

**Smashing the patriarchy and creating a gender equal society
through pay transparency**

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Abstract

While the foundations for redressing gender pay inequality in Aotearoa (New Zealand) were established over half a century ago, significant numbers of women still endure gender-based pay discrimination (Parker & Donnelly, 2020). Historically and comparatively, New Zealand's gender pay gap is small. However, this gap has refused to close fully despite significant societal changes over many decades and numerous labour market and policy initiatives targeting the gender pay gap (Frey, 2021). The literature has highlighted that legislation requiring employers to deliver pay and employment equity to women is essential if New Zealand is to overcome systemic discrimination against women (Parker & Donnelly, 2020). To end pay discrimination, it is also essential that the work done by women and men is valued comparatively (Oelz, Olney & Tomei, 2013). Gender pay gaps are influenced by social structures such as patriarchy, neoliberalism, capitalism, and colonialism that discriminate against women. Research has found that pay transparency is a tool to identify and address the gender pay gap (Baker, Halberstam, Kroft, Mas & Messacar, 2019; Bölingen, 2022; Frey, 2021; Obloj & Zenger, 2020; Reilly, 2019; Stanberry, 2018). If pay was transparent it would become more challenging for organisations to hide structural inequalities (Research New Zealand, 2020).

This research aimed to discover what role pay transparency has in positive change by exploring participants' perceptions of pay transparency and the gender pay gap. The purpose of this research was to answer the research question: Is pay transparency key to closing the gender pay gap? Primary research was conducted among Human Resource Managers, policy analysts and policy makers working in the public, private or not-for-profit sectors. Participants were actively engaged in work on the gender pay gap and advocating for gender equal pay. This study contributes to the developing knowledge of gender inequality and focuses on addressing the gap in New Zealand research on the gender pay gap and pay transparency.

Overall, this study found that pay transparency is complicated. This is because of the multiple levels and complexities of gender discrimination within societies and organisations and the fact that pay transparency fails to address the root cause of gender discrimination. Pay transparency is an essential component and one of the tools in the toolkit to combat the gender pay gap, but it will not fix everything. Pay

transparency is not significant enough to close the gender pay gap and needs to be combined with other tools or measures including pay gap reporting, auditing systems, policies, and procedures. Furthermore, knowing how to correctly implement pay transparency is crucial. Pay transparency is not a 'simple' tool (Frey, 2021), due to differing definitions, access to data, datasets with varying legislation, policy, dataset size, and varying regulations for public, private and not-for-profit sectors within different countries contexts (Chan, 2022; Lewis, Pathak & Galloway, 2018). Therefore, data collection across organisations and countries is inconsistent (Bölingen, 2022) and does not necessarily capture the information required to effect or bring about positive change.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor used artificial intelligence tools or generative artificial intelligence tools (unless it is clearly stated, and referenced, along with the purpose of use), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.



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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will describe the research problem and rationale, describing the aim of this research and choice of the research question: Is pay transparency key to closing the gender pay gap? Next this chapter will describe the background to the research problem, including the historical context and political background that relates to the systems that perpetuate the gender pay gap in Aotearoa (New Zealand), the Equal Pay Act 1972, New Zealand's duty under international and domestic human rights law, along with the development and validation of pay transparency in New Zealand. This will include the contribution and summary of the gap in the literature which this research aims to fill. The final section of this chapter will then detail the thesis structure.

1.2 Research Problem and Rationale

Before 1972, it was legal to pay women less than men for doing the same or similar work. However, the Equal Pay Act 1972 makes it unlawful to offer an unequal pay rate based on the sex of a person. Nevertheless, pay secrecy has allowed women to be underpaid for over 50 years since the Act was made law in 1972 (Human Rights Commission, 2022). Pay secrecy restricts employees' access to other employees' pay within their organisation (Belogolovsky & Bamberger, 2014). New Zealand research has found the secrecy of pay in organisations is one of the barriers that has enabled the gender pay gap to persist (Research New Zealand, 2020). If pay is transparent, it will become more challenging for businesses to hide structural inequalities (Human Rights Commission, 2022), as pay transparency makes it possible for employees to find out what other employees make (Ramachandran, 2011).

According to Parker and Donnelly (2020), the foundations to correct gender-based pay inequalities in New Zealand were established over half a century ago. However, women are still experiencing gender-based pay discrimination. Parker and Donnelly (2020) state that New Zealand's gender pay gap is small compared to other countries. However, researchers also argue that this gap has refused to fully close, despite

significant societal, educational and labour market changes over many decades that have targeted public policy and the gender pay gap (Frey, 2021).

According to The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), many governments are mandating new pay transparency tools (Frey, 2021). These tools include equal pay audits, pay gap reporting and gender-neutral job classification systems (Frey, 2021). Parker and Donnelly (2020) highlight that international experts argue legislation is required for employers to deliver employment equity to women and state regulatory changes over time do not always impact pay. Parker and Donnelly (2020) argue that legislation is essential for New Zealand to overcome systemic discrimination against women. Recent international and domestic studies have begun to provide insight into how pay transparency can be used to close the gender pay gap. However, there continues to be a persistent pay gap. This implies that despite the Equal Pay Act 1972, making it illegal for women to be paid less than men, women are still paid less due to pay secrecy.

This study will contribute to the developing knowledge of gender inequality and focus on addressing the gap in New Zealand research on the gender pay gap and pay transparency. This research will seek to understand the gender pay gap and generate new questions and understandings about how to target and improve pay gaps through pay transparency. It is essential to research the gender pay gap as it is crucial to close this gap to create a gender equal society. The purpose of this research is to add to the knowledge of how pay transparency might reduce the gender pay gap and to answer the research question: Is pay transparency key to closing the gender pay gap?

This research aimed to discover what role pay transparency has in positive change by exploring participants' perceptions of pay transparency and the gender pay gap. Primary research was conducted among Human Resource Managers (HR Managers), policy analysts and policy makers working in the public, private or not-for-profit sector. Participants had to be actively engaged in work on the gender pay gap and advocating for gender equal pay.

1.3 Background to the Research Problem

This section describes the background of the research problem, including a brief overview of the historical context that has influenced the gender pay gap. This

includes defining the unequal power relationships between men and women and power systems and structures within New Zealand's society and organisations.

1.3.1 The Gender Pay Gap

In 2022, the national gender pay gap (refer to Chapter Two for the full definition) in New Zealand was 9.2 percent (Stats NZ, 2023). The past decade has seen little change, movement or progress in this area (Beard, 2021). In 2011, the national gender pay gap in New Zealand was 10.3 percent (Beard, 2021), with a change of only 1.2 percent in 10 years. Many female workers in New Zealand work in occupations that are more than 80 percent female dominated. These female dominated occupations tend to be lower paid, and women are under-represented in higher-level jobs (Employment New Zealand, 2022). The YWCA (previously known as the Young Women's Christian Association) argue if men work for 12 months of the year, for women to earn the same amount as their male counterparts, they will have to work for 13 and a half months (YWCA, 2022). Based on findings from MindTheGap (New Zealand's first Pay Gap Registry) and when examining the data in terms of ethnicity, mindthegap.nz (2022) found that for every \$1.00 a Pākehā (White New Zealanders primarily of European descent) man earns in New Zealand, a Pākehā woman earns \$0.89, an Asian woman earns \$0.83, a Māori woman earns \$0.81 and a Pasifika woman earns \$0.75 (mindthegap.nz, 2022). This shows that there is gender and ethnic inequality between men and women in New Zealand, predominantly relating to Pākehā men and that this is not improving (Reilly, 2019). This confirms that men, specifically Pākehā men, have a certain level of privilege in New Zealand society (Mao, 2017) and that New Zealand has a systemic economic discrimination crisis against women (Parker & Donnelly, 2020) that ranges in ethnicity.

1.3.2 The Impact of the Gender Pay Gap

The Education and Workforce Committee highlighted that women have less retirement income than men. This is due to the additional barriers women face, including working part-time or casual work and undertaking a disproportionate share of family and caring responsibilities (Ministry of Business, 2022). Furthermore, the gender pay gap is driven by factors that 80 percent of quantitative differences can not explain. These factors include conscious and unconscious biases (Ministry of Business, 2022).

Therefore, a lack of pay transparency can hide pay inequalities and discrimination (Ministry of Business, 2022). There are a range of tools that can help reduce pay gaps. One tool is having more transparency of pay and access to this information (Ministry of Business, 2022).

On 11 August 2023, the Government announced that it would launch a reporting system for the gender pay gap. Businesses with over 250 employees will be required to publicly report their gender pay gap, followed later by those with 100 workers. Action plans will be voluntary to start, followed later by a review after three years to determine if this needs to be made mandatory. The next phase of consultation will consider the inclusion of ethnicity before legislation is drafted (New Zealand Government, 2023b). However, this announcement is reflective of a mandatory reporting-only model. This will establish the reporting of pay gaps but not the transparency of pay. The Education and Workforce Committee highlighted that pay equity is more likely to be achieved with a comprehensive pay transparency regime that requires organisations to action and address inequity instead of a reporting-only model (MBIE, 2022a). In addition, New Zealand's general election will be held on 14 October 2023. With this, there could be a potential change of Government that may not continue to prioritise, or action pay transparency.

1.3.3 Gendered Structures in New Zealand Historically

Patriarchy relates to the unequal power relationships between men and women (Came, Matheson & Kidd, 2022). It is “a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (Walby, 1989, p.20). Patriarchy is taken for granted male privilege (Montgomery & Stewart, 2012), where men automatically have benefits and advantages over others (Montgomery & Stewart, 2012; Walby, 1989). Furthermore, there is a considerable amount of power in the hands of particular groups of men in New Zealand society (Murray & Öchsner, 2017), resulting from New Zealand's systems and structures.

New Zealand's dominant economic and political system is neoliberal capitalism or neoliberalism (McMaster, 2013). The terms *neoliberalism* or *neoliberal capitalism* are ideas associated with free-market capitalism. According to Acker (2006), capitalism is a system of domination, and class relations are gendered. *Capitalism* drives patriarchy by reinforcing hierarchical gender structuring (Smith, 2016) and gender

roles (Ford, Atkinson, Harding & Collinson, 2021). This ensures society is regulated and controlled (Smith, 2016). Lower-level workers are predominately women and higher-level managers, predominantly men (Acker, 2006). There can be problems for women around gender segregation of jobs, occupations, and hierarchical positions (Acker, 2012), so that men can maintain control over work, the structure of labour markets and occupational closure (Smith, 2016). Acker (2006) defines gender as being socially constructed beliefs and identities that support inequality. These socially constructed beliefs and identities are also present in all organisations (Acker, 2006).

Discrimination and racism are a normalised part of New Zealand society (Came & McCreanor, 2015) due to the assumptions of Western superiority and its systems, including cultural, moral and assumed intellectual superiority (Montgomery & Stewart, 2012). The term *colonialism* describes the control or rule of one country by another country through physical settlement (Montgomery & Stewart, 2012). New Zealand's founding document, Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi), was signed in 1840. This was meant to be a partnership between Māori (the tangata whenua or Indigenous people of New Zealand) and the British Crown. The English treaty and the te reo Māori (Māori language) Te Tiriti o Waitangi held different meanings as they were not exact translations of each other, bringing about different understandings of certain words (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2023) which resulted in the declaration of British sovereignty over New Zealand. Māori and Pākehā, therefore, had different expectations of the Treaty's terms, presenting ongoing challenges and conflict (Orange, 2012); including discrimination and racism (Came & McCreanor, 2015). Pākehā settlers assumed that wāhine Māori (Māori women) were not powerful and negotiated only with men. However, Māori women had a say in the affairs of their iwi or hapū (Māori tribe or subtribe) (Else, 2011). They were landowners and spiritual and political leaders (Else, 2011). Women of rangatira (chiefly families) were seen as tapu (sacred or restricted) and were the first to speak or perform the karanga (welcome) when visitors came to a marae (meeting grounds) (Else, 2011). Colonisation has meant that Māori women's traditional power was undermined (Else, 2011).

1.4 Women in New Zealand Society

The patriarchal, neoliberal, capitalist and colonial systems in New Zealand, where society is structured to benefit and value men (particularly privileged white men) economically and politically, continue to flourish (Came et al., 2022). These systems (neoliberalism, capitalism and colonialism) enable patriarchal power and control. Colonialism in New Zealand meant that Pākehā brought ideas about gender norms, a women's place (Else, 2011) and women's work. These ideas have influenced laws, education, employment and property rights (Else, 2011). Crowley (2013) describes the breadwinner-caretaking/homemaker roles and system, where men were expected to support their families and women were expected to be mothers and homemakers (Else, 2011). In 1893, New Zealand became the first country in the world to enact legislation that gave women the right to vote (Parker & Donnelly, 2020). This was 25 years ahead of Britain and the United States of America (Ministry for Women, 2023a). However, there has been slow progression towards gender equality since. Women in New Zealand could not stand for parliament until 1919. Elizabeth McCombs was the first woman to become an MP, elected in 1933 (Ministry for Women, 2023a), 40 years after the Electoral Act 1893, and Iriaka Rātana was the first wāhine Māori MP, elected in 1949. New Zealand's first female Prime Minister was Jenny Shipley from 1997 to 1999 (Else, 2011), and the first elected Prime Minister was Helen Clark from 1999 (Ministry for Women, 2023a) to 2008 (Else, 2011). Jacinda Ardern became New Zealand's 40th prime minister and the world's youngest female head of government from 2017 (Else, 2011) to 2023. In 2022, equal gender representation in Parliament was reached (Ministry for Women, 2023a).

Occupational/industry segregation and the value of women's work are essential contributors to the gender pay gap (Brookes, 2016) and contribute to the slow progression of gender equality. According to Crowley (2013), gender influences the nature of work and creates jobs as feminine or masculine. There are also historical influences and contexts. For example, paid employment for women, before the Second World War, was limited by age and occupation. It was unusual for women to work after marriage (Cook, 2011). However, the number of women in the labour market rose from 169,000 in 1945 to 382,000 in 1971. Increasing numbers of women returned to or continued to be in paid employment after marriage. Increasing numbers of Māori women were also in paid work (Cook, 2011). Most women in the early 1970s

were reluctant to take on paid work outside the home while their children were young (Brookes, 2016). Those who did faced a strong social stigma (Brookes, 2016). The number of women in the labour market rose from 525,087 in 1981 to 1,158,711 in 2018 (Cook, 2011). In December 2022, the number of women in the labour market rose to 1,982,134, and women's labour force participation rate was 67.1 percent (Stats NZ, 2023).

However, organisations continue to exclude women from some jobs and devalue women's work (Crowley, 2013) due to dominant male ideologies, beliefs and values associated with the breadwinner-caretaking/homemaker roles and system (Crowley, 2013). Organisations often direct women towards jobs that are similar to the caretaking/homemaker roles and exclude women from higher-skilled jobs associated with higher pay and career progression (Crowley, 2013). Women are perceived to prioritise family, whereas men are perceived to value paid employment (Ford et al., 2021). In addition, part-time hours and casual work are usually constructed around women's work (Crowley, 2013) and occupations. Women work these hours so that they can combine paid and unpaid work, including family obligations and caretaking/homemaker roles. Therefore, women are disadvantaged due to structural barriers, inflexible career structures and lower-paid jobs (Ford et al., 2021). Williams (2000) explains how the 'ideal worker' norms also exclude most mothers as this concept revolves around the traditional work-life cycle of men (Williams, 2000). Furthermore, in 2020, industries in New Zealand with a high proportion of women included health care and social assistance at 83.1 percent and education and training at 72.2 percent. Industries with a low proportion of women included construction at 13.5 percent and mining at 8.7 percent (Stats NZ, 2020). This has remained virtually unchanged since the 19th and 20th centuries when most employed women in New Zealand undertook domestic service roles, such as nurses and teachers or shop and clerical workers (Cook, 2011).

In addition, the division of household labour remains gendered in New Zealand (Ministry for Women, 2023c). There is an assumption that women will be responsible for unpaid work at home (Brookes, 2016). Typically, fathers do most of the paid work (Ministry for Women, 2023c), whereas mothers care for children, older family members or people and those with disabilities (Ministry for Women, 2023c). In 2020, eighteen percent of women not in the labour force cared for a child as their primary activity,

compared with 4 percent of men (Ministry for Women, 2023c). Unpaid work is not visible, understood or recognised as real work, but it does make an essential contribution to the economy and society (Ministry for Women, 2023c). Women are less likely to be in paid work if they are responsible for the unpaid care work in their household (Ministry for Women, 2023c). Women in paid work are more likely to be limited to part-time work and earn less (Ministry for Women, 2023c). Unpaid work, including household tasks, cooking and cleaning, house cleaning and laundry, is often a woman's responsibility, even when managing paid work commitments (Brookes, 2016). Consequently, the cost of being a mother continues to be higher than that of a father (Brookes, 2016).

1.5 New Zealand's Legal Framework

It is important to include a brief overview of New Zealand's legal framework that aims to address gender inequalities and discrimination. However, it is also important to note that these frameworks sit within the systems that perpetuate the gender pay gap in New Zealand, including neoliberalism. There are laws in New Zealand that aim to protect people from discrimination (Employment New Zealand, 2023). These laws include The Human Rights Act 1993, The New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, The Employment Relations Act 2000 and The Equal Pay Act 1972. The Human Rights Act 1993 prevents unfair treatment and allows all people equal opportunities (Ministry of Justice, 2023). It makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sex (including pregnancy and childbirth), race, colour, ethnic or national origin (including nationality or citizenship), religious belief, ethical belief, disability, age, political opinion, employment status, marital status, family status and sexual orientation, (Human Rights Commission, 2023). The New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 sets out a range of civil and political rights arising from the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. These include the right to be free from discrimination, freedom of expression, freedom of movement and religious belief (Human Rights Commission, 2023). Section 104 of the Employment Relations Act 2000 refers to The Human Rights Act 1993, where prohibited grounds of discrimination include gender and are set out in section 21(1) of the Human Rights Act 1993.

