity of the population it serves. This research aims to break down barriers and create an equitable playing field where talent and passion are the only determinants of success. This approach aligns with initiatives like UK Sport's new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy, which aims to create a more diverse and inclusive sporting community (Saldana, 2012).

3.14 Critical Analysis of Methodology

The methodology chapter utilises Saunders' research method to investigate diversity and inclusion in women's football. The critical analysis reflects on the strengths and limitations of this approach.

Based on Saunders et al.'s research method, the chosen methodology has strengths and weaknesses in studying diversity and inclusion in women's football.

3.14.1 Strengths

- **Appropriateness of Research Philosophy and Approach:** The selection of an interpretive research philosophy aligns well with the subjective nature of social phenomena, allowing for a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding diversity and inclusion in women's football. Similarly, the qualitative research approach is well-suited for exploring nuanced experiences and perspectives within this context.

- **Comprehensive Research Design:** The exploratory and descriptive research design enables a thorough examination of various dimensions of diversity and inclusion in women's football. By integrating multiple data collection methods, such as interviews, focus groups, and document analysis, the study enhances the richness and depth of its findings.
- **Purposive Sampling Strategy:** The purposive sampling strategy enhances the relevance and richness of the data by targeting individuals with diverse perspectives and experiences in women's football. This approach allows for the exploration of a wide range of viewpoints, contributing to the validity and comprehensiveness of the study.
- **Ethical Considerations:** The emphasis on ethical considerations, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and adhering to ethical guidelines, demonstrates a commitment to protecting the rights and well-being of participants. These ethical practices enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings.

3.14.2 Weaknesses

- **Potential for Bias in Data Collection and Analysis:** Despite efforts to mitigate bias, the study's qualitative nature leaves it susceptible to researcher bias in data collection and analysis. The subjective interpretation of data could inadvertently shape the findings, potentially skewing the portrayal of diversity and inclusion in women's football.
- **Limitations of Qualitative Research:** Whilst qualitative research offers depth and richness in exploring complex social phenomena, it also has inherent limitations. The findings may need more generalizability due to the small, non-random sample size and the focus on specific contexts within women's football. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias and inaccuracies.
- **Scope and Depth of Analysis:** The methodology must explicitly address potential limitations in the scope and depth of analysis. Given the multifaceted nature of diversity

and inclusion in women's football, capturing all relevant dimensions within the confines of the research design may be challenging. As such, certain aspects of the phenomenon may still need to be explored or noticed.

- **Triangulation and Validity:** While the methodology mentions using triangulation to enhance the validity of the findings, it could benefit from a more detailed discussion of how triangulation will be implemented and how different data sources will be compared and integrated to strengthen the credibility of the results (Moon, 2019).

3.15 Mixed Method Approach

The mixed methods design is a research approach that combines sequential or concurrent research designs. This approach is beneficial when dealing with complex research subjects that cannot be adequately understood using qualitative or quantitative research methods alone (Östlund et al., 2011). The rapid development of technology has led to a growing need for reliable information systems. Mixed methods research can explore and test questions simultaneously, providing a more comprehensive perspective and producing more reliable results than single research methods. This approach offers significant advantages over single research methods and is particularly effective when dealing with complex research subjects. (Gliner et al., 2009).

This research employs qualitative and quantitative methods to address the research question, thereby capitalising on the strengths and compensating for the limitations of each approach. When the selected methods complement each other, using them concurrently leads to more precise and comprehensive findings (Hendren et al., 2018).

Using a mixed-methods approach to examining diversity and inclusion in women's football is rationalised by its capacity to understand complex phenomena comprehensively (Scott, 2013).

According to Gratton and Jones (2010), combining these methods aids in developing a more robust theoretical framework, which can inform effective policies and practices. The mixed

methods approach offers a more holistic perspective on diversity and inclusion in women's football, which can lead to more informed decision-making.

Here's how integrating qualitative and quantitative data enhances the validity and reliability of the study:

3.16 Comprehensive Understanding

The present study endeavours to comprehensively explore the diversity and inclusion aspects of women's football and their challenges. The study proposes to employ quantitative and qualitative research methods to achieve this objective (Bell et al., 2018). The qualitative method will entail online interviews led by the researcher and enable an in-depth exploration of individuals' experiences, attitudes, and perceptions. The quantitative method will involve distributing an online survey to a sample size of 30-50 individuals and will provide statistical evidence and generalisable insights across a larger sample size. By combining the two methods, the study will be able to capture both the breadth and depth of the topic under investigation.

3.17 Triangulation

Integrating qualitative and quantitative data allows for triangulation, where results from one method are confirmed or augmented by results from the other (Manganelli et al., 2014). Triangulation strengthens the study's reliability and credibility by confirming evidence across multiple sources and techniques (Fuchs et al., 2021).

3.18 Contextualisation

Understanding the nuances and complexities of diversity and inclusion in the sport requires insights from qualitative narratives and quantitative trends (Hermans and Hermans-Jansen, 2001). Analysing data using this method will provide rich contextual information to help this research interpret quantitative findings within the specific context of women's football.

3.19 Depth of Analysis

Qualitative research explores individual experiences, motivations, and perspectives concerning diversity and inclusion in women's football. As a result, in this research, accurate conclusions can be drawn, and informed decisions can be made based on a comprehensive finding. According to (Saunders et al., 2009), In academic and business settings, this approach is considered a valuable tool for examining complex issues, as it enables a more thorough investigation of the individual experiences and perspectives of the people involved. Therefore, it is essential to consider incorporating qualitative research methods in studies concerning diversity and inclusion in women's football to obtain a more complete and accurate understanding of the topic.

3.20 Counterbalancing Bias

While surveying diversity and inclusion in women's football, it is essential to address any potential bias by using fair and inclusive language in the questions. The sampling techniques were applied to help ensure representation across different demographic groups. Explicit instruction was provided to minimise the chance of biased responses. The validated tools and pilot testing were also used to enhance the survey's reliability and validity. An accurate understanding of diversity and inclusion in women's football can be achieved by considering various perspectives.

To conclude, although Saunder's research methodology offers a robust framework for examining diversity and inclusion in women's football, it has limitations. Addressing these limitations necessitates careful consideration of bias, methodological constraints, and the scope of analysis, which can enhance the rigour and credibility of the study's findings. In brief, the amalgamation of qualitative and quantitative data in scrutinising diversity and inclusivity in women's football can bolster the reliability and dependability of the research by providing a comprehensive, triangulated understanding of the subject matter. By leveraging the advantages of both

methodologies, the study can yield significant knowledge that can influence practical applications, policies, and future research in this domain.

