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FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

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Abstracts

The under-representation of female gender and especially female leaders in the creative industries is an increasingly debated issue. Several papers in the literature and in media have been written concerning the lack of women especially at senior positions in the sector with the purpose of explaining the source of this problem. Although point of views on this topic differ, understanding the under-representation of women at leadership roles has been problematic due to a lack of information and data as the sector is rapidly changing. The purpose of this paper is to provide a qualitative understanding of the under-representation of women leaders in the creative industries and how successful female leaders perceive the problem and battle the challenges imposed by the sector. Based on literature review, a specific research has been implemented in order to understand the phenomenon in creative organisations.

Existem, cada vez mais, discussões acerca da minoria do género feminino, especialmente enquanto líderes na indústria criativa. Tanto em artigos científicos como nos média este tema, relacionado com a falta de mulheres a desempenhar funções em cargos superiores nesta indústria, tem sido debatido a fim de se tentar perceber a causa deste problema. Embora haja diferentes pontos de vista, perceber a falta de representação feminina em posições de liderança tem sido difícil devido à falta de informação e de dados, relacionado consequentemente com as alterações constantes nesta área. Portanto, a principal função deste artigo é perceber, qualitativamente, a minoria do género feminino enquanto líderes nesta área e, como elas enfrentam esse problema impostos pela indústria criativa. Baseando na revisão de literatura, foi feita uma pesquisa especificamente focada em perceber este fenómeno relacionado com agências criativas.

Index

List of tables

Index

Table of Contents

Introduction

Introduction to the topic

Since the last five years the under-representation of female in the creative industries in the media have been more and more highlighted seeking for the reason to this situation. However, there is a little study about female at managerial and leadership positions in the sector. A new phenomenon has been observed: women creating female only club in the creative industries in order to fight the challenges imposed by the sector. This phenomenon re-enforcing the idea of female under representation and difficulties to develop a career in the creative industries needed to be studied by doing a deep research.

Investigation objectives

In order to understand how and why this phenomenon happens, it has been decided to discern in the first place the challenges women face while entering the sector. Then, how female develop their career in managerial positions will be investigate. It have a focus on the challenges they might face as well as how they overcome them. Finally, both these investigations will allow to draw conclusions about how female leaders are perceived and succeed in the creative industries.

Thesis structure

In order to study and have a better understanding of the problem stating that female leaders face more challenges than male in order to enter and succeed in the creative industries, a literature review will be first conducted. In the first chapter of this research paper the literature review will lead to more clarity concerning the problem as well as generate sub research hypotheses. Then, in the purpose to verify these research hypotheses a specific methodology has been implemented through two types of qualitative explorations, a survey as well as in depth interviews. Further on, in the third chapter of this research paper, the findings of both researches will be presented for an overview of opinions and experiences on the studied topic. The chapter four will analyse these findings in the purpose of verifying the hypotheses made in the first chapter of the paper. To finish, a conclusion will be drawn.

Chapter 1: Creative industries: women and leadership in the literature

Many times, referred as the creative economy, the creative industries are one of the key areas of the twenty-first century's global economy. However, the literature made clear that women are under-represented within the sector. This research focuses on women's leadership and management in the creative industries.

The chapter is structured as follows: based on the creative industries literature and articles, the first section defines the sector, its characteristics and its particular appeal. The second section examines the representation of women in the creative industries. It also discusses issues women are facing within the sector including the difficulties to challenge the male-base sector. Finally, the third section focusses on how women battle and succeed in the creative industries despites the challenges they face.

Research question: How women leaders fight the challenges imposed by the creative industries?

Research hypothesis: In order to access and be successful in leadership positions within the creative industries, women have to fight several challenges.

1.1.   The creative industries

Since 2008, the creative industries are highlighted as one of the fastest growing sectors within the global economy. In the United Kingdom, the demand for creative and cultural products and services is growing faster than the income and population together (GLA Economics, 2008). However, as the sector is pretty new and not well known from everyone, it is important to define the creative industries. After defining the industries, their characteristics will be discussed. Finally, the appeal for the sector, especially for women on the management side will be studied.

1.1.1.   Defining the creative industries

The concept of the creative industries appeared in the 1990s, when the former UK Department of national Heritage had been renamed Department for Culture, Media and Sport [DCMS] for the purpose of developing creative industries policies. The purpose of this national change was to shift away from the "traditional" arts which were associated to the values of golden age and move toward the new creativity (Garnham, 2005). Art tended, at that time, to be seen as marginal economically wise and was dependent on public subsidy. The creative industry's view was very narrowed and needed to be considered as a commercial contribution. They required to be re-defined since creativity and culture started to be a growing source of wealth creation (British Council, 2010). The DCMS defined the creative industries as "*the activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent, which have a potential for job and wealth creation through the generation and exploitation of the intellectual property*". (O'Brien, 2014). A numerous amount of study has been done in order to try to explain which industries should be defined as creative. It is important to define the word creativity by itself in order to understand the scope of the creative industries. Creativity had been defined several times in the literature and different authors agreed on defining it as "*the process of generating something new by combining elements that already exist*" (Boden, 1990; Romer, 1990; Runco and Pritzker, 1999, Sternberg, 1999). Thus, creativity is based on individuals' as well as organizations', capabilities and motivations to be involved in non-routine and experimental activities. They have for goal to create products, services and performances upon different projects (DeFillippi, 2015).

It is important to take into consideration that some organizations such as the European Union and/or UNESCO consider the creative industries as cultural industries.

The two terms tend to be interchangeable as the UNESCO's definition suggests: it focuses on economic activities producing tangible or intangible artistic and creative products that can be exploited in order to generate wealth through exploiting cultural assets (UNESCO, 2010). Those industries use creativity, cultural knowledge and intellectual property to generate products and services with social and cultural meaning.

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) decided to devise the creative industries according to their copyright, aiming to include all industries from creation, manufacturing, production, broadcast, distribution and consumption of the copyrighted works. It results in three main categories, which can be applied internationally:

- Core copyright industries: advertising, collecting societies, film and video, music, performing arts, publishing, software, TV and radio and visual and graphic art.
- Interdependent copyright industries: blank recording material, consumer electronics, musical instruments, paper, photocopiers, photographic and equipment.
- Partial copyright industries: architecture, clothing, footwear, design, fashion, household goods, toys.

In 1998, The DCMS defined the following British industries as creative: advertising, architecture, art and antiques market, crafts, design, fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, performing arts, publishing, software and computer services and television and radio. However, in 2004, the DCMS decided to create a tool kit (DEC) for regional use level. It regroups the creative industries in four domains according to their final outputs. Audio-Visual being the main domain includes TV and radio, film and video, photography, advertising, music, interactive digital media and computer software. The second group Book and Press covers publishing, literature and printing. Performance regroup theatre, dance, circus, carnival and puppetry. Finally, Visual Arts and Design contains design, architecture, fine arts, crafts and art and antiques (DCMS, 1998; 2004).

1.1.2. Characteristics of the creative industries

In 2001, the government of the United Kingdom defined the Creative Industries in a mapping document. A mapping document has for purpose to assess the value of a specific sector. The studied sector being the creative industries, the mapping exercise made by the UK government wants to assess the value of the creative industries to the wider economy, demonstrating through different measures such as number and size of creative businesses, employment, gross value added, export, or even the composition of the workforce like gender or ethnicity (British Council, 2010). There were five main reasons for the British government to do this mapping. The first one being to raise the profile of the creative industries. As the creative sector became more and more important in the economic growth of the country, it was significant to raise awareness of its economic value (GLA Economics 2004). Learning about the sector was the second main purpose of the mapping. The creative industries had been defined and recognized by the UK government in 1998 but the definition tended to be broad, it was then important to have a better overview of those varied and fast-changing industries. Additionally, it was important to plan the potential future growth of the industries as these ones face unprecedented challenges in a new economy. Engaging leaders in policy issues that could affect the creative industries was another goal of the mapping as it raised the profile of these ones by providing data about the size and location of them. It allowed politicians to take the sector more seriously. Finally, the mapping helped to support economic and political objectives in showing the role, importance and contribution of creative across the British economy (British Council, 2010).

This mapping allowed to show the important of creativity across economy and resulted in a guide that expounded which industries can be defined as creative. This tool kit allowed to get rid of the scepticism about the creative industries as well as not isolated them anymore (Flew and Cunningham, 2010). The creative industries add value to other industries, mainly through design, advertising and branding. They also contribute to the "knowledge economy" as they employed highly graduated talents. Finally, they bring communities and people together through shared experiences (Kunzman, 2007).

The previous presented definition and characteristics tend to focus on the United Kingdom, as it had been the first country defining and integrating them in their politics and economy. However, it is important to note that the creative industries do not have any standard definition internationally, most countries adapt the concept to their economy

and policy depending on their own needs (Hölzl, 2006). The UK mapping had been the first creative industries mapping document and it allowed other countries to make their own national analysis based on the British model. According the creative economy report made by the United Nation, the creative industries weighted 3.4 per cent of world trade, $424 billion export and employed 5.6 million people in 2005. The annual rate average growing in between 2000 and 2005 was of 8,7 per cent in the European Union countries (UNCTAD, 2008).

Nations tend to have different classification framework (see Appendix A) than the main one made by the government of the United Kingdom. Most of the countries that tried to define these are developed ones because they depend on creativity within their workforce in order to be successful. The competitiveness of these countries relying more on quality and imagination rather than on price. Emerging economies tends to have a price-led competition due to the many outsources jobs especially in services and manufacturing (Staines and Mercer, 2013).

1.1.3. The appeal of the cultural industries especially to women

One of the appeals for the creative industries, in addition to the economic interest, is the presumptions around it. One might define the creative industries as trendy with a destressed and playful work environment (Gill, 2002). They can be perceived as fun, stylish and glamourous (Nixon, 2003) which resonates as exciting and progressive compared to other industries, one can define as more classic. It appears that creative industries are flexible and smooth the way for autonomy as it is mostly a project-based sector. These characteristics can highlight that generally, the business types that make up the creative industries are small to medium size organizations with a small amount of multinational (Caves, 2000). The organizations are often a combination of part-time workers, freelancers and job holders (Baines and Robson, 2001). In 1999, Leadbeter and Oakley, suggested that the creative industries might constitute the employment model of the future as it offers a form of independent work with a possibility of progress in different projects which contrasts with the traditional concept of career defined by full time and permanent employments (Handy, 2002).

Concerning women in the creative industries, they display unique interest, characteristics, and are a good fit to the creative industries. Sharing attributes with their male peers as leaders, they also display unique traits suitable to lead and manage departments and organization within the sector. Women leaders and entrepreneurs are often described as suitable to smaller businesses, to be customer oriented and apply soft management style which give a good value to the quality, cultural and human capital of an enterprise (Henry, 2008). The literature indicates that both genders have their own way to manage business and help it to grow (Women's Unit UK and Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications (Sweden) 2001). Nevertheless, the flexibility of the creative industries is an appeal to women that experience issues to balance business and family responsibilities (Fielden and al. 2003). Some sub-sectors in the creative industries are appealing to women as they allow working from home, flexibility and part-time working. It might help when family responsibilities are involved (Wilby, 2008). This aspect might cause prejudice to women's progress, excluding them from promotional opportunities, will be analysed in the second chapter of this literature review. Idealistically, women capabilities in multi-tasking and experiences make them ideal workers for project-based sector and organizations (Gill, 2002).

Research hypothesis 1: Based on the creative industries definition and characteristics, the sector is suitable and adapted to women leader's development.

Focusing on leadership in the creative industries, it is suggested that transformational leadership is the most successful type (Hyypiä, 2013). This style of leadership implies that "*leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation*" (MacGregor Burns, 1978). The leader identifies change requirement, creates a vision, inspire and execute it together with the members of the group. Nonetheless, it appears that genders leadership contrast in the creative industries. The main purpose of being leader for women is the possibility to develop relationships with others. It is important for them to help to the development of their followers, as a part of transformational leadership taking into consideration individual is a major success factor for the team (Henry, 2008). Women tends to be interested or set up the sort of business that are in general share the same characteristics that the creative industries organizations: micro or very small businesses which are oriented towards service, value the cultural, quality and the human aspects of the business (Carter et al., 2001). In comparison to men, women will not take the development of a strategy and policy as the first purpose of their leader role. Although, this feature mattering much while worker alone. Women features as leader in the creative industries assumes that women feel they are able to deploy a substantial influence and create a better impact outside the classic organizational structure. Besides, surveys have found women adopt less authoritarian management styles and show more negotiating and diplomatic skills than men (Tomlinson and Colgan, 1989). As a consequence, women are frequently employed in departments which have to be handled carefully with diplomacy and a mother figure are required (Tomlinson and Colgan, 1989). Additionally, women might be singularly suited to the creative industries, both as employee and as independent worker as they possess characteristics worthy to the sector. Being able to self-reliance, autonomy and adaptability, their way of working seems to be proficient in the creative industries (Gill, 2002). Thus, one might say that the creative industries represent a great opportunity for women.

Research hypothesis 2: Women leadership characteristics are a fit to the creative industries as they enhance better environment and results to the industries.

However, the literature reports a lack of empirical studies as well as unavailable gender separation data concerning women presence in the creative industries. Yet, there is an emerging evidence that women are more and more attracted by the overall sector and are still under represented in sub-categories of the creative industries (GLA Economics, LDA, 2004).

1.2. Challenges for women in the creative industries

Even though the creative industries are an appealing sector by itself and as mentioned in the first part of this literature review, is particularly attractive to women, it is important to note that they are facing challenges.

In the United Kingdom, where creativity is one of the main sources of economy creation, women represent 36 per cent of the creative workers while they constitute 46 per cent of the whole UK workforce. Some of the sub creative sectors are more appealing to women, such as advertising and fashion where the employments of women are generally higher than in the other creative industries. In 2014, Grow and Deng suggested that women were making 20.3 percent of advertising workers worldwide. Among high managerial positions, women are scarcer. Within the worldwide creative industries, women at decision making positions are only 8 percent. (Klein, 2000). It seems as they are even more under-represented in older ages which also correlates with position involving higher influence and position. 16 per cent of the women workers in the sector is 50 years old or more whilst men of the same age are 25 per cent (Skillset, 2010).

In 2001, Reis suggested that a combination of constant gender stereotyping, internal and external factors to the organization as well as marriage and family life affect women's development and productivity within the creative industries.

These treats focused on gender biases appear in two stages of women career within the creative industries. First of all, it is difficult for women to enter the sector due to their birth characteristics. Secondly, after they succeed to enter the sector, women are facing new challenged during their development and learning trajectory.

Research hypothesis 3: In comparison to the wider economy, women are significantly under-represented in the creative industries.

1.2.1. Entering the creative industries

Women's under-representation can be explained by the model of the creative industries based on a male gendered culture; one might describe it as sexist. The field has been developed and maintained on a male norm based. It is generally harder for women to enter the sector and to succeed in it (e.g., Nixon, 2003; Gregory, 2009; Mallia, 2009). The creative departments have been described as a "*boy's club*" (Alvesson, 1998) are driven by a male career model. The masculine characteristics are privileged on the field. The difference between male and female characteristics appear in different ways not allowing women to enter as easily as men in the creative industries.

First of all, creative workers' personality traits seem to be aligned with the male dominated field. The lack of successful women in the creative industries can be explained by the gender theory. Gender being a social construction, particular characteristics are ascribed to women and men (Oakley, 1973; Ahl, 2004). Women are attributed characteristics which can constitute a considerable barrier to their career entrance and development in every sector. Numerous stereotypical behaviours are associated with male and female, where the former is privileged. It deems a hierarchical value of traits and characteristics according to gender (Marlow and Patton, 2005). Male gender is stereotyped around the perseverance, competitiveness and toughness. It seems that having a thick skin is also an important factor for success in the creative industries (Grow and Broyles, 2011). These above-mentioned characteristics supposedly belong to the conventional image of the male gender whereas the female gender seems more delicate and sensitive.