Equal pay (refer to Chapter Two for the full definition) was fought for in the public service in the 1950s and the private sector in the 1960s and 1970s (Cook, 2011).

Lobbying and campaigning helped persuade the government to pass the Government Service Equal Pay Act 1960 (public sector) and the Equal Pay Act 1972 (private sector) (Cook, 2011). This legislation made it illegal for men and women to be paid different rates despite doing the same work (Cook, 2011) and resulted in the gender pay gap shrinking to 20.8 percent by 1979 (Cook, 2011). Before this, the gender pay gap was around 60 percent (Brookes, 2016). From the late 1970s, the gender pay gap had stalled at just over 20 percent. Unions and women's organisations started to look into a new approach called pay equity (Cook, 2011) (Refer to Chapter One for definition). In 1989, Helen Clark, then Minister of Labour, pushed through the Employment Equity Act, passed into statute in July 1990. This came into effect in October 1990. However, in the later October 1990 elections, the National Party won in a landslide victory and revoked the legislation. The Minister of Women's Affairs was Jenny Shipley. In the 2000s, there was a focus on pay equity in the public sector. However, the new National government elected in 2008 shut down the pay and employment equity office before any claims were assessed (Cook, 2011). In the 2010s, unions and women's organisations pushed again for pay equity. An Employment Court judgment in a successful test case by the Service and Food Workers Union made it clear that the Equal Pay Act 1972 included pay equity (Cook, 2011). According to Casey, Skibnes and Pringle (2011), New Zealand has had a soft regulation approach. Therefore, this has resulted in encouragement, awareness-building and advocacy of equal employment opportunity policies and benchmarking (Casey et al., 2011).

In addition, New Zealand is also associated with several international agreements through Manatū Wāhine (Ministry for Women). This includes the United Nations Human Rights Treaty Bodies (Ministry for Women, 2023b). These agreements protect and promote gender equality and set goals to promote the rights of women globally by advocating for the interests of New Zealand women (Ministry for Women, 2023b), including endorsing several international declarations, having representation at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and the International Women's Caucus. The Ministry for Women manages the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and reports on the Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Ministry for Women, 2023b). Domestically, the Ministry for Women supports developing policy that is consistent with New Zealand's international responsibilities (Ministry for Women, 2023b). On the

World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2023, New Zealand ranks 4th out of 156 countries.

1.6 The Development and Validation of Pay Transparency

There is no legislative requirement for pay transparency in New Zealand despite the Government identifying pay transparency as having an important role in closing the gender pay gap (Reilly, 2019). The lack of data to compare pay makes it difficult to bring an equal pay claim against an employer because employees do not have access to this information (Human Rights Commission, 2022). Pay transparency would aid in enforcing the Equal Pay Act 1972 (Reilly, 2019). Pay information must be available before legal action is undertaken and empowers third parties, like unions or the Human Rights Commission, to take enforcement action (Reilly, 2019).

Furthermore, the lack of pay gap reporting has been a significant oversight and is overdue. In 2021, The Human Rights Commission launched a petition calling for pay transparency legislation and an independent pay transparency agency in New Zealand (MBIE, 2022a). The MindTheGap campaign primarily focused on closing the gender pay gap by reporting pay gaps in New Zealand (mindthegap.nz, 2022) and undertook petition activities (Cook, 2011) alongside the Human Rights Commission. In March 2022, MindTheGap launched a voluntary Pay Gap Registry, encouraging private sector organisations to report on their pay gaps (MBIE, 2022a). This includes gender and ethnic pay gaps for Māori and Pasifika employees (MBIE, 2022a). In September 2021, the Government directed the Education and Workforce Committee to set up an inquiry into pay transparency (MBIE, 2022a). They considered public submissions and looked at different countries' pay transparency systems and procedures (MBIE, 2022a). On 8 August 2022, the Government released their response to the Education and Workforce Committee report, highlighting that a lack of pay transparency is a significant issue in New Zealand (MBIE, 2022a).

The Education and Workforce Committee made fourteen recommendations including highlighting that: 1) pay equity is more likely to be achieved with a mandatory regime than an optional regime; 2) pay equity is more likely to be achieved with a comprehensive pay transparency regime that requires action to address inequity, as opposed to a reporting only model; 3) there is strong evidence showing a persistent pay gap for Māori and Pasifika and other ethnicities; 4) pay transparency should be

phased in over time; 5) the most valuable data is captured from entities with more than 50 employees; 6) most overseas pay transparency regimes do not apply to small or medium sized businesses with fewer than 50 employees; 7) the Government should consider whether it should be compulsory to publish starting salaries when advertising a job; 8) the Government should continue with its work in the public sector to ensure that it continues to lead in this area by reducing and publishing pay gaps (MBIE, 2022a).

1.7 Thesis Structure

The next chapter, the literature review, defines gender equal pay, the gender pay gap, pay secrecy and pay transparency, and then reviews the academic literature on legislation, policy and Government regulations internationally and pay transparency in New Zealand. Chapter three, methodology, describes this research's philosophical background and positioning, including the interpretive paradigm, relativist ontology and constructivist epistemology. This chapter outlines how interpretive descriptive methodology was used to design this research, guiding the researcher towards the methods applied to this research. Chapter four presents the study's findings developed through thematic analysis of the interview data, presenting five main themes including open and transparent pay, advocating for change, advocating for gender equality is 'women's work', pay secrecy promotes structural inequalities and planning for positive change and impact.

Chapter five discusses the main findings of this study in relation to the literature reviewed, identifying and analysing the relevance and importance of similarities and differences (Thorne, 2016), demonstrating how this relates to the literature and expands on these to create a deeper understanding of pay transparency and the gender pay gap. Chapter six summarises the conclusions of this study in answer to the research question. This chapter also identifies the research outcomes, including how the research question was answered. It then outlines the contributions and significance of this research, the limitations, recommendations for future research, and closing comments.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The Introduction Chapter (Chapter One) described the research problem, the aims, the research question, and the background to the research problem. This included explaining the historical context of the gender pay gap in New Zealand, the Equal Pay Act 1972, New Zealand's duty under international and domestic human rights law, the development and validation of pay transparency in New Zealand, and a summary of the gap in the literature which this research aims to fill.

This chapter begins by explaining the role of gender in pay, defining pay and the gender pay gap. Next, it explains the contributing factors of gender pay inequality, pay transparency, pay transparency legislation and policy, and lastly, it explains what this means for New Zealand. This chapter will frame the current state of research on gender pay inequalities and pay transparency and identify several gaps in the literature.

2.2 The Role of Gender in Pay

A considerable amount of literature has been published on gender pay inequalities (Bishu & Alkadry, 2017; Blau & Kahn, 2017; Coxon, 2019; Gulyas et al., 2021; Polachek, 2019; Research New Zealand, 2020; Stanberry, 2018), including equal pay, pay equity, pay parity and the gender pay gap. However, with over 30 years of research, pay inequalities persist and remain an area of active and innovative research (Blau & Kahn, 2020). Multiple studies have considered the relationship between the gender pay gap, legislation, policy, and government regulations to understand how best to speed up and close the gender pay gap (Polachek, 2019). In addition, developments in this area have started to investigate the issue of how to approach the gender pay gap through the concept of pay transparency (Baker et al., 2019; Bennedsen, Simintzi, Tsoutsoura & Wolfenzon, 2019; Blundell, 2020; Cullen & Pakzad-Hurson, 2021; Duchini, Simion & Turrell, 2020; Gulyas et al., 2021). Furthermore, it has been suggested that the implications of gender pay inequalities have social, economic, and physiological implications (Bishu & Alkadry, 2017; Cullen & Pakzad-Hurson, 2021; Duchini et al., 2020) for women. These consequences affect access to workplace opportunities and rewards (Bishu & Alkadry, 2017). The most

frequently measured reward related to workplace opportunities is economic reward (Bishu & Alkadry, 2017) or pay.

2.3 Definitions of Pay Inequalities

The broad definition of 'pay' creates complexities (Hall, 2004). This section defines key terms such as pay equity, equal pay, and pay parity, followed by the gender pay gap, contributing factors of gender pay inequality, pay secrecy, and pay transparency.

2.3.1 Pay Equity

Pay equity is generally defined in the literature as equal pay for work of equal value (McGregor & Davies, 2019; Parker & Donnelly, 2020; Smith et al., 2017). The New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment (MBIE, 2020) define pay equity as women and men receiving the same pay for doing jobs that are different but of equal value. This includes jobs that require similar levels of skills, responsibility, and effort (MBIE, 2022b). For example, pay equity is about women receiving equal pay for work of equal value. It requires comparing jobs that are generally done by women with jobs that are different and generally done by men.

2.3.2 Equal Pay

Equal pay is being paid the same for doing the same work (MBIE, 2020), regardless of gender. For example women and men should receive the same pay for the same work. Oelz et al. (2013) argue that to end pay discrimination, it is essential that the work done by women and men is valued relatively (Oelz et al., 2013). However, numerous studies have argued that equal pay is not enough, and that equal pay still needs to be implemented and applied to practice (Albertyn, Fredman & Fudge, 2014; Hall, 2004; Oelz et al., 2013). Extensive research suggests that equal pay does not address all the contributing factors of gender pay inequality (Albertyn et al., 2014; Hall, 2004; Oelz et al., 2013). Hall (2004) highlights that the fundamental concept of equal pay is the rate of pay based on the value of work, and this should not be affected by gender or male and female comparisons (Hall, 2004). Therefore, men and women should be paid the same for doing the same work under the same conditions (Ministry for Women, 2023d).

2.3.3 Pay Parity

Pay parity is the same pay for the same work across different workplaces, organisations, and employers (MBIE, 2020). For example, women and men should receive the same pay for the same job, regardless of who the employer is or sector the work is in. Research is focused on pay disparity more often than pay parity (Carvajal, Reavis & Rodriguez, 2019; Lewis et al., 2018). Pay parity is more of a complex issue than equal pay, as literature around achieving pay parity is vague, with different definitions and methods (Carvajal et al., 2019; Lewis et al., 2018) defining pay parity. Pay parity complexities include dealing with multiple employers and sectors (NZEI Te Riu Roa, 2022). According to the NZEI Te Riu Roa (2022) it is a concept specific to the education sector. In New Zealand, primary teachers achieved pay parity to that of secondary school teachers in the 1990s and in the early 2000s kindergarten teachers achieved pay parity to that of secondary and primary school teachers. Currently, ECE teachers are campaigning for pay parity to that of secondary, primary and kindergarten teachers (NZEI Te Riu Roa, 2022). According to NZEI Te Riu Roa (2022), the challenge is that there are thousands of employers in this sector, whereas primary, secondary and kindergarten, only have one employer, the Ministry of Education. However, the Ministry of Education have created a pay parity opt-in scheme, where education and care services can opt in to the pay parity scheme (Ministry of Education, 2023). This is not mandatory, it is recommended but voluntary.

2.3.4 Gender Pay Gap

Discriminatory practices including pay inequity contribute to the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap is generally defined as the difference in pay between men and women (Blau & Kahn, 2020; Stanberry, 2018; Parker & Donnelly, 2020; Gulyas et al., 2021; Polachek, 2019), and is used to measure women's disadvantage in employment (Charlesworth & Macdonald, 2014). Previous studies have conclusively shown that there is a gender pay gap, and the data from multiple studies have identified this (Bishu & Alkadry, 2017; Blau & Kahn, 2017; Coxon, 2019; Research New Zealand, 2020; Stanberry, 2018; Polachek, 2019; Gulyas et al., 2021), producing evidence that women earn less for doing the same work as men (Stanberry, 2018). Detailed examination has been given to the gender pay gap over the past several decades

(Blau & Kahn, 2020; Stanberry, 2018), with research focusing on reducing the gap (Charlesworth & Macdonald, 2014). It has, however, only been very recent that people have started to pay attention to the fact that there is a gender pay gap (Charlesworth & Macdonald, 2014). The persistence of the gender pay gap suggests that attention must now be given to the processes designed to address it (Charlesworth & Macdonald, 2014). The main weaknesses of previous studies consist of the gender pay gap varying in size according to how data is collected and analysed (Trotter, Zacur & Stickney, 2017), including full-time versus part-time work, hourly versus weekly or yearly pay, and mean versus median statistics (Trotter et al., 2017). Researchers have also identified that the gender pay gap increases over time due to age and the stage of a women's life (Trotter et al., 2017; Polachek, 2019). For example, the motherhood penalty. Existing research recognises that the gender pay gap is relatively small for the young but increases with age (Polachek, 2019). The gender pay gap is more significant when comparing married men and women but smaller for singles (Polachek, 2019). Furthermore, if a woman's starting salary for their first job is less than a man's, that initial difference can cause a systemic career-long problem (Stanberry, 2018) contributing to the gender pay gap and gender pay inequality.

2.4 Contributing Factors of Gender Pay Inequality

Previous pay inequality research has focused on and produced data confirming the existence of a gender pay gap. Stanberry (2018) argues that determining why women earn less than men is far more complex than collecting data confirming the existence. However, earlier research has acknowledged that organisational practices, processes, and actions result in and maintain gender inequalities (Acker, 2006). Acker's five-dimensional framework theory of gendered organisations (Acker, 2012) explains that the most common inequalities of equal employment opportunities is the gender pay gap between men and women, which is related to the gender segregation of jobs, occupations, and hierarchical positions (Acker, 2012). Gendered substructures, including organisational processes, organisational culture, interactions on the job, and gendered identities, help explain gender inequalities in organisations. A considerable amount of literature supports Acker's theory of gendered organisations. However, recent research conducted by Bates (2022) acknowledges the value of Acker's theory but notes that, most frequently, this is used to legitimise the idea that organisations are gendered and not to test whether they are. Bates (2022) states that very few

studies use Acker's theory entirely or as it was initially intended and that fewer have ever questioned it. Bates (2022) argues that this contributes to the stagnation of Acker's ideas. Bates (2022) calls for future studies to work with data unaccounted for in the expectations and predictions Acker sets while operationalising the whole five-dimensional framework (Bates, 2022).

In addition, Employment New Zealand (2022a) identifies factors contributing to the gender pay gap, such as women's jobs, the value put on women's work, work arrangements, and caring responsibilities. The Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment (2020) also identifies the factors of pay inequity as being caused by systemic sex-based discrimination that leads to the undervaluation of work predominantly performed or done by women (MBIE, 2020). In addition, the ideal worker is based on unattached men (Williamson & Wilkie, 2015) that work full-time, are committed and able to work long hours and do not need to take time off for family reasons. This excludes most women of childbearing age (Williams, 2000) as caregiving responsibilities and family responsibilities falls mainly on them. However, Acker (2006) also notes that the ideal worker for many jobs is a woman, particularly a woman who is compliant and will accept orders and low wages (Acker, 2006), which contributes to the continuing gendered division of jobs (Albertyn et al., 2014), gendered organisations, gender-based undervaluation, systemic pay inequalities (Hall, 2004) and labour market discrimination (Grybaite, 2006).

Recent research has explored the labour market undervaluation of care work (McGregor & Davies, 2019), which results from structural conditions and gendered norms (McGregor & Davies, 2019). Similarly, Albertyn et al. (2014) found the continuing gendered division of work, especially socially necessary but unpaid care work by women, has contributed to the increase in gendered inequalities in many areas of social life. Grybaite (2006) acknowledges that pay inequality affects the position of women in the workforce and the status and power of women within the household. Hall (2004) explains that there are a variety of possibilities as to why the undervaluation of women's work persists and reveals that this is due to historically based undervaluation, the traditional criteria of work value, skill, and qualifications. Hall (2004) believes that critical questions must be asked at a social, industrial, and political level, including how women's work should be valued. How does gender enter

into how work is valued? How is equal value established? What are men's and women's comparable worth, and who determines the value of work?

2.4.1 Pay Secrecy

There has been relatively little literature published on pay secrecy and pay transparency compared to gender pay inequalities (Belogolovsky & Bamberger, 2014; Janićijević, 2016; Trotter et al., 2017). At a social level, pay secrecy can impact labour market efficiency (Janićijević, 2016). Pay secrecy is generally defined in the literature as restricting or withholding information or access to data from employees on all or some aspects of the level of other employees' pay within their organisation (Belogolovsky & Bamberger, 2014; Janićijević, 2016; Trotter et al., 2017). Pay secrecy reinforces biases and often hides structural inequalities and pay discrimination (Trotter et al., 2017). These biases, structural inequalities, and pay discrimination are more challenging to support under pay transparency (Trotter et al., 2017). It is thought that the gender gap persists because it is hidden (Baker et al., 2019; Trotter et al., 2017) and that pay secrecy advantages organisations (Janićijević, 2016).