4. Data Analysis

This chapter explores and interprets qualitative data collected through surveys on gender diversity and inclusion in football leadership. Through the analysis and thematic examination to uncover the insights, patterns, and perspectives illuminating the current state of gender diversity within football organisations and the challenges and opportunities encountered by women aspiring to leadership roles in the sport (Eagly and Carli, 2007). This chapter also comprehensively analyses the qualitative data collected through surveys on gender diversity and inclusion in football leadership. The rigorous analysis and thematic examination of the data uncover valuable insights, patterns, and perspectives (Chin and Trimble, 2014). The ultimate goal is to shed light on the current state of gender diversity within football organisations and the challenges and opportunities faced by women seeking leadership roles in the sport (Cunningham, 2019). The analysis will enable us to identify the key themes and patterns present in the data, providing a deeper understanding of the current state of gender diversity in football leadership (Evans and Pfister, 2021). Examining women's challenges and opportunities in this field hoped to provide insight into how organisations can better support and promote gender diversity within their leadership structures (Ely et al., 2011). Overall, this chapter will determine the ongoing conversation surrounding gender diversity and inclusion in sports.

4.1 Purpose of Data Analysis

The primary objective of this chapter is to extract meaning from the raw data gathered and transform individual responses into coherent narratives that bring to light the intricate nuances of gender representation and inclusion in football leadership (Saldana, 2012). Through a systematic process of categorisation, analysis, and interpretation of qualitative data, the objective is to explain critical themes, identify trends, and offer insights that contribute to a deeper understanding of women's place in sports (Marshall and Rossman, 2014). A rigorous analytical approach can provide a comprehensive understanding of the underlying dynamics of gender

representation and inclusion in football leadership, advancing the field of study (Oates, 2017). A comprehensive overview of the data collected will be presented, encompassing the total number of responses, any incomplete or missing data, and the distribution of responses across different survey questions (Andrew et al., 2019). This overview serves as a prelude to an in-depth exploration of the emerging themes from the data analysis. The data summary provides a holistic view of the responses and helps identify broad patterns and trends before delving into a more detailed analysis of emerging themes. This approach facilitates a structured and systematic understanding of the data, ensuring that all significant aspects are considered and analysed (Banister et al., 2011).

4.2 Methodological Framework

(Al-Ababneh, 2020) Paun *et al.* (2022) stated that a recap needs to be done of the methodology employed in data collection to ensure the data analysis's validity and reliability. This will involve providing comprehensive details on various aspects of the survey conducted with the individual for this study, including process, design, participant demographics, and data collection procedures (Fulp, 2018). The main aim of revisiting methodology is to establish a clear and precise context for the data analysis, which will help readers to arrive at accurate conclusions. Furthermore, this approach ensures that the methodology is transparent and rigorous and increases the overall validity of the findings and recommendations (Whittemore and Knafl, 2005). This study's data analysis approach is guided by a methodological framework grounded in qualitative research and quantitative principles (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Thematic analysis will be used as the primary methodological tool, allowing for the identification of recurring patterns, themes, and insights across the dataset (Drury et al., 2022). Additionally, the quantitative analysis will be integrated to complement qualitative findings, providing numerical insights into the prevalence and distribution of specific themes and perspectives.

4.3 Overview of Themes

Braun and Clarke (2021) stated that thematic analysis involves identifying recurring patterns, themes, and insights from the qualitative data. A systematic approach will be applied to categorising responses based on commonalities, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the perspectives shared by participants during the survey and interview (Östlund et al., 2011). The chapter will present a comprehensive analysis of different themes that are closely related to gender diversity and inclusion in football leadership. The discussion covers various topics, such as the perceptions of representation, awareness of diversity issues, challenges faced by underrepresented groups, and the significance of visible role models. The aim is to provide nuanced insights and practical recommendations to help football organisations to advance gender equity. The systematic and thorough analysis hopes to shed light on football organisations' challenges and opportunities in achieving gender diversity and inclusivity in their leadership role (Cunningham, 2010).

4.4 Contribution to the Field

The present chapter on data analysis represents a significant contribution to the existing literature on gender diversity and inclusion in sports leadership. Synthesising qualitative data and offering nuanced interpretations will provide valuable insights that inform future research, policy development, and organisational practices to foster more inclusive and equitable environments within the football leadership domain (Lindsey and Darby, 2019). The findings of this study offer an opportunity to explore the potential barriers women face in leadership positions and the steps organisations can take to ensure gender inclusivity. This study provides a comprehensive and insightful analysis that can help organisations develop best practices and policies to foster a more diverse and inclusive sports leadership environment (Ely *et al.*, 2011).

4.5 Scope and Limitation

Although this data analysis aims to present an analysis that strives to maintain comprehensiveness, certain limitations may affect the reliability of the findings; for example, data availability, cultural contexts, time limit, and historical biases are all potential factors that may impact the validity of the results (Vijver and Leung, 2021). Nevertheless, the ultimate objective is to present an evidence-based perspective on diversity and inclusion in women's football and organisational challenges. Ultimately, it intends to contribute to a more equitable and inclusive future for women in football by providing a thorough and well-researched analysis of the relevant issues (Tindall, 2013).

4.6 Validity and Reliability in Data Analysis

4.6.1 Validity

According to Vijver and Leung (2021), the extent to which the findings of a study accurately represent the phenomenon being studied is referred to as validity. This dissertation employed several measures to ensure the validity of the data analysis process. Firstly, great attention was paid to selecting and designing research instruments, including surveys and interview protocols, to ensure they effectively captured the constructs of interest related to diversity and inclusion in women's football (Thomson et al., 2023). The survey questions were carefully created to tackle key aspects of diversity and inclusion in football. This was done by drawing upon established frameworks and literature in the field. Additionally, the interview protocols underwent pilot testing and refinement to guarantee their relevance in gathering participants' insights (Gratton and Jones, 2010).

Thematic analysis of qualitative data was conducted using established procedures, including coding, categorisation, and interpretation, to ensure that themes accurately reflected participants' perspectives and experiences. Furthermore, integrating qualitative and quantitative data through

triangulation allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic, thus contributing to the study's overall validity.

4.6.2 Reliability

Moon (2019) stated that reliability refers to the consistency and stability of research findings over time and across different contexts. In this dissertation, efforts were made to enhance the reliability of the data analysis process through several means. Firstly, standardisation of data collection procedures was ensured, with clear protocols and instructions provided to participants for surveys and interviews. This helped minimise response variability and ensured data collection consistency across participants.