The theories and assumptions around each gender leads to an under-representation of women in the creative industries. In this informal male club, the similarity attraction is one of the factors making hard for women to enter and succeed in the creative industries. Due to the competitiveness of the sector, the hiring process as well as being promoted is more difficult for women than for men (Grow and Broyles, 2011; Mallia, 2009). Women are discriminated as employers tend to hire people like themselves. For example, in the British advertising industries, one can assume that a "*locker room culture*" with a masculine power and male bonding exists (Gregory, 2009). In advertising, men would be more likely to build relationships with other men that have the same business and social lifestyle than them (Ibarra, 1992). This attraction can be defined as homosociality.

Homosociality defined by Lipman-Blumen in 1976, means same-sex relationships that is does not have a romantic or sexual nature but can be friendship, mentorship or others. It is rather a preference for members of one's own sex. This culture promotes male interest including, activities, hobbies and values shared by the same gender (Gregory, 2009). Social research found that it is easier for men to socialize between and among their peers. This situation of gender hierarchy is maintained by homosociability and sexist humour (Alvesson, 2008; Gregory, 2009). Homoscociability might reinforce the male gender power by "*reflecting, supporting and giving more credibility to masculine values*" (Gregory, 2009). The outcome is men hiring people like themselves, creating a man's network and excluding women. Men being more likely to build relationships with other men is one of the reasons for female underrepresentation in advertising. Women are not able to build the same type of social link and see this informal network as the continuance of the male base sector (Gill, 2002).

Entering in the creative industries is a challenge for women as the sector's network is mainly composed of men who are most likely to bond with their peers. Networking in the creative industries is difficult as the sector is male base. Thus, women struggle most of the time and feel excluded from the sector's network. Men's voices are often privileged in the field. In the context of under-representation of women in the workplace, it makes it complicated for women to interact in a networking situation. As previously explained, the creative industries are project-base which results on a recruitment practices being different than in any other sectors. Due to tight timings, schedules and often budget, it is not possible to make any mistake in the recruitment process (Caves, 2000). Workers with influence such as directors or producers thus, rely on tested collaborators or workers that have been recommended by a trusted colleague. As a result, workers are commonly recruited through personal networks (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2009; Randle and Culkin, 2009). According to Skillset, in 2010, the 78 per cent of the creative media workers were hire in their current position informally and had been directly contacted by their employer or someone they previously worked with. Across the whole industry, only 8 per cent of workers have applied to a job offer through an advertisement (Skillset, 2010). This process seems to be intensified depending of the hierarchical levels. The higher in the hierarchy the position is, the more workers will be hired via previous colleagues contact books (Blair, 2001). Seeking for someone they can trust is the base of the hiring decision within the creative industries (Sutton Trust, 2006). Workers have to continuously be

actively social and maintain a certain trust among his/her pairs. Thus, the importance of networking in the sector disadvantages female workers. Women find themselves disadvantaged as they can be unable to build strong social ties in the mainly male worker sector (Gill, 2002).

Research hypothesis 4: Due to social beliefs and patterns, it is harder for women to enter the creative industries.

1.2.2. Learning and development within the creative industries

When women succeed to enter the creative industries and go beyond the previous mentioned barriers, they still face challenges in order to learn and develop their careers. The male dominant culture in the creative industries lead to the question the access to resources for learning and develop themselves. Do men and women have the same opportunities in the sector? The literature confirms that gender constraints on employment and career progression for women.

Homoscociability is considered as an informal male socialization but has an impact on the way projects are assessed and evaluated. The different beliefs around women personality can influence the assignment type they are assigned to. Thus, in the field, no work or project are given to women according their meritocracy but based on the interpretation of their personality. In addition, the gender differentiation is not only happening internally to organizations but also through the relationship with the client. Depending on the brand and product, the client might be able to request to have a man leading the account. For example, in a male-female partnership, client tend to only talk to the men (Kestin, 1998). Workers as well as clients are looking for similarity feature such as gender (Ibarra, 1992). As mentioned previously as well as described in the literature, male tend to be more comfortable with their peers (e.g. Bosman, 2005). This likeness can also be explained by the term homophily. Homophily is the fact that people tend to interact with others who are similar on attributes like sex, race and/or education (Ibarra, 1992). In the advertising industries and especially in the United Kingdom, the culture can be defined as a locker room culture. Masculinity, competition, male bonding and sexualization of women are synonym of power (Gregory, 2009). This male dominance leads to the 'doing gender' principle. Doing gender is a social construction when a situation creates differences between men and women, these differences not being natural or biological by reinforcing the essentialness of a specific gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987). In the workplace and especially in the creative industries, it results as implicit expectations of how each gender should "do" as act and interact (Salminen-Karlsson, 2006). Doing gender creates and help to the sustainability of social inequalities. Frequently, male is the dominant gender and assert women (Goffman, 1967). Thus, women and men do not experience the work environment the same way. In this case, women can be the subject to normative conceptualizations about her gender. It often results in the determination of female participation and/or discredit of her potential

achievement within the workplace. These expectations can lead to an under-representation of a gender such a woman in the creative industries.

In addition, the literature mentions women are facing unequal treatments in the creative industries. It refers to an empirical study made in 2005 by Marcella et al. which had as purpose to investigate gender constraints on employment, career progression, training and opportunities for women. It had been found that 60 per cent of the women answering the survey had faced unequal treatment especially from gender-related issues that had an impact on their career progression. In addition to the previously mentioned barriers, it also appeared that work-related training available to men had not been made available to women. The gender inequalities women are facing in the creative industries results in unequal management within organizations. The unequal treatment revealed that work-related training available to man are not available to women. Being based on project, the sector of the creative industries offers a very little access to training. Since projects are only temporary, it does not seem beneficial for employers to finance trainings or work development sessions. The industry is thus based on the "learning by watching" scheme. The new entrants start as assistant and acquire capabilities and skills by watching their colleagues (DeFillippi and Arthur, 1998).

Furthermore, an important characteristic of working in the creative industries is the work rhythm. Long hours and arrangement that cannot be flexible (Mallia and Windels, 2011). The sector being based on project as well as at the mercy of the client, long hours are mandatory to succeed and progress. It appears to be difficult for women whom expressed frustration concerning the time management and the value of this one (Grow *et al*., 2012). They then give the impression of being less hard worker as their opposite gender peers as some of them decide to take the dual role of creative industries' worker and family founder (Mallia, 2009). Domestic responsibilities can be a barrier for women who want to reach higher echelons in an organization. If they inspire to become senior managers and directors, it is generally required to be more committed, dynamic, contentious and work longer hours than other employees. These characteristics are not commonly associated with women, especially working longer hours could interfere with family responsibility (Bushell, 1996). It results as a negative impact on women's employment as employers tend to be unwilling to accommodate careers' needs. Women are more likely to encounter work-family conflict and thus, are more prepared than men

to hold up their growth within organizations. Women have to choose between their public and working life and the demands of their home which lead to a different progress within the workplace compared to men. In the literature Hirshman states that the real 'glass ceiling' is due to family responsibilities women have. The notion of glass ceiling is a metaphor used to represent an invisible barrier which keeps minorities from growing beyond a definite level of hierarchy. It often applies to women progress within organizations. Hirshman affirms due to the belief that women are responsible for running the household and raising children they do not have the opportunity to rise as far as they would like to in their public life because of their private life.

At last, successful women in the creative industries have common point in the core of their personality. They are highly intelligent, able of imagination, hard workers with strong will, share the ability to overcome challengers and are eager to learn independently as they seek to live a different type of life than their peers. Despites, these characteristics, they experience internal barriers such as lack of self-confidence which tend to prevent them from fully accomplish their creative work (Reis, 1998; 2001). This absence of self-belief is linked to the notion of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined in the literature as "*self-confidence in a given domain*" (Wilson et al., 2007) which is based on individual's perception of their own skills and abilities (Markham et al., 2002). This approach demonstrates one's belief on whatever he/she thinks he/she has the specific abilities needed to accomplish a particular task. The concept lead to a certain disparity between men and women's career choices (Wilson et al. 2007). The differences in gender regarding self-efficacy have been observed in stereotypical domains associated with "male-skills" as well as "non-traditional" to women industries. In the context of the creative industries, it is interesting to note that numerous sub-sectors, such as design, fashion or beauty, perceived as feminized sectors, which would require highly feminine skills are so far dominated successfully by men.

Research hypothesis 5: Women face internal barriers within organizations due to their gender.

1.3.   How are women fighting against the creative industries challenges?

As previously-mentioned women progression within the creative industries appears to be harder than for men. From the entrance challenges to be a senior successful leader in the creative industries, women have to fight against the male based sector and its challenges.

In order to be able to progress at the same pace as men, women developed coping strategies. First, how women succeed to be accepted and taken seriously in the male-based sector will be discussed. After that, a second part will study how women succeed to be as recognized for their work as men in the sector.

Research hypothesis 6: Women leaders have to develop strategies in order to cope the creative industries challenges.

1.3.1. Strategies for women to be accepted in the male-based sector

It is interesting to study the creative industries from a situated learning theory point of view. A situated learning theory is defined as unintentional learning situated within authentic activity, context, and culture (Lave, 1988). In the case of the creative industries, this theory has been used on advertising creative department with the goal of examining the career trajectories by developing competencies through assignment on which no one wanted to work (McLeod et al., 2011). Within a specific context, a new person will learn to informal expectations of the community. Beginner will learn to judge their own work as they develop an understanding of what the community consider "good" or "bad" (McLeod et al., 2011). Newcomers' success in the creative industries is based on two factors: challenging projects and guidance of senior peers – mentors (Lave and Wenger, 1991). In the creative industries, gender is situated learning is very important. In the creative workplace, communities have implicit expectations about how femininity and masculinity should be done which has an impact on how individual build its work identity (Salminen-Karlsson, 2006). As the creative community is associated with masculine values, women must learn how to act and think in ways that seems to be more common to the work place, here associated with men (Salminen-Karlsson, 2006). Learning in a community where gender nature is taking an important place can be seen differently for men and women. Characteristics associated with masculinity could be seen as unreachable for women. Being accepted into a community is determining the trajectory the newcomer will follow to learn via participation and will be able to make mistake freely. However, for a junior female creative, lack of legitimacy occurs based on her birth characteristics (Wenger, 1998). The possibility of being denied the access to a community which supposedly will provide her learning through experience and help her to develop an identity is high (Contu and Willmott, 2003; Salminen-Karlsson, 2006).

In order to be accepted more easily in the community of the creative industries women compensate by acting like one of the male workers (Windels and Lee, 2012). Successful women in the creative industries have been described as having what are traditionally male characteristics. They show they interest and participate in discussion of sports and sex as well as sharing the same sense of humour as men within the organization (Klein, 2000; Nixon, 2003; Gregory, 2009). Thus, by showing a good knowledge, women could fill conversations with references to interact with their male peers. Besides, women workers in the creative industries mentioned that they tend to wear less feminine clothes,

which make them fit more into the community (McLeod et al., 2011). Additionally, work-wise women will try to create work that can be defined as more 'guyish', using masculine humour for instance in the goal of conforming to the norms of the work environment (Gregory, 2009). Being a bit of a 'tomboy' helps in order to not be only assigned accounts focused on women's products (Kazenoff and Vagnoni, 1997). In order to succeed at the same level as the male workers in the creative industries, women have to be strong, have sense of humour, should be able to talk to guys on their level and should be willing to make sacrifice in order to prove their dedication to their job. Successful women in the sector then, wait until their career is established to have children (Mallia, 2009). Those successful women often can rely on their partner to stay at home or hire a nanny to still be able to reply to the demands of the industries (Mallia, 2009).

Nonetheless, by trying to participate in any dialogue at work in a more male way, women take the risk to violate the norms of their own gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987). Their actions that seem appropriate to the field in order to succeed in the creative industries might occur aggressive which is crucial in the sector (Mallia, 2009; Grow and Broyles, 2011). One might say men can be as aggressive as they want, they can yell and treat people badly. However, when a woman does the same, she will get labelled as difficult. Fighting the gender inequality within the industry create a conflict between the need of being recognized for their work and being aggressive, which is not a social characteristic commonly associated to the female gender. Being aggressive can lead to alienation within an organization. Women might find an in between concerning their personality within the creative industries in order to progress in their careers without fighting for their work (Mallia, 2009).

Research hypothesis 7: In order to be accepted in the creative industries, women leaders develop a work identity based on male characteristics.

1.3.2. Strategies to have their achievement recognized

After entering the creative sector through their new identity, competencies and relationships, women also want to be recognized for their achievements. Women's recognition for their work is hard within the organization they work for but also in the community of the creative industries. Commonly, in the sector, in order to move forward in their career, workers move to other organizations rather than staying within the same one and receive promotions. The mobility within creative agencies is considerable (Nixon and Crewe, 2004). Moving from organization to organization allow workers to be more visible and potentially be more successful with a better access to meeting peers, senior positions, challenging projects and receiving awards. These factors are more likely to guide workers toward award-winning work (McLeod et al., 2011; Nixon and Crewe, 2004).

In order to fight the gender inequalities in the creative industries and be recognized for their achievement, women request to be more noticed especially within the awards organizations. They want to be acknowledged for their work and their influence within the industries. The main reason women want and are ready to fight the creative industries' challenges is to enhance the sector. This goes through spreading better messages about the industries, towards both women and men as well as creating a better work environment.

First, in order to spread better messages through the creative industries, it is important for women to be rewarded for their work as much as men do. This goes through award winning. A good example of award winning within the creative industries is advertising. Even though it is important to acknowledge that women make up to 80 per cent of the household purchase decision, women work is not as rewarded as men. Thus, the dominance of men within the creative industries and especially advertising seems curious. Advertisements aiming to target women are made by men that one can define as sexist. In 2005, Vagoni described the male workers creating the advertisement or commercial as "pretty clueless" about how they talk to women. Additionally, winning peer recognition is hard for women in the creative industries. It results as many award institutions has a jury mainly composed by men. However, this situation is currently changing. In 2004, one of the chairmen of the well-known Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival requested that women have at least 25 percent of the judging positions (Bosman, 2005).

The result of having made dominated juries is the reward of work made by men to appeal men. It especially concerns a typical sense of humour as well as provocation and edgy advertising work targeting young adult males (Vagnoni, 2005)

As it is hard for women to be rewarded by the classic award organizations such as One Show or Adweek's Best Spots (Weisberg and Robbs, 1997; Mallia, 2008) successful women decided to create their own award organization. In order to be recognized and help her peers to be rewarded for their work, Jane Talcott, a senior creative director at a New York based creative agency called Young & Rubican, helped found 'The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly Awards'. These awards, managed by the Advertising Women of New York have for purpose to recognize intelligent, respectful, insightful artworks as well as reprimand tasteless, degrading and foolish images (Vagoni, 2005).

Concerning the creation of a better work place, it is important to give a voice to women for them in order to make the sector as well as each organization more productive. Taking the example of advertising once again, taking women more into consideration leads to making more effective advertisement which also will allow the organization to make more money. This is important for two reasons, the first one being the fact that potential talent is not entering the creative industries due to the entrance selection based on gender or network for instance. However, since one of the characteristics of the creative industries is high competition, new and better talents are the origin of more creativity. Secondly, work-life balance is as important for men than for women, it is important in the current era to be able to change the preconceptions even though men are less likely to admit it (Hall, 2000). This process will attract more customers to the creative industries and thus make the sector bigger than it is currently.

Proposition 8: Women want to be recognized for their achievement but also to create a better environment in the creative industries.

1.3.3. Women in the creative industries increase organisations' efficiency

As previously mentioned, one the challenges for organisations is the fact they have fewer women than men in leadership positions. This unbalanced situation results in the organisation not experiencing or receive any benefit from a combination of different styles of leadership. This combination of leadership could be provided by high level of female decision maker (Eagly and Carli, 2003; Lips and Keener, 2007). This set of circumstances can be called 'unbalanced leadership'. It is important to note that unbalances leadership within organisation's management can affect the performance of the business (Ogbonna and Harris, 2000). The main direct implication of the lack of leadership diversification impacts women as individuals, in society as well as in business. In order to fight this challenge women, tend to set up their own business instead of working in corporate environment (Weiler and Bernasek, 2001).