2.5 Pay Transparency

In contrast to pay secrecy, academic literature defines pay transparency as the openness about the pay of workers (Trotter et al., 2017) and the ability to find out what other employees make (Ramachandran, 2011). Lam, Bonnie Hayden, Bamberger and Mon-Nok (2022) describe pay transparency as a pay communications policy where organisations provide employees with voluntary pay-related information (Lam et al., 2022). Pay transparency offers a simple and intuitive tool to identify and address when a gender pay gap occurs in a workplace (Frey, 2021). Data from several studies have identified pay transparency as being key to closing the gender pay gap (Baker et al., 2019; Frey, 2019; Obloj & Zenger, 2020; Reilly, 2019; Stanberry, 2018) through employer pay gap reporting, equal pay audits, and job classification systems including pay bands (Frey, 2021). Recent pay transparency studies have found that pay transparency places social pressure on organisations to reduce both inequity and inequality (Obloj & Zenger, 2020), along with helping employers comply with legal obligations. This includes not discriminating against women and aiding in the enforcement of the law (Reilly, 2019). Furthermore, academic research has also found that pay transparency improves the inequality of bargaining power and encourages

organisations to hire and promote based on legitimate measures (Reilly, 2019). However, Baker et al. (2019) argue that there is limited research that sheds light on pay transparency's effectiveness (Baker et al., 2019). According to Frey (2021), pay transparency encourages employers to prevent and address pay inequity, gives employees more information to combat pay discrimination, and helps governments identify when, where, and how to target gender pay gaps (Frey, 2021). Pay transparency laws are increasingly considered a policy to reduce the gender pay gap (Baker et al., 2019; Stanberry, 2018).

2.6 Pay Transparency Legislation and Policy

There has been considerable attention and ongoing debate among academics and policy makers around pay transparency legislation, policy, and government participation (Baker et al., 2019; Frey, 2021; Gulyas et al., 2021; Reilly, 2019) and whether this contributes to closing the gender pay gap. The public sector in New Zealand has led the way with equal pay regulation (Parker & Donnelly, 2020) and has performed better than other sectors in closing the gender pay gap (Bishu & Alkadry, 2017). Research has found that there are now demands on the private sector for pay transparency, focusing on transparency around pay differences between women and men (Baker et al., 2019). Pay transparency is rare outside the public sector (Ramachandran, 2011) as private sector employers continue discouraging employee discussions about pay (Trotter et al., 2017). Research has found that more attention needs to be paid to the private sector (Charlesworth & Macdonald, 2014). Previous pay transparency and gender pay gap studies generally only focus on one sector, not the differences between the public and private sectors (Trotter et al., 2017). Existing research fails to examine pay transparency in the not-for-profit sector.

Internationally, pay transparency policies are relatively new, and despite the creation of these policies, there has been limited research carried out evaluating their effectiveness (Baker et al., 2019; Frey, 2021; Gulyas et al., 2021; Reilly, 2019) in reducing inequalities and closing the gender pay gap. Many OECD countries have recognised the challenges of the gender pay gap and have begun implementing new pay transparency policies (Frey, 2021). Pay transparency laws are increasingly considered a policy to reduce the gender gap (Baker et al., 2019). However, these policies, need to be carefully created, implemented and managed (Trotter et al., 2017).

Research has found that clear legislation guaranteeing equal remuneration and specified processes for seeking it is fundamental (Hall, 2004). In addition, out of 38 OECD countries, 18 have mandated regular gender pay gap reporting by public sector organisations (Frey, 2021). Within this group, nine have implemented equal pay auditing processes (Frey, 2021). Research has conclusively shown that there are positive effects of pay transparency, including reductions in the gender pay gap (Baker et al., 2019; Bennedsen et al., 2019; Blundell, 2020; Jones & Kaya, 2022; Obloj & Zenger, 2020). However, international pay transparency laws are complicated and diverse (Bölingen, 2022), with broad and varied research making it difficult to comprehend general conclusions for policy and research (Bölingen, 2022). Research also only examines partial aspects of a pay transparency law (Bölingen, 2022).

Recent work has identified the complexities of pay transparency legislation and policy by studying a collection of pay transparency laws in the United States of America and the European Union. This research found that pay transparency laws can effectively reduce the gender pay gap (Bölingen, 2022). However, effectiveness depends on the type of pay transparency used (Bölingen, 2022). Pay transparency laws in Denmark, the United Kingdom, the United States of America (Bölingen, 2022), and Canada (Baker et al., 2019) have been evaluated as effective (Baker et al., 2019; Bölingen, 2022). However, studies examining pay transparency laws in Germany and Austria have not found an effect of the laws on the gender pay gap (Bölingen, 2022). Bölingen (2022) explains that the effectiveness of pay communications, transparency laws or the right to discuss pay remains mixed. Pay outcome transparency laws referring to the disclosure of pay amounts and ranges have been evaluated as effective in reducing the gender pay gap in Denmark and the United Kingdom but ineffective in Germany and Austria. All other pay outcome transparency interventions were effective, including pay process transparency, although according to Bölingen (2022), pay-setting processes are sometimes shallow.

In conclusion, all studies tend to use the quantitative difference in differences statistical technique (Trotter et al., 2017). Datasets vary in legislation, policy, and access to data (Trotter et al., 2017). These limitations are creating different outcomes. Positive effects are found to arise through a reduction in men's pay rather than an increase in women's pay (Bennedsen et al., 2019; Blundell, 2020; Frey, 2021), whereas adverse effects are due to differing country policy, enforcement, and the gender pay gap

visibility being weaker (Böheim and Gust, 2021; Frey, 2021; Gulyas et al., 2021). Gulyas et al. (2021) acknowledge that transparency policies can have a more significant impact on the gender pay gap if the pay reports are public information and that this could be one of the reasons why the United Kingdom reform is more successful compared to Austria in closing the gender pay gap (Gulyas et al., 2021).

2.6.1 Intersectional Policy

Similar to pay transparency policies being relatively new, intersectional policy has only recently come into existence. The term 'intersectionality' (Crenshaw, 1991; Crenshaw, 2013) originated from Black feminist scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 to describe how individual characteristics including race, gender and class overlap and intersect (Coaston, 2019). According to Capatosto (2022), minorities are overlooked by one-size-fits-all strategies to close gender pay gaps, and equal pay for women can only be achieved if systemic racism is also addressed (Capatosto, 2022). Similarly, Grosfoguel, Oso & Christou (2015) researched racism and its relationship with intersectionality in a capitalist, patriarchal, colonial world system (Grosfoguel et al., 2015). Grosfoguel et al. (2015) define racism as a global hierarchy of human superiority and inferiority and believe that this is culturally, politically, and economically produced and reproduced by capitalist, patriarchal, and colonial structures and systems (Grosfoguel et al., 2015).

Literature on the gender pay gap, pay transparency, and intersectional policy is sparse and still in its infancy. However, Frey (2021) highlights the OECD countries that report data with an intersectional framework. These countries include Canada, Mexico, the United States, and New Zealand. These countries collect and report earnings data by gender, race, or ethnicity (Frey, 2021). Most OECD countries do not report data with an intersectional framework (Frey, 2021). The public sector in New Zealand publishes annual release reports called the public service workforce data under the Kia Toipoto - Public Service Pay Gaps Action Plan 2021 – 2024 (New Zealand Government, 2023c). According to Frey (2021), public sector departments are expected to report gender pay gaps by both mean and median pay, and if there are sufficient numbers, gender pay gaps by organisational group, level of seniority, tenure, age, ethnicity, occupation, role (Frey, 2021). Frey (2021) highlights that best practice includes

acknowledging that there is no homogenous woman and understanding intersectionality, which can lead to more significant pay gaps and outcomes.

2.7 What does this mean for New Zealand?

New Zealand's gender pay gap is 9.2 percent (Stats NZ, 2022). This measure is based on the median hourly wage and salary earnings (Stats NZ, 2022a). According to Parker and Donnelly (2020), half a century ago in New Zealand, the foundations for remedying gender pay inequality were established. However, women are still struggling with gender-based pay differentials. Parker and Donnelly (2020) highlight that historically and comparatively, New Zealand's gender pay gap is small. However, researchers also argue that this gap has refused to close fully and that the progression towards closing the pay gap in New Zealand has been slow (Mao, 2017). This is despite significant societal changes over many decades and numerous labour market, public policy and educational initiatives that have targeted the gender pay gap (Frey, 2021).

Gender pay inequality is under rigorous investigation (Parker & Donnelly, 2020) in New Zealand. Notably, Research New Zealand (2020) found that paying people differently because of gender was unacceptable to most New Zealanders (Research New Zealand, 2020). It has been established that unequal pay is a standard phenomenon, and that those less likely to believe this problem exists in New Zealand are male (Research New Zealand, 2020).

The secrecy of pay in New Zealand workplaces is one of the barriers that has enabled the gender pay gap to persist (Research New Zealand, 2020). If pay was transparent, it would become more challenging for businesses to hide structural inequalities (Research New Zealand, 2020). Privacy and confidentiality concerns should not be used as an excuse not to implement pay transparency (Reilly, 2019). Reilly (2019) states social and privacy norms can shift (Reilly, 2019). Employers may feel threatened by a new culture of pay transparency (Reilly, 2019); however, employers with nothing to hide have nothing to fear (Reilly, 2019). Similarly, Mao (2017) highlights that pay transparency may take time to deliver pay equality. However, it would be a significant step forward for equality (Mao, 2017).

Gender pay inequality is a constant feature of labour markets worldwide (Gulyas, Seitz & Sinha, 2021), and advancing gender equality continues to be a policy objective in

many OECD countries (Casey et al., 2011). Similar to New Zealand, internationally, the gender pay gap has barely shifted or changed over the past decade (Frey, 2021). The gender pay gap stands at 13 percent, on average, across OECD countries (Frey, 2021). When comparing New Zealand's gender pay gap to other OECD countries, in 2021, New Zealand ranked 11th place at 6.7 percent, with Ireland (5.2 percent), Denmark (5.0 percent) and Norway (4.6 percent) ahead in places eight, seven and five. Australia (12.3 percent) and the United Kingdom (14.3 percent) were behind, ranked 28th and 36th (OECD, 2022). Research also indicates that women in top positions, such as Chief Executive Officer (CEO), often earn only about 80 percent of what men with duplicate job titles earn. This is also true with midlevel positions (Stanberry, 2018).

According to the OECD (2021), many governments are mandating new pay transparency tools, including pay gap reporting, equal pay audits, and gender-neutral job classification systems (Ministry for Women, 2023d). However, only half of the OECD countries use job classification systems in the public or private sector (Frey, 2021). Job classification systems class jobs or list pay for jobs and are used more frequently in the public sector (Frey, 2021). According to Frey (2021), job classification systems help promote equal pay.

To overcome systemic pay discrimination against women in New Zealand, it is essential for legislation to require employers to provide employment equity to women (Parker & Donnelly, 2020). Reilly (2019) argues that pay transparency should be mandatory in New Zealand and that this would address the gender pay gap (Reilly, 2019). Reilly (2019) states that this would also help reinforce the law by supporting the Equal Employment Act 1972 (Reilly, 2019) and the pay equity claims process.

Past research has found that discrimination in New Zealand contributes to inequality between men and women (Reilly, 2019). Discrimination is prohibited by New Zealand law, in the Employment Relations Act 2000, the Human Rights Act 1993, and the Equal Pay Act 1972 (Reilly, 2019). Under international and domestic human rights law, New Zealand must ensure equal pay for work of equal value (Human Rights Commission, 2022). Research has found that New Zealand's equal pay legislation has not yet achieved one of its stated purposes: preventing discriminatory pay for work typically performed by women (Hill, 2013; McGregor & Davies, 2019). In addition, Bölingen

(2022) has found that pay transparency allows women to challenge disadvantages in pay effectively and file a legal complaint under equal pay laws (Bölingen, 2022; Kulow, 2013). For these reasons this thesis asks: Is pay transparency key to closing the gender pay gap?

2.8 Chapter Summary

This literature review frames the current research on gender pay inequalities and pay transparency. It has identified several gaps in the literature, including the limited research on pay transparency within a New Zealand context and the international debate among academics and policy makers around pay transparency legislation, policy and government participation, and whether or not pay transparency contributes to closing the gender pay gap. This literature review highlights that New Zealand has a systemic economic discrimination crisis against women (Parker & Donnelly, 2020) and that pay secrecy in workplaces is one of the barriers that has enabled gender pay gaps to persist (Research New Zealand, 2020). In addition, the literature review demonstrates the complexities around pay transparency being a relatively new concept with varying datasets related to legislation, policy, and access to data (Trotter et al., 2017). These limitations create different outcomes and, consequently, limit the value of research on pay transparency. In order to address this gap in the literature, this thesis asks: Is pay transparency key to closing the gender pay gap? The next chapter, Methodology Chapter (Chapter Three), will discuss the choices made regarding the research design, including the philosophical background, methodology and methods used and applied to guide this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The literature review in the previous chapter framed the current state of research on gender pay inequalities and pay transparency. It identified several gaps in the literature, including the limited research on pay transparency within a New Zealand context and the international debate among academics and policy makers around pay transparency legislation, policy and government participation, and whether or not pay transparency contributes to closing the gender pay gap. This thesis contributes to the knowledge about pay transparency and the gender pay gap. Research has been restricted to focus on individuals affected by the gender pay gap and not those who are working to reduce the pay gap. In addition, empirical studies are absent from the perspective of those advocating for gender equality or gender equal pay. This research provides an original and alternative perspective of those working on closing the gender pay gap to create positive change. This study seeks to answer the research question: Is pay transparency key to closing the gender pay gap?

Furthermore, the literature review highlighted that New Zealand has a systemic economic discrimination crisis against women (Parker & Donnelly, 2020) and that pay secrecy in workplaces is one of the barriers that has enabled gender pay gaps to persist (Research New Zealand, 2020). In addition, the literature review exemplified the complexities around pay transparency being a relatively new concept, with studies tending to use the quantitative difference in differences statistical techniques (Trotter et al., 2017). However, datasets vary in relation to legislation, policy, and access to data (Trotter et al., 2017). These limitations create different outcomes and consequently limit the value of research on pay transparency. Therefore, research investigating the complexities of the gender pay gap and pay transparency is essential.

This chapter describes the choices made regarding the research design, including the philosophical background, methodology and methods used to guide this study. The next section of this chapter discusses the philosophical background of the research, including the interpretive research paradigm, relativist ontology, and constructivist epistemology. Following this, the chapter will explain the interpretive descriptive methodology and how the philosophical background guided this choice of methodology. Subsequently, this chapter will explain the methods guided by the

methodology and used for selection criteria and data collection. Lastly, this chapter will describe the methods applied to the data analysis, including rigor and thematic analysis.

3.2 Research Aims

The purpose of this research is to contribute to the developing knowledge of gender inequality, the gender pay gap, and pay transparency. This study seeks to answer the research question: Is pay transparency key to closing the gender pay gap? The aim of this research is to discover what role pay transparency has in positive change and explore participants' perceptions of pay transparency and the gender pay gap. Primary research was conducted qualitatively among HR Managers, policy analysts, and policy makers who work in the public, private, or not-for-profit sectors. Participants actively worked on the gender pay gap and advocated for gender equal pay. This study will interpret, understand and discover their viewpoints, understanding there may be differing and multiple perspectives, but bringing these perspectives together and exploring them to understand, identify, analyse and interpret patterns of meaning, creating themes around these patterns. The purpose of qualitative inquiry highlights the need to understand people's perspectives to understand interaction, process, and social change (Agee, 2009). It is essential to research the gender pay gap as it is crucial to close this gap and create an equal society.

3.3 Philosophical Background

This section discusses the philosophical background of the research and how this background directed the choice of methodology. This follows the order and choices of the interpretivist paradigm, relativist ontology, constructivist epistemology and interpretive descriptive methodology. According to Kankam (2019), research paradigms are philosophical beliefs or frameworks used to study and interpret knowledge (Kankam, 2019). They consist of the researcher's position towards the nature of reality (ontology), how the researcher knows what they know (epistemology), and the methods used in the process (methodology) (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano & Morales, 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2016; Kankam, 2019). Research philosophy knowledge helps to recognise which designs will work and which will not (Kankam, 2019).

A research paradigm is a basic model (Babbie, 2011) or framework for observing and understanding (Kankam, 2019). It shapes what researchers see and how they understand it (Kankam, 2019), as a research paradigm is a set of assumptions, concepts, ideas and values that shape and guide the research activity (Kankam, 2019). It can impact research by describing what is being studied and how it is conducted (Krauss, 2005). A research paradigm guides researchers to experience and think about the world and explore how knowledge is interpreted and studied (Kankam, 2019). One researcher's application of a research paradigm varies from another depending on the researcher's choice and the phenomenon being researched (Kankam, 2019). Ontology seeks to understand what is reality (Gray, 2014; Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010). It is the philosophical study of being, the nature of existence, and what establishes reality (Gray, 2014). Epistemology seeks to understand what it means to know (Gray, 2014) and provides a philosophical background for deciding what knowledge is suitable and valid (Gray, 2014).

3.3.1 Interpretivist Paradigm

Interpretivism was identified as being the most appropriate paradigm for this study. To ensure a robust research design, researchers must choose a research paradigm that fits their beliefs around the nature of reality (Levers, 2013). The interpretive paradigm supports the researchers' own beliefs about research and understanding participants' personal experiences and perceptions is one of the central responsibilities of this study. In line with this, interpretivism attempts to listen to people and understand what meanings people connect to life events and what it means to be human (Grant & Giddings, 2002). It looks to understand how problems should be understood and addressed (Kuhn, 1970), along with explaining human and social reality (Crotty, 1998). It is a widely used research paradigm (Kankam, 2019) commonly associated with the qualitative research approach (Creswell et al., 2007; Kankam, 2019). Interpretivism looks for 'culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social lifeworld' (Crotty, 1998, p. 67), allowing researchers to interpret aspects of the research and integrate human interest into the research (Dudovskiy, 2017). Interpretivism aims to uncover the meanings by which people understand their behaviours and experiences (Kankam, 2019). Whereas, positivism is beneficial for quantitative hypothesis testing (Gray, 2014). Interpretivism transmits meaning and

perceptions from one person or community to another (Crotty, 1998) and relies on interpreting or understanding the meanings humans attach to their actions (Mills et al., 2010; O'Reilly, 2009), rather than focus on a generalisation of results (Gray, 2014). The researcher needs to appreciate participant differences (Dudovskiy, 2017). Interpretivism can extend to other times and places (Mills et al., 2010) and deals with social truth or reality (Kankam, 2019) to recognise the subjective meaning of social action. The gender pay gap is a systemic problem with a historical framework and is therefore beneficial for participants to reflect on historic events and systems.