Inter-coder reliability checks were carried out during the thematic analysis of qualitative data to evaluate the consistency of coding decisions. Any discrepancies that emerged were discussed and resolved through consensus, enhancing the reliability of the coding process.

Furthermore, using established measurement tools and validated survey instruments helped ensure the reliability of the quantitative data collected. Statistical analyses were conducted using robust techniques, and data quality checks were performed to identify and address any anomalies. Overall, these measures contributed to the reliability of the data analysis process and the trustworthiness of the research findings. In general, these methods enhanced the dependability of the data analysis procedure and the credibility of the research outcomes.

Moreover, test-retest reliability can be established through ratings and reliability checks of survey instruments. By considering these issues in the research processes, the quality and reliability of data can be improved, leading to valuable insights into diversity and inclusion in football leadership (Abowitz and Toole, 2010).

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards are crucial in the planning and execution of research studies. These principles ensure the responsible conduct of research and respect for the interests of the individuals and

communities involved (Tomlinson 2014). Ethical considerations are not only a matter of compliance but also integral to the quality and validity of research. Adhering to moral principles ensures that research is conducted responsibly and respectfully, ultimately contributing to the study's trustworthiness and impact on the broader community (Walther, 2002).

Before conducting any research, survey, or interview for this study, the ethical considerations form was filled out, and ethical approval from relevant institutional review boards or ethics committees was obtained before conducting the data analysis to ensure that the study adheres to ethical guidelines and regulations governing research involving human participants.

Here are ethical considerations to be taken into account while conducting data analysis for this study on diversity and inclusion in women's football:

- **Informed Consent:** The participants were informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks or benefits. They were given informed consent before their data was used in the analysis and were allowed to ask questions and withdraw their consent at any time.
- **Anonymity and Confidentiality:** During the analysis, the participants' privacy was protected by anonymising their data. Any identification information was removed to ensure confidentiality; the data was stored securely, and researcher-only authorised access.
- **Voluntary Participation:** All participants participated in the study voluntarily and without any pressure and were free to withdraw from it at any point without consequence.
- **Respect for Diversity:** The diversity of participants was respected, and their voices were accurately represented in the analysis. There was no mention of stereotyping or generalising findings based on individual characteristics like gender, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.

- **Conflict of Interest:** Objectivity and transparency were maintained throughout the research and analysis process so that nothing could influence the interpretation of the findings.
- **Responsible Reporting:** The data analysis findings were presented accurately and responsibly, avoiding exaggeration to ensure that the implications of the findings are interpreted appropriately.

4.8 Qualitative Data Analysis

This data analysis presents a comprehensive data analysis of the outcomes of an in-depth interview with five female candidates to explore diversity and inclusion in leadership roles within the football industry. The primary objective of conducting interviews was to gain deeper insights into the perspectives and experiences of female stakeholders occupying various roles in football organisations, such as players, coaches, administrators, and executives. This study examines their insights on the current state of diversity and inclusion initiatives, the challenges faced by underrepresented groups, and the strategies for promoting greater inclusivity within the sport.

4.8.1 Interview Questions

The list of questions and answers is attached as Appendix ‘A’ for detailed review. All respondents will be referred to as R1, R2, R3, R4, and R5.

Theme 1: Cultivating Diversity and Inclusion Awareness
<p>Q1: Are you aware that women are getting fair representation in leadership roles?</p> <p>40% were aware of the term</p> <p>60% were not aware or were not sure</p>
<p>Q2: Have you seen any specific initiative a club/organisation takes to promote diversity and inclusion?</p>

Most respondents have seen the efforts made by the club/organisation.

R1: quoted Liverpool FC's campaign “All Red, All Equal.”

R2: quoted the Football Association’s Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion strategy (2121-2024)

R3: quoted, “Kickt it out and Stonewall.” (A detailed response is in Appendix A2)

Q3: How would you describe the awareness amongst leaders regarding the importance of Diversity and Inclusion?

The majority of respondents said it is becoming a more prominent topic; however, there is still a need for ongoing dialogue and action to fully integrate these principles into football governance (detailed response can be seen in Appendix A3)

Q4: How do you assess the current state of diversity and inclusion within leadership in the context of women leaders?

Most respondents stated that despite some progress made in recent years, the current state of diversity and inclusion in leadership suggests significant obstacles still exist and require attention (detailed response can be seen in Appendix A4)

Theme 2: Addressing Challenges Faced by Underrepresented Groups

Q5: What are the main challenges and barriers underrepresented groups face in attaining leadership roles?

The respondents received a variety of responses, both cultural and systematic, such as stereotypes, less mentorship, cultural norms, inclusion policies, and a lack of diverse voices.

(A detailed response can be seen in Appendix A5)

Q6: Have you personally experienced discrimination or bias against underrepresented groups?

All respondents had experienced/witnessed and gave examples (See Appendix A 6)

Theme 3: Importance of Representation and Role Models

Q7: How important is it for a female to have a leadership role for inspiration and as a role model?

All respondents agreed that having a female leader in the football industry is very important for inspiration and as a role model.

(A detailed response can be seen in Appendix A7)

Theme 4: Promoting Inclusive Leadership Practices

Q8: How can football organisations support the development and progression of women into leadership roles?

A variety of suggestions are summarised here:

- Cultivating a supportive organisational culture that values diversity and fosters an inclusive environment.
- Providing ongoing training and professional development opportunities focused on leadership skills, conflict resolution, and inclusive management practice to empower women to excel in leadership roles. **(A detailed response can be seen in Appendix A8)**

Theme 5: Sharing Personal Experiences and Insights of Leadership Role

Q9: How have you navigated diversity and inclusion challenges in your leadership role?

Most respondents suggested fostering culture change and promoting equal opportunities through training, resilience, mentoring, and positive impact. **(A detailed response can be seen in Appendix A9)**

Theme 6: Offering Recommendations and Best Practices

Q10: What recommendation would you offer the football organisation to enhance gender diversity and inclusion within their leadership structures?

R1: Foster a culture of accountability by regularly tracking and reporting progress towards diversity and inclusion.

R2: Establish apparent diversity and inclusion goals and integrate them into the organisational strategy plan

R3: Implement policies and practises that actively recruit, retain and promote women into a leadership position.

R4: Create opportunities for networking, mentorship and professional development specifically tailored to women in football leadership

R5: Prioritise education and awareness initiatives aimed at challenging biases, promoting gender equality and fostering a culture of inclusivity **(A detailed response can be seen in Appendix A10)**

Theme 7: Facilitating Mentorship and Networking

Q 11: How do female leaders in football seek guidance and build networks to manage the demands of their roles and explore future opportunities?