Even though the literature starts to include numbers of women in leadership positions, a little can be find about the benefit of having a balanced leadership (Women to the Top, 2010). However, two American authors, Adler (2001) and Catalyst (2004) found positive correlations between organisations having women in decision making positions and profitability. In 2003, in the United Kingdom, Singh and Vinnicombe studied the correlation between women directors in agencies and high market value. Their research enhanced the discussion around the implication of women in leadership, their implication in market share as well as their underuse as human capital. This study highlighted the interest in how balanced and effective leadership styles encourage business growth (Rowley et al., 2010). In the current controversy discussion about women on boards and the need to increase the representation of women within the boardroom, the argument focuses on increasing the effectiveness of balancing the decision making within organisation (Eversheds, 2011).

The creative industries are a flourish sector but still a broad concept to defined depending on countries and organisations. However, the characteristics of the creative industries seem to be the same worldwide. The different authors in literature highlight the difficulties for women, especially in managerial positions, to enter and succeed in the creative industries. It seems that even though the sector is appealing due to its new way working, the branch is male-based. Successful women within the creative industries has to implement strategies in order to fight the challenges the sector itself impose.

Summary of the research hypotheses

Research question: How women leaders fight the challenges imposed by the creative industries?

Research hypothesis: In order to access and be successful in leadership positions within the creative industries, women have to fight several challenges.

Research hypothesis 1: Based on the creative industries definition and characteristics, the sector is suitable and adapted to women leader's development.

Research hypothesis 2: Women leadership characteristics are a fit to the creative industries as they enhance better environment and results to the industries.

Research hypothesis 3: In comparison to the wider economy, women are significantly under-represented in the creative industries.

Research hypothesis 4: Due to social beliefs and patterns, it is harder for women to enter the creative industries.

Research hypothesis 5: Women face internal barriers within organisations due to their gender.

Research hypothesis 6: Women leaders have to develop strategies in order to cope the creative industries challenges.

Research hypothesis 7: In order to be accepted in the creative industries, women leaders develop a work identity based on male characteristics.

Proposition 8: Women want to be recognized for their achievement but also to create a better environment in the creative industries.

Chapter 2: Research methodology

The essence and characteristics of the creative industries are such that they have fluid limits and definitions (Garnham, 2005). Often, this limited the potential development of strong quantitative and qualitative documentations for the sector as a whole.

In order to verify the research question and the research hypotheses made in the first part of this paper, a specific scientific methodology has been applied. The research question being women in leadership positions have more difficulties than men to enter and succeed in the creative industries. The research hypothesis is questioning the reasons of these difficulties and how women are fighting the challenges in order to succeed. The applied research aims to generate knowledge and understand of phenomena and problems which occur in diverse organisational settings. This methodology implies two types of research in the goal of collecting the most complete information to draw appropriate conclusions. First, both a quantitative and a qualitative research will be conducted. A questionnaire will be sent to people working in the creative industries to understand the issues women are facing. Additionally, another, deeper, qualitative research will be conducted by doing interviews with successful women in the creative industries in the purpose of understanding how they challenge these issues.

2.1. Research design

2.1.1. Empirical research: survey

This research examines the reasons of the difficulties women face to enter and success in the creative industries. This research consists in a survey, also called questionnaire. Questionnaires are used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data (Menter et al., 2011) about facts, activities, people's perceptions, attitudes, behaviours, abilities, values and beliefs (Siniscalco & Auriant, 2005). The purpose of this survey is to gather relevant data about the creative industries with a focus on leadership positions and women. In order to meet the research hypothesis stating that it is harder for women in leadership positions to enter and succeed in the creative industries, a survey is the best way to collect data that are precisely measurable (Babbie, 2012).

2.1.2. Empirical research: In-depth interviews

In the purpose of completing an exhaustive study of successful women leaders in the creative industries, a qualitative research has been conducted. The first research supported the general hypothesis made about the creative industries and the difficulties for women in management to enter and succeed within the field. The second qualitative research aims to go further in the analysis of women leaders in the creative industries, studying how to become successful in the sector by connecting experiences with opinion to get the most insight into situations. This research happened in the form of in-depth interviews. In qualitative research, interviews are one of the most frequently used methods to gather data (King & Harrocks, 2010). In the context of researching how women fight the challenges imposed by the creative industries, using in-depth qualitative interviews allowed the researcher to meet and discuss with the people who have knowledge and/or experience the problem of interest. Qualitative research is considered as appropriate when the goal is to examine the perceptions and beliefs of individuals as they interact with the world (Merriam, 2002). The researcher can explore the motives, experiences and opinions of others in detail which allows to face and develop different point of views on the studied subject. In comparison to ordinary conversation, qualitative interviews have a structure allowing a focus on a research question. The research question has to be clearly defined and can cover different scopes such as the understanding of important concepts, learning

about ideas that define a culture or how people understand their own world (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

2.2. Selection of the population

2.2.1. Selection of the survey's respondents

The survey aims to receive answers from workers in sub-creative industries in order to have a variety of respondents. One assumption could be that women would be the target group of this questionnaire. However, the survey was also open to men in order to obtain comparative information even though it has been openly acknowledged that the focus of the research is upon women in leadership. Additionally, the survey was not focused on workers in leading executive positions but to the whole population working in the creative industries. It had been decided to broaden the target subjects of the survey in order to understand and acknowledge different point of views on women leadership in the creative industries and the different challenges they might face.

2.2.2. Selection of the population interviewed

In looking at individuals most intimately involved with the topic of female under-representation in the creative industries, in depth interviews were conducted with four women at key leading executive positions which deemed the appropriate methodology. The goal of the interviews was to understand successful female leaders' point of view on the assumptions made in the literature review as the interview guideline was focused on experiences and identity perception of the respondents.

2.3. Collection of the data

2.3.1. Elaboration of both samples

2.3.1.1. Survey sample

It has been decided to use a sample that would consists of about 50 workers in the creative industries. The respondent age not being a relevant characteristic. A sample of about 50 respondents is a representative sample of the population working in the creative industries as the purpose of the survey is to have a better insight to the sector.

2.3.1.2. In-depth interview sample

In looking at individuals most intimately involved with the topic of female under-representation in the creative industries, in depth interviews were conducted with four women at key leading executive positions which deemed the appropriate methodology. The goal of the interviews was to understand successful female leaders' point of views on the creative industries through their experiences and identity development within their careers.

Initial respondents were recruited via e-mail based from the industry contacts of the author and expanded within her network as snowball sampling. The interviews happened face to face and by phone. The researcher made efforts in order to recruit women with various backgrounds which includes variety of nationalities, experiences along with different sub-sectors agencies. This research therefore examines five women in key leading executive positions in organisation across Amsterdam where the researcher is based. Specifically, the women undertaking the following roles:

- Founder
- Executive strategy director
- Head of Production
- Account director

2.3.2. Conception and realisation of the survey

The questionnaire including twelve questions has been sent to relevant people in a Google forms. Using google forms allowed to maximize the time to process responses. A selection of workers in the creative industries has been made in the goal of having only relevant participants. A standardized questionnaire has been used since the purpose was to gather information about the participants and their beliefs about women in the creative industries. The participants should answer the same questions and under the same system of responses (Siniscalco and Auriat, 2005). This method provided a summary of all information and data that deal with the studied phenomenon.

The questionnaire has been designed in a clear way, giving directions to respondents. An introduction has been implemented in order to present the nature and reason of the questionnaire. Additionally, formal statements of anonymous nature and confidentiality of the responses have been added.

The questions were selected according to specific criteria in order to always get an answer which delivers meaningful results (Siniscalco & Auriat, 2005). The questionnaire covered a range of questions as follow (see Appendix B):

- Closed questions concerning the respondent gender and age.
- A multiple-choice question concerning the sub-sector of the creative industries the respondent works in. The answers to this question have been classified according to the sectors classification of WIPO according to the type of copyright.
- An open question on the position/role of the respondent in the creative industries.
- A closed question concerning the entry to the sector according to gender
- A scale question about the entry to the sector with previous connections (network).
- A scale question about the representation of women according to the respondent in the sector.
- A multiple-choice question concerning the barriers which prevent women leaders' progression.
- A multiple-choice question about the characteristics of successful female leaders' characteristics in the sector.

- A multiple-choice question concerning the challenges imposed to women by the creative industries.

- An open question about the responder's opinion on the way the creative industries can cater women development towards female leadership.

- An open and not mandatory question in case the respondent had any questions or comments.

The questionnaire has been prepared carefully, taking into consideration all variables in the research in order to answer and measure each variable. The answers have been interpreted and analysed based on the assumptions previously made.

The online survey has been shared through the writer's connections as well as focused groups on social media. Personal network has been used to reach out to the women in leadership positions working in the creative industries. Focused groups on social media were mainly on Facebook through two groups: "Ladies, Wine and Design Amsterdam" which is a group composed of women in the creative industries only and a group called "RAW Advertisers Community" which is a group for talents in the Dutch creative industries. It allows to maximize and reach out a representative number of workers in the creative industries. The author added a post to the Facebook groups and members simply had the opportunity to answer the questionnaire. In a second time, in order to receive enough replies, the survey also has been shared through the author's personal and professional network. The survey was live for a period of three weeks and achieved 50 useable responses.

2.3.3. Conception and realisation of the interviews

All interviews were semi-structured, with broad and open-ended questions for an absolute understanding of the respondents' perceptions. The interviews have been conducted in a semi structured way. The method consists in developing the script for the interviews with predefined matters in order to give the interviewee the freedom to use time and words that she wants. The semi structured interviews are best applied with business leaders, experts and opinion leaders which fit the research on female leaders in the creative industries. This type of interview also allows to establish a relationship in between the interviewee and the interviewer.

Each and every interview started by asking the respondent the authorization to record the interviews in order to transcript them to analyse the subsequent data. Then, the interviewer introduces the subject by explaining the context and the interviewee introduced herself. The interviews covered five main topics and questions (see Appendix C):

- The interviewee entrance in the creative industries.
- The interviewee development as a female leader in the sector.
- The interviewee's opinion on her carrier.
- The interviewee's point of view on the creative industries.

Every interview ended up in an opening question on their motive or not to enhance a better environment for women leaders in the sector. The interviews lasted an average of 40 minutes, ranging from 30 to 60 minutes.

2.4. Treatment and analyse of data

2.4.1. Treatment of the survey's answers

As previously mentioned, the survey allowed both a quantitative and qualitative research. In order to bring some clarity to the researcher the data collected have been analysed through a grid and especially on excel. Then, data have been analysed in two different ways. First, the numerical variables have been analysed by minimum and maximum numbers as well as the average answer. Secondly, the nominal variables have been selected and classified by similarities and differences.

2.4.2. Treatment of the in-depth interviews

The in-depth interviews have been analysed by similarities and differences the interviewees mentioned per themes. The results have been split in five different topics as follow:

- Women entrance in the creative industries.
- Career development in the creative industries.
- Definition of success according to the interviewees.
- Interviewee's definition of the creative industries.
- Future of the creative industries.

2.4.3. Treatment of data as a whole

Finally, the findings will be analysed as a whole in order to have a complete discussion about the topic. Every data will be analysed in order to answer each sub research hypothesis.

In order to verify the research question which states that women in leadership positions in the creative industries have more difficulties than men to enter and succeed in the creative industries, it has been decided to make two types of research. The researches being a questionnaire shared online as well as in-depth interviews with four successful female leaders in the creative industries. These researches' purpose was to generate knowledge and understand of phenomena and problems which will be carefully analysed and discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter 3: Presentation of the findings

In order to be able to analyse the findings in the most efficient way possible and then verify the main research assumption being women in leadership positions in the creative industries have more difficulties than men to enter and succeed in the creative industries, it has been decided to first present the findings. The findings will be presented according the two researches implemented during the writing of this research paper. First, the survey's findings will be displayed. They will be divided in four different sections for a better overview of the respondents' responses. This outline will present the respondents' characteristics, their perceptions on the creative industries and on female leadership in the sector as well as their opinion for the future of female leaders in the creative industries. Then, the findings of the interviews will be explained. Each of the four interviewees will be presented and a summary of their interview based on the five approached topics will be displayed.

3.1. Survey's findings

3.1.1. Respondents' characteristics

The majority of respondents are women. Out of 50 respondents, 35 are women and 15 are male. One might assume that the title of the survey being "Female leadership in the creative industries", male did not feel concerned by filling it in. Moreover, for the same reason, it might have attracted women's attention more. This collected data does not mean that the creative industries employ more women than men.

The age of the respondents varies in between 22 and 60 years old with a majority of respondent being in between 25 and 35 years old. The largest group of respondents, 10% of them being 29 years old. The average age of the respondents is 33 years old. According to the range of age, it can be assumed that not a lot of respondents are occupying a junior position. Thus, the majority of respondent might have been working in the creative industries for several years and have an accurate point of view on the studied topic.

The vast majority of the respondents, 54% of them, work in advertising followed by 12% of them working in film and video production and another 12% working in visual and graphic design. Therefore, 78% of the respondents are working in a core copyright industry according to the WIPO classification. The 11 other respondents are working in the following sub-sectors of the creative industries: architecture and design, brand strategy, colour and material strategy, content creation, digital marketing, education in the creative industries, fashion, marketing, marketing and social media, product design and publishing.

Concerning the respondents' positions and roles in the above-mentioned sub-sectors of the creative industries it has been decided to classify them in different categories as each respondent filled-in a different answer. The classification has been created allowing to classify the respondents in two groups: business orients and creativity oriented. Out of 50 respondents, 19 are at business positions such as: CEO, account management positions, strategy, sales and new business, marketing manager and consultant. 25 respondents are creatives occupying different positions in art direction, copywriting, design and edition. Additionally, 6 respondents are at producer's position which is undertaking both business and creative roles. Finally, as assumed before, only 3 respondents are occupying junior positions.

3.1.2. Respondents' perceptions on the creative industries

The first perception's question asked to each respondent was about the entrance in the creative industries according to gender. 18 respondents out of 50 believe than it is easier for men to enter the sector whereas only one female respondent thinks that it is easier for the female gender. 25 respondents state that gender isn't a barrier to enter the sector as it gives equal chances for everyone. The 8 last respondents answers vary in 3 categories. First, 3 participants of the survey mentioned that to enter the creative industries the gender is not taken into consideration but the more senior you get, the harder it is for women to grow senior. 2 respondents state that it depends on the sub-sectors of the creative industries as well as the position. Finally, 2 respondents bring up that entering the creative industries does not depend on gender but on previous experiences and hard work.

Concerning the entrance in the creative industries through previous connections, 72% of the respondents fully agreed that having previous contact in the sector is an advantage. Additionally, 20% agree with it whereas 4% moderately agree. 2% of the respondents do not agree that a network is needed to enter the sector and 2% disagree with it.

In regard to the representation of women in the creative industries according to the respondent's opinions, 42% of them think women are moderately represented in the sector. 24% of the participants think female gender is not well represented in the sector. Finally, 28% of them think women are well represented while 6% state they are very well represented.

3.1.3. Respondents' perceptions on female leaders in the creative industries

The first question in order to understand respondents' point of view on female leaders in the creative industries was about the barriers they might face when they progress within the sector. A list of potential barriers has been provided; the respondents have the importunity to choose different barriers within this list as well as add barriers that have not been mentioned. The most chosen barrier is "Assumptions and beliefs around female personality and characteristics" with 58% of the respondents. 52% of the participants think female growth can be stopped by the male based sector itself. 50% think it can be due to family responsibilities while 46% think women might struggle to get more senior due to gender bias as unequal treatment based on gender. 40% of the participants

think that glass ceiling and lack of self-confident can be barriers to women leaders' progression. Lack of mentorship appears to be an important barrier for 32% of the respondents as well as the fact that project can be assigned based on gender for 30% of them. Similarity attraction occurs to be a potential barrier for 26% of the respondents, personality over meritocracy for 22% of them and the sector's characteristics for 20% of the participants. The lack of training does not seem to be an important barrier as 6% of the respondents mentioned it. Finally, 3 respondents declared that they do not think there are any barrier to female leaders' progression in the sector.