Interpretivism approaches knowledge by emphasising the importance of perceptions to understand social reality (Kankam, 2019), seeking to explore people's perspectives, views and experiences (Kankam, 2019). The aims of interpretive research provide an appropriate basis for the research approach as previous research has not explored the perceptions of those that advocate for gender equal pay or pay transparency within a New Zealand context. This research aims to explore participants' experiences, views, and perspectives on the gender pay gap and pay transparency.

3.3.2 Relativist Ontology

The ontology corresponding with the interpretivist paradigm is relativism (Crotty, 1998). Relativism discovers a collection of viewpoints (Given, 2008) and understands that multiple realities exist (Gray, 2014), that are not permanent but constantly changing. For relativists, with multiple realities and ways of accessing them (Gray, 2014), this goes further than two people experiencing an external world differently (Stajduhar, Balneaves & Thorne, 2001). Instead, their worlds are different (Stajduhar et al., 2001) and with multiple interpretations of experience come multiple realities (Levers, 2013). There are diverse ways of knowing, which are separate realities (Crotty, 1998). Relativism fits with the aims of this research, as it will help to make sense of participants' diverse insights. Participant's truth is dependent on culture, society, historical contexts, specific systems and structures (Baghramian & Coliva, 2019). All truths are dependent (Baghramian & Coliva, 2019) and will enable the interpretation and understanding of those advocating for gender equal pay and their perceptions of pay transparency. This research will also contribute to the developing knowledge of pay transparency, which characterises the relativist ontology as the reality of the relativist ontology constantly changes and knowledge is becoming.

3.3.3 Constructivist Epistemology

Epistemology provides a philosophical background to decide what kinds of knowledge are appropriate and acceptable (Gray, 2014). The constructivist framework believes that truth and meaning are not discovered but constructed (Crotty, 1998). All knowledge and reality are constructed through people's interactions with the world (Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2014). People construct meanings differently; hence, multiple contradictory but equally valid perceptions of the world can exist (Crotty, 1998; Dudovskiy, 2017; Gray, 2014). Interpretivism wants to understand the world, and constructivism wants to change it (Kankam, 2019). This research aims to understand participants' perceptions and explore what role pay transparency has in positive change. Lived experiences have constructed participants' truth and meaning through advocating for gender equal pay. These perceptions may vary and contradict each other due to participants' life experiences. Gender and patriarchy are socially constructed. These constraints persist in part because women's knowledge and voices are not valued or seen to be authoritative. This research will give participants an academic platform to be heard.

3.4 Methodology

The previous section detailed the choice of a relativist ontology, constructivist epistemology, and interpretivist paradigm. This section outlines the appropriate research methodology. Methodology governs researchers' choice and use of methods (Crotty, 1998). These choices affect the methods and techniques researchers are likely to use (Mills et al., 2010). Methodology is the plan and process behind the choice and use of particular methods (Crotty, 1998). This process and plan design links the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes (Crotty, 1998). The research methodology selected will influence the choice of methods (Gray, 2014).

The methodology chosen for this research is interpretive description. In 1997, Thorne, Kirkham and MacDonald-Emes developed the interpretive descriptive methodology (Thorne, Kirkham & MacDonald-Emes, 1997) within the nursing discipline. According to Grant and Giddings (2002), nursing has taken the lead in the development, critique and application of interpretive methodologies (Grant & Giddings, 2002) and there has been a considerable increase in the use of interpretive descriptive methodology over the last five years (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021). Interpretive description has been

expanded to include novice scholars, potential scholars, and community members (Ocean, Montgomery, Jamison, Hicks & Thorne, 2022). Anti-oppressive researchers are using interpretive description to understand social problems, and the people who experience and create solutions for positive change (Ocean et al., 2022).

This innovative methodology was specifically developed to address limitations within established qualitative traditions (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021) and allows researchers to move beyond phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography (Thorne, Kirkham & O'Flynn-Magee, 2004). These are also interpretive methodologies but they differ in their theoretical perspectives as they focus on different aspects of experience (Grant & Giddings, 2002). Phenomenology focuses on participants' experience of a phenomenon, grounded theory focuses on data collection and analysis, and ethnography focuses on culture and society (Grant & Giddings, 2002). Interpretive description is based on borrowed approaches from phenomenology, grounded theory and ethnography (Thorne et al., 2004). Interpretive description examines a phenomenon to identify patterns and themes around individual perspectives, also accounting for participant variations (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021). Based on this knowledge, it provides the means to enable action (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021). This methodology directly links to this research topic as it will explore and listen to participants' perceptions of pay transparency and the gender pay gap to understand their perceptions of pay transparency and whether or not pay transparency could help close the gender pay gap. Interpretive description describes and interprets but does not produce theory (Smythe, 2012). This research will analyse themes and present an overview of the findings, without producing theory. Furthermore, Interpretive description can be used for small-scale qualitative research about a phenomenon (Ghorbani & Matourypour, 2020) and is suited to Master's research, which is restricted by time but where the researcher wishes to hear the voices of people, analyse themes and present an overview of the results (Smythe, 2012).

3.5 Methods

The previous section detailed the chosen research methodology, interpretive description. Interpretive description links to the aims of this research as this research seeks to understand participants' experiences and perceptions of pay transparency

and the gender pay gap to find out whether or not pay transparency could help close the gender pay gap. This section details the methods used in this research. Methods are the techniques or approach used to gather and examine data related to the research question (Crotty, 1998). Grant and Giddings (2002) describe methods as the tools for collecting and analysing data, including recruiting participants and analysing the information gathered (Grant & Giddings, 2002). This section details the selection criteria, participant information, data collection methods, including sample selection and recruitment practices, and the semi-structured interview method.

3.5.1 Selection Criteria

To be eligible to take part and assist in this research all participants had to meet the following criteria and be HR Managers, policy analysts or policy makers, working in the public, private or not-for-profit sectors. Participants had to be actively engaged in work on the gender pay gap and advocate for gender equal pay. This assisted the research as participants were aware of the studied phenomenon (Ghorbani & Matourypour, 2020), pay transparency, are experts in gender equal pay and have the knowledge and skills to put forward unique and different perspectives.

3.5.2 Sample Selection and Recruitment

Selective sampling (Martínez-Mesa, Gonzalez-China, Duquia, Bonamigo & Bastos, 2016) by searching for participants with specific research criteria was chosen to identify participants for this research. Recruitment was initially targeted through publicly available information. This process began with targeted searches of organisations that had a focus on gender equal pay or addressing the gender pay gap. Initially, this consisted of a Google search that included 'gender pay gap, organisations, New Zealand'. The researcher reviewed the results and the organisation's websites to see if organisations were actively involved in work on the gender pay gap to then find potential participants who met the specific research criteria. Such participants were then contacted, using the publicly available contact details, and invited to take part in the research. This was complemented through advertising the research through social media (LinkedIn and Facebook) advertisements. Participants who were interested in taking part then contacted the researcher or were contacted through email or LinkedIn (for those who had been

contacted directly through publicly available information). The researcher introduced themselves, explained the research and why they were interested in their involvement. Additionally, snowball recruiting occurred through participant referral (Martínez-Mesa et al., 2016). When the researcher contacted participants through selective sampling, several participants introduced the researcher to other participants (Taylor et al., 2015). This did not limit the diversity of participants (Taylor et al., 2015) as multiple methods were used to invite participants to participate, including advertising on social media channels LinkedIn and Facebook (Appendix Four), along with email correspondence.

Once participants expressed their interest, they were sent an email outlining the research along with the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix Two), which included an invitation summary and highlighted the purpose of the research, how participants were identified, how to agree to participate, any associated risks and how these will be alleviated, along with how privacy would be maintained and information on the end-use of the research. Once participants agreed to participate in the research, they were provided with a consent form to be signed before the interview commenced (Appendix Three).

Table One – Participant Information

Pseudonyms have been used to maintain participants' confidentiality.

Pseudonym	Ethnicity if specified by participants	Brief background description
Maddison	Filipino	Not-for-profit sector, delivery manager
Micky	New Zealand European	Public sector, principal analyst
Yasmin	Iranian	Public sector, not-for-profit board member, not-for-profit memberships, HR Manager
Eleanor	Māori - Ngā Puhi and Ngāti Raukawa	Not-for-profit sector, board member, not-for-profit memberships, CEO

Sarah	Romanian European	Public sector, not-for-profit sector, HR Manager
Namita	Indian	Public sector, senior advisor
Hannah	Pākehā	Private sector, public sector, not-for-profit sector, business owner
Bella	Māori – Ngati Porou	Private sector, public sector, CEO, business owner
Nimah	Irish	Private sector, public sector, CEO
Naomi	Unknown	Trade union sector, senior leadership, activist
Samantha	Unknown	Public sector, principal advisor

3.5.3 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 11 participants. All participants were female. This was not part of the research criteria nor a requirement. Men were also approached but opted for female representation within their organisations. Participants had experience working in various sectors, including not-for-profit, public and private sectors. The researcher used inductive reasoning (Gray, 2014) to collect data and generate answers. Interpretive studies are usually inductive and generally associated with qualitative research measures and approaches of data collection and analysis (Gray, 2014). Interpretive studies explore people's experiences, including their perspectives of these experiences (Gray, 2014). Conclusions are specific to the data used at the time (Gray, 2014). Interpretive description uses inductive analytic approaches designed to create ways of understanding phenomena (Thorne et al., 2004). This methodology commonly uses interviews to collect data (Thorne et al., 2004), and data collection and analysis occur concurrently (Thorne et al., 2004). Interpretivism believes the approach to reality is through social constructions including language, shared meanings and consciousness (Dudovskiy, 2017). Interviews serve as a primary tool for gathering detailed data, offering insights into participants' views

and experiences (Kallio, Pietila, Johnson & Kangasniemi, 2016; Taylor et al., 2015). This supports the interpretive descriptive objective of interpreting personal perceptions (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021) and, therefore, gaining an understanding of participants' perspectives and experiences (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021). In qualitative research, interpretive descriptive methodology and thematic analysis reinforce and align with each other. Interpretive descriptive methodology seeks to understand a phenomenon from the perspective of those experiencing it (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021), while thematic analysis offers flexibility in identifying, analysing and reporting themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I give an example of this process under section 3.6.2 (Thematic Analysis), when explaining how the researcher moved through the six different phases of thematic analysis.

The researcher created a semi-structured interview guide with open-ended descriptive questions (Appendix Five) (Brinkmann, 2014). In qualitative research the semi-structured interview format is the most commonly used method (Kallio et al., 2016). The semi-structured interview method was adapted from the standardised interview as an interview guide to make sure important topics were explored (Taylor et al., 2015). The interviewer was the data collector, and this role involved getting people to feel at ease enough to answer the questions (Taylor et al., 2015). Semi-structured interviewing can be flexible, non-standardised, and open-ended interviewing, directed toward understanding participants' perspectives on their experiences, lives and situations (Kallio et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2015). These are expressed in the participants' own words (Taylor et al., 2015). The relationship between the researcher and the participants influences the success of interpretive research (Taylor et al., 2015). The researcher asked the participants open-ended, descriptive questions. Descriptive questions allow participants to tell the researcher about the things that are important to them and the meanings they attach to them (Kallio et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2015).

Both the researcher and participants are involved in the data collection (Grant & Giddings, 2002). The relationship and interaction between the researcher and the participant are central to the research and a critical interpretive principle during data collection. The participants are interpreters and co-producers of meaningful data (Kankam, 2019). Meaning will be constructed through social interactions and perceptions, leading to multiple meanings within this research (Kankam, 2019). The

researcher's interpretation of those meanings is essential in the analysis process (Grant & Giddings, 2002). Therefore, a critical part of interpretive research is listening to and observing participants.

3.6 Data Analysis

The previous methods section identified the data collection methods, including selection criteria, participant information, sample selection and recruitment, and the semi-structured interview method. This section will detail the researcher's data analysis methods, including rigour and thematic analysis.

In qualitative research, data collection and analysis go hand in hand (Thorne et al., 2004). Interpretive description also enables researchers to have a flexible approach to analytical qualitative data (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021) and favours analysis frameworks that progress through inductive reasoning (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021). Through the process of gathering data, this research established patterns and meanings (Gray, 2014), after which the data was analysed to find any emerging patterns and relationships between variables (Gray, 2014). Throughout the semi-structured interviews, the researcher constantly tried to make sense of the data by keeping track of emerging themes and ideas, rereading notes and transcripts to develop concepts and interpret the data (Taylor et al., 2015). Thematic analysis was applied to identify themes and write up findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For example, information that emerged in one interview was probed more deeply within the interview itself, and explored in subsequent interviews. This enabled the participants' experiences and knowledge to be centred, as is the aim of descriptive interpretive research.

3.6.1 Rigour

Rigorous data collection processes drives the quality of research (Kallio et al., 2016). Rigor is commonly used within the data analysis process to ensure accuracy, trustworthiness and integrity (Johnson, Adkins & Chauvin, 2020). Furthermore, rigour is achieved with complete and accurate reporting (Johnson et al., 2020) through a systematic and transparent research process (Johnson et al., 2020). According to Thompson Burdine et al. (2021), to establish rigour, research methodologies should follow reliable principles for research frameworks, sample selection, data sources and

data analysis. In addition, rigour is especially critical with interpretive description (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021). Therefore, the researcher must account for the influence of bias as much as possible (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021). Biases can lead to false conclusions and affect the credibility of the research (Smith & Noble, 2014). Interpretive description relies on the credibility of the researcher's ability to analyse the data and put forth evidence justifying the participants' perceptions (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021). The researcher must adequately account for their decisions when choosing what to include and leave out of the research (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021).

3.6.2 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was chosen to analyse the data. Thematic analysis is a method for deciding on and distinguishing patterns or themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It organises and describes the researcher's data set in detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes capture something significant about the research data and represents some patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher's judgement is necessary to determine a theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Data saturation is the point at which no new information, codes or themes develop from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). There is much debate and judgment around determining the perfect sample size (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Guest et al. (2017) found within the first six interviews, 94 percent of high frequency codes were identified (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Guest et al., 2017). However, Constantinou, Georgiou and Perdikogianni (2017) argue that all possible themes were found after interview seven (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Constantinou et al., 2017) and Hagaman and Wutich (2017), recommended achieving data saturation through thematic analysis with sample sizes ranging from six to 16 interviews (Hagaman & Wutich, 2017). In addition, data saturation is not a desired outcome in interpretive description because experience can theoretically possess infinite variation (Thorne et al., 2004). Similarly, Braun and Clarke (2019) highlight that data saturation is not always necessary; however, 11 interviews provided the researcher with a deep understanding of participant's perspective, with comparable and varying perceptions (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021), supporting the researcher in analysing the views of participants on the subject of pay transparency (Creswell et al., 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2016; Kankam, 2019).

Identified themes were firmly linked to the data and not driven by the researcher's interests or biases (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher used an inductive approach. Inductive analysis is coding data that has not been added into pre-existing coding frames or the researcher's preconceptions. Therefore, this thematic analysis is data-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Similarly, interpretive description coding is generated from the data (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021). There are no pre-existing theories or codes that might be applied to the data (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021). From a constructivist perspective, meaning and experience are socially produced and reproduced (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, thematic analysis within a constructivist framework seeks to understand social and cultural systems and structures that could be reflective of participant's individual perspective (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is necessary to achieve the research aims, to understand individual participant experiences and perceptions, and necessary to answer the research question.

Following Braun and Clarke (2006), six phases of analysis guidelines, the researcher had the flexibility to not only move from one phase to the next but also move back and forth throughout the six phases as needed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This included, as noted above, initial analysis occurring during interviews as new ideas were probed, so that participants' experiences and knowledge could inform the analytical process. Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of analysis guidelines include phase one: familiarising yourself with your data, phase two: generating initial codes, phase three: searching for themes, phase four: reviewing themes, phase five: defining and naming themes and phase six: producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019). Phase one: the researcher familiarised themselves with the data, by collecting and transcribing the verbal data themselves (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During phase one, the researcher immersed themselves in the data by re-reading the transcripts thrice (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Phase two: after transcribing and rereading the text, the researcher worked closely with the text, looking for insights into the participants' experiences and perspectives (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021) to generate initial codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher copied and pasted distinctive quotes from each interview into a new document and ordered them into similar combinations. In addition, the researcher identified patterns, differences and similarities within the text, which helped to develop the initial codes (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021).

Coding is necessary to identify, sort and organise data into a manageable form (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021).

When all the data had been initially collated and coded (Braun & Clarke, 2006), the researcher used a manual process with paper to organise themes and codes visually to aid the process of theme development aligning with phase three (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Coding and organising interviews were guided by the researcher's evolving ideas from ongoing data analysis (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021), which happened during phase four, reviewing themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The different levels of themes that could have formed sub-themes were also considered, and others were discarded (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase five, identifying the essence of each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and phase six, producing the report, occurred concurrently through the process of drafting and writing up the Findings Chapter (Chapter Four), detailing what was unique and specific about each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As the researcher produced the Findings Chapter (Chapter Four), they went back and forth through phases three, four and five. Themes were changed as they did not fit the research question. Other themes were merged, and some needed to be split up into different themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes surfaced during the researcher's examination of the data and when the researcher attempted to address the research question: Is pay transparency key to closing the gender pay gap? Thematic analysis assisted the researcher in producing an account of the data set (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021).