All respondents suggested the following:

R1: Through mentorship and networking for valuable guidance, support and opportunities.

R2: Access to mentors and networking can help them navigate the unique challenges and barriers and provide access to the resources.

R3: This response did not benefit from the mentoring experience; however, it suggested it can be beneficial under the right mentorship and positive environment.

R4: The relationship developed through networking and mentorship can encourage personalised guidance advice from experienced professionals and can provide insight into career progression.

R5: They connect with their colleagues, peers, and industry leaders through networking, collaboration, and mentorship. **(A detailed response can be seen in Appendix A11)**

Theme 12: Empowering for Future Outlook

Q12: What steps can be taken to empower more women to pursue active leadership roles in football?

All respondents suggested different ideas as follows:

Start a football career from a young age

Provide positive mentorship and leader development opportunities and programme

Foster a culture of diversity and inclusion

Be an advocate of gender equality.

Self-advocacy, resilience, and empowerment strategies to build confidence and resilience for future success.

(A detailed response can be seen in Appendix A 12)

Theme 13: Recommendations / Thoughts

Q13: What are your final thoughts or recommendations regarding women's perspective in football leadership and the broader conversation on diversity and inclusion?

All the respondents suggested several views, as seen in **Appendix A 13**

These thematic themes provide a framework for organising and analysing discussions and insights about diversity and inclusion in women's football. This allows for a comprehensive exploration of the topic from various perspectives.

4.9 Quantitative Data Analysis

The following data analysis involves surveying fifty individuals associated with football organisations to gather constructive feedback regarding their perceptions, attitudes, and experiences relating to diversity and inclusion within the football industry. By administering a structured questionnaire to a varied sample of participants, including leaders, managers, coaches, players, support staff, and fans, this study explores their perspectives on crucial issues such as representation, equity, access, and inclusivity within football organisations. The insights gained from this study will help identify areas of improvement and enable the football industry to

develop more inclusive practices and policies, thereby enhancing diversity and promoting a fair and equitable environment for all.

This analysis involves calculating percentages, frequencies, and correlations to complement the qualitative findings and offer a comprehensive understanding of the data.

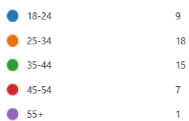
4.9.1 Survey Questions

Fifty individuals were surveyed, answering fourteen questions to gather their perspectives on diversity and inclusion within football organisations, particularly about women footballers.

Survey on Diversity and Inclusion in Women's Football

1. What is your age?

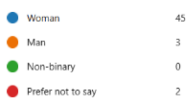
[More Details](#)



- **Age Group:** The graph shows that the majority of respondents aged between 25 - 44, with the largest group between 25 – 34

2. What is your gender identity?

[More Details](#)



- **Gender:** 90% of respondents were women

3. Geographic Location (Optional)

[More Details](#)

39
Responses

Latest Responses

"England"

"England "

- **Geographic Location:** 85% of respondents were from Wales / West Wales, whereas 15% of respondents were from England

4. How frequently do you engage with football games (watching matches, attending games, participating in events, etc.)?

[More Details](#)

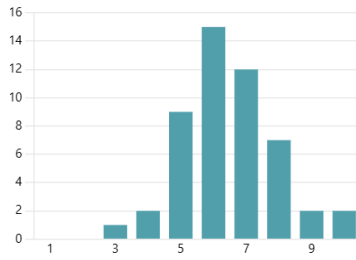


- 88% of the respondents frequently engage with football, 12% engage occasionally, and one respondent never engages.

5. On a scale of 1 to 10, how inclusive do you perceive the football community to be for women? (1 being not inclusive at all, 10 being extremely inclusive)

[More Details](#)

6.48
Average Rating



- The majority of the respondents perceived the football community as inclusive, although the average rate shows it as neither inclusive nor inclusive.

6. Have you personally witnessed or experienced discrimination within the football community directed towards women?

[More Details](#)

Yes	33
No	13
Maybe	4



- 66% of the majority witnessed gender discrimination in the football community.

7. Do you think football organisations effectively communicate their commitment to diversity and inclusion?

[More Details](#)

Yes	12
No	19
Maybe	19

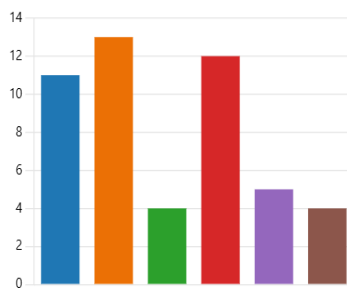


- 24% Minority thought the communication barrier from the organisation related to diversity and inclusion.

8. In your opinion, what challenges or barriers do women face in participating or pursuing careers within the football industry?

[More Details](#)

Gender Stereotype	11
Discrimination and Bias	13
Culture and Societal Norm	4
Inadequate Support System	12
Work Life Balance	5
Other	4



- There is a range of different responses, with discrimination being the highest, followed by gender stereotyping and an inadequate support system being the most common.

9. Do you believe that projects like diversity training and awareness campaigns are effective in fostering inclusion within the football community?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	29
● No	4
● Maybe	17



- The Majority, 68%, said yes to the awareness training, while 34% were unsure.

10. How well-represented do you think women's position is in a leadership role within football organisations?

[More Details](#)

● Extremely well	1
● Somewhat well	18
● Neutral	19
● Somewhat not well	12

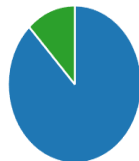


- A majority of 62% responded either neutral or somewhat well

11. Would you support the implementation of specific policies or programs aimed at increasing the representation and participation of women in football?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	44
● No	0
● Maybe	6



- The overwhelmed majority, 88%, were in favour, with the small minority, 12%, not against it.

12. How important do you think it is for prominent figures within football (players, coaches, administrators) to advocate for diversity and inclusion?

[More Details](#)

● Extremely important	44
● Somewhat important	5
● Neutral	1
● Somewhat not important	0
● Extremely not important	0



- An overwhelming majority of 88% think it is essential, and no one thinks it is not necessary.

13. What recommendations do you have for football organisations aiming to improve diversity and inclusion within their leadership structures?

[More Details](#)

29

Responses

Latest Responses

- 29 respondents out of 50 respondents offered their recommendations, which can be viewed in **Appendix B.**

14. Is there anything else you would like to share or emphasise regarding diversity and inclusion in women's football?

[More Details](#)

17

Responses

Latest Responses

- 17 respondents out of 50 respondents offered their suggestions, which can be viewed in **Appendix C**.