Most of the respondents share the same opinion on the main characteristics female leaders must have: 80% of them think they should be confident, 72% intelligent, 70% ambitious, 66% ambitious, 66% determined and 60% committed. It is important to note than none of these characteristics are used in the literature to describe one specific gender. However, 60% of the respondent think that it is important for a woman leader to be relationship oriented which is described as a more female characteristic. Additionally, most of the participants consider important for a female leader to be adaptable (48%), imaginative (44%), vision creator (44%), willing to work long hours (44%) and perseverant (42%). To them, it seems to be less important for a female leader to be influential (38%), autonomous (36%), competitive (36%), dynamic (32%), self-reliant (32%) or tough (32%). It appears to be even less common for the respondents that a female leader can be a negotiator (28%), sensitive (22%) nor shares common interest with their male peers (14%). Finally, being contentious, delicate, small business focused and/or creative do not seem to matter much as only 6% of the respondents find these characteristics important. A participant acknowledges that the above list of qualities does not only apply to women but whatever gender is the leader. It is noteworthy that characteristics considered as more manly in the literature and the society such as being tough, competitive or negotiator are not the most important ones according to the sample. However, the characteristics used to describe the female gender like delicate or sensitive are also not characteristics that female leaders should have.

To the question "in what way can women challenge gender inequalities imposed by the creative industries", the vast majority of respondents, 84%, answer by creating balanced-leadership within organisations. 22% answer by creating their own female organisations or groups and 12% by creating awards for female only. However, 20% of the respondents think it is important for women to adapt their personality to the organisation's culture. Adopting more masculine values or mannerisms is not a way to

challenge gender inequalities according to the respondents. Several of them indicate that having open conversations and that being strong and the best at your work despite the gender is the most important.

3.1.4. Respondents' brainstorm on creative industries' future for female leaders

The questionnaire's last question was an open question with the purpose of encouraging the respondents to brainstorm on the future of the creative industries concerning female leadership. The 50 answers have been classified three main categories: learning, diversity and women focused. It is important to note that 12 respondents were not replying to this question as they were not sure of how the creative industries can provide support to female leaders, five participants answer saying that nothing would be possible, and five others decided to not answer the question at all. First, 10 respondents mentioned that learning process such as access to training and workshops for both genders would help. It also has been acknowledged that women in the creative industries should have more mentorship in order to have someone to look up to as there are less women than men at senior roles in the sector. Secondly, 10 participants brang up the need of diversity and equality though policies by mentioning for instance meritocracy, balanced leadership or employment quota especially in the most senior positions. One participant states the latest "*push towards more gender balanced juries and panellist* (…) *for industries awards and conferences*" One respondent mentioned the importance of not creating female groups but collaboration within organisations. Equal pay has also been mentioned by two participants. Finally, and at the opposite of the previous point, 8 respondents mentioned women focused solutions that could be implemented by the creative industries in order to facilitate female leadership growth. Some of the participants discussed the need of "*female-ownership of agencies*" or all-female groups. It also has been expressed twice that women in the creative industries should receive better maternity packages.

3.2. Interview's findings

3.2.1. Summary of Hayley Reddall's interview

3.2.1.1. Hayley Reddall's presentation

Hayley Reddall has been the first person interviewed. She is account director and mainly in client services at The Brave New Now in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. She is British and lives in the Netherlands for 5 years. An account director is responsible for a group of accounts also called clients (Jefkins, 2016). They have to deliver the most suitable solution to the clients, especially on time, budget and media (Leigh, 2000). She occupies this position at The Brave New Now, a small creative agency specialized in advertising. She works in the creative industries for 6 years.

3.2.1.2. Table 1: Summary table of Hayley Reddall's interview results

Topic	Interviewee's experience	Interviewee's point of view
Entering the creative industries	Through experiencing work on the client side, she decided to work in a creative agency.	Enter is easier if you studied the field and sector.
Career development in the creative industries	Experienced gender barriers internally to the organisation as well as with client.	It is harder for women to climb up the ladder and become more senior due to their gender.
Definition of success	Working hard. Has experienced women adapting to male characteristics.	Speaking up in order to cope gender inequalities.
Definition of the creative industries	Female leaders under represented at senior roles due to the characteristics of the sector.	Under representation of creative female leaders being very important. Ego-centric sector.
Future of the creative industries	Better gender balanced is needed.	

3.2.2. Summary of Jessica Reynolds' interview

3.2.2.1. Jessica Reynolds' presentation

Jessica Reynolds has been the second person interviewed. She is head of production and part of the leadership board at Iris, Amsterdam. She is British and lives in the Netherlands for 3 years. Her primary position is head of production which means that she supervises a team up to 3 people. She is responsible for the oversight of all aspects of producing advertising within her agency. As part of the leadership board, she is involved in management decisions such as human resources, or decision about changing of office space and to some extend financial planning. She is currently trying to implement trainings within the agency. Iris is a network of agencies around the world specialised in marketing and advertising. She works in the creative industries for about 10 years.

3.2.2.2. Table 2: Summary table of Jessica Reynolds' interview results

Topic	Interviewee's experience	Interviewee's point of view
Entering the creative industries	Entered through previous contacts. First did a work experience.	Depending on the country an educational barrier can challenge the entrance.
Career development in the creative industries	Experienced difficulties changing of position. Assumptions around female characteristics can be challenging.	Importance of having mentors.
Definition of success	Hard work. Importance to know your own worth.	The more senior, the blunter a female needs to be as less friendly in order to be taken seriously and have authority.
Definition of the creative industries	Characteristics of the sector are challenging.	Being extravert in the sector is rewarded.
Future of the creative industries	The way to work should change for female to participate. People should be responsible of their time and way of working.	

3.2.3. Summary of Stephanie Feeney's interview

3.2.3.1. Stephanie Feeney's presentation

Stephanie Feeney was the third interviewee. She is American and works as executive strategy director and is also partner at 72 and Sunny in Amsterdam. As executive strategist director, Stephanie supervises the strategy team. The strategy department in advertising has to purpose to plan, develop and present strategic marketing recommendations for projects or clients. It is the base of any creative project as strategists provide the team with relevant information and data which will allow them to establish a further plan. As partner, Stephanie Feeney's role includes being head of college meaning she help with human resources, development and training as well as recruiting and more. She mentioned that her purpose in this role is to create a "*really vibrant, diverse culture where people can bring their true self to work*". This have been illustrated by the implementation of regular open forums where people can voluntary come together and have converse about a chosen topic such as gender, introversion vs extraversion or mental health. At 72 and Sunny, Stephanie also worked on an initiative called 72 & U which has for goal to let the next generation experience the creative industries. It happens through a partnership with local schools and with the brands they work with to help kids in between 10- and 13-years old gain knowledge in the field. 72 and Sunny is a network of agencies around the world focused on marketing and advertising. She works in the creative industries for about 12 years.

3.2.3.2. Table 3: Summary table of Stephanie Feeney's interview results

Topic	Interviewee's experience	Interviewee's point of view
Entering the creative industries	Through experiencing work on the client side, she decided to work in a creative agency.	Difficulties to enter depending on the person nationality.
Career development in the creative industries	Hard work. Not hesitating sharing her opinion and be a good listener despite facing inappropriate situation(s) with male.	Agencies only focus on work and not gender. Companies are opportunistic whatever the gender.
Definition of success	Make moves to be recognized and know your worth.	Not being shy.
Definition of the creative industries	Currently changing. Can be accommodating.	Aware of gender bias.
Future of the creative industries	Promoting diversity as it makes better creativity and innovation. Make clearer the way to enter the creative industries and reaching out to different type of people that might not be exposed to the sector.	

3.2.4. Summary of Maxine Penney's interview

3.2.4.1. Maxine Penney's presentation

Maxine Penney was the last interviewee of this research paper. She is British and founded FreshhhConnections in summer 2018. FreshhhConnections is a creative agency which makes introduction of small to medium size business. Maxine Penney offers a unique service to creative businesses which do not have the skills or the time to network and connect for new business purposes. She previously worked in creative recruitment for 4 years and introduced creative freelancers to companies for design projects.

3.2.4.2. Table 4: Summary table of Maxine Penney's interview results

Topic	Interviewee's experience	Interviewee's point of view
Entering the creative industries	Without guidance and alone despite her vast previous connections.	Difficult even with network. Very closed industry based on trust.
Career development in the creative industries	Experienced being hold back by women leaders.	Successful women in the sector tend to make it harder for other women.
Definition of success	Gain in experience and knowledge. Receive positive feedback.	Interest of people in the creative organizations.
Definition of the creative industries	Exclusive especially in Amsterdam. Not willing to open internationally.	
Future of the creative industries	Make the sector more inclusive to minorities, opening up. Educate and present opportunities in the creative industries to everyone. Having open conversations and workshops to allow people to speak up.	

Two researches have been implemented in order to verify the research hypothesis affirming that it is more difficult for female leaders to enter and succeed in the creative industries. These two types of research result in numerous findings. On one hand, the survey provided diverse qualitative and quantitative data about the creative industries and how they are perceived from an inside point of view. On the other hand, the in-depth interviews recognize an overview of experiences and point of views of four female leaders in the sector. All findings will be analysed in the following chapter, allowing to verify the hypotheses and draw conclusions.

Chapter 5: Analysis of the findings and discussion

The purpose of the research is to verify that in order to access and be successful in leadership positions within the creative industries, women have to cope against several challenges. In order to demonstrate this statement, a list of different research hypotheses have been made based on literature review. Additionally, to demonstrate and illustrate each assumption two types of research have been implemented. It has been decided to divide the research hypothesis in two main question. First, how female leadership in the creative industries is perceive from inside will be examined. In the second place the question on how female leaders succeed in the field will be examined.

5.1. How female leadership in the creative industries perceived from inside?

5.1.1. Are women significantly under-represented in the creative industries?

The creative industries are well known to be a male based club, but one might think that the sector is changing, and the female gender is less and less under-represented. According to the survey's respondents' women are moderately under-represented in the creative industries which has been confirmed during the interviews. However, Hayley Reddall expressed her opinion stating that women in the creative industries are "*massively*" under-represented compared to a wider economy. It is important to stress that each and every interviewee and some survey's participants highlighted that some departments in the creative industries and especially in advertising are more female oriented. It is the case for account handling as well as production while it seems that there are only few female creatives. According to Hayley Reddall this can be due to social and gender beliefs: "*I think there is sort of a skewed feminine and masculine way of learning which might means that boys are better equipped to go in art director, design, editing roles*". However, she believed that the newer generation will change this perception.

5.1.2. Is it harder for women to enter the creative industries due to social beliefs and patterns around the female gender?

The four interviewees entered the creative industries without studying anything related to it. Three of them started on the client side and have seen the work a creative agency produced through that, which stimulated their interest. Thus, all of them entered the industries via previous contact(s). Jessica Reynolds entered an agency called Iris after a six-weeks work experience there. She stated that: "*it feels good because it was sort of a shortcut*". Even though she was competing with six other people that studied creativity or advertising at university, she felt she has been the one hired because the team already knew her way of behaving with them. She stated that "*50% of why you hire someone*" is based on knowing someone personality and that the person will fit within the team. None of the interviewees experienced difficulties to enter the creative industries due to their gender. While entering the sector they did not feel any female under-representation or favouritism for men. Thus, both genders have the same opportunity in order to enter the creative industries. However, Hayley Reddall and Maxine Penney, both faced other types of challenges in order to enter the creative business. Hayley Reddall entered the creative industries two years after university as she had a previous experience client side: "*It is a funny industry… I did not have experience in advertising, so no one wanted to hire me, but you need to get hired to gain in experience.*" She also felt "*overlooked*" since she was older than most of the people applying for the same job. Additionally, Maxine Penney who always has a large network in the creative industries acknowledge that "*it is quite a closed industry even though you know everyone*". She mentioned that it is mainly because people are busy, so they do not take time to meet. The industry being based on trust senior workers always come back to the people they already know the quality of their work. Additionally, 29 out of 50 respondents to the survey states that one of the barriers to female leaders' progression in the creative industries is the assumptions and beliefs around female gender.

5.1.3. Are the creative industries adapted to female leader's development?

According to several authors in the literature, the creative industries' way of working seems to be adapted to women leader's development. Being project based allows freelancers works which is supposedly facilitating flexibility for women, especially when they have to balance their work and family lives. For the four interviewees as well as

some survey's respondents stated that both genders have equal chance to enter the creative industries and develop their career at junior level. However, it is easier for men to develop their career at senior level. Additionally, Hayley Reddall believes that women are under-represented in the creative industries due to "*the characteristics of the sector and advertising in particular, long hours, project-based and also if the woman wants a baby. It's probably a quite intimidating world to step into as a woman*". Moreover, Jessica Reynolds explained that as junior she did not pay much attention to the gender representation but the more senior she got, the more she realized she started to be surrounded by more male than female even though she always had female executive above us. Having only female executive helped her to develop her carrier as she would always have someone to look up to. Maxine Penney also highlights the importance of having mentors while developing in the creative industries which she never has. It is important to have guidance from a more senior person. Finally, it is interesting to look at the perceptions and experiences of the interviewees on successful women leaders who want a family. Both, Hayley Reddall and Jessica Reynolds understand the difficulties to start a family at their position. Jessica Reynolds said that when she thinks of family cannot imagine how she could start one at her current role: "*I do genially think because of the responsibilities and family life, I am generalizing, it's often a problem woman has to solve and not the guys*". Hayley admits she will go back to the client side up to some point in order to have a less hectic lifestyle. It is the same for Jessica Reynolds: "*I probably want to stay in the creative industry in some capacity and probably in another type of job role*". It appears that only Stephanie Feeney has a family and that it has been very well accepted at 72 and Sunny where she works. She has been able to take a year off with her husband (who works for the same organization). She highlighted the difficulty for a man to take a parental leave. Stephanie Feeney explained that in her agency it is becoming more expectable to come back after pregnancy leave: "*I can take my job back, but I also need a bit of time to be a mum*". Stephanie Feeney and her husband both were able to take a day off a week to take care of their child. However, she acknowledges that the mentality in the Netherlands might help and that would not have been possible in the United States nor in the United Kingdom for instance. Her main clients being working mums they understand the situation and allowed her to be the first woman in her company at this very senior level to work part time.

5.1.4. Women leaders characteristics are a good fit to the sector and thus, enhance better environment and results to the industry as a whole?

As mentioned previously male and female might have different management and leadership approaches. All interviewees highlighted that it is important in the sector to be: "*arrogant*", egocentric, having a lot of confidence due to the male dominated sector and cannot be quiet as it will be seen as a sign of weakness (H. Reddall, 2019). However, it is important for Hayley Reddall to have women in the sector in order to contain and neutering while men tend to provoke. She believes that it is why account management is female heavy as this department is more in touch with the client and women tend to "*soften the blow*" (J. Reynolds, 2019). According to Jessica Reynolds it is a matter of behaviour perception. As head of production in a creative agency, she believes women are more organized which explain why production departments tend to be more female oriented. Thus, it seems that male and female are split depending on the sub-sector as well as the department they work in.

5.1.5. Are women facing internal barriers within organisations due to their gender?

Hayley Reddall experienced a situation where the company she was working for was looking for someone for the position above her. Her superior was referring at the perfect candidate as a man. When Hayley Reddall asked why her superior replied that the client "*would respond better to male leadership*". She described the client team as "*old female client team, Russian and quite flirty*". Her superior believed that a man would be better to manage their expectation. She felt that she would not be able to grow and have a higher position within this agency. It happened a second time during her career when she works on a project with a client she defined as "*sexist*". The client would not make eye contact with her and was speaking over her while when her male colleague was speaking, he was fully listening without interrupting. Maxine Penney experienced gender barriers from other women in the industries. She believes that because it has been hard for them in the past, they tried to make it hard for her as well. Maxine encountered three female superiors that hold her back and did not give her any confidence. Moreover, two interviewees: Jessica Reynolds and Stephanie Feeney experienced being under paid for the work they provided. Both stated that they realised it a bit late and assumed that negotiating salaries is more difficult for women than men as women can struggle knowing

their own worth: "*it is apparently a really female thing, but I am terrible at negotiating and that's the prize*" (S. Feeney, 2019).