3.7 Chapter Summary

In conclusion, this chapter described the research aims, including the purpose of this research as contributing to the developing knowledge of gender inequality by focusing on addressing the gap in New Zealand research on pay transparency and answering the research question: Is pay transparency key to closing the gender pay gap?

This chapter described and explained the research philosophical background and positioning, including the interpretive paradigm, relativist ontology and constructivist epistemology. Interpretive descriptive methodology was used to design this research, guiding the researcher towards the methods applied to this research, including selective sampling, snowball sampling, semi-structured interviews and data organisation and analysis. This chapter detailed the thematic analysis method and

steps taken from phase one to six, along with additional aspects of this research, including rigour and highlighted the significance of the researchers' influence of possible bias, as well as participant and researcher involvement. The next chapter, the Findings Chapter (Chapter Four) will present the findings of the data collection including five main themes and seven sub-themes from the semi-structured interviews with participants.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

As outlined in the previous Methodology Chapter (Chapter Three), semi-structured interviews were carried out with 11 participants. These participants met specific criteria, including the requirement to be HR Managers, policy analysts, and or policy makers actively working on the gender pay gap. There was a noticeable absence of male participation. Men were approached but if they did respond to the recruitment ad opted for female representation within their organisation.

This chapter presents the findings of five main themes and seven sub-themes from the semi-structured interviews with participants. This chapter will follow the order of these themes. The main themes emerging from the data are: 1) open and transparent pay; 2) advocating for change; 3) advocating for gender equality is ‘women’s work’; 4) pay secrecy promotes structural inequalities; and 5) planning for positive change and impact.

The following sections present the themes and sub-themes developed through thematic analysis of the interview data. Table two summarises the themes and subthemes.

Table Two – Themes

Theme	Sub-Theme	Description
Open and Transparent Pay	Defining pay transparency	Participants explained the gender pay gap and pay transparency, describing pay transparency as an essential component in closing the gender pay gap but also challenging to implement.

Advocating for change	Advocates' motivations	Participants described the significance of the gender pay gap and explained how they are in privileged positions to create positive change.
Advocating for gender equality is 'women's work'	The role of women and men	Participants explained how men have a vital role in overcoming gender inequality.
Pay secrecy promotes structural inequalities	Organisational culture	Participants acknowledged that pay transparency can create a sense of employee value, openness, and a positive workplace culture.
	Sector differences	Participants identified the contextual differences pay transparency has on public, private, and not-for-profit organisations.
Planning for positive change and impact	Collaboration and control	Participants acknowledged that pay transparency requires a collective approach.
	Intersectional lens	Participants identified additional compounding barriers for women other than gender.

4.2 Open and Transparent Pay

The first theme, open and transparent pay, includes one sub-theme, defining pay transparency. The first sub-theme, defining pay transparency, established participants' perceptions of the gender pay gap and pay transparency. Participants

described pay transparency as an essential component in closing the gender pay gap but also challenging to implement.

As described in the Introduction Chapter (Chapter One) and Literature Review Chapter (Chapter Two), the gender pay gap in New Zealand is 9.2 percent (Stats NZ, 2022b). Eleanor, Bella, and Namita highlighted the importance of understanding the gender pay gap and how it measures inequality. Hannah and Micky explained how organisations need to be adequately resourced to analyse their gender pay gap data and to not make anything too complicated. Namita described how having the ability to influence, persuade, and guide others could create positive change and impact. She explained how influence needs to be integrated with education and support so that employers are well-equipped to analyse their data and understand the drivers of their organisational pay gaps.

Hannah explained that organisations need to be planned, resourced, and ready for action once organisational pay gaps are identified. Similarly, Niamh highlighted the importance of guidance and education related to gender pay gap reporting. She stated that the public sector had done this well. Niamh described how some advocacy groups are pushing for gender pay gap legislation, but she explained that legislation without the support of education and awareness will not have a positive impact.

Participants defined pay transparency, described how it may work and how it will be an essential component in closing the gender pay gap. However, participants had varying and inconsistent definitions and descriptions of pay transparency, along with concepts and understanding of how it will work. Maddison explained:

"The analogy I use is this: there is a whole buffet. There's a whole range of pay transparency measures. Still, it comes down to the employer making all aspects of employees' pay more visible, so not only can employees have a sense of if they're being paid right, compared to the market, but also if they're being paid fairly as compared to their other co-workers" (Maddison).

Maddison described pay transparency as making everything and anything about pay and remuneration clear and transparent so that employees do not need to reach out or research if they are being paid correctly. Similarly, Sarah described pay transparency as not compromising anyone's confidentiality but being transparent with pay and pay levels.

Nimah described pay transparency as having differing external and internal factors. She explained how some organisations could have a high level of transparency within the organisation that people may not be able to see from the outside, and other organisations may have a high level of transparency at the start when applying for a role, but they may not have continued transparency. Similarly, Yasmin described how pay transparency would be challenging across an open market as, internally, and externally, all jobs are different.

Sarah described setting pay as a fair and equitable benchmark that includes transparent criteria and how to apply that to each employee. Participants acknowledged that setting pay also needs to consider performance, bonuses, incentives, and other benefits. Several participants described pay bands as a tool to increase pay transparency. Hannah explained that pay bands need to be put into place, along with jobs being sized according to employee's levels of responsibility and accountability. Maddison described how putting salaries on a pay band has become compulsory in other jurisdictions. Several participants highlighted the requirement to advertise job listings with the salary band or range so that applicants know the salary before applying, reducing the risk of bias and discrimination.

Participants described how creating educational tools through processes and structures, documentation and guidelines, workshops, and effective leadership may help clarify the benefits of pay transparency. Sarah explained how you need to start with education and get people to know why you want to do what you are trying to do and what you want the outcomes to be. Similarly, Samantha explained:

"All our advice is solid on engagement with employees, between employee and employers over the actions that they'll take and not only drawing on the data they have but also feedback from employees to understand what 's going on"
(Samantha).

Participants found describing how to implement pay transparency challenging. Several participants explained how pay transparency is complicated, an essential component, and one of the tools in the toolkit to combat the gender pay gap. They also explained how it will only fix some aspects of the gender pay gap. After describing how to implement pay transparency, one participant changed their perception of pay

transparency, acknowledging that pay transparency is complicated and that there are some disadvantages of pay transparency:

"I'm not sure really if transparency is a good thing. At the end. There are several disadvantages... so I don't know yet how..." (Yasmin).

However, all other participants confirmed that pay transparency will contribute to closing the gender pay gap.

"I don't expect that pay transparency alone is going to fix everything, but having said that I think that pay transparency is a really important component for change" (Micky).

4.3 Advocating for Change

The second theme, advocating for change, includes one sub-theme that presents participants' motivations to become advocates of equal pay. Participants explained the significance of the gender pay gap and described how they are in privileged positions to create positive change.

Several participants described the gender pay gap phenomenon as real and something that should not exist in modern New Zealand society. Participants acknowledged that there has been little progress in narrowing the gender pay gap in recent years and that the relevance of the gender pay gap may be lost. Maddison stated:

"It shouldn't be a thing in 2022, but that's it, it just is" (Maddison).

Similarly, Namita explained:

"I believe the gender pay gap in 2022 should not exist, but unfortunately, it does" (Namita).

In addition, Sarah described the gender pay gap as:

"It's a thing and very real" (Sarah).

Participants highlighted, that as well as being real, the gender pay gap has been hard to shift and that society accepts it. Participants described how individuals do not understand the gender pay gap or believe it is relevant. According to Sarah, some of

the most vigorous deniers that the gender pay gap exists were women in senior positions:

“I was surprised by how many people didn't believe that it was a thing, and really interestingly, the people that were the firmest advocates for it not being a thing were female presenting people, and they were largely in senior roles, so they kind of often had this mentality of like, there's not a problem. I had to find my way to be here, so you know, we don't need to make the world easier for anybody else” (Sarah).

Similarly, Micky described how senior professional women believe that the gender pay gap is happening elsewhere and not to them. However, Micky highlighted that some of the most significant gender pay gaps occur in the highest-paid senior professional roles and highest-paid sectors.

Participants described how the gender pay gap measures inequality and reflects how society values women and women's work. When explaining the importance of the gender pay gap, the term 'indicator' was often referred to by participants. This represented a quantitative measure for some but is reflective of a broader social concept for others. Micky explained how the quantitative measure is helpful as it can be hard to talk about gender norms and behaviours that lead to structural inequality and believes this measure helps individuals understand the gender pay gap. Similarly, Samantha explained how quantitatively measuring the gender pay gap is an essential high-level indicator that is easy to communicate. In comparison, however, Hannah, Maddison, Eleanor, and Yasmin discussed the broader societal indicators in which the term 'value' was often referred to and the social impact this has on women.

“I think it's a reflection on how we value people's contribution. So, it's actually reflective of something that, it's an indicator of something much bigger at play. We pay when we believe it's an exchange. You provide something of value to an employer, and in return, they pay” “...how you are paid, it's a reflection of how you're valued, but also, it's a perception of how the work you do is viewed” “...It reflects society's values and perceptions” and “it's unfair in its outcome, but it's also an indication of the base fairness in society” (Hannah).

Participants described the role of advocacy within businesses and organisations through to the broader community and society. Participants acknowledged that having

the responsibility and ability to influence change places them in a privileged position of power. When discussing their impact, participants described how they would like to make a difference and acknowledged that accountable responsibility comes with advising leaders. Participants described how their influence allows them to push for change for future generations.

Participants described how to create and promote positive change to progress gender equality further, explaining how gender equal pay needed to be supported and understood through education, leadership and advisership. In addition, participants described how men must become allies to women and seriously commit to gender equality. However, additional male participation is required. Men were also approached to participate in this research but opted for female representation within their organisation. This demonstrates a persistent societal perception that gender equality is a women's issue that needs to be resolved by women and that women need to adapt and change rather than society acknowledge the systematic structural barriers that reinforce these perceptions. Roles that are advocating for gender equal pay are dominated by women and seen as 'women's work'.

Sarah described how being a proud member of the rainbow community, it was vital for her to advocate for people within her community who do not necessarily have a voice. She explained how all minority groups suffer when it comes to pay equity and described how her position and role carried a lot of privilege and influence. She finds this an unusual situation, as she has much influence and can push for change.

Niamh and Maddison explained how they were passionate about equity and women's rights, and Bella explained how she wanted to make a difference. Naomi expressed her deep belief that she wanted to create change. Similarly, Niamh described her interest in delivering results and making a difference.

Hannah expressed her need for social justice and emphasised that she is a feminist at heart. She explained how she is also a businesswoman and that pay equity is the right thing to do for business. Namita explained how she is highly passionate about equity fairness as a fundamental human right. She described how she wanted her daughter to be paid fairly and to see the impact of her work through to the next generation. Micky explained how she was in the right place at the right time and how work continued from there:

“I look back to the work of people like Kate Sheppard, Ettie Rout. Good feminists, New Zealand women, and I think in my mind, is sort of a torch there that we pick up from them, and we will try and move things forward a little bit. Also, I should say, I've got daughters and nieces, so, you know, I'm very much interested in the future” (Micky).

4.4 Advocating for Gender Equality is ‘Women’s Work’

The third theme, advocating for gender equality, is ‘women’s work’, comprises of one sub-theme, representing the role of women and men in advocating for gender equality. Participants explained how men are vital in overcoming gender inequality and described how New Zealand’s culture and labour market is separated into men’s and women’s work. Participants explained how women do the vast majority of unpaid work, including unpaid caregiving work, while most men’s work is primarily paid work. Participants acknowledged that women are over-represented in industries and sectors that pay less and under-represented in higher-level jobs, highlighting that occupational segregation is a significant driver of the gender pay gap.

Participants explained how those who advocate for equal pay are primarily people who are passionate about gender equal pay. However, one participant did not want to be described as an activist but did explain how she had found herself as an ethnic female engineer pushing for pay equity. Similarly, another participant described being interested in data and having knowledge of gender equity rather than a potential interest in positive impact and change.

Participants described advocacy as standing up and amplifying other voices, being able to shout as loud as possible, and holding themselves and others accountable, which allowed them to push and drive positive change. Sarah highlighted that without accountability, people hide in the dark and make decisions behind the scenes that they do not have to justify. When describing how to hold others to account, Eleanor explained how women need to form strong alliances and how men need to become supportive allies to women, as they will be the catalysts for positive change:

“Hold yourself to account, hold others to account, and the biggest thing we can do, though, is for men to become allies to women” (Eleanor).

Participants explained how organisations in New Zealand that are dominated and led by men need good, respectful leaders that listen, understand, take responsibility, and actively demonstrate efforts to address gender inequality at work and in society to create a system-level change. Participants explained how it is important to have visible female representation and leadership presence so that women have influence to make positive change. Bella described how many women feel alone and can only rely on the female leaders within their organisations and how those leaders have generally been the HR Managers. However, Namita believed half of the public sector's CEOs are women. Samantha expanded on this and explained that some public agencies have very good female representation, although those agencies traditionally operate in female-dominated fields.

Participants described the advantages of role models, sponsors, mentors, and coaches, explaining that you can only be what you see and that may encourage others to aspire to and take the same pathway. Eleanor described how when people see a successful female leader, it is because they have been mentored or there has been a strong alliance. Eleanor highlighted that, some of it comes down to talent, but much of it comes down to who paves the pathway for you.

Participants described developing and running leadership development courses for women. However, they did not specify what these courses provided, whether they focused on changing women and how they lead, or if they looked into systemic organisational structural barriers that reinforce the perception that advocating for gender equality is women's work.

4.5 Pay Secrecy Promotes Structural Inequalities

The fourth theme, 'pay secrecy promotes structural inequalities' comprises of two sub-themes: organisational culture and sectoral differences. The first sub-theme, organisational culture, acknowledges that pay transparency can create a sense of employee value, openness, and a positive workplace culture. The second sub-theme, sector differences, identifies the contextual differences pay transparency has on public, private, and not-for-profit organisations.

4.5.1 Organisational Culture

Several participants identified cost as the primary concern or challenge of pay transparency for organisations and employers. This reflects New Zealand's neoliberal, capitalist society and economic system, focusing on profits over the cost of implementing pay transparency. Participants highlighted New Zealand's patriarchal structures and systems that privilege men and promote organisational barriers where patriarchal norms, expectations, and the status quo are not challenged. Furthermore, Maddison described how a pay secrecy culture within organisations allows for secret discrimination and how pay gaps thrive in New Zealand culture. Maddison explained how this is rooted in New Zealand's capitalist and colonial system:

“Pay gaps thrive in our culture of secrecy, and the culture of pay secrecy is, again, this is just my opinion, rooted in the whole racial capitalist and colonial system, which New Zealand is founded on. Employers don't want employees to be discussing pay because it gives them more leverage to question the system. So instead, society, the concept of society has made pay such an uncomfortable topic for people to discuss” (Maddison).

Several participants explained how a reserved and conservative New Zealand culture impacts organisations. Employers and employees are fearful and uncomfortable about sharing information. New Zealanders are uncomfortable having conversations regarding pay because people are private in New Zealand, which can make them feel challenged. Namita explained how commitment and leadership can achieve an environment where everyone is comfortable sharing data. People need to feel comfortable and safe to share their data, especially minority groups that may feel that sharing their information may result in discrimination. Nevertheless, Maddison explained how these awkward conversations could open a national discussion about pay and who society is undervaluing.

Bella, Yasmin, and Niamh explained how visibility is perceived as a threat and how employers and employees fear pay transparency. Bella described this as a fear of competition, and Niamh acknowledged that people may feel challenged. However, Yasmin explained that pay transparency could be a way for organisations to gain a competitive advantage and attract potential employees.

Several participants indicated that pay transparency would create openness and inclusion, allowing employees to feel valued and, in doing so, improve organisational culture:

“I've found the work that's required to ensure that you eliminate your gender pay gap has other benefits culturally in the organisation, and it's a very evident way of showing your staff that they're valued and respected” (Nimah).

Eleanor explained how remuneration is part of organisational culture, that should be based on merit and skills and not define gender. Similarly, Bella described an inclusive culture as being able to look at the man sitting across from you in a similar role and know that you are getting paid the same as them. Sarah explained how pay transparency is a crucial way to demonstrate to people that they are valued within their organisation or sector and could be a positive driver for overall accountability concerning decisions related to pay. She also explained that pay transparency gives employees additional bargaining power, and more ability to bargain than they would have had.

4.5.2 Sector Differences

Participants acknowledged differences within the public sector compared to the private sector. The not-for-profit and non-governmental organisations were also considered, but comparisons were primarily made between the public and private sectors. Bella explained that not-for-profits exist for altruistic reasons and pay gaps would be less acceptable within these organisations. Micky highlighted that non-governmental organisations like the National Council for Women and the Human Rights Commission are also progressing pay transparency.

Participants described how pay transparency is and has already occurred in New Zealand in the public sector. Participants explained how the public sector publishes salaries on job advertisements and develops guidance and action plans around pay transparency. Micky explained how the public sector makes up 25 percent of New Zealand's workforce and, therefore, 25 percent have had some level of pay transparency for many years. Micky described the process in New Zealand, where the public sector goes first so that the government can experiment and have some good tools to pass on to the private sector. Sarah explained how the work in the public

sector is crucial because this work needs to reach a critical mass where it can flow into sectors that are not regulated.