5. Finding / Discussion

The findings of this research confirm the persistent underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions within FIFA. Despite the increasing visibility of female athletes on the field, their voices are still disregarded at the higher echelons of power. This issue goes beyond numbers; it reflects deep-seated obstacles that impede women's progress in football governance organisations. It is essential to collectively break down institutionalised biases and establish pathways for fair representation to address this inequality.

The survey findings reveal widespread recognition of the importance of diversity and inclusion in women's football leadership, with most respondents supporting more excellent representation and equal opportunities for women in leadership roles. However, the survey also highlights the challenges and barriers hindering women's advancement in football leadership positions, including gender biases, a lack of mentorship opportunities, and institutional barriers within FIFA.

To provide a more comprehensive understanding of women's challenges in leadership positions, the study conducted in-depth interviews with various stakeholders in various football community roles. The interviews provide valuable insights into the systemic inequalities and discriminatory practices that hinder women's progress in football governance. The participants, including managers, players, coaches, administrators, and fans, share diverse perspectives on the perpetuation of gender stereotypes, the limited access to resources and networks, and the prevalence of male-dominated leadership structures within FIFA. The respondents also suggested that fostering a diverse culture of inclusivity and educating the sports community can create more equitable, accessible, and welcoming sports for all.

The dissertation dives into the multifaceted challenges and barriers that women encounter in FIFA leadership roles, encompassing structural, cultural, and systemic factors that perpetuate

gender inequalities and hinder women's advancement. The study highlights the discriminatory practices, lack of representation in decision-making processes, and limited access to leadership opportunities, which are prominent challenges women face within FIFA governance structures.

To address these challenges, the study recommends advocating for policy reforms to promote gender equity and diversity within FIFA governance bodies. Additionally, implementing mentorship and leadership development programs to support the advancement of women leaders is necessary. The study also emphasises the importance of fostering a culture of inclusivity and accountability within football governance structures.

The survey and in-depth interview provided a detailed exploration of the challenges and barriers that hinder women's participation in leadership roles in football organisations, with a particular focus on FIFA governance. The findings identify the critical areas for improvement and recommend strategies to create a more inclusive, equitable, and representative environment for women in leadership positions.

6. Conclusion

This dissertation aimed to investigate diversity and inclusion within FIFA leadership, focusing on the challenges and opportunities for women in football governance. The literature review provided a theoretical framework for understanding the complexity of gender discrimination, lack of representation, and unequal opportunities women face in football governance. A mixed methods approach combining surveys and interviews addressed these issues. The survey results revealed that diversity and inclusion are recognised as necessary in women's football. Meanwhile, the interviews provided more profound insights into the barriers and opportunities for women in leadership roles within FIFA. The findings revealed that gender discrimination, lack of representation, and unequal opportunities persist within FIFA's governance structures. However, the research also identified possible solutions, such as advocating for policy changes, promoting mentorship and networking opportunities, and raising awareness about diversity issues.

In conclusion, the challenges faced by women in football can be overcome through the collective action of stakeholders across the football community. Through championing diversity and inclusion, FIFA can create a more equitable and inclusive environment for women in football leadership, thereby paving the way for a brighter future where all voices are heard and valued. This research underscores the need for a proactive approach to ensuring that football remains a fair game for everyone, emphasising the role of collective action in dismantling gender discrimination. The study contributes to the ongoing dialogue about gender equality in sports. It serves as a call to action for governing bodies, organisations, and individuals to commit to making football a genuinely reflective game of equality and fairness.

The journey towards an inclusive football culture is ongoing, and although challenges persist, the potential for transformation is boundless. Through persistent efforts and unwavering commitment to diversity and inclusion, football can be called the game for all. Initiatives such as awareness campaigns, educational programs, and policy reforms are pivotal in overcoming biases and creating an environment where women can thrive in the sport.

This research suggests that empowering women in football requires a collective and proactive approach from stakeholders across the football community. By creating an inclusive environment for women, FIFA can lead the way in championing diversity and inclusion, thereby creating an exclusive place for everyone. Establishing clear pathways for progression and enforcing strict anti-discrimination laws are crucial in ensuring that football remains a fair and inclusive sport. To champion equality and combat gender discrimination, it is essential to leverage the spirit of teamwork and fair play intrinsic to the sport. This study advocates for a cultural shift that values and celebrates female athletes, encourages active participation, and acknowledges their achievements in football. By doing so, football can serve as a model for other domains, demonstrating that equality can become a tangible reality with resilience and unity. Furthermore, it is imperative to establish clear pathways for progression and implement strict anti-discrimination laws to ensure that football remains a fair and just game. The spirit of teamwork and fair play, inherent to the sport, must be harnessed to champion equality and discourage gender discrimination. The ongoing journey towards this goal necessitates collective efforts from all football stakeholders to sustain momentum and continue dismantling barriers, ultimately making the beautiful game genuinely inclusive for everyone.

The dissertation findings underscore embracing diversity as a strength and a catalyst for positive change within FIFA and the broader football community. Therefore, all stakeholders must work collaboratively and proactively to promote gender equality, celebrate diversity, and ensure that football remains a fair and inclusive sport.

7. Recommendations

After conducting a thorough investigation into the diversity and inclusivity of FIFA's leadership, analysing existing studies, surveying, and in-depth interviews, a set of actionable recommendations has been put forward to promote a fair and inclusive governance structure for women's football. The research has highlighted several systemic challenges and barriers that must be addressed to overcome gender inequality and promote diversity within the football governance framework. These recommendations are grounded in the insights and findings from the earlier chapters, providing a roadmap for implementing significant changes that will positively impact FIFA's leadership landscape. Recommendations offered by the participants from the survey conducted for this study can be seen in Appendix "B".

1. FIFA should consider providing blind recruitment processes and establishing a selection panel with diverse representation to ensure that the selection process is fair and equitable. Equal opportunities for underrepresented groups to access leadership roles in football can be achieved through targeted recruitment, leadership development programs, and the creation of pathways for career advancement.
2. Having visible role models within the football industry is crucial for aspiring female leaders. These role models provide inspiration, guidance, and proof that success is attainable. Without such representation, women may struggle to imagine themselves in leadership roles and may face additional barriers to entry.
3. To promote greater inclusion and representation in the sport, FIFA should actively seek out and consult with various women's football stakeholders, such as players, coaches, administrators, and advocates. By creating meaningful opportunities for participation and feedback, FIFA can ensure that the voices of these stakeholders are heard and that their insights are considered when making important decisions about policies and initiatives.