5.2. How do female leaders succeed in the sector?

5.2.1. Do women leaders have to develop strategies in order to cope the creative industries challenges?

In the interviewees opinions, developing and adopting strategies in order to cope the creative industries' challenges towards women was not the good answer to what they experienced. All of them made the best of every challenges they faced by working very hard and trying to prove themselves. Jessica Reynolds, Hayley Reddall and Maxine Penney encountered situation where even trying their best nor having open conversations was rewarded at its fair price that they decided to leave the organization they worked at. Nonetheless, a counter-example has been explained by Stephanie Feeney who did not feel that challenged by her gender but more by her nationality. As American it has been hard for Stephanie Feeney to enter the strategy department of an agency in London, the United Kingdom being the "*home of strategy*". Her way of challenging the fact that she was overlooked trying to work in this field was to prove that she had a new pair of eyes of this subject which make her succeed. Then, she never had to cope against challenges especially gender bias because she felt that "*agencies were opportunistic*" since she was very good at what she has been hired for. It has been acknowledged through the answers to the survey and by the interviewees that nowadays it is easier to talk about female under representation and gender bias within the sector. Thus, women do not have to develop strategies in order to cope challenges. Finally, according to the survey's participants, it is important for women to create and push towards balanced-leadership within organisations while creating female only groups or even awards seems going to the contrary of overcoming the creative industries challenges nor making it a better environment.

5.2.2. Do female leaders have to develop a work identity based on male characteristics in order to be accepted in the creative industries?

As previously mentioned, the creative industries can be described are very manly. In order to succeed and be recognized at their true worth women can develop a work identity based on male characteristics. It is interesting to note that 20% of survey's participants would recommend female leaders to adapt their personality to the organisation's culture while which can be described as manly. However, only 4% of the

respondents recommend fighting the challenges by adopting more masculine values or mannerisms. In addition, none of the interviewees agreed with themselves changing their personality in order to fit a men-based organisation but witnessed of it happening to other women. Hayley Reddall when explaining that at one of her former agencies, her superior was looking for a man only in a senior position, she described the agency as male club "*which wanted another male in their pack*". Only one female was at the senior position of managing director. Within the organisation this person has been described with male characteristics such as "*being pushy*". Hayley Reddall acknowledged that she might have tried to compensate and adapt by being "*ferocious or talks loudly*". However, adopting male characteristics is not the way to answer a challenge according to her.

5.2.3. Do female leaders work toward the goal of being recognized as well as creating a better environment in the sector?

During both researches, it has been shown that female leaders in the creative industries first fight for their own success and then help other women within the sector. Most of the respondents of the survey declared that they did not know how to make the creative industries a better environment nor that it would be even possible. The interviewees who think of themselves as successful as women leader in the sector mentioned the difficulty to change the industry fully and thus, try to do it in a smaller scale which is the creative industries in the Netherlands or within the organisation they work for. Hayley Reddall and Jessica Reynolds understand that being a good manager as well as being a good mentor is important in order to show to other women that it is possible to succeed within the sector. They want to make the sector less intimidating. Maxine Penney and Stephanie Feeney both tried to make the creative industries less inclusive, to open up to everyone in order to have more diversity. They both want to explain and give opportunities to people from outside the sector. They believe that the more diversity in colour, gender, background, personality and other, the better the creative will be, which will enhance better efficiency within the sector.

The above presented analysis of the finding does not fully verify the main research hypothesis stating that it is harder for female leader to enter and succeed in the creative industries. Along the writing of this research it has been important to acknowledge the

different layers and parameters in order to discuss the above hypothesis. The conclusions will be drawn in the following chapter.

Conclusion

Main conclusions

The above analysis of the findings has to purpose to verify the main research question which affirms that female is facing different challenges to enter and succeed as leader in the creative industries. Through two types of research investigations it has been possible to draw some conclusions. This research has been generated with the idea that female was very much under-represented in the creative industries compared to the wider economy. It appears that from an inside point of view, women are not under-represented until a certain seniority level when it seems to be more men heavy. Additionally, depending on the departments within the creative industries and especially advertising, women are more or less well represented. For instance, the departments of account management and production have been described as more feminine. Women believe that certain traits of their personality one can describe as female pattern makes these departments more female oriented. For example, account management being a department facing client relationship on a daily basis, it is easier for women to "soften the blow" (Jessica Reynolds, 2019) in case of discordance.

Female with the ambition to become leaders do not face any challenges entering the creative industries. In order to get in the sector, it is easier to have previous connections to be introduced to the sector. However, it is harder to climb the ladder and develop to more seniors' positions as a woman due to social beliefs and patterns around the female gender. In order to be successful and recognize at their worth, female leaders have to fight challenges through executive or client's requirements. It is important to note that female do not know or do not feel the need to challenge these issues other than working hard. Moreover, women tend to assume that some moves to make in order to become more senior are harder for female such as negotiating their salaries. Nonetheless the creative industries are challenging and give opportunities to women to balance their work and family lives by allowing them to take long parental leave followed by possibilities to adapt their work life to their new lifestyle.

Finally, and as mentioned before women in the creative industries acknowledge the fact that it is more difficult for women to succeed in the creative industries. Yet, women think it is important to work towards the goal of making it easier for the next female generation by being an example of success in the sector. Female are willing to

become mentors and be able to have open conversations in order to create a more diverse environment. Changing the whole sector seems more complicated than implementing strategies to create a better environment at the smaller scale of the organization itself.

Research contribution

This research paper has for purpose to shows the importance of female leaders in the creative industries and especially at managerial positions. Many studies have been made in order to show that female is under-represented in the creative industries, but none have a particular focus on women at managerial positions. Additionally, this research paper displays the point of view of female on how to be successful and not only their feeling on the situation. Finally, even though it has been verified that women face more challenges developing their career in the creative industries, the sector is changing and female at leadership positions are willing to work towards making it a better environment. Thus, this research paper is unique displaying different features in the purpose of developing the society point of view on the preconception of the creative industries being hard to access to women with leadership ambition.

Research limitations

During the writing of this research paper, the author faced two main limits. Due to the researcher's connections and network, the methodology applied, and finding have been limited to the specific geographic zone of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Although the survey and interviewees research have been shared on social media such as Facebook and LinkedIn, the participants are mainly based in this city since the writer lives and started her career in the creative industries there. Additionally, the researcher working in the sub-sector of advertising, both research, survey and interviews happened to be answered by advertising workers for the vast majority. Thus, the conclusion made happened to be focused on advertising in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Direction for further research

As per the main conclusion and the limitation above, it would be interesting the study the creative industries as a whole, including every sub-sector as well as a broader

geographic zone focused in order to have a better understanding of the perceptions and experiences of female leaders in the sector. Additionally, all interviewees were coming from different countries and mentioned that the Netherlands are very open minded towards female leadership in comparison to the United Kingdom or the United States.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Table: four countries defining the creative/cultural industries

Comparison of four countries; definitions of the creative/cultural industries

	UK	GERMANY	SPAIN	FRANCE
Term used	Creative industries	Culture and creative industries	Culture industries	Cultural sector
Architecture	✕	✕		✕
Audio-visual (film, TV, radio)	✕	✕	✕	✕
Performing arts	✕	✕	✕	✕
Libraries			✕	✕
Design	✕	✕		
Art market/ Visual arts	✕	✕	✕	✕
Publishing	✕	✕	✕	✕
Fashion	✕			
Software/ multimedia	✕	✕		
Museums/ cultural heritage			✕	✕
Music	✕	✕	✕	✕
Crafts	✕			
Advertising	✕	✕		

Source: Adapted from Hölzl, K. (2006) Creative Industries in Europe and Austria: Definition and Potential,and Söndermann, M.et al (2009) Culture and Creative Industries in Germany.

<u>Source:</u> BOP Consulting (2010) *Mapping the creative industries: a toolkit*, British Council.

Appendix B: Survey for a quantitative research

Introduction:

Currently finish a master's degree in Management at ISCTE Business School, I am in the process of writing my thesis about female leadership in the creative industries. I would need 5 minutes of your time to complete this form. Many thanks!

Question 1: Mandatory – One choice to select

What is your gender?

None of the following questions can be used to identify you. Also note that all of your answers will be kept strictly confidential.

- Female

- Male

- Prefer not to say

- Other: …

Question 2: Mandatory – Open question

How old are you?

To be filled by respondent.

Questions 3: Mandatory – Multiple choices can be selected

In which sector of the creative industries do you work?

The creative industries being defined as 'the activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent, which have a potential for job and wealth creation through the generation and exploitation of the intellectual property.

- Advertising

- Architecture and design

- Art and craft

- Fashion

- Film and video production

- Music production

- Performing arts

- Photography

- Product design

- Publishing

- TV and radio

- Visual and graphic art

- Other: …

Question 4: Mandatory - Open question

What is your position / role within the creative industries?

To be filled by respondent.

Question 5: Mandatory – One choice to select

Would you say it is easier to enter the creative industries if you are:

- A woman

- A man

- Equal chances to everyone

- Others: …

Question 6: Mandatory – One choice to select – Scale question

Would you agree with the following statement: having previous connections within the creative industries provides an advantage to entering the sector:

Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Agree

Question 7: Mandatory – One choice to select – Scale question

In your opinion, how are women represented in the sector?

Not represented at all   1   2   3   4   5   Very well represented

Questions 8: Mandatory – Multiple choices can be selected

What kind of barriers are there to prevent women leaders' progression?

- Assumption and beliefs around female personality and characteristics

- Family responsibilities

- Gender bias – unequal treatment based on gender

- Glass ceiling: invisible barrier which does not allow women to grow beyond a definite level of hierarchy

- Lack of mentorship

- Lack of self-confidence

- Lack of training

- Less credibility in comparison to their male peers

- Male dominated sector (both in numbers and culture)

- Personality over meritocracy

- Project assigned based on gender (e.g. cars to men; make-up to women)

- Sector's characteristics (e.g. long hours)

- Similarity attraction (male team, client and network)

- Other: …

Questions 9: Mandatory – Multiple choices can be selected

In your opinion, successful female leaders in the creative industries share which of the following characteristics:

- Able to overcome challenges

- Autonomous

- Perseverant

- Influential

- Adaptable

- Ambitious

- Committed

- Competitive

- Contentious

- Delicate

- Determined

- Diplomatic

- Dynamic

- Imaginative

- Intelligent

- Negotiator

- Relationship oriented (team, clients and organization's culture)

- Self-confident

- Self-reliant

- Sensitive

- Share common interest with their male peers

- Small business focused
- Though
- Vision creator
- Willing to work long hours
- Other: …

<u>Questions 10:</u> Mandatory – Multiple choices can be selected

In what way can women challenge gender inequalities impose by the creative industries:

- Adapt personality to the organisation's culture
- Adopt more masculine values / mannerisms
- Create their own female organisations or groups
- Create awards for female only
- Create balanced-leadership within organisations
- Other: …

<u>Questions 10:</u> Mandatory – Open question

In what way do the creative industries cater women development towards leadership?

To be filled by respondent.

Appendix C: Semi-structure, in-depth interview guideline

1. Record – Permission

2. Explaining of the context

3. Could you please introduce yourself? (Name, company, position)

4. How did you enter the creative industries?

    a. As a woman, did you find it more difficult to enter the sector? Do you have any examples of why you found it difficult? Did that held you back or in contrast push you to try harder to progress in the sector?

    b. Did you face any (other) barriers? Would you say these barriers are due to social beliefs and patterns around the female gender?

5. How did you develop yourself in the creative industries?

    a. Did you ever face any barriers in previous jobs within the sector? If yes, were they because of your gender?

    b. Did you have to develop strategies in order to cope these challenges? Does it includes developing a work identity based on male characteristics?

6. Would you consider yourself as successful in your job?

    a. Do you feel that your achievements are well recognized? If yes, how so? Was it always the case during your carrier?

    b. Do you work towards the goal of making the creative industries a better environment?

7. How would you define the creative industries from your point of view?

    a. Do you feel at place in the creative industries? Especially as a female leader.

8. Opening:

    a. Would you state that women with leaderships/management skills are a good fit to the creative industries and enhance better environment and results to an organization and the sector in general?

    b. How could the creative industries cater women development towards leadership?

9. Thank you very much for your time and honesty. Have a lovely day!

Appendix D: Survey's respondents gender split

What is your gender?

50 responses

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Other

70%
30%
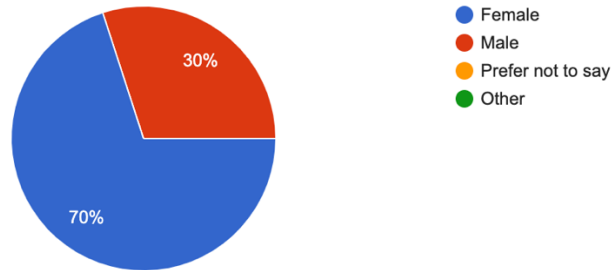
Appendix E: Survey's respondents age

How old are you?

50 responses

Appendix F: Survey's respondents split by sectors of the creative industries

In which sector of the creative industries do you work?

50 responses

Legend:
- Advertising
- Architecture and design
- Art and craft
- Fashion
- Film and video production
- Music production
- Performing arts
- Photography

▲ 1/3 ▼

- Product design
- Publishing
- TV and radio
- Visual and graphic art
- Education
- marketing and social media
- Brand Strategy
- Color & material strategy

- marketing
- digital marketing/advertising
- Graphic Design/Content Creation

▲ 2/3 ▼   ▲ 3/3 ▼

Appendix G: Survey's respondents split by positions / roles in the sector

What is your position / role within the creative industries?

50 responses

(Jr) Art director… Brand Director,… Creative Director Freelance copy… Marketing Dire… Strategy
Account manager Consultant Director of Info… Head of Creati… Sales manager designer art dir…

Appendix H: Survey's respondents' opinion on entering the creative industries

Would you say it is easier to enter the creative industries if you are

50 responses
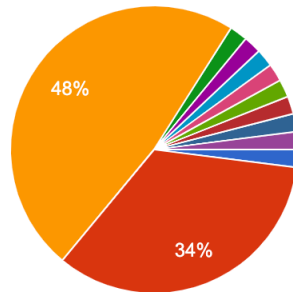
- A woman
- A man
- Equal chances to everyone
- it's equal at lower levels, but the mo…
- This depends on what kind of positi…
- I don't know
- Depends on the environment
- I think it's equal chances in 2019. 2…

▲ 1/2 ▼

- if you have more experience its easier, regardless of gender
- To enter, the chances are equal. To grow, things change...
- It depends which creative industry. For advertising, I'd say it's easier if you're a man.

▲ 2/2 ▼

Appendix I: Survey's respondents' opinion on entering the sector via network

Would you agree with the following statement: Having previous connections within the creative industries provides an advantage to entering the sector.

50 responses
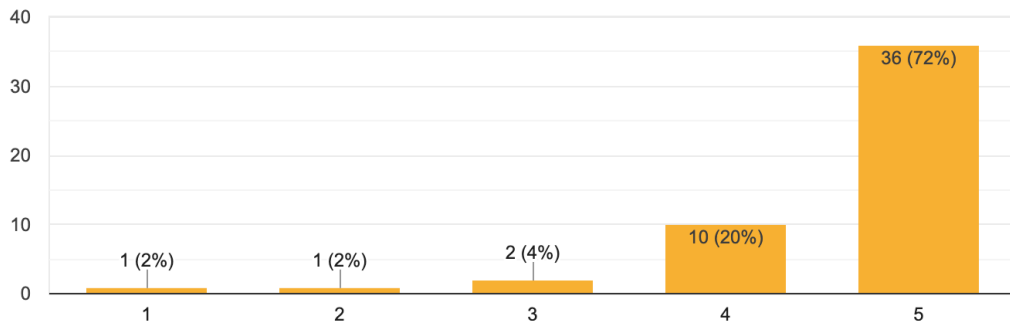
Appendix J: Survey's respondents' opinion on female representation in the sector

In your opinion, how are women represented in the sector?

50 responses
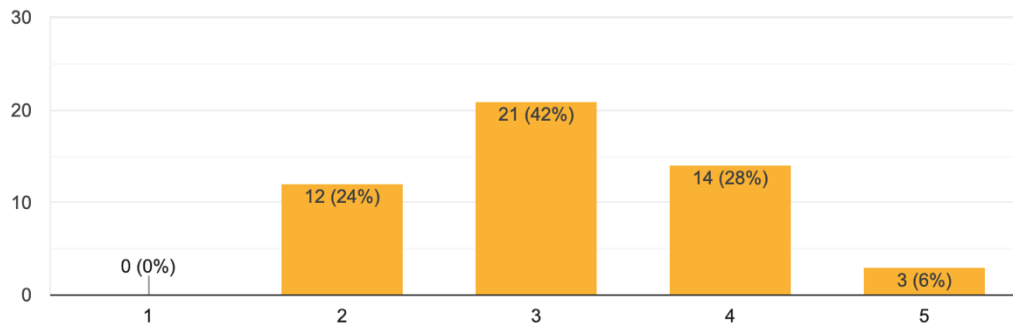
Appendix K: Survey's respondents' opinion on barriers preventing women leaders' progression

What kind of barriers are there to prevent women leaders' progression?