Samantha explained that the public sector started measuring the gender pay gap in 2000 and that the data shows a downward trend since measurement began. The downward trend has also been accelerated since the gender pay gap action plan was implemented due to the actions taken based on that analysis and understanding of pay gaps. Bella described the public sector as being more advanced than the private sector as they have been forced to be:

“The public sector was a lot, a lot more on to it because they have a lot more pressure on them from the government, in government requirements, actually about reporting, so they are a lot more engaged with the process and have been for a lot, for a lot longer” (Bella).

Hannah explained how the private sector started reporting on the gender pay gap between 2015 to 2017, with there being a lot more focus on the gender pay gap in the last five years:

“Private sector organisations, I would say in New Zealand, that reporting about the pay, gender pay gap would have only really started probably 2015/2016/2017, but in the last five years, there's been a lot more focus on it. So, you know, in the scheme of things, that's quite late, quite late in the piece” (Hannah).

However, participants did acknowledge that some private organisations are ahead of the curve and already implementing pay transparency. Participants described how the private sector differs from the public sector, with most participants relating this to organisational size and New Zealand's unique business environment context. Bella explained that 90 percent of New Zealand comprises of small businesses, and Niamh highlighted that small and medium-sized organisations are the backbone of New Zealand's economy. Niamh's perception of small and medium-sized businesses was that they were not against pay transparency. They are simply trying to run businesses in a challenging environment and have not thought to do any analysis. Bella explained that messaging around pay transparency is tailored around large organisations because they are perceived as the only ones that can afford to implement pay transparency. However, Bella highlighted that New Zealand must also bring small

businesses on the pay transparency journey, stating that “*diversity, equity, and inclusion are for everyone*” (Bella). Bella proposed that small businesses could be the easiest and quickest movers of pay transparency. Similarly, Yasmin explained that small organisations might be more accessible or different from a more comprehensive corporate and that pay transparency would not be hard to implement in a small organisation.

However, Namita described privacy concerns around small numbers, and Samantha explained how small organisations can not conclusively calculate data because organisations need at least 20 people in each comparative group. Micky explained how overseas, there have been issues around fluctuating numbers and the definition of an employee. She suggested this may be an issue in New Zealand due to a high number of contractors in the workforce. Micky also explained that, when an organisation is an international company, it may adhere to overseas legislation and already be reporting but reporting using a different metric. Namita explained how change within the private sector will take time:

“It's not an overnight thing. It's, it's a complicated problem. It will take time. It's a long game” (Namita).

4.6 Planning for Positive Change and Impact

The fifth theme, planning for positive change and impact, comprises of two sub-themes: collaboration and control, and intersectional lens. The first sub-theme, collaboration and control, acknowledges that pay transparency requires a collective approach. The second sub-theme, the intersectional lens, identifies additional compounding barriers for women other than gender.

4.6.1 Collaboration and Control

Participants were asked if pay transparency is an employer or government responsibility. Participant perceptions differed, with most participants describing how responsibility sits with the employer and the government. Sarah and Bella were cautious of government involvement, highlighting that if pay transparency is the government's responsibility, there will be resistance from the private sector. Sarah believes that when you put the power back on organisations, you can create systemic change; otherwise, a change in government could mean a shift in compliance or

mandates. Bella explained how pay transparency would be compliance-driven and cost organisations if the government was involved.

Eleanor described how good organisations in New Zealand are already implementing pay transparency and how bad organisations will try and find a workaround. Similarly, Naomi explained how most businesses in New Zealand would have to be dragged “*kicking and screaming*” and would feel if the government were involved that they would be “*poking their noses into their business*”, reflective of New Zealand being a “*nanny state*”.

However, Nimah explained that if you want a level of transparency across the economy, some level of regulation may be needed. She also highlighted the influence that encouraging and motivating people and organisations can have, without introducing legislation:

“I think, however, there’s no, there’s no single way that’s a silver bullet, and I know that some people think that if you legislate for it, they’ll solve the problem, which it won’t, so there’s other nations where pay transparency has been legislated and it hasn’t closed gender pay gaps” (Nimah).

Similarly, Hannah described how different forms of mandates have moved things quicker than voluntary involvement. She gave the example of the New Zealand Stock Exchange mandating the reporting of women on boards of listed companies. Before 2012, the percentage of women on boards had stagnated, but after mandating, there was an initial rise and impact.

Maddison explained how the Human Rights Commission has been pushing for a full suite of pay transparency measures and how she would fully endorse this. This would include making it mandatory for all employers to publish the payment of any roles they advertise, making it mandatory for businesses to report on their pay gaps, and the illegality around having grounds for employers never to bar employees speaking about pay, or anything to do with remuneration. However, Maddison did highlight that lobby groups, such as Business New Zealand, influence the government and are significant stakeholders. So therefore, her perception was that the government is risk averse to passing anything, especially coming into an election year. Maddison also described how pay transparency is not an urgent priority but in the nice-to-do basket.

The majority of participants, including Sarah, Nimah, Bella, and Micky, explained how the responsibility of pay transparency sits with both organisations and the government and that pay transparency requires a collective approach and efforts to develop good relations and involvement from unions, professional work bodies, advocates and lobby groups:

"I say it's a mix. I mean, I think you've got to have the leaders of organisations and leaders of nations having some level of alignment, but I don't think it's one or the other. I also think that the trade union movement needs to demonstrate leadership as well. You know, and I think it takes a collective effort really" (Niamh).

Hannah explained how the government set up a committee in 2022 to look at pay transparency and believes that unless the government mandates pay transparency, there is only so far the work of industry bodies and organisations pushing for pay transparency can go. Similarly, Micky described responsibility as being a joint issue. She explained how the government itself has been reporting at an organisational level and undertaking policy activities to reduce the gender pay gap. Micky's perspective was that the public sector shows leadership and provides tools for reducing pay gaps, including measuring the gender pay gap. Eleanor and Micky also described the media's influence and explained that there is a role for the media to play in promoting people's understanding of pay transparency.

4.6.2 Intersectional Lens

Several participants, including Sarah, Namita, Hannah, Micky, Niamh, Maddison, and Bella, explained how pay equity is not just about gender and how all minority groups suffer when it comes to pay inequality. Namita described how the gender pay gap has a compounding effect on women:

"There is a compounding effect as well for women from Māori, Pacific, Asian and ethnic backgrounds, and there can be other barriers like age, you know, ethnicity, members of rainbow communities, disabled people" (Namita).

Participants described how New Zealand's initiatives are focused not only on gender but also on Māori, Pacific, Asian, and ethnic pay gaps. Namita explained that she had not seen many initiatives at a global level that are examples of intersectional policy,

as most are solely gender related. Namita highlighted, that this is a unique position to be in because New Zealand is leading the way in bringing attention to the intersectionality issues of the pay gap and that there is more to know about the compounding barriers for women and people.

Hannah explained how incorporating intersectionality with pay gaps is critical:

“Otherwise, all New Zealand would have are just a lot of Pākehā women hoping New Zealand addresses the gender pay gap but not Māori, Pacific, and other ethnicities” (Hannah).

However, Hannah also described how putting measures in place will be complex as it is usually easier to identify who is male and who is female if you are looking at it from a sex basis, not from a gender identity basis; similarly, there are complexities with ethnicity. She explained how once the gender pay gap measure for all organisations is in place, efforts could then be expanded on, although these measures will be a lot harder to measure than the gender pay gap.

“Nobody said it was easy, but it's the right thing to do, and sometimes the right thing to do is not the easy thing to do” (Hannah).

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented five main themes and seven sub-themes. The five main themes included: 1) open and transparent pay; 2) advocating for change; 3) advocating for gender equality is ‘women’s work’; 4) pay secrecy promotes structural inequalities; and 5) planning for positive change and impact. The seven sub-themes included: 1) defining pay transparency; 2) advocates motivations; 3) the role of women and men; 4) organisational culture; 5) sector differences; 6) collaboration and control; and 7) intersectional lens.

The first theme, open and transparent pay, included one sub-theme, defining pay transparency and established participants’ perceptions of the gender pay gap and pay transparency. Participants described pay transparency as an essential component in closing the gender pay gap but challenging to implement. Participants highlighted the importance of understanding the gender pay gap and how it measures inequality, how organisations need to be adequately resourced to analyse their gender pay gap data, and how influence needs to be integrated with education and support so that

employers are well-equipped to analyse their data and understand the drivers of their organisational pay gaps. Additionally, participants explained how pay transparency might work. However, there were varying and inconsistent definitions and descriptions of pay transparency, along with concepts and understanding of how it will work.

The second theme, advocating for change, included one sub-theme, advocates motivations. Participants described the significance of the gender pay gap and explained how they are in privileged positions to create positive change. Participants described the gender pay gap as being real and something that should not exist in modern New Zealand society. Participants acknowledged that there has been little progress in narrowing the gender pay gap in recent years and that the relevance of the gender pay gap may be lost. Participants described the role of advocacy within businesses and organisations through to the broader community and society. Participants acknowledged that having the responsibility and ability to influence change places them in a privileged position of power.

The third theme, advocating for gender equality, is 'women's work', included one sub-theme, the role of men and women. Participants explained how men are vital in overcoming gender inequality and described how New Zealand's culture and labour market is separated into men's and women's work. Participants explained how those advocating for equal pay are primarily people passionate about gender equal pay and explained how women need to form strong alliances. Participants described how men need to become supportive allies to women as they will be the catalysts for positive change.

The fourth theme, pay secrecy, promotes structural inequalities, included two sub-themes. Sub-theme one, organisational culture, acknowledged that pay transparency could create value, openness, and a positive workplace culture. Sub-theme two, sector differences, found that participants identified the contextual differences pay transparency has on public, private, and not-for-profit organisations. Participants described how a pay secrecy culture within organisations allows for secret discrimination and how pay gaps thrive in New Zealand culture. Participants indicated that pay transparency would create openness and inclusion, allowing employees to feel valued and, in doing so, improve organisational culture. Participants acknowledged differences within the public sector compared to the private sector, with

the public sector being more advanced than the private sector as they have been forced to be. Participants described how the private sector differs from the public sector, with most participants relating this to organisational size and New Zealand's unique business environment context.

Theme five, planning for positive change and impact, included two sub-themes, collaboration, and control and intersectional lens. Sub-theme one, collaboration and control, acknowledged that pay transparency requires a collective approach. Sub-theme two, intersectional lens, found that participants identified additional compounding barriers for women other than gender. Participants explained how the responsibility of pay transparency sits with both organisations and the government. Pay transparency requires a collective approach and efforts to develop good relations and involvement from unions, professional work bodies, advocates, and lobby groups. Participants explained how pay equity is not just about gender and how all minority groups suffer when it comes to pay inequality. Participants explained that they had not seen many initiatives at a global level that are examples of intersectional policy. This highlights that New Zealand is in a unique position to be leading the way in terms of bringing attention to the intersectionality issues of the pay gap and that there is more to know about the compounding barriers for people and women.

The next chapter, Discussion Chapter (Chapter Five), will discuss the significance and contribution of the main findings of this research in the context of the existing academic literature to further identify and analyse the relevance and importance of similarities and differences (Thorne, 2016), demonstrating how this relates to the literature and expand on these similarities and differences (Thorne, 2016) to create a deeper understanding of pay transparency and the gender pay gap.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings of the data collection. It identified five main themes and seven sub-themes from the semi-structured interviews with participants. The main themes of participants' perceptions are: 1) open and transparent pay; 2) advocating for change; 3) advocating for gender equality is 'women's work'; 4) pay secrecy promotes structural inequalities; and 5) planning for positive change and impact.

The themes and subthemes found: 1) pay transparency is an essential component in closing the gender pay gap but is challenging to implement; 2) participants are in privileged positions to create positive change; 3) men are vital in overcoming gender inequality; 4) pay secrecy allows for secret discrimination and, enables pay gaps to thrive; 5) pay transparency requires a collective approach and, there are additional compounding barriers for women other than gender.

The Discussion Chapter (Chapter Five) will reflect on the Literature Review Chapter (Chapter One) and Findings Chapter (Chapter Four) to further identify and analyse the relevance and importance of similarities and differences (Thorne, 2016), demonstrating how the findings of this research relate to the literature and (Thorne, 2016) to create a deeper understanding of pay transparency and the gender pay gap. The following sections will follow the order of the main five themes.

5.2 Open and Transparent Pay

In contrast to Frey (2021), this research found that pay transparency is not a 'simple' tool (Frey, 2021). The impacts and causes of complexity are primarily driven by: 1) data; 2) differing regulations; and 3) interpreting and responding to previous research that does not include the contextual detail that is necessary. This study's findings more closely link to that of Hall (2004), Lewis et al. (2018), Bölingen (2022), and Barker et al. (2019), where, similar to Hall (2004), an important issue emerging from these findings is that the broad definition and levels of pay transparency create complexities (Hall, 2004). Similarly, differing definitions result in data collection and analysis inconsistencies, producing different patterns and conclusions (Lewis et al., 2018). Datasets with varying sector regulations, legislation, policy, and size are creating

different outcomes (Chan, 2022; Lewis et al., 2018). In addition, international pay transparency laws are diverse and complicated (Bölingen, 2022), and research is varied and broad, making it difficult to draw general conclusions for policy and research (Bölingen, 2022). Furthermore, research only examines partial aspects of a pay transparency law (Bölingen, 2022). Therefore, Baker et al. (2019) highlight that limited research sheds light on pay transparency's effectiveness (Baker et al., 2019). The effectiveness of pay transparency depends on the type of pay transparency (Bölingen, 2022), and pay transparency processes are sometimes shallow (Bölingen, 2022). Similarly, participants all had slightly different definitions of pay transparency. They all indicated that pay transparency was complex and depended on the country's context, regulation, business environment, and business size.

Although there are varying, inconsistent definitions and approaches to pay transparency, previous literature has found that pay transparency is an essential component of closing the gender pay gap. Data from several studies support this and have identified pay transparency as being vital in closing the gender pay gap (Baker et al. 2019; Frey, 2019; Obloj & Zenger, 2020; Reilly, 2019; Stanberry, 2018), with help from pay transparency tools including, employer pay gap reporting, equal pay audits, and job classification systems. The findings are consistent with extant research; however, they differ slightly, where several participants identified pay transparency as one of the components to close the gender pay gap, which will need to be combined with other tools. Several participants explained how, while pay transparency is an essential component, it is complicated and only one of the tools in the toolkit to combat the gender pay gap. They also explained how it will not fix everything because it is only one component, and one of the tools to combat the gender pay gap. Pay transparency initiatives need to be introduced in conjunction with education about the pay gap and pay transparency for it to succeed. Extant research found educating, communicating and engaging with multiple stakeholders in the early stages of policy planning helps ensure buy-in (Frey, 2021). Small business needs are specific to education and support to upskill, to be able to collect and analyse the data, and in introducing pay transparency. A pay transparency country case study on France highlighted how they targeted small and medium-sized organisations by offering training courses to those in charge of small and medium-sized businesses to help them calculate the gender pay gap and set up corrective measures (Frey, 2021).

Online training sessions were also carried out, and a hotline was put in place to answer any questions from employers (Frey, 2021).

5.3 Advocating for Change

This theme explains the significance of the gender pay gap, what it takes to create change, who those who advocate for gender equal pay are, and why they advocate. This was an unexpected finding but highlights the systemic challenges of reducing the gender pay gap and introduces how pay transparency can smash the patriarchy. Politically active women are seen as a threat to the patriarchy (Chenoweth & Marks, 2022), simply because they are women (Bardall, Bjarnegard & Piscopo, 2020). There can be resistance to politically active women. This has been labelled as violence against women in politics (Bardall et al., 2020). As illustrated in the findings, advocating for gender equality is seen as women's work, and important work because the gender pay gap is not perceived to be relevant or existing these days. Advocacy is supporting an idea, need, person, or group (London, 2010). Advocates speak out and take action to effect change (London, 2010). Within organisations, advocacy can involve championing a policy, a person, or an effort to benefit employees, customers, or community members (London, 2010). Social advocacy may involve proactively representing others to create public pressure for a cause (London, 2010). Advocacy is essential to fight gender inequality (Goetz & Jenkins, 2018; London, 2010).

5.3.1 Advocates' Motivations

Contrary to expectations, participants described how some individuals do not believe that the gender pay gap is relevant to them and that society is accepting of it. According to multiple participants, some of the most vigorous deniers that the gender pay gap exists were women in senior positions, who believed that the gender pay gap was happening elsewhere and not to them. This finding was unexpected and suggests that even with the considerable amount of literature having been published on the gender pay gap (Bishu & Alkadry, 2017; Blau & Kahn, 2017; Coxon, 2019; Research New Zealand, 2020; Stanberry, 2018; Polachek, 2019; Gulyas et al., 2021), and with previous studies conclusively showing that there is a gender pay gap (Bishu & Alkadry, 2017; Blau & Kahn, 2017; Coxon, 2019; Research New Zealand, 2020; Stanberry, 2018; Polachek, 2019; Gulyas et al., 2021), individuals, regardless of their gender are still questioning if the gender pay gap is real.

There is a possible explanation for this result that is consistent with the literature, as Charlesworth and Macdonald (2014) highlighted that it has only been very recently that people have started to pay attention to the fact that there is a gender pay gap. However, this finding was from almost ten years ago. There may be generational gaps or differences, and the women in senior professional positions may be older workers and or members of a privileged group or class. This finding suggests that attention not only needs to be given to designing processes to address the systemic issue (Charlesworth & Macdonald, 2014) of the gender pay gap but also address the perceived relevance of the gender pay gap within organisations and New Zealand society.