4. To promote gender inclusivity in football, leaders must prioritise equity in recruitment and promotion, provide mentorship opportunities, offer training programs, actively address discrimination and harassment, and actively seek out and nurture female talent.
5. FIFA is responsible for investing in and developing women's football across all levels. This means allocating resources for grassroots programs, infrastructure development, and marketing initiatives to raise the profile of the women's game and create opportunities for female talent development.
6. Women who hold leadership positions in football face balancing their work commitments and responsibilities. To navigate these demands, they must prioritise their time effectively, establish clear boundaries, and seek supportive environments that accommodate their needs. Although societal expectations and biases can create unique challenges, these women also have opportunities for growth and impact within the industry.
7. Football organisations should take the initiative to promote diversity and inclusion in their leadership positions. They can do this by creating policies and programs that aim to increase the representation of underrepresented groups. Such measures may include setting diversity targets, establishing mentorship programs, and creating a supportive environment for individuals from diverse backgrounds.
8. Football organisations must recognise and tackle the systemic prejudices within their structures. This may require providing bias training for staff and decision-makers, conducting regular diversity audits to discover areas for improvement, and ensuring that recruitment and promotion processes are impartial and transparent.
9. Football organisations must challenge gender norms that perpetuate stereotypes and hinder the progress of women and underrepresented groups. They must actively promote positive role models, challenge discriminatory attitudes and behaviours, and establish a

culture of inclusivity and respect. There is no room for complacency when addressing issues of gender inequality in football.

10. football organisations must undergo a cultural transformation towards greater inclusivity and equality to achieve significant progress. This transformation demands leadership commitment to diversity and inclusion, regular communication, education on these issues, and strict accountability measures for individuals and organisations that fail to uphold these values.

By implementing these strategies, football organisations can work towards overcoming the challenges and barriers faced by underrepresented groups in attaining leadership roles, ultimately creating more diverse and inclusive environments within the sport. Looking forward, improving the representation of women in football leadership positions is desirable and necessary for the sport's growth and long-term sustainability. FIFA can eliminate systemic barriers to create a more inclusive and equitable environment for women in football leadership, which is a moral and strategic necessity. With a concerted effort and collective action, a more representative and inclusive future for women's football leadership can be paved; this will ultimately drive positive organisational change and advance gender equality in the sport globally.

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9. Appendices

9.1.1 Appendix A” Interview Questions and Answers

9.1.2 Appendix A: Introduction

INTRODUCTION:

Q1: Could you please share your journey and experiences in leadership within the football community?

R1: "Certainly! My journey in football leadership has been both rewarding and challenging. Starting as a volunteer coach at the grassroots level, I gradually moved into administrative roles within local clubs, eventually leading to leadership positions at regional and national levels."

R2. " I'd be happy to share. My path to leadership in the football community began with a passion for the sport and a desire to make a positive impact. Over the years, I've had the opportunity to lead various initiatives, from organising youth tournaments to spearheading diversity and inclusion efforts within football organisations."

R3. "Of course! My journey in football started when my daughter started playing at school, which ignited my passion for the game; I then joined the local football team. As I transitioned from player to coach and administrator, I encountered numerous challenges and opportunities that have shaped my leadership approach and philosophy within the football community."

R4. "I'd love to. My journey began with a deep love for the sport and a desire to contribute beyond the field. Through dedication, perseverance, and continuous learning, I've been fortunate to hold leadership positions within football clubs, leagues, and governing bodies. I've had the privilege of making a meaningful impact on the sport and its community."

R5. My journey in football leadership has been dynamic and characterised by growth, learning, and meaningful connections. From grassroots coaching to executive roles within football associations, each experience has provided valuable insights and opportunities to drive positive change and promote inclusivity within the football community."

9.1.3 Appendix A1: Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Q1

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AWARENESS:

Q1: Do you believe women are getting the fair representation they deserve in football leadership?

R1: Yes.

R2: No.

R3: No

R4: Not Sure

R5: Yes

9.1.4 Appendix A2: Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Q2

Q2: Have you personally encountered or witnessed discrimination or bias against underrepresented groups in football leadership?

R1: Yes, I've experienced biases firsthand. For instance, my ideas were sometimes overlooked or dismissed during team meetings until a male colleague repeated them.

R2: I've witnessed discrimination. For instance, a highly qualified female coach was passed over for a coaching position, favouring a less experienced male candidate.

R3: Unfortunately, yes. I've seen instances where women's achievements were downplayed or overshadowed by their male counterparts within the football organisation.

R4: Yes, I've encountered bias. For example, there were instances where my male counterparts were automatically assumed to be more knowledgeable about the sport despite my extensive experience and expertise.

R5: Yes, I've witnessed discrimination. For instance, female referees or officials were sometimes subjected to disrespectful treatment or questioning of their authority simply because of their gender.

9.1.5 Appendix A3: Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Q3

Q3: How would you describe the level of awareness among football leaders regarding the importance of diversity and inclusion?

R1: Many coaches actively recognise the importance of diversity and inclusion, but work remains to ensure that it is fully integrated into decision-making.

R2: Coaches' and team members' awareness of it varies, with some embracing it fully and others needing more education and advocacy.

R3: Football leaders are increasingly aware of the significance of diversity and inclusion, leading to more initiatives and policies to foster inclusivity.

R4: Football leaders vary in prioritising diversity and inclusion, although they need more knowledge and awareness.

R5: Football leaders are becoming more aware of diversity and inclusion, but ongoing dialogue and action are still needed to fully integrate these principles into football governance.

9.1.6 Appendix A4: Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Q4

Q4: From your perspective, how do you assess the current state of diversity and inclusion within football leadership, specifically regarding women?

R1: Despite some progress in recent years, women remain underrepresented in leadership positions within football, highlighting the need for more focused and sustained efforts to promote true inclusivity in the sport.

R2: I think there are some improvements. However, the current state of diversity and inclusion in football leadership related to women suggests that significant obstacles still exist and require attention.

R3: The current state of diversity and inclusion in football leadership is mixed, with some organisations leading the way and others lagging. This underscores the importance of consistent commitment to driving change.

R4: While some advances have been made in increasing women's representation in football leadership, fundamental structural changes are needed to address systemic inequalities and foster a more inclusive environment.

R5: Women's involvement is a work in progress, and it needs to be encouraged and reinforced to have long-lasting effects.

9.1.7 Appendix A5: Challenges & Barriers Q5

CHALLENGES FACED BY UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS:

Q5: what are the main challenges or barriers that underrepresented groups face in attaining leadership roles within football organisations?

R1. Bias and stereotypes limit diverse representation.

R2. Few mentorship opportunities hinder progress.

R3. Discrimination and cultural norms discourage diversity.

R4. Weak inclusion policies maintain barriers.

R5. The lack of diverse voices slows progress.