50 responses
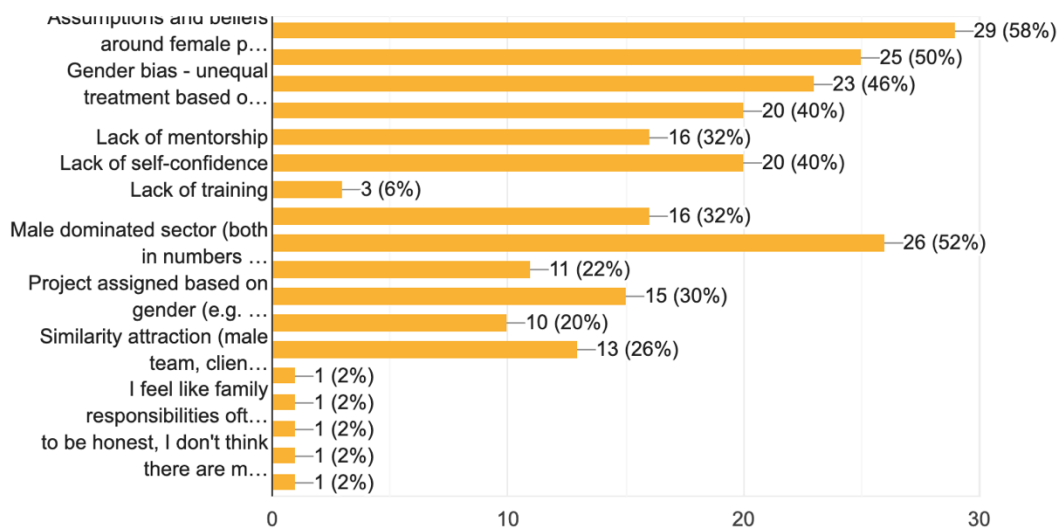
Appendix L: Survey's respondents' opinion on female leaders' characteristics

In your opinion, successful female leaders in the creative industries share which of the following characteristics:

50 responses

Characteristic	Value
Able to overcome challenges	33 (66%)
	18 (36%)
Perseverant	21 (42%)
Influencial	19 (38%)
Adaptable	24 (48%)
Ambitious	35 (70%)
Committed	30 (60%)
Competitive	18 (36%)
Contentious	1 (2%)
Delicate	1 (2%)
Determined	33 (66%)
Diplomatic	15 (30%)
Dynamic	16 (32%)
Imaginative	22 (44%)
Intelligent	36 (72%)
Negotiator	14 (28%)
	30 (60%)
Self-confident	40 (80%)
Self-reliant	16 (32%)
Sensitive	11 (22%)
	7 (14%)
Small business focused	1 (2%)
Tough	16 (32%)
Vision creator	22 (44%)
Willing to work long hours	22 (44%)
Creative	1 (2%)
	1 (2%)

Appendix M: Survey's respondents' opinion on how women can challenge gender inequalities in the sector

In what way can women challenge gender inequalities imposed by the creative industries

50 responses

Category	Value
Adapt personality to the organisation's…	10 (20%)
	2 (4%)
Create their own female organisations o…	11 (22%)
	6 (12%)
Create balanced-leadership within organ…	42 (84%)
Utilise female insights productively, o…	1 (2%)
	1 (2%)
Be proud of yourself and your capabilit…	1 (2%)
	1 (2%)
Learn to be tougher negotiators	1 (2%)
	1 (2%)
Just be a strong woman an don't let you…	1 (2%)
	1 (2%)
Be best at what you do.	1 (2%)
	1 (2%)
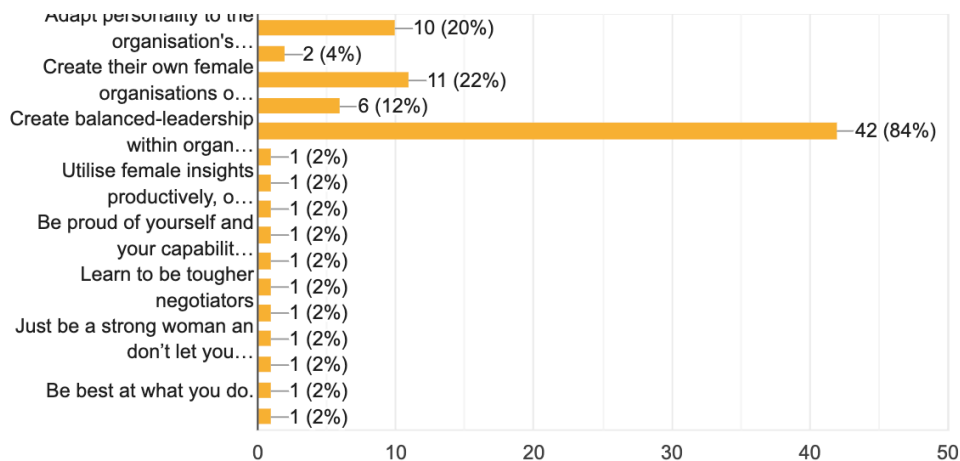
In what way do the creative industries cater women development towards leadership?

50 responses

?

More training available (like through the IPA). Better maternity packages.

training schemes

1. By example (female-ownership of agencies). 2. Cross-sector/non-gender bias in allocation of projects (cars can = women!). 3) Empowerment in terms of accelerated learning curves and vitally, ongoing positive feedback fuelling personal development. 4) Valued with renumeration: equal salaries whether male or female.

Not sure

Through training, support and sufficient maternity rights and pay.

Not sure what this means 😊

I'm not really aware of any out there at the moment?!

While I do not think this is common, I did see one company stating in their job description that they would favour applications by women over those of male applicants.
I also saw an all-female collective of directors in the UK. I think these initiatives to be very inspiring, and hope to contribute in a similar manner in the future.

Equal opportunities and equal pay

By seizing the full potential of women

Within the organisation/business: 1: Open up about the role of leadership between men/women. Especially within the highest (top) positions within big brands, agencies and organisations. (because the hierarchy can be quite masculine and old fashioned i guess) 2: Do not fight, but be collaborative. Don't create male or female organisations (only if it is a very niche/specific product or field)

too many to mention all

Recently I've seen a push towards more gender balanced juries and panelists such as for industry events, awards, conferences, etc.

I'm not sure they do...

I don't think it does. In my view a leader can be male or female an both should be treated the same.

Mentorship and groups for women in business is always a good thing.

Some young creative companies work with a diversity policy, which I think may help women to climb up on the ladder more easily.

They don't

Workshops

Showing the industrie we have a problem to solve. Showing the disbalance

I dont know

I don't know

Only through political means

in almost no way

Not specificly

I don't know, i am a woman, but i don't feel that there is a difference between woman or man in my company or my business cirkle. I do understand the origine of your questions, but i don't think you delivere "answers" in the right way. IT feels really negative, this survey, and i don't think that that Should BE the way you ask things and want to have answers. Because the way you ask things now almost make me feel like i have to answer like a "real feminist" and be mad at the men who i work with.

employment quota

its becoming "trendy" to see things through a womans perspective, and thats great. Besides just being really good at the job, many opportunities for women are arising because the industry recognises the value of our input and POV (also good for reputation and sales) - this isnt a bad thing. This works

Don't think that's happening enough right now, but by diversifying and focusing more on balanced leadership and different perspectives, there's more room for women to get into leadership positions.

no idea

In the same ways as they do for men (in NL at least). I believe NL and agencies are quite open to having female leaders. The biggest problem might actually be the fact that family responsibilities are often still mostly on a women's shoulders, and being a leader in this industry is a highly demanding job that is hard to combine with responsibilities as such.

N/A

By judging on merit

Accesibility to training

Hiring women because they are organized and capable

No idea

.

none.

I don't even know

Flexible hours

Not sure what you mean by this, sorry.

Not everyone wants to be a 'leader'. However, I'm certain creative industries support and develop people with passion, talent and commitment (regardless of gender). I'm certain every agency owns processes for career development regardless of gender. It could be coaching, performance based reviews, internal & external trainings.

They don't

There are some initiatives in advertising but they feel a bit like they're done because they're the right thing to be doing and because it looks good to be doing something. I think they lack the commitment needed from the C-Suite to make female leadership part of the business strategy. Only once that happens will it be taken more seriously and become part of the culture of the company and eventually the industry. It has to come from the top.

No comment

I believe the only way is by having leadership with is clearly gender balanced.

Above is pretty spot on. Highlighting women leadership, applying for balanced - gender awards.

Any comment? Please let me know!

11 responses

Every good team needs a good mix of male/female, simply because it is a 'human' industry and client teams must feel they can share openly and sometimes emotionally with an agency team member. It's human to want to talk to a same-gender opposite number because there is an inherent view that "they will understand". Female clients sometimes require a sounding-board that is female, rather than male. Power is knowledge and a strong female team member is someone who can deliver everything required by the job spec, but also utilise their inherent human disposition to listen (more) and to empathise with clients on a 'personal' level, more instinctively. Strong personal relationships mean strong business relationships and women have an easier in-road to developing this with clients, whether those clients are female, or male. Why? Because they are (sociologically) less threatening than their male counterparts and tend to handle a traditionally 'submissive' role more easily. This does not in any way way mean they are less able to lead - far from it - they lead using those insights gleaned and they lead better potentially than their male counterparts by being able to listen to the invisible 'emotional' needs from clients alongside delivering their 'functional' requirements.

By filling in this form I feel the importance about this subject, but i'm not very aware of the actual facts. I believe and hope that this topic will not be a discussion but more a conversation, and that in the end will result in a more equal and balanced industry. Good luck X

Good luck, sounds like an interesting project!

Good luck!!!!

Thank you for researching this topic!

I recently moved to Amsterdam from Israel.

Good luck, sounds like an interesting project!

Good luck!!!!

Thank you for researching this topic!

I recently moved to Amsterdam from Israel.

See above!

Good luck!

If you are talented and work hard, there is no limit to what you can achieve. Whatever your gender.

Having worked both agency and client side for many years, I can say gender hasn't been an issue towards leadership. In ad agencies where I've worked, there was a trend for more account team people (male or female) to become leaders rather than the creative team. Group Account Directors rose to Board Directors / Partners level as apposed to Creative people (regardless of gender). At Philips (Client side); many leaders are women (also ones with families too). They have worked hard, are respected and able to balance their life and work commitments seemingly well.

Increasingly, it's been realized that woman have been oppressed in advertising - and for good reason, trying to highlight it is the first step. I've seen it's now become a divide in the industry, where when you go too far and differentiate us women, I think you're actually furthering the divide between genders.

Harmony Boda: Good morning Hayley, how are you doing?

Heylay Reddall: Hi Harmony, I am fine, exciting to do this interview!

HB: Nice! Thank you very much for participating! Would you mind if I record you?

HR: No, not at all.

HB: Great. I will explain a bit of context first: I am currently finishing my master's degree in management and thus I am writing my thesis. My thesis is about female leadership in the creative industries and especially how to enter and succeed in the sector.

HR: Alright, yes.

HB: Would you like to introduce yourself?

HR: Sure. My name is Hayley, I am an account director, so I work in client services and I work at The Brave New Now which is a creative agency in Amsterdam. It's a very small agency. But in the past, I work at much larger creative agencies and also production houses.

HB: When you say creative agencies, do you mean advertising? Do you work in a particular sub-sector of the creative industries?

HR: Hm, it has been mostly in advertising as well as big 360 advertising so kind of, you know, from the shop floor to the cinema, what does that look across the board. And now I guess it is lot more of content creation which is a different type of advertising but it is also advertising.

HB: Alright, how did you enter this sector? How did you decided to go that way, what is your story?

HR: That's an interesting question that I don't really know the answer to. Hmm. My godfather was in advertising and he was someone I always looked up to. Hmm. And my cousin, his nieces, both of them work in advertising. I think I was kind of really. They were both, Emma and Jessica, seemed to enjoy their jobs. And I studied art history and anthropology at university, and I guess one day I kind of realized that actually advertising might be the kind of perfect marriage of both of those things. I am not very, I wasn't planning on becoming an accountant, put it that way. I needed to be visually stimulated, I needed do somewhere where I am making something. And so, for me, I am also interested in people and why people do things. So for me advertising sort of makes sense since you know, you are creatively bribing, creatively sort of guiding people to do

something whether that's a purchase, you know purchase a type of beer or make people behave differently you know to make them to engage with a charitable organization. Hmm, I think that's kind of what, there is one day I just realized these two things probably meant that it was the right industry for me to work in.

HB: That's very interesting!

HR: Does that makes sense?

HB: Yes, completely! Did you enter an agency directly after college?

HR: No, I did not. After college, I went to work for the company which owns Ugg Boots and I work with them for a little while, doing all kind of different things. I worked with their marketing teams, just kind of helping out which was quite boring but I also worked with their legal team, it is a brand that has a lot of legal challenged all the time. Hmm, yes. So, I work with them I think for two years and then I was kind of… That wasn't really for me, I didn't really enjoy it but when I was seeing the other team talking about all the marketing campaigns, all of the shoots, I think that was the point I was like "This, I want to work for the people who do that". I didn't want to be on the client side which is interesting because this is where I will probably end up again eventually.

HB: So, when you decided to go to the creative industries, particularly to an advertising agency, how did that happen? Did someone reach out to you? Did you apply to specific agencies? Did you have any previous connections which helped you to enter the sector?

HR: Hmm. No, I had friends who advised me on the kind of agencies I should speak with.

HB: Yes

HR: Hmm. And that, I think that helped me to shortlist people I wanted to speak to but I had to speak to quite a lot of people because I didn't have… It's a really funny industry. I didn't have experience in advertising, so no one wanted to hire me but in order to get the experience. Because I had been working for two years already, I think I got overlooked quite a lot because I think most people go to advertising straight after university whereas I was probably two years older than most people applying for the same job as me. It was a strange thing.

HB: Right, it didn't seem easy. Did you have the impression it had been more difficult to be hired due to your gender?

HR: Yes, I don't know, it would be interesting to hear one of my colleagues, Daniel, his point of view on that because I work, we work in this account handling side of course which is historically and generally speaking more female heavy. Hmm. You actually find fewer men who are account managers until you get to a really senior level and then you

will find men. So, I don't know if that was ever, I never felt that way about my job, I never felt that someone who was male had better chance. I think if you want to work in account management in the creative industries it is weighted more towards female.

HB: Alright, was it still the case when you were developing your career? You never faced challenges or difficulties due to your gender within the agency you worked in or the client for instance?

HR: Oh no, I actually have! I will not name the agency, but I was once told that they were looking to hire somebody above my level. And my old colleague and I were having a conversation with our boss, who was a man. He kept on, we were trying to understand what this role was being put between us, and our boss kept on referring to this person as a man. I jokily said, "but he can also be a she" to which I was told "no we are only looking for a man in this role because man hold more clout in this senior level".

HB: Alright, how did you react to that?

HR: Very badly.

HB: Did you say anything?

HR: I said something straight away. And I said "Matt, you can't mean that" and he said yes I think with the client that we had a the time, he said "I think they respond better to male leadership" at which point my colleague and I said "well okay that's not right and also what do you would that say about our roles?". You know, will we not progress because we are female? And then, he started backtracking, but it was definitely a very clear preference towards a man.

HB: Would you say it was an isolated case due to the client's preference?

HR: I think it was two things. I think one in their experience it was an old female client team, they were Russian, and they were quite flirty so I think they thought that a man would be better, and it was also in an agency where all managing directors within the firm were male.

HB: Would you describe this agency as a very male club agency?

HR: It was indeed, a very male club and they wanted another male in their pack.

HB: Alright, were you able to feel that it was only male leaders in the sense of the atmosphere, the culture, the conversations even were also based on male characteristics?

HR: Yes, it was the case but at the time towards when I left, there was one female managing director as well. Hmm but there were always… I would hear her being referred to as pushy or bossy, which is a really terrible, you wouldn't refer to a man as pushy or you know. It was a very male description.