The findings in the present study are consistent with the extant literature about participants' characteristics and motivation to become an advocate, centring on participants' strength of conviction (London, 2010) and drive to do what is right. Self-confidence and transformational skills are also characteristics that, according to London (2010), are central to the motivation to become an advocate. London (2010) believes these characteristics are needed to capitalise and establish goals for positive change (London, 2010). Furthermore, London (2010) explains another set of individual characteristics around achieving goals and bringing about positive outcomes or change. These characteristics centre on an individual's skills, abilities, and personality, focusing on political and change management skills, persistence, strength of personality, and ability to learn from their experiences (London, 2010).

The participants' were highly skilled individuals with transformational, political, and change management skills. This is reflective of the high-level positions and organisations they are in, in accordance with the recruitment criteria and requirement for participants to be HR managers, policy analysts, or policy makers actively engaged in work on the gender pay gap and advocating for gender equal pay. While this study did not seek to investigate what motivates people to advocate for eradicating the gender pay gap, this emerged from the data. The chosen methodology, interpretive description, and semi-structured, in-depth interviews (Thorne et al., 2004), enabled participants to participate in a reflective process (Agee, 2009). Participants reflected on their experiences and learnings to better understand their behaviours and experiences (Kankam, 2019). This highlights the value of a qualitative approach (Agee, 2009). Participants explained the significance of the gender pay gap and how

they are motivated to create positive change for future generations through their work as HR Managers, policy analysts, or policy makers. Participants highlighted that their roles put them in a privileged position of power to use their abilities and skills for positive change.

5.4 Advocating for Gender Equality is ‘Women’s Work’

This section discusses the role of women and men in advocating for gender equal pay. The key findings of theme three, highlight that men have a vital role in overcoming gender inequality. This section also links back to the key findings of the previous section, advocates’ motivations, the limitations of London (2010) and gender-related change. Similar to extant research, one key finding was that advocating for gender equality has been led by women (McGeorge & Bilen-Green, 2021). The first indication of this is that although this study did not specify that only women could participate, fewer men responded to calls for participation. Furthermore, the men that responded to the recruitment advertisement then deferred to women in their workplace to respond instead. Findings differ from the literature slightly where McGeorge and Bilen-Green (2021) state, gender equality has historically been led by women. This statement was not extended to the present. This study’s findings highlight that this is not a historical problem but a contemporary one: advocating for gender equal pay is perceived to be ‘women’s work’.

The disproportionate amount of unpaid work women are responsible for, and the value put on women’s paid work was consistently communicated in the literature (Albertyn et al., 2014; Charlesworth & Macdonald, 2014; Hall, 2004; Oelz et al., 2013; Parker & Donnelly, 2020; Smith et al., 2017) and in the Findings Chapter (Chapter Four). This is comparable to advocating for gender equality in work and reflected in how participants expressed that a disproportionate number of women are responsible for promoting the value and benefit of gender equal pay (McGeorge & Bilen-Green, 2021). These findings suggest that women are in the business of caring. It is women’s work to care for others, be this within organisations, unpaid child or elder care, paid care work, or work that cares to advocate for women (McGeorge & Bilen-Green, 2021). Women are the ones who care for others, care for what happens to others, and care to make a difference for others (McGeorge & Bilen-Green, 2021).

It was highlighted that these women were in privileged, senior positions and possibly reflective of class privilege. On the one hand, this is a positive element as it is important to have visible female representation and leadership presence so that women have influence and impact to create positive change. Indeed, this is to be celebrated especially as Grybaite (2006) acknowledges that pay inequality affects the position of women in the workforce as well as the status and power of women in society (Grybaite, 2006). However, as the participants discussed, having men as allies and advocates for pay transparency is important.

There is limited research on the men's role as change agents and allies of gender equality (Moser & Branscombe, 2022). Furthermore, there is limited research supporting that this is or will actively happen. This is reflective of gender equality being 'women's work.' This limited research is based within university environments (Anicha, Burnett & Bilen-Green, 2015; Bilen-Green et al., 2015), and therefore best practice is being ignored within different organisational settings and social levels. Furthermore, there can be a degree of 'superficial instrumentality' behind framing the business case for gender equality (Cullen & Murphy, 2018). These findings suggest that this may not be something men are willing to do as men are advantaged by the status quo and seek to protect the status quo (Cullen & Murphy, 2018). The findings suggest that men can be allies for gender equality. However, limited research supports that this is or will actively happen, suggesting that men may resist progressive social change (Flood, Dragiewicz & Pease, 2021)

5.5 Pay Secrecy Promotes Structural Inequalities

This section discusses theme four, pay secrecy promotes structural inequalities, and follows the two key findings and sub-themes: pay transparency can create a sense of employee value, openness, and a positive workplace culture, and the contextual differences pay transparency has on public, private, and not-for-profit organisations.

5.5.1 Organisational culture

Participants acknowledged that pay transparency can create a feeling of being valued in the workplace, openness, and a positive workplace culture. One participant described pay secrecy, whereas all other participants had a focus on transparency and visibility, which is the opposite of pay secrecy. These participants described the fear

of pay transparency and explained how a reserved and conservative New Zealand culture impacts organisations. Previous research and the current findings are focused on visibility or transparency and not necessarily the issue of pay secrecy. There has been relatively little research on pay secrecy in comparison to gender pay inequalities (Belogolovsky & Bamberger, 2014; Janićijević, 2016, Trotter et al., 2017).

Pay secrecy reinforces biases and often hides structural inequalities and pay discrimination (Trotter et al., 2017). It is thought that the gender gap persists because it is hidden (Baker et al., 2019; Trotter et al., 2017) and that pay secrecy advantages organisations (Janićijević, 2016). Similarly, current findings described how a pay secrecy culture within organisations allows for secret discrimination and that pay gaps thrive in New Zealand culture. This is rooted in New Zealand's capitalist and colonial system, and that society has made pay an uncomfortable topic for people to discuss. In addition, several participants explained how a reserved and conservative New Zealand culture impacts organisations with employers and employees feeling fearful. The current findings explained how these awkward conversations could open a national conversation about pay and who society is undervaluing. Similarly, several participants indicated that pay transparency would create openness and inclusion, allowing employees to feel valued and improve organisational culture.

In addition, extant research acknowledged that organisational practices, processes, and actions result in and maintain gender inequalities (Acker, 2006), with a considerable amount of literature supporting Acker's theory of gendered organisations (Albertyn et al., 2014; Bishu & Alkadry, 2017; Grybaite, 2006; Hall, 2004; Williams & Cooper, 2004; Williams, 2000). Acker (2012) explains that the gender pay gap is related to the gender segregation of jobs, occupations, and hierarchical positions (Acker, 2012) and that gendered substructures including organisational processes, organisational culture, interactions on the job, and gendered identities help to explain gender inequalities in organisations (Acker, 2012).

5.5.2 Sector Differences

The current findings identified the contextual differences pay transparency has on public, private, and not-for-profit organisations. Similar to the literature, this research acknowledges that there are differences within the public sector compared to the private sector, that the public sector has led the way (Parker & Donnelly, 2020) and

perform better than other sectors in closing the gender pay gap (Bishu & Alkadry, 2017). This research found that pay transparency is and has already been occurring in New Zealand in the public sector, how the public sector is already publishing salaries on job advertisements, and how the public sector are creating and developing guidance and action plans around pay transparency. In line with this, this study found that the public sector makes up 25 percent of New Zealand's workforce and, therefore, 25 percent have had some level of pay transparency for many years. Furthermore, the public sector started measuring the gender pay gap in 2000 and that the data shows a downward trend since measurement began. In addition, this research found that the work in the public sector is crucial because it needs to reach a critical mass where it can flow into sectors that are not regulated. Another finding is that the public sector is more advanced than the private sector as regulation is effective in creating change.

This study highlighted New Zealand's labour force size, organisational size, and unique business environment context. Participants explained that 90 percent of New Zealand comprises of small businesses and that small and medium-sized organisations are the backbone of New Zealand's economy. Similarly, messaging around pay transparency is tailored around large organisations. However, New Zealand also needs to bring small businesses on the pay transparency journey.

This study found that the private sector started reporting on the gender pay gap in 2015 to 2017, with there being a lot more focus on the gender pay gap in the last five years. Similarly, research has found that there are demands within the private sector for more transparency about pay (Baker et al., 2019). However, pay transparency is rare outside of the public sector (Ramachandran, 2011) as private sector employers continue to discourage discussions about pay among their employees (Trotter et al., 2017). Research has found that more attention needs to be paid to the private sector (Charlesworth & Macdonald, 2014). However, findings in the present study found there are implications around privacy related to small numbers as small organisations cannot categorically calculate data because organisations need at least 20 people in each comparative group. Small numbers risk individuals being identified (New Zealand Government, 2023a).

5.6 Planning for Positive Change and Impact

This section discusses theme five, planning for positive change and impact, and follows the two sub-themes: collaboration and control and intersectional lens. Two key findings include pay transparency requiring a collective approach, and there are additional compounding barriers for women other than gender.

5.6.1 Collaboration and Control

Findings in the present study are consistent with extant research, as there is considerable attention and ongoing debate around pay transparency legislation, policy, and government participation (Baker et al., 2019; Frey, 2021; Gulyas et al., 2021; Reilly, 2019). This study found that participant views varied, with the majority describing how responsibility sits with the employer and the government. In addition, participants were cautious of government involvement believing that when you put the power back on organisations, you can create systemic change. In line with this, a change in government could mean a change to compliance or mandates. In addition, some regulation without legislation may be an option. This study found that forms of government mandate have moved things quicker than voluntary involvement. However, the majority of participants explained how the responsibility of pay transparency sits with both organisations and the government and that pay transparency requires a collective approach and efforts to develop good relations and involvement from unions, professional work bodies, advocates, and lobby groups.

The current study found that pay transparency will contribute to closing the gender pay gap, but not on its own. This differs slightly from the literature, as previous studies have had a focus solely on pay transparency. This study found that pay transparency is complicated. It is an essential component and one of the tools in the toolkit to combat the gender pay gap, but it is not going to fix everything. It may be the case that pay transparency is complicated because it is a relatively new concept (Baker et al., 2019; Frey, 2021; Gulyas et al., 2021; Reilly, 2019), that has limited research evaluating pay transparency policies (Baker et al., 2019; Frey, 2021; Gulyas et al., 2021; Reilly, 2019), and that, international pay transparency laws are complicated and diverse (Bölingen, 2022). Furthermore, there are varied and broad studies, making it difficult to draw general conclusions for policy and research (Bölingen, 2022). In addition, research also examines partial aspects of a pay transparency law (Bölingen,

2022). However, overall studies have conclusively shown that, there are positive effects of pay transparency including reductions in the gender pay gap (Baker et al., 2019; Bennedsen et al., 2019; Blundell, 2020; Jones & Kaya 2022; Obloj & Zenger, 2020). In line with this, these findings suggest that policies need to be carefully created, implemented, and managed (Trotter et al., 2017).

5.6.2 Intersectional Lens

An important issue emerging from these findings is that there are additional compounding barriers that exist for women other than gender. This is reflective of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991; Crenshaw, 2013) and how race, ethnicity, gender, class and other individual characteristics overlap and intersect with one another (Coaston, 2019). Similarly, this study found that pay gaps require an intersectional lens due to minority groups suffering additional compounding barriers in pay equity. Furthermore, New Zealand's public sector initiatives are focused not only on gender but also on Māori, Pacific, Asian, and ethnic pay gaps. Not many initiatives at a global level are examples of intersectional policy, as most are solely gender related (Frey, 2021). This study found that New Zealand is in a unique position to be leading the way in terms of bringing attention to intersectionality issues of the pay gap and that there is more to know about the compounding barriers for people and women. However, research on the gender pay gap, pay transparency and intersectional policy is sparse and in its infancy. The OECD countries that report data with an intersectional framework include Canada, Mexico, the United States, and New Zealand. These countries collect and report earnings data by gender, race, or ethnicity (Frey, 2021). Best practice includes acknowledging that there are no homogenous women and understanding how additional factors including race, ethnicity, class, and gender, intersect and can lead to more significant pay gaps (Frey, 2021). In addition, public sector departments in New Zealand are expected to report gender pay gaps by mean and median pay and gender pay gaps by organisational group, level of seniority, tenure, age, ethnicity, occupation, and role (Frey, 2021). This study found that incorporating intersectionality is vital to understand various intersecting forms of discrimination. Putting measures in place will be complex when not basing these on sex but rather gender identity. However, once the measures for gender are in place these could be expanded.

5.7 Chapter Summary

In conclusion, the significant and unexpected findings that differed from or contrasted with the literature include findings that: 1) pay transparency is not a 'simple' tool; 2) pay transparency is only one component that needs to be combined with other tools to close the gender pay gap; 3) women taking the lead on gender equality is not a historical problem but a contemporary one; 4) individuals, including women, do not believe that the gender pay gap is accurate or relevant to them; and 5) there is no evidence of men outside of universities actively performing the role of change agents.

The next chapter, the Conclusion Chapter (Chapter Six), will summarise the research and findings, identify the research outcomes, including how the research question is answered, and then outline the contributions, significance, and limitations of this research and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter provides a summary of the research and its findings. The chapter identifies the research outcomes, including how the research question was answered. It then outlines the contributions and significance of this research along with the limitations. The final sections of the chapter include recommendations for future research and closing comments. The key arguments in this chapter, in line with the contributions and significance of this research, include the importance and relevance of this study's results. This research had an alternative perspective to research concentrated on those affected by the gender pay gap, focusing instead on those working on closing the gender pay gap to create positive change. Contrary to extant research, this thesis has revealed that pay transparency is not a 'simple' tool (Frey, 2021). An unexpected finding also arose from the study's chosen methodology and the decision to interview those advocating for gender equal pay, which found that the motivation of advocates centred on participants' strength of conviction (London, 2010) and drive to do what is right.

6.2 Research Outcomes

The aim of this research was to contribute to the developing knowledge of gender inequality, the gender pay gap, and pay transparency. This study seeks to answer the research question: Is pay transparency key to closing the gender pay gap? This research aimed to discover what role pay transparency plays in positive change by exploring participants' perceptions of pay transparency and the gender pay gap. The most appropriate paradigm for this study was identified as being the interpretive paradigm as it approaches knowledge by emphasising the importance of perceptions to understand social reality (Kankam, 2019) by seeking to explore people's experiences, views, or perspectives of these experiences (Kankam, 2019) and deals with social truth or reality (Kankam, 2019) to recognise the subjective meaning of social action. This research used interpretive descriptive methodology to describe, interpret, and understand (Smythe, 2012) participants' experiences and perspectives on the gender pay gap and pay transparency while also accounting for differences in experiences and perspectives between participants (Thompson Burdine et al., 2021).

Primary research was conducted among HR Managers, policy analysts, and policy makers in the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. Participants had to be actively engaged in work on the gender pay gap and advocating for gender equal pay. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with 11 participants. All participants were female.

In answer to the research question: Is pay transparency key to closing the gender pay gap? This study has found that pay transparency is: 1) an essential component in closing the gender pay gap; 2) not a simple tool or a quick fix; 3) will contribute to closing the gender pay gap; and, 4) needs to be combined with other tools to close the gender pay gap.

First, this thesis found that pay transparency is a tool to identify and address the gender pay gap (Baker et al., (2019); Frey (2021); Obloj & Zenger, (2020); Reilly (2019); Stanberry (2018). Second, and in contrast to Frey (2021), this research found that pay transparency is not a 'simple' tool (Frey, 2021), due to differing definitions, access to data, datasets with varying legislation, policy, and dataset size, varying regulations for public, private and not-for-profit sectors within different countries contexts (Chan, 2022; Lewis et al., 2018). These differences result in inconsistencies around data collection and analysis, producing different patterns and conclusions due to the exact specifications used. Third, this research identified pay transparency as one of the components to close the gender pay gap. A fourth main finding was the need to combine pay transparency with other tools.

Several main conclusions can be drawn from these critical findings, including the overarching concept that pay transparency is not a simple or quick fix. Pay transparency is complicated. This is because of the multiple levels and complexities of gender discrimination within societies and organisations and the fact that pay transparency fails to address the root cause of gender discrimination. Pay secrecy reinforces gender discrimination (Trotter et al., 2017). Pay transparency can help investigate, identify, and report gender pay discrimination. However, pay secrecy could to some extent continue, hidden behind pay bands, range dimensions, or through data manipulation, related to reporting specifications. This could continue if there are no societal or organisational system changes that alter and eliminate critical drivers of gender inequality. These key drivers include gendered structures (Ford et

al., 2021), gendered segregation of jobs, occupations, and hierarchical positions (Acker, 2012), the role and position of women in society, and the intertwined systems and power dynamics of neoliberal, patriarchal social structures (Crowley, 2013; Ford et al., 2021; Smith, 2016) which obstruct and hinder social norms, expectations, attitudes and behaviours, restricting the ability of women to contribute to society, organisations and the economy.

This thesis found that the most important social systems that hold back pay transparency and gender equal pay are New Zealand's patriarchal, neoliberal, capitalist, and colonial systems. New Zealand society and organisations are risk-averse due to a reserved and conservative culture, constructed within New Zealand's capitalist and colonial system (Came & McCreanor, 2015; McMaster, 2013; Orange, 2012). Participants described how pay is an uncomfortable topic and that a culture of pay secrecy allows for secret discrimination that contributes to the gender pay gap. In addition, individuals are uneasy about sharing information and having uncomfortable conversations regarding pay because people in New Zealand are private. Furthermore, pay secrecy reinforces biases and often hides structural inequalities and pay discrimination (Trotter et al., 2017).

However, conversations about pay and who society is undervaluing could open a national conversation. Nevertheless, there is resistance to change or challenge the status quo, benefiting the privileged and advantaged groups within New Zealand. This may primarily be due to privileged individuals not believing that the gender pay gap is real or relevant to them and that society accepts this.