9.1.8 Appendix A6: Challenges & Barriers Q6

Q6: Have you personally encountered or witnessed discrimination or bias against underrepresented groups in football leadership?

R1: Yes, I've experienced biases firsthand. For instance, my ideas were sometimes overlooked or dismissed during team meetings until a male colleague repeated them.

R2: I've witnessed discrimination. For instance, a highly qualified female coach was passed over for a coaching position, favouring a less experienced male candidate.

R3: Unfortunately, yes. I've seen instances where women's achievements were downplayed or overshadowed by their male counterparts within the football organisation.

R4: Yes, I've encountered bias. For example, there were instances where my male counterparts were automatically assumed to be more knowledgeable about the sport despite my extensive experience and expertise.

R5: Yes, I've witnessed discrimination. For instance, female referees or officials were sometimes subjected to disrespectful treatment or questioning of their authority simply because of their gender.

9.1.9 Appendix A7: Female Role Model Q7

REPRESENTATION AND ROLE MODELS:

Q7: From your standpoint, how important is it for aspiring female football leaders to have visible role models within the industry?

R1: Female leaders in football are beacons of inspiration, guiding others on the path to success.

R2: They demonstrate resilience and leadership, instilling confidence in aspiring leaders.

R3: These role models offer crucial mentorship, helping others navigate unique challenges.

R4: By breaking stereotypes, they pave the way for greater diversity in football.

R5: Their presence underscores the importance of women's voices in shaping the sport's future.

9.1.10 Appendix A8: Inclusive Leadership Q9

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES:

Q8: How can football organisations better support the development and progression of women into leadership roles?

R1: Implementing targeted mentorship programs to support women's career growth and leadership development within football organisations.

R2: Creating inclusive recruitment and promotion processes that actively seek out and value diverse perspectives, ensuring equal opportunities for women to advance into leadership positions.

R3: Establishing transparent and equitable compensation structures to address gender pay gaps and ensure that women are fairly rewarded for their contributions in leadership roles within football organisations.

R4: Providing ongoing training and professional development opportunities focused on leadership skills, conflict resolution, and inclusive management practices to empower women to excel in leadership roles.

R5: Cultivating a supportive organisational culture that values diversity and fosters an inclusive environment where women feel empowered to voice their ideas, take on leadership responsibilities, and thrive within football organisations.

9.1.11 Appendix A9: Personal Experience in Leadership Q9

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND INSIGHTS:

Q9: How have you personally navigated challenges related to gender diversity and inclusion in your football leadership role?

R1: I don't have a leadership role; however, if I did, I would address gender biases within the organisation by implementing diversity training programs and policies to promote equal opportunities for men and women in leadership positions.

R2: As a leader, I am always advocating for the inclusion of women in decision-making processes and ensuring their voices are heard and valued in discussions related to football governance and strategy.

R3: I have Collaborated with stakeholders to create mentorship and development programs tailored to support women's advancement in football leadership roles.

R4: I have been a team leader who has overcome traditionalist resistance by demonstrating the positive impact of gender diversity on the organisation's performance and reputation.

R5: Proactively foster a culture of inclusivity and respect within the football community, challenge stereotypes, and promote women's contributions to all aspects of the sport.

9.1.12 Appendix A10: Recommendations Q10

RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES:

Q10: What recommendations would you offer to football organisations aiming to enhance gender diversity and inclusion within their leadership structures?

R1: Foster a culture of accountability by regularly tracking and reporting progress toward gender diversity goals and holding leadership accountable for creating an inclusive environment.

R2: Establish clear diversity and inclusion goals and integrate them into the organisation's strategic planning processes to ensure a comprehensive approach to promoting gender diversity in leadership roles.

R3: Implement policies and practices that actively recruit, retain, and promote women into leadership positions within the organisation, including transparent hiring processes and development programs.

R4: Create opportunities for networking, mentorship, and professional development tailored to women in football leadership to support their career advancement and retention within the organisation.

R5: Prioritise education and awareness initiatives aimed at challenging biases, promoting gender equality, and fostering a culture of inclusivity among staff, stakeholders, and the broader football community.

9.1.13 Appendix A11: Mentorship & Networking Q11

MENTORSHIP AND NETWORKING:

Q11: How do women in football leadership navigate the demands of their roles while balancing other life commitments, and are there unique challenges or opportunities in this regard?

R1: Mentorship and networking are crucial for women aspiring to leadership roles in football as they provide valuable guidance, support, and opportunities for professional growth and advancement within the industry.

R2: Access to mentors and networks can offer aspiring female leaders insights into navigating the unique challenges and barriers they may face in football leadership and provide access to resources and opportunities for career development.

R3: I haven't benefited from mentorship; however, through other colleagues and networking, I attested to the transformative impact of mentorship and networking on their journeys to leadership roles in football.

R4: Mentorship relationships can offer aspiring female leaders personalised guidance, encouragement, and advice from experienced professionals who have navigated similar paths and can provide insights into career progression and leadership development.

R5: Networking allows women in football leadership to connect with peers, colleagues, and industry leaders, expanding their professional circles, building relationships, and accessing new opportunities for collaboration, mentorship, and career advancement.

9.1.14 Appendix A12: Future Outlook Q12

EMPOWERMENT AND FUTURE OUTLOOK:

Q12: What steps can be taken to actively empower more women to pursue leadership roles in football, and how can agencies contribute to fostering such an environment?

R1: Encouraging girls and women to participate in football from a young age through grassroots programs and initiatives, fostering a pipeline of talent and interest in leadership roles.

R2: Providing mentorship and leadership development opportunities tailored to women interested in football leadership, offering guidance, support, and resources to help them navigate their careers.

R3: Addressing systemic barriers and biases within football organisations through policy changes, diversity initiatives, and inclusive recruitment practices to create a more level playing field for women aspiring to leadership roles.

R4: Fostering a culture of inclusion and support within football agencies by actively promoting gender diversity, providing resources for work-life balance, and creating opportunities for women to contribute and advance within the organisation.

R5: Collaborating with stakeholders across the football community to advocate for gender equality, challenge stereotypes, and create awareness about the importance of women's leadership in advancing the sport.

9.1.15 Appendix A13: Final Thoughts Q13

CLOSING / FINISHING:

Q13: Is there anything else you want to share or emphasise regarding women's perspective in football leadership and the broader conversation on diversity and inclusion?

R1: Women bring unique perspectives, experiences, and talents to football leadership roles, enriching the sport and contributing meaningfully to its growth and success.

R2: Emphasising the importance of gender diversity and inclusion in football leadership is not just about fairness. It's also about maximising the sport's potential and ensuring its relevance and sustainability in an increasingly diverse world.