HB: Would you say this person was just trying to compensate, adopt some male characteristics in order to adapt to this male environment?

HR: Yes, a little bit. She was very hmmm, ferocious, she was great. Hmm. Yes, I think she probably did slightly adapt slightly to, she talks very loudly, put it that way. She tried to assert herself in front of them all.

HB: Interesting. Let's go back to you: when you told me previously when you were having this talk with your boss about this position. You basically told me he was generally saying that you couldn't go further than the position you were at because of your gender.

HR: He was implying that yes.

HB: Did you think about developing strategies in order to cope this challenge? In order to sort of fight this issue?

HR: Gosh, I don't know. I think I just tried to make sure I was in all of the meetings and getting enough face time with the most senior client in order to be able to sort of prove myself. I think that was probably the only thing I did.

HB: Did you have the impression you could have been adapting more to the male environment yourself? Both to fit more to the agency's environment and to fit more to what the client expected from his contact in the agency? Is it something you would have been able to do?

HR: No, I don't think so. The only thing that I did was making sure that I did the job that I was hired to do very well. I don't think I have ever knowingly adapted kind of male traits no. Hmm.. Is that the wrong answer?

HB: There is no good or wrong answer, I just wanted your point of view on this, no worries. There are several possibilities in order to fight the male based sector. Some women tend to compensate by adopting male traits in order to fit in an organizational culture with mainly men employees. Another strategy can be that women push an organization to have a more balanced leadership. Balanced leadership is supposed to bring better environment as well as a better efficiency. So, there are several strategies women can implement but there is no good or wrong answer.

HR: I think pushing for more female leadership is definitely something, and also once we were aware of this sort of boys' club mentality, we became very vocal about that role being female or at least that role open for female. We became very extremely vocal about that. We complained at a higher level about it.

HB: Did they do anything at a higher level?

HR: Yes, they ended up hiring a woman for the position. So yes, we sort of won

HB: Did you have any other experiences of working with a client who preferred to work with a man instead of a woman?

HR: There is one client. This client is a real property developer and it appears that his natural default is to be quite, I think he is just genially very sexist. He would speak to me in a way that I don't believe he would speak to a man. It is unfortunate that I never saw him face to face with a man. For instance, if I was talking on the phone, he would talk over me and when my colleague Roger spoke, he would listen. When I met with him he wouldn't make eye contact with me. His body language was very dismissive with me. His body language was kind of, and he was talking sort of openly but straight on to his male colleague. I was like outside the conversation. I think he would have preferred to have a man from the agency.

HB: Did you think about strategies in order to sort of fight this?

HR: I don't think I could have said anything to him, no. I couldn't have change his behaviour. Hmmm. The only strategy that I had was to not give it to him. There was one point when I wanted to ask Daniel to take it back and to look after it but then I realized that it was exactly what the client wanted. So, I stayed on the project.

HB: That's great. It doesn't sound easy to do.

HR: Yes.

HB: Would you consider yourself as successful in your job?

HR: Do I consider myself successful in my job?

HB: Yes. Did you feel that your achievement in your carrier have been well recognized?

HR: Hmm. I feel pretty satisfied with my career. I think I am at the level I am meant to be at. Hmmm. It's funny, I didn't really work with, all the teams I worked with have been really female heavy, so I never felt that a man sort of has progress more senior to me. But I am very aware in previous agencies that most of what is above me is male.

HB: Alright, it's great I reckon, both to not have been able to experience it too hard during your career but also be fully aware of female under-representation at higher executive level. Would you feel like working towards the goal of making the creative industries a better environment for female leadership?

HR: Absolutely, absolutely! Especially on the creative side of the business. I think women make fantastic creatives but there is only a few of them. Hmmm. I think there is a type of male leadership that you get in the creative agencies, quite often a bit older who have sort of an historical bias maybe. I think that would change in the next 5 years and we'll see more female in creative teams, we already sort of do.

HB: Don't you think also the industry is project based and there are lot of freelancers but not a lot of them are women? We could have assumed women would prefer to work as a freelancer in order to balance their family and job lives, so why do you think there are less women freelancers?

HR: I only know one person; I should put you in contact with her. She worked here before once. She is a copy writer, she works at an agency, she works freelance and she has a child. It's amazing!

HB: What about you? You told me you are happy with your career, which I imagine comes along with you feeling at place in the creative industries right?

HR: Yes, in my position I feel very at home!

HB: It's great! Do you think that in the creative industries women are even more under-represented compared to a wider economy?

HR: Yes, massively!

HB: Do you have an idea why?

HR: I think because of the characteristics of the sector and advertising in particular, long hours, project-based and also if the woman wants a baby. It's probably a quite intimidating world to step into as a woman.

HB: Why that?

HR: It's quite male environment and especially in creative teams. I wonder if it is more like a grow up routes things. You know, boys grow up playing computer games and you know learn how to use software generally a bit more. Like at my school, lot of boys would take the design and technology class but not many girls would take it. You know would take the painting class and art. I think there is sort of a slightly skewed feminine and masculine way of learning which might means that boys are better equipped to go in art director, design, editing roles. The newer generation will massively change hopefully.

HB: Finally, you mentioned that women with leadership and management skills are a good fit for the creative industries, would you think they also enhance a better environment and better results to an organization?

HR: Yes, absolutely, I think you need to have a good balance and I think it is a very hot headed. You know, in advertising you have a lot of, you know, not arrogant, it is the wrong word. It's a lot of confidence, you know if you are going to present an idea to the client, you have to really believe that it is the right thing. If you are a creative and you put your creative work forward, there is a certain level of arrogance and confidence needed in order to sell that and I think women have a slightly…. You know women working in

advertising are quite male, they have sort of a male personality. You can't really be sort of quiet and weak, well not weak but you have to be kind of ready to bug heads when it is needed to. Hmmm. But I think you need a female presence to calm and be more measure especially when you have all of these, not even male personalities but male and female with big egos. It is a very ego centric industry; I think women have a way of containing that and neutering it in a way that men sort of naturally provoke it.

HB: Would you state that it is why the account management department is mainly composed by female as they have to deal with the client?

HR: I suspect it is it, yes.

HB: Alright, it was really interesting! Thank you very much Hayley.

HR: Thank you! It made me think and see the industry from a different point of view than just superficially know that women are under-represented in the sector.

Harmony Boda: Good morning Jessica, I will first start with a bit of context if you don't mind. I am currently writing my master's thesis on female leadership in the creative industries especially about their under-representation in management sides and senior positions.

Jessica Reynolds: Hmm, hmm.

HB: Would you mind introducing yourself? What is your name, what creative industries you work in, etc.?

JR: Sure, my name is Jessica Reynolds, I work as head of production at Iris Amsterdam, which is a marketing and advertising agency. I am doing that since nearly two years this August. Moved there from London. I managed team that are at max. 3 people, right now one person because we are a bit smaller again. I am on the leadership team in the agency, which is about 6-8 people who are the head of departments and then we have 5 people on the board. So yeah, usually I am involved in some management conversations such as HR and all the issues that can come up "should we move to a new office?" or to some extend financial planning. Hmm, how much I am involved depends from topic to topic because I am not on the board of it which they decide of everything.

HB: But you are still making decisions for the agency, it is great!

JR: Yes, on a smaller scale right, so like last few months I tried to develop a training program for everyone so like you know what kind of resources we can get from London. Is there any course in Amsterdam that could benefit to everyone? I tried to schedule that so, I have been quite lucky in the sense of it is not too hieratical for an agency compared to the other agencies I work at. So, you do get some autonomy and they do delegate stuff to do.

HB: It seems so interesting to take part of some of the leadership process!

JR: Yes, it is!

HB: How did you enter the creative industries?

JR: Via, hmm, this is not really interesting. I am in advertising since now nearly ten years. I actually started doing work experience like most people in London, I am not sure it is the same in here or for other cultures.

HB: Did you study advertising?

JR: No, I didn't, I studied English literature which is about language, film and culture in general. After that, I didn't really want to do anything academic, I didn't really want to be a teacher. I tried journalism for a bit, so I tried that, and I was like "pfff" I don't think I am made for this as I didn't feel I was good enough writer, so I stopped doing that. I tried publishing for a bit because that's quite common when you studied English and no it was too slow paced and also you just work on your own all day. Then, I got a work experience at Iris for about 6 weeks over the summer I graduated from Uni. When I was there, I heard they had internships for graduates. I was like "hmmm, I should apply for that". I finished my studies, but I missed a deadline but the guy I was working for like really supportive and was still asking me to ask my application anyway, so I did and then. It was like. Because I already did a work experience there, I got to by-pass the CV check and went straight to the final bit to do a presentation, we had to do an interview in front of different people. I think it really helped that I was already there you know. Most people know you and they know that you are not like strange or…

HB: Yes, I understand, they know your way of working and behaving within the agency.

JR: Yes exactly, which is basically 50% of why you hire someone right? If the person thinks "oh I could do with this person at the office". So that really helps, so yes, I got in. It felt a bit like a shortcut because I was already there in front of 6 other people. I didn't know anything about advertising, but I had to make a presentation compared to other ones who studied it. I honestly at that point didn't really know the difference between advertising or branding, so I did a presentation on the re brand of the Tate Modern because it was on the opposite side of the office. But actually, it was actually a brand design job and not really advertising anyway. I think just because I made an effort with it. I got that place, you know, 4 months out of Uni so it is quite fast.

HB: That's quite impressive indeed. When you decided to do this work experience, how come you ended up in an advertising agency?

JR: That's a good question. Actually, it was, I did another work experience. I did a lot of work placements, five different placements in five different things. To try different things and also, as you must know, it is very hard to know what the difference is between things until you are in the job. I did a work experience at a media agency, which sounds really fun "media". And it was such not for me, it's like planning isn't? Hmm. It was a really small media agency in southern London about 5 people buying you know some media slots. I didn't really know what I was doing, I was rubbish at excel. It wasn't my skillset but the guy there knew someone at Iris. He advised me to try a creative agency because

he thought that was what I was looking for. So, I actually had the first one from my dad, he was a patient from my dad that thought a media agency would be great for me. So, he put me in touch with someone he knew at Iris. Then, I emailed them and that's kind of how it happened. So, it helped that I knew the initial person and I also grow up in southern London which, you actually know people, whose parents or uncle or aunties or whatever who works in the city which gives you an advantage compared if you are from a small town. I am very aware of literally where you grew up is important for getting a first job. And then I have been in advertising ever since!

HB: It's great that you found what you wanted to do; it seems to be as smooth path to enter the creative industries. I understand you didn't face any barriers, right?

JR: Hmmm, no. Not when I started out, I think it was an equal number of male and female graduates who could apply to the job. I think the company in general was quite, this was at Iris London, were quite good at being fair and probably having some kind of confirmation thoughts, I would say 50-50 I imagine.

HB: Alright, so Iris London seems well balanced. Did you face any other type of barriers than gender? For instance, since you didn't study advertising.

JR: No, I think from my experience there were never any barriers, I think it is different country to country though. I have Dutch friends that are still studying or people of my age only started to work 3 years ago because they studied really specific courses because, for instance, I had a Dutch intern like 6 months ago who has done a media degree with is quite close to our sector but she decided to go on a further masters in advertising. If you are in the UK and you are already done with one degree, you just stop. I think it is a Dutch state of mind.

HB: It's interesting because from my point of view, in France for instance, you need to have a really close degree to the sector and job you want to work in, in order to be successful. But the British way seems way better it allows you to change and start a carrier without having a degree in it. Anyway, how did you develop yourself in the creative industries?

JR: To be honest after entering the sector I didn't fully understand the differences in between the different roles. It was quite a big agency, so a good place to start because you can see everyone doing different things and I think within a year and half I realized I didn't want to be an account handler. And at that point, I didn't want to develop as an account handler because I don't think it is actually what I want to do. Not because it is not interesting but like no longer term. I couldn't see myself account director. I think I

get until the account manager level in 2 years. Hmm. So, I did work hard and I was on a team where I was surrounded by hard workers, I think it is the best way to learn. Then, I tried to change jobs and that was that simple even though you can hear in a lot of companies that it is really easy to change positions within the agency. I think at Iris they were pretty frustrated because I told them I wanted to be at the production. At that time there was only one person at production, so it is quite a big thing to ask to be production assistant after 2 years in account management. We lost a big client, so we had to get rid of half of the account management team I was actually on. And I said to them that I don't want another job as account handler. And they were like "what are you talking about? We got rid of a lot of people so you should be lucky you are staying" and I was like "no I am junior; I am just cheaper". Hmmm. And I said no if it is between picking an account handler job or leaving, I will just leave. At the same time, I was chatting with the one producer who was really keen on working with me even if it is for 3 days a week until something comes up then I would have experience because I don't have any. It was all quite messy for two months, so I had to handle my notice and actually leave, give my laptop back and all that stuff while still having chat with the producer lady. She was really great. I think there is people in your career you just like know they have your back and that's the most important thing. She really fought to like have me, get me a job on her team 4 days a week.

HB: That's great!

JR: Yes, it was funny because I sort of half left for a bit and then came back with her because she was my best chance to get a job because I get to know her. You know I could have look at other agencies or production houses, but I think my CV was just not good enough. So yes, she was really helpful, she didn't need to fight that way, she didn't really need the help. I think it was really good timing within the business because we were doing more work. I think she thought we could use have me around. So that's how I started production, she trained me for what like 2 years. And then I had a different boss every year and a half, we had 3 head of production in the space of four years which was hard, I think people really burn out quickly in this role. But I learn lots because everyone has a different style. One woman was super loose like, one was way more into socialize, so yes it was interesting.

HB: You seem like you also worked hard for it.

JR: I think it was a combination of obviously some degree of privilege, you know I know people in London in the first place. I worked hard like I had a lot of experience before

advertising, I think it was important and yes work hard when I was there, making efforts, always smiling, get to know people. You know especially in the creative industries, it's often a small sector so going to the pub on Friday allow you to meet more people outside the team. You have to be quite sociable, which is quite draining (laugh) but I think it is an important part. And after that I think I have been lucky to have good bosses, all being very different but all good leaders. They were all female as well. I never had, only now I have a male boss. Hmm.

HB: I understand you never faced gender bias in this case, right?

JR: I think at first, I was too junior to be affected by it. You can still see it but often in production, hmm. It is very more a female role for some reasons, maybe because we are well organized. I think production's team are generally more female for some reasons. I think it is because production is a combination of both soft and hard skills and you have to be able to like to get along with people and solve problems. Without being bias but in my experience, women are better at doing that. I think it is also why some parts of the creative agencies are also more male focused, based. For my experience, a lot of creators or designers are often male and a lot of account handlers up to a level are female, then at the top to a point that it phases out. I think it really helps having female manager up to that point because it means that does mean that you are not aware of any bias. But I am also aware they will probably would discriminate at another level because the rest of the leaders are often all male. I think if I look up at Iris London, at east 80% are male on the top 20 people or something which is not uncommon. Hmmm. Same at Iris Amsterdam, on the board there is 5 people including 1 female. On the leadership team it's 2 females out of 8 which is not great you know. It is still not well balanced. That hasn't change but I think I am way more aware of it now than I was back then. I think when you are younger you just get to know everyone and when you get more senior you realize it is all male. It does change your perception.

HB: That's interesting. As a producer, your role includes a little contact with the client. Don't you think that the client can also be the one requesting a male contact in the agency?

JR: I think it a slightly different reason, I think historically producer is not a client facing role. It's changing more now but I think it is more you are behind the scenes and try to sort shit out and you give the client to the account handler and they try to fight battles with the client. You are kind of involve on PPM (Pre-Production Meeting) sometimes. But yes, that's why we don't have lot of contact with client. But I would probably agree with your point of the more senior you get the more senior you got in head of account are

more male. I think it must be cultural, they respond better to this project isn't doing well so now a guy looks like he really going to take the reins. I think that is often people perception of way doing work.

HB: Don't you think it is also just the way society perceive genders? Such as men tend to be more able to stand up for themselves and results focused while women are seen as more sensitive and more relationship oriented.