Women are the change makers, by leading and advocating for gender equality (McGeorge & Bilen-Green, 2021). This is reflective of how society values women and women's work. This study found that women need to form strong alliances with men and that men need to become supportive allies to women as men will be the catalysts for positive change. Organisations also need to actively demonstrate efforts to address gender inequality at work and in society to create a system-level change. Men can be allies for gender equality, but there is limited research supporting that this is or will actively happen, suggesting men may resist progressive social change (Flood et al., 2021).

Pay transparency is perceived to be an essential component in closing the gender pay gap but, not significant enough to close it. In addition, participants perceived pay transparency as a tool that needs to be combined with other tools or measures to close the gender pay gap and that pay transparency by itself would not close the gender pay gap. Tools include pay gap reporting, auditing systems, policies, and procedures. Furthermore, knowing how to correctly implement pay transparency is critical. The broad definitions of pay transparency hinder data collection and analysis (Lewis et al., 2018). This includes different countries varying regulations, legislation, and policy, along with access and size of the data, creating different research outcomes (Bölingen, 2022). Data collection across organisations and countries is inconsistent (Bölingen, 2022) and does not necessarily capture the information required to effect or bring about change.

6.3 Contributions and Significance of Research

This study contributes to knowledge about pay transparency and the gender pay gap. Research has been restricted to focus on individuals, occupations, and industries affected by the measuring of the gender pay gap and the differences in pay between women and men. Less attention has been given to those working to reduce the gender pay gap, who they are, and how they will create positive change. This research provides an original and alternative perspective of those who work to close the gender pay gap to create positive change, in roles such as HR Managers, policy analysts, or policy makers and includes perspectives from the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. This research includes participants' perspectives on how pay transparency is already working within New Zealand and internationally, and how best to apply this thoroughly within a New Zealand context. Furthermore and contrary to extant research, this thesis has revealed that pay transparency is not a 'simple' tool (Frey, 2021). In addition, and unlike previous pay transparency research that has a core singular focus on pay transparency (Baker et al. 2019; Frey, 2019; Obloj & Zenger, 2020; Reilly, 2019; Stanberry, 2018); this thesis has found that pay transparency is not a standalone resolution to close the gender pay gap, nor is it a quick fix. Furthermore, pay transparency is only one component that will need to be combined with other tools to close the gender pay gap.

An unexpected finding to emerge in this study that arose from the interpretive description methodology and the decision to interview those advocating for gender equal pay, was the motivation of advocates, centring on participants' strength of conviction (London, 2010) and drive to do what is right. The main motivations of participants centred around wanting to: 1) change the perceptions of those who do not think the gender pay gap is relevant to them and 2) the slow progression of closing the gender pay gap and the need to create positive change for future generations. This finding does not answer the research question – Is pay transparency key to closing the gender pay gap? However, it does add to our understanding of what it takes to create change and who the change makers are. These unexpected findings present part of the complex picture of whether pay transparency can smash the patriarchy and create a gender equal society. The choice of methods potentially empowered participants, providing them with an opportunity to reflect (Agee, 2009), through the interview process (Thorne et al., 2004), on their experiences and knowledge (Kankam, 2019), when analysing what role, they and pay transparency have in positive change. This evaluation and research method is empowering when it offers an opportunity for action, directed at changing the balance of power in society and organisations (Ross, 2017). Interpretive description (Thorne et al., 1997) enabled participants to direct this path and opened them up to reflection.

6.4 Research Limitations

One limitation of this study was the small sample size. Although consistent with a Master's thesis scope, 11 participants are a relatively small sample size. This sample size may be insufficient (Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe & Young, 2018) and may be considered a threat to validity (Vasileiou et al., 2018). However, choosing a suitable sample size for qualitative research is debatable and uncertain (Vasileiou et al., 2018). Samples in qualitative research tend to be small in order to support the depth of analysis (Vasileiou et al., 2018). Selecting the correct sampling method that ensures useable data from each participant may allow for fewer participants (Vasileiou et al., 2018). In some cases, a minimum of 10 participants is acceptable, depending on the type of research and research question (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Hennink, Kaiser and Marconi (2017) indicate that nine interviews are adequate for reaching a point where no additional issues are identified or codes are developed (Hennink et al., 2017).

Next, this study's broad research question included public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. This could be narrowed down to independently investigate each sector and compare sectors. Pay transparency and gender pay gap studies generally only focus on one sector, not the differences in sectors or the public sector versus the private sector (Trotter et al., 2017). Existing research fails to examine pay transparency in the not-for-profit sector. Participants were also based in Auckland or Wellington. Future research may also require a broader range of participants from other areas of the country. This will determine whether this study's findings relate to other settings around New Zealand.

Further, the scope of this thesis concentrated on gender differences only and did not consider intersectionality or gender identity. Gender is complicated by ethnicity, race, class, and other differences (Acker, 2006). An important issue emerging from these findings is that additional compounding barriers exist for women other than gender. The term 'intersectionality' (Crenshaw, 1991; Crenshaw, 2013) describes how race, ethnicity, gender, class, and other individual characteristics overlap and intersect with one another (Coaston, 2019). These findings suggest that pay gaps require an intersectional lens due to minority groups also suffering when it comes to pay equity. New Zealand's public sector pay gap initiatives focus not only on gender but also on Māori, Pacific, Asian, and ethnic pay gaps. There are limited initiatives at a global level that are examples of intersectional policy, as most are solely gender related. Most OECD countries do not report data with an intersectional framework (Frey, 2021); therefore, New Zealand is in a unique position to be leading the way in terms of bringing attention to intersectionality issues of the pay gap. However, the private sector in New Zealand may need to catch up with the public sector. Frey (2021) highlights that best practice includes acknowledging that there are no homogenous women and understanding how additional factors including race, ethnicity, class, and gender, intersect and can lead to more significant pay gaps.

6.5 Policy and Legislation

There is considerable attention and ongoing debate around pay transparency legislation, policy, and government participation (Baker et al., 2019; Frey, 2021; Gulyas et al., 2021; Reilly, 2019). Varied and limited research also sheds little light on pay transparency's effectiveness (Baker et al., 2019). In addition, international pay

transparency laws are complicated and diverse (Bölingen, 2022), as well as varied and broad, making it difficult to draw any firm conclusions for policy and research (Bölingen, 2022). Furthermore, research also examines partial aspects of a pay transparency law (Bölingen, 2022). This contributes to the complexities of transferring knowledge into action and practice through the implementation of pay transparency and is therefore inconclusive in relation to suggested policy improvements. The public sector is leading the way and has the perception that they have made good changes, yet there has not been much movement in the gender pay gap for 20 years. This may be because the public sector compensates for the private sector, and the public sector's pay gap may be lower than that of the private sector.

In line with the findings, the responsibility of pay transparency is recommended to sit with both organisations and the government. Systemic change is possible through the actions of organisations. However, a change in government could mean a change in compliance or mandates. Government policy has moved things along quicker than voluntary involvement. New Zealand's small business environment also needs to be considered. Organisations can create change through a transparent and open organisational culture. They can redesign and improve organisational practices, processes, and actions. These findings suggest that attention not only needs to be given to designing processes to address the systemic issue (Charlesworth & Macdonald, 2014) of the gender pay gap but also address the perceived relevance of the gender pay gap within organisations and New Zealand society.

6.6 Recommendations for Future Research

In this section, recommendations are made for future research, based on the limitations of this study, including: 1) sample size; 2) research generally only focusing on one sector; 3) research concentrating on gender differences; 4) how data is collected and analysed; and 5) addressing the perceived relevance of the gender pay gap within organisations and New Zealand society.

First and foremost, large-scale national research in New Zealand is warranted to investigate New Zealand's organisational culture of pay secrecy, including secret or hidden pay discrimination. Previous research and the current findings are focused on visibility or transparency and not necessarily the issue of pay secrecy. This aligns with theme 4) pay secrecy promotes structural inequalities; and sub-theme 4) pay secrecy

allows for secret discrimination and, enables pay gaps to thrive (Chapter Four). In addition, this also relates back to New Zealand's social systems and culture in the Introduction Chapter (Chapter One).

Next, research should be narrowed down to independently investigate each sector, including public, private, and not-for-profit sectors, as well as compare sectors. Pay transparency and gender pay gap studies generally only focus on one sector, not the differences between sectors or the public sector versus the private sector (Trotter et al., 2017). Existing research fails to examine pay transparency in the not-for-profit sector. New Zealand's labour force size, organisational size, and unique business environment context could also be investigated with a focus on New Zealand's small business environment and how pay transparency will work.

The public sector of New Zealand is currently in a unique, groundbreaking position, bringing attention to pay gap intersectionality issues and compounding barriers for women and people. To ensure New Zealand continues to lead by example, there needs to be additional research focused on how the private sector will contribute. Furthermore, research on how all sectors will need to address and expand on ethnic, and gender pay gaps to include additional minorities including the rainbow community and those with disabilities. In addition, continued research, work and understanding of gender identity would be beneficial.

More expansive research is also needed on the gender pay gap around women's unpaid work and whether this should be included in the gender pay gap statistics as society and the economy are benefiting from this work. Hennink et al., (2017) believe that unpaid care work is the missing link in the analysis of gender gaps, labour force participation and pay (Hennink et al., 2017). In addition, the analysis and measures of women's unpaid work needs to be reviewed for a complete analysis of the gender pay gap in New Zealand.

A natural progression of this work is to analyse why women are taking the lead on gender inequality issues and if this is seen to be a women's issue or if there are male advocates supporting women as change agents in New Zealand. There is no evidence of men outside of international universities actively performing the role of change agents (Anicha et al., 2015; Bilen-Green et al., 2015). Additional research is also required to understand advantaged groups' opposition to equality and whether they

believe that the gender pay gap is 'real' and relevant to them. A further study within the New Zealand context could determine how men and advantaged groups can become better allies of gender equality.

Extensive analysis of pay transparency policy and legislation is required across countries and legal systems to thoroughly investigate which aspects of pay transparency are beneficial, which are not and which areas to prioritise, target and implement as, international pay transparency laws are complicated and diverse, making it difficult to draw general conclusions for policy and research (Bölingen, 2022).

6.7 Closing Comments

This study makes a significant contribution to knowledge about pay transparency and the gender pay gap and, provides an original and alternative perspective of those who are working on closing the gender pay gap to create positive change, in roles such as HR Managers, policy analysts, or policy makers and includes perspectives from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. Participants actively worked on the gender pay gap and advocated for gender equal pay. In answer to the research question - is pay transparency key to closing the gender pay gap? This study has found that, pay transparency is: 1) an essential component in closing the gender pay gap; 2) not a simple tool or a quick fix, nevertheless it; 3) will contribute to closing the gender pay gap; and, 4) needs to be combined with other tools to close the gender pay gap. The critical theoretical contributions of this study include: 1) contrary to extant research, this thesis has revealed that pay transparency is not a 'simple' tool (Frey, 2021); and 2) an unexpected finding to emerge from this study's methodology and the decision to interview those that are advocating for gender equal pay, was the motivation of advocates, centring on participants' strength of conviction (London, 2010); and drive to do what is right.

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Appendix 1: Ethics Approval



Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

AUT

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

12 October 2022

Katherine Ravenswood
Faculty of Business Economics and Law

Dear Katherine

Ethics Application: 22/286 **Smashing the patriarchy and achieving a gender equal society through pay transparency**

We advise you that a subcommittee of the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) has **approved** your ethics application.

This approval is for three years, expiring 12 October 2025.

Non-Standard Conditions of Approval

1. Amendment of the Information Sheet as follow:
 - a. Removal of duplicate "What is the purpose" section;
 - b. Inclusion in the benefits section of attaining a qualification and the benefits to the wider community.

Non-standard conditions must be completed before commencing your study. Non-standard conditions do not need to be submitted to or reviewed by AUTEC before commencing your study.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research](#) and as approved by AUTEC in this application.
2. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using the EA2 form.
3. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using the EA3 form.
4. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form.
5. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
6. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
7. It is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard and that all the dates on the documents are updated.
8. AUTEC grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management approval for access for your research from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

For any enquiries please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz. The forms mentioned above are available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTEC Secretariat
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: emmcar15@autuni.ac.nz

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet



Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

12 September 2022

Project Title

Smashing the patriarchy through pay transparency and creating a gender equal society.

An Invitation

My Name is Emma-Louise Hitchcock and I am a Master's student in the Business, Economics & Law Faculty at Auckland University of Technology. I am working on a research project under the supervision of Associate Professor Katherine Ravenswood.

I am writing to you today to invite you to participate in a study entitled "Smashing the patriarchy through pay transparency and creating a gender equal society". This research aims to discover what role pay transparency has in positive change and will explore participants' perceptions on pay transparency and the gender pay gap.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to contribute to the developing knowledge of gender inequality, the gender pay gap and pay transparency and to answer the research question: is pay transparency key to closing the gender pay gap?

I am wanting to understand if pay transparency will help to close the gender pay gap as New Zealand has a systemic economic discrimination crisis against women (Parker & Donnelly, 2020). In 2021, the national gender pay gap in New Zealand was 9.1 percent (Ministry for Women, 2022). Past research has found the secrecy of pay in workplaces is one of the barriers that has enabled gender pay gaps to persist (Kalafatelis et al., 2020).

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

Primary research will be conducted among participants with specific criteria including HR Managers, policy analysts and policy makers who work in the public, private and the Not-For-Profit sector who advocate for gender equal pay and who are actively engaged in work on the gender pay gap. Participants will be identified through their public information on platforms such as LinkedIn and their organisational information.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Potential participants will complete a consent form, sent via email or LinkedIn. Participants will send back a signed copy via email one week prior to the interview.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

Researcher and participants will work together in which participants are participating in a one-hour interview session. Research will be conducted face-to-face in Auckland workplaces, at an AUT campus or via zoom.

Additional time may be required in relation to email correspondence, with a maximum additional time of one-hour.

What are the discomforts and risks?

Interview questions could unintentionally trigger emotions and thoughts around past experiences of discrimination, although this is unlikely as this research is not focused on individuals' experiences at work.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

AUT Student Counselling and Mental Health is able to offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions are only available for issues that have arisen

directly as a result of participation in the research and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

- drop into our centre at WB203 City Campus, email counselling@aut.ac.nz or call 921 9998.
- let the receptionist know that you are a research participant, and provide the title of my research and my name and contact details as given in this Information Sheet.

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on <https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/student-support/counselling-and-mental-health>

What are the benefits?

Participants will have access to academic research investigating, examining and analysing findings on a topic participants are already advocating and creating change for and may give participants added academic credibility, possibly creating an environment where people who were opposed to pay transparency are more willing to listen and understand what they are advocating for. This research could create public awareness, as well as put pressure on organisations, government, network groups and trade unions as they have a key role to play in a gender equal society. This research is going to help me as the researcher understand the gender pay gap and pay transparency and will also help me to gain my Master of Business qualification.

How will my privacy be protected?

Privacy of participants will be designed through data protection and storage. I will be responsible for keeping information (including the identity of participants) confidential and secure from interception or appropriation by unauthorised persons, or for purposes other than the approved research. This will require removal of identifying material from documentation and the use of pseudonyms. If interviews are to be transcribed by a professional transcriber, the professional transcriber will complete an AUT confidentiality form.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

Participant's time of two hours.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

One month.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes, a one or two page summary of the findings.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Katherine Ravenswood, katherine.ravenswood@aut.ac.nz, and 09 921 9999 ext 5064.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, ethics@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Emma-Louise Hitchcock, emmcar15@autuni.ac.nz.

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Katherine Ravenswood, katherine.ravenswood@aut.ac.nz, and 09 921 9999 ext 5064.

Appendix 3: Participant Consent Form



Consent Form

Project title: *Smashing the patriarchy and achieving a gender equal society through pay transparency*

Project Supervisor: *Katherine Ravenswood*

Researcher: *Emma-Louise Hitchcock*

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 12 September 2022.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes No

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 12 October 2022 AUTEK Reference number 22/286

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix 4: Research Advertisement



THE ROLE OF PAY TRANSPARENCY IN REDUCING THE GENDER PAY GAP

Are you an HR Manager, policy analyst or policy maker advocating for gender equal pay and working on the gender pay gap in the public, private or Not-For-Profit sector?

IF YES, THEN WE NEED YOU!

This project aims to discover what role pay transparency has in positive change and will explore participants' perceptions on pay transparency and the gender pay gap.

If you agree to be interviewed in this project, interviews will take around 60 minutes.

If you want to be part of something that can potentially contribute to understanding how pay transparency might be used in New Zealand AND you:

- Are an HR Manager, policy analyst or policy maker advocating for gender equal pay and working on the gender pay gap
- Are comfortable with a face-to-face or zoom interview

Then please contact Emma-Louise Hitchcock, emmcar15@autuni.ac.nz for more information and to book your interview time.

This project has been Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 12 October 2022, AUTEK Reference number 22/286.

Appendix 5: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

- 1) Tell me more about your work on reducing the gender pay gap.
 - a. Why or how did you get into this work?
 - b. What is important about the gender pay gap?
 - c. What things have you done, in your career, to try and reduce the gender pay gap. How successful were they?

- 2) Tell me about your perceptions of pay transparency.
 - a. How does it work?
 - b. Will it fix, or reduce the gender pay gap?

- 3) Do you know of examples (anywhere) where it's been implemented? Please tell me.
 - a. Pros and cons
 - b. Challenges/successes

- 4) Tell me how you think pay transparency will work.
 - a. How would you implement it?
 - b. Is it an employer responsibility or a government responsibility, why?
 - c. What are the pros and cons of pay transparency, in your opinion?
 - d. Are New Zealand employers and employees ready for it?

- 5) Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?