R3: The conversation on diversity and inclusion in football leadership extends beyond gender. It encompasses intersectional identities, including race, ethnicity, sexuality, ability, and more, highlighting the need for comprehensive and inclusive approaches to fostering diversity.

R4: Creating truly inclusive environments within football organisations requires ongoing commitment, collaboration, and accountability from all stakeholders, including leaders, administrators, players, coaches, fans, and sponsors.

R5: By championing diversity and inclusion in football leadership, we can create a more equitable, accessible, and welcoming sport for all, where everyone can participate, contribute, and succeed, regardless of their background or identity.

9.1.16 Appendix B” Recommendations Offered by Survey Participants

9.1.17 Appendix B1: Responses 1 - 5

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Promoting and Celebrating Diversity
2	anonymous	Men always take priority on pitch booking and games. Our games have been cancelled numerous of times due to men playing a lot on our pitch and causing unplayable pitch.
3	anonymous	Offer more to youth as young females still aren't given the same opportunities as men for example, academies there are none in wales for females where there are many for males
4	anonymous	Fair opportunities for all to access qualifications in coaching so they can represent to children and adults the range of diversity and inclusivity needed
5	anonymous	Flexible working, matched fair salary, incentives and benefits, career progression

9.1.18 Appendix B2: Responses 6-12

6	anonymous	To treat both genders the same
7	anonymous	Use marketing and social media to get the word out more. Advertise for matches more. Broadcast them more and have the male pundits commenting and hosting football shows and matches etc to cross over and not just have the women in the men's game.
8	anonymous	Challenge stereotypes by bringing diverse candidates through to leadership, support and develop them. Once this is visible more candidates will see this pathway as an option for them.
9	anonymous	Offer more coaching/ committee roles for women within clubs and community projects. Offer more football sessions in schools, such as in physical education and in after school sessions.
10	anonymous	Consequences for those that discriminate and it be known what the consequences are so people can see they are protected etc
11	anonymous	They need to have a mixed leadership structure between women and men.
12	anonymous	Ask the women within their organisation what they need and want.

9.1.19 Appendix B2: Responses 13-20

13	anonymous	More female referees.
14	anonymous	Educate staff, advocate for woman
15	anonymous	To promote equal access and training for both girls and boys at all ages. This must include academies for BOTH boys and girls. It just have a female on the director panel/ at meetings.
16	anonymous	Talk with grassroots clubs
17	anonymous	Invest more in diversity and inclusion for grassroots to allow for a ripple effect for the game
18	anonymous	Grassroot female coach courses
19	anonymous	Encourage diverse candidates to apply for leadership roles and establish metrics to track progress toward inclusivity goals.
20	anonymous	Consider implementing inclusive hiring practices, offering diversity training, creating mentorship programs, and fostering a culture of openness and respect.

9.1.20 Appendix B2: Responses 21- 29

21	anonymous	Prioritise equal opportunities
22	anonymous	HerGameToo, FAW
23	anonymous	As long as the person applying for the job has all the qualifications needed and is suitable for the job, it shouldn't come down to diversity
24	anonymous	The same support as men's football
25	anonymous	Look for good female representatives/role models
26	anonymous	Make women's football inclusive to all of your policies and plans
27	anonymous	To be more transparent and more open in offering chances to women in football leadership positions
28	anonymous	Include everyone and respect their opinion
29	anonymous	Helping women with work-life balance to join and enjoy the football game

9.1.21 Appendix “C” Insights from Survey Participants

9.1.22 Appendix C1: Responses 1-4

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Invest in Women's football Leadership opportunities Global Collaboration
2	anonymous	There needs to be more research into creating women's football boots. England is leading the way but the other countries are falling behind. Wales especially as having our own leagues doesn't necessarily benefit us. The top tier should get promoted to the championship equivalent or similar to spread the women's game all over the U.K. like the men's game. Also on apps the women's team is always labelled as the women's team, in this case why is the men's team not labelled as men eg. Swansea City ladies and Swansea City men.
3	anonymous	A culture change is needed at grassroots level, until a proper commitment and investment is made it won't happen.
4	anonymous	Women should have more opportunities for football such as more programmes for participation, more chances of playing on dominant pitches, more coaching career opportunities with FAW and in clubs, more sponsorship, more financial benefits, and more spectators. I understand that men's football is more popular, but more advertisements regarding women's football should be shown.

9.1.23 Appendix C2: Responses 5-8

5	anonymous	me proud to show how the passion of ladies football is on the increase. There are so so many clubs out there today with so many potential players coming through they need to be recognised not just dismissed. Womens football ⚽ should be supported and women players should be paid the same as male .
6	anonymous	There are some clubs who pay lip service to including women but find we are a bit tiresome in our demands for a changing room on match days!!
7	anonymous	It's much more inclusive than it was when I was growing up. My daughter also plays football and there are many more teams compared to when I grew up also much more awareness of girls and women in football due to social media in my opinion.
8	anonymous	Yea Cardiff city and Swansea city MUST have girl academies under 16 as the boys have .Cardiff and vale county girls have HALF as much training as the boys. This is so wrong from the outset. There's still so many changes and discriminations for girls from kits being designed for boy sizes and non availability for girls down to havina female staff in all boardrooms.

9.1.24 Appendix C3: Responses 9 - 13

9	anonymous	Participation for women has gotten better in the UK however it needs to be more available to women of colour as well as there is very little representation available
10	anonymous	Regularly assess and update policies to ensure they align with inclusive values.
11	anonymous	Promote positive narratives about women's football and collaborate with diverse stakeholders to create an inclusive environment that empowers women at all levels of the sport.
12	anonymous	Support grassroots initiatives, provide resources for youth development, and advocate for fair compensation for female players.
13	anonymous	Mens football clubs have to buy into it, and recognise women participation will grow their men's side too. They benefit each other. Clubs also need to recognise they need to invest money and resource before they see any progress. Awareness courses are good, but certifications and standards I feel would be just as if not more beneficial. I.e. this club has achieve silver accreditation for its measures towards becoming a clubs that facilitates and champions diversity. We need to recognise the importance of equity not equality.

9.1.25 Appendix C4: Responses 14-17

14	anonymous	Increasing grassroots participation including football being part of school pe sessions. Normalisation of girls and women playing football instead of it being a non traditional girls sport.
15	anonymous	Men and boys get more priority over pitches than women and girls football does. I have noticed this since my daughter started and now myself. Also funding and facilities for women or girls is sparse.
16	anonymous	Equality in pay needs putting into place
17	anonymous	No