JR: Yes, yes, I think it is a behaviour perception isn't? I think guys can get away with the fact they can be really firm but also very charismatic whereas when women do that it often comes across women is being bossy or flirty if you get along with someone. It is a more complicated lines of treads which makes the client relationship harder to manage for a female. There is always a someone you have to take out for dinner or that kind of stuff there is always a bit more a sense of the relationship doesn't have a clear cut. I think this is just society, I think especially in the creative industries and advertising the whole socializing happens at the pub or over drinks, which I think it's getting less but it's still a big part of it. I think it is less here in Amsterdam than it was when I was in London. But if you don't really drink or if you got, I can't really start discussing the child caring. You are not able to do so because you have to go to the pub until 9pm and making new buddies. Then I think it is becoming more a male club because I think the more senior you get the more it is about your relationship like network.

HB: Yes, it is exactly what I wanted to rebound on. You mentioned before the more the more senior you are, the more you realize you are surrounded mainly by men. Do you have the impression that at this point, in order for your work to be recognized or just to enter and be accepted by this male club, you have to adapt to them?

JR: Hmm, that's a good question. I think to become more senior in production you have to become more like blunt, become less people's friend. As a producer you are sort of the end of the line and you are the one who knows what is not possible, so you have to be more direct to people. In account management you have to be sort of more indirect right? Because you have to soften the blow and stuff whereas in production you sit behind them and tells them "there is no way we could do the shoot". Hmm. I think the more senior you get you have to feel or act like an authority so you are going to behave, in advertising especially you have to be, depending on the person but I am not a very extravert person, so you have to go out on work stuff. It is something I felt like you have to do especially when you are more junior. To be in that culture of it because if you are kind of a bit quiet, I made a lot of friends and I was really happy with them, but you won't get really far if

you stay in a small team in a 280 people company. So, you have to be like. In society and especially in the creative industries, extroversions is really rewarded and the person who is funny and go out and then these people are noted when it comes to reviews and what they do, like "oh yes, I know that person". In a lot of creative industries I think it is about your own PR in a way, which I think is very unfair because some people can be really brilliant at their job, you can be a really great graphic design in a big agency but if you are not more vocal it might go unnoticed in some way. It feels like advertising in particular is not necessary judged on like tangible skills. I met some awful people with big personality, and I was like "how are you still going? You are not good at your job or you are not a particularly nice person." If you play the game enough, you can still move forward which won't be the case if you are a layer for instance. The creative industries is a bit more of a slippery game in some ways. Hmm which I think overall benefits men because it is a bit more of a power play by going out.

HB: I do find it hard to sell yourself especially when you are in a junior position.

JR: It is easier when you get older and more senior because you don't have to prove yourself. If you feel like you don't know how to improve your job anymore, which is great, you don't go to network in the goal of moving forwards you know. The PR thing is still hard. I think some people are really good at it or they force themselves to be good at it. Like a good friend of mine is senior in advertising. She is really militant on I am going to do interviews every two months and I will have a side project which is around female leadership and empowerment and I am like always amazed that she has the energy to do so many things. I should do more of that, not because necessarily because I want to but because I should do it because that's the kind of things, people who, you know you google their name and you see she is really known and busy. It doesn't come like a natural thing.

HB: Don't you find it really hard with the characteristics of advertising, especially working long hours?

JR: Yes, people who do that I am like "why"? the unbalanced of the job makes it very hard to have side projects. I think, I have been working for nearly 10 years now (laugh). And I think it is something I still don't really know the answer to because, every year you are probably like "oh I will do this other thing like you know". I went to a phase in London when I did a graphic design course during the weekend for like two months and that was so tiring that I didn't enjoy it. I worked all week as you know and I had to get up at 9 on a Saturday morning and go to the class for 4 hours so it felt like I had no weekend and it

was supposed to be a fun thing but I was also annoyed at myself that I wasn't finding it fun because I was so tired. If you don't have the physical or mental energy to do something, then it becomes another thing on your to-do list. It's really hard to balance. In some ways it becomes easier when you become more senior because you can sort of decide you own workflow. I have been really grateful that since I got to Amsterdam that my boss is technically a creative director, he is a very calm English guy who doesn't really manage me because you know we have quite different roles so no one is there checking my time or my work, it is totally on me which is also quite stressful at the same time because I wonder if I have spent enough time on a project. I don't know it is sort of an isolation which has its pro and cons because I feel way more in charge of my own time. Since I have more control of my time, I have the impression I should do more in general. I should do a class next to work but as soon as you book one you know a big dull will come in and you miss 3 classes and they you will be very upset, but it does get easier. Since moving here, it is the first time ever that I am going to gym classes. That's a start, that something.

HB: Yes indeed, it is really great to take time for this kind of things. Would you consider yourself as successful in your job?

JR: Hmm.

HB: It's a very broad question, if you want, I can narrow it a bit?

JR: Yes please.

HB: Do you feel the work you achieve is well recognized for instance? Was it always the case in your career? I understand you are hard working so would you think your work is recognized for its value?

JR: I think, hmm, there were definitely time when it wasn't. Hmmm. Before I moved to Amsterdam, I quitted my job, for the second time.

HB: Why that?

JR: Because I didn't feel I was recognized for my efforts. At all. I have been in production for 3 and a bit year and I was working on one account which was very male oriented on sports. I don't really care about sports. It wasn't in the top of the type of work. After a year and a half working ridiculous hours. Hmm. I think if it was to do again, I would put my foot down way sooner but I wasn't senior enough to set any boundaries of my time. I was working from 8 till 8-9pm every day. And then, you know London is big so you would be home at 10-11pm and I was so tired. I had no life in the week at all. And during the weekend I was so tired, I didn't make any time for friends and also needed to do my

laundry. And I kept of thinking "lend off this project" and I just didn't. I also wasn't pay enough for the level of work at that point I was doing. I was running a lot more shoots by myself, travelling a lot, I was away often every two weeks and often during the weekend. So, it was sort of combination of being really worn out by it like just physically and also being like "hang out a minute, I am not being paid a fraction of what a freelance would come and do this job for.

HB: How long did it take you to realize you should leave?

JR: I think it took probably about a year in total to first ask for more money, which helped a bit. I will stay a bit longer because I asked what I asked for. But it wasn't compensating, in advertising you won't get compensated by money in comparison to zero life. I was nearly earning 40K which in London is not that much still. Then I had a lot of stress, so it wasn't worth it. At that point it is not fun, you try to balance constantly your life. I did it with the new salary for about 6 months. I said to them that I am going to leave and they asked me if I wanted more money and I kind of wanted, it wasn't just the money, I need someone to work with. I need more support. By that point I already asked for that previously, but I realized nothing will change. They tried to make me stay but I felt like since I already give them what they wanted; they will keep on constantly… I think it is really thing as well in the creative industries having to fight for your own salary which is really hard to do because you really need to know yourself worth. It is hard when you are not confident to say, "no. that is not acceptable". I don't know if you look at any study that a male scale, not a female one. Like man will apply for a job when they will understand 30% of the requirements while female will apply when they know 130% of it because we want to be fully confident before we do something. I when you have to fight too much, I think you start thinking "no I don't really want to be a part of that" because it feels like a battle.

HB: Do you think when women are tiring of fighting, they decide to just let it go?

JR: I think that would be an interesting study to read. I think it is more complicated than just you know gender and why they is so few females in the creative industries. I think part of it is for some reason a lot of women look up to women who are senior and think "I actually don't think I want that lifestyle". And you know I often think that. I am like "oh my god, can you imagine doing that much work and that many hours, how would you ever have a family or a dog". I do genially think because of the responsibilities and family life, I am generalizing, it's often a problem woman has to solve and not the guys. I see example for example female on my board who is really hard working and a mum. She

has a really supportive and equal partner because he actually does a lot of the child care work. That allows her to be on the board. It is not a common based scenario and he enables her to do that and I think they have a really balanced relationship. That is not everyone's, because of barrier gender expectation that's not available to everyone. Imagine you are a single parent; I don't even know how you would even keep on working in the creative industries. That would become really difficult if you don't have enough support from your team. In some industries, like client side for example, to have a more stable, you can have more support from your network. You can have people doing 3 days week, you can have maternity cover. I think in general because advertising works on such small margins you have minimal team of people to deliver a project. I think if you have a commitment you sort of rely to the rest of the team to slack it, you know what I mean? Rather than being "oh no worries, bring you child to sports". That's why a lot of women are like "you know what, I can't see someone that balance, so I am just going to leave". I totally understand and when I was more junior and naïve, I was a bit like "they are just like, you know, women are not fighting enough for their roles" but the most senior I have got, the more I thought I don't think I want that lifestyle. It is a different thing.

HB: It's really interesting because also women after pregnancy leave tend to not come back to the industry and prefer as you mentioned work on the client side who allow her to adapt to her new family life. Would you say you work towards the goal of making the creative industries a better environment? As what you mentioned by being on the leadership board, I was wondering if it is something you work towards.

JR: I think I definitely can't say that I want to change the whole industry, I know people who try to do that and I really admire it. I don't know, there are so many things wrong with the industry, sometimes I feel like I would like to start to make something better for female but on smaller level. Personally, within an agency, I like to believe that I can bring a different perspective to decision being made. I think as a female you do bring a different point of view to stuff like: what people are going to value, like I do care about people career progression, especially people I've managed because I think it is so important because you can't go anywhere except if someone has your back and trains you. I had an intern; she was studying and you know that takes a lot of work like training someone and managing them. But I was glad I did it because to some level I learnt a lot from it and hopefully she learnt a lot from it and it might help her get a job in maybe a year or something. I managed female and I tried to be, hopefully helped them to understand they need sometimes to speak up.

HB: Do you have a different type of management depending if you manage a female or a male?

JR: I think the guys I managed had less of the need to tell them to be more confident or to be more assertive than female and I do feel that it comes back down to like, often female you manage you know they are capable of doing something. And feedback them is "I know you know the answer, but you need to vocalize it a bit more". That comes a bit down to the introvert, extravert thing, female want to be a bit more expert in order to feel comfortable. I think guys in general need a bit less encouragement. Hmm. I still need this encouragement. I even if where I am right now is still very male dominated at the top, I am still very grateful there is one woman above me. She, I think does a really good job of being assertive, which I do admire. It takes lot of energy. I would also have, probably not right now but in the next year another intern and I will probably always have a preference for female just in the sense of like things are probably harder for female to enter the creative industries in the first place. A lot of people helped me when I started, I am super grateful, and I sort of want to return the favour.

HB: I think mentorship is very helpful in the creative industries, indeed. How would you define the creative industries from your point of view? Do you have a clearer overview after this interview? Do you feel at place in the creative industries for instance?

JR: Hmm. Since leaving London, the Dutch vibe helps a lot. Hmm. I felt more comfortable with it because I have been a bit more in charge of my own life and time. That has helped. I mean the creative industries in general probably but advertising, creative agencies specifically at the moment I can't see how it would work in 4-5 years for me because I think at some point, I would like more balance than that. I don't really know what that looks like. For my understanding I don't necessarily think it could happen with the type of job I am doing right now. I just don't see that happen in a type of work where it is not that easy to take a day off on a Monday or Friday. If you have a strong team and people picking up the work, that often doesn't happen in the creative industries so I don't know how I will balance if I want a family with what I am doing now. Hmm. But I probably want to stay in the creative industry in some capacity and probably in another type of job role.

HB: would you say that it the 4-5 years it will not change enough to be able to have a more balanced lifestyle?

JR: I can't see how it can change because the industry itself is changing so much. I don't know if advertising industry still exists in the same way in 5 years. You know, every year

you hear about agencies being more cut out, their budgets are smaller. We work in much more creating contents which was not even when I started. The budget has been shrunken by 70% so I don't know if the industry will continue like this. So, I think the whole industry would need to change quite a lot for that to be possible. The way advertising agencies run, like client to client, project to project, I don't think it is sustainable. You can never, you never, except in big agencies you can be super comfortable that financial model is just unstable, and you end up with people that are always stretching. It seems more like the way of working would have to change for female to participate. There is so many issues with balance in life, committing and founding your family in general. I don't, know I would probably look to do something different as the next step. And maybe what can change is the way we work, we are always connected to our phone and laptops from Monday until Friday, 9am till whenever. Technology was meant to free our time and place and it has not really happened. You know what I mean? So, that makes it feel it hasn't any progression in the world. We have to do more or it. So, more flexibility on where you work from and your use of time. It would massively help people. In order to do that. You have to just give people more autonomy of their time because until you do that people will feel very much like tie to their job. More responsibilities given to people. I think people doing their work on their own terms would be more efficient. I don't think advertising in general has thought of that. There are still expectations like if they can't see you at your desk, what are you doing? You know? People have to feel able to deal with their work, but I don't know how long it would take to happen. Until then, I think it is just having more female in general in any type of management helps because other, junior female see senior female doing that job which is motivating and you need to see women to look up to in any industry to be like "oh, she is really awesome, I can do that too". There are some women doing that in advertising but not many. It is important to have representation.

HB: I think you just answer my two last questions. Thank you very much.

Harmony Boda: Thank you very much for taking time to answer some question for my thesis. I know you don't have a lot of time, so I will start straight by explaining a bit of context if you don't mind.

Stephanie Feeney: (laugh) yes, no problem.

HB: I am writing my master thesis at the moment on female leadership in the creative industries and especially about their underrepresentation in the sector. Would you mind introducing yourself first?

SF: Sure, I am Stephanie Feeney and I am the executive strategy director and a partner at 72 and Sunny in Amsterdam.

HB: Great. My first question is how did you enter the creative industries?

SF: Hmm. Quite by accident I supposed. I had left university and I always imagined I would work in publishing or journalism or something like that. I studied English literature in university, and I was living in London and interning in that world and was a bit disappointed (laugh). I don't know I felt like working behind the business of book was killing literally everything I always loved. Which is a weird moment because it is something you always imagine it is the thing you always wanted to do and suddenly you don't want to do it. I was just pending; I was working as a secretarial typing position due to my education in America. I had an appointment the marketing and fundraising department at Armistice International in London and I was just typing for someone who worked there for a couple of months and then they had a vacation in another team and they asked me if I wanted to apply for it. So, I went to the marketing team. Although I always been a member of Armistice International, I ended up working on a project that tried to make the next generation of young people to support and be active and donate to the cause of human right. To that I ended up to be in touch with a creative agency because they were working with them and ultimately and simply it felt like I wanted to try to be on that side of the problem. Working for a creative agency rather than the brand. And I enter the industry probably 12 years ago now. The creative agency I was working with at the time, they advised me to go to strategy because it was something I had, and I have been in it ever since.

HB: Would you say you enter the industry through previous contact has you decided to go from client side to agency one?

SF: Yes, so I knew the creative agency because I was a client of them, you know? Although it was a pro bono client (laugh). And they, I remember going for lunch with them. They were working on a music project for Armistice International that I was kind of in charge of. No, I was like 23, I wasn't in charge of the project anyway, I sort of was. I just said during the lunch that I admired what they did. I remember bringing them a really long brief like, at Armistice everything was like 22 pages of details brief. And they come back with one visual image answering everything we were trying to say in the 20 pages brief. And I thought "what a beautiful art and communication". I wanted to stay in London at that time and the agency was based in Amsterdam so they introduce me to, they recommended that I should go to strategy, they recommended a few agencies and I just 100% took their advice. And I went to an agency with a lot of strategy, so I did that. Probably since then I have move towards more and more creative agencies. So yeah.

HB: It's interesting, did you have to face any challenge while you entering the sector?

SF: As a female, I didn't feel it was more difficult. I think also I felt more difficulties towards the fact I am American actually in London. Strategy in the UK is very, well, British strategy is like the home of strategy, so I felt like in a world of really educated people, mainly male, mostly from good families. As American I felt a bit more outside than being woman. It is the only difference I have been aware of but that I also can use in a way, having an outside perspective was also very valuable.

HB: Yes, a fresh pair of eyes is always good, right?

SF: They were also mainly man especially in front of what you call account handling side and production they were a lot of strong female leaders whereas in strategy so-so and a very few in creative. So, you would even not many agencies had female planning or creative directors when I started. But I think that changes.

HB: Yes, it is interesting that historically account handlers and production are mainly female leaders when in creative are mainly men. How did you develop yourself in the creative industries? How did you become more and more senior?

SF: Hmm. A lot of hard work for sure and I think there is no shortcut. A lot of hard work, I always been very happy to speak my mind as well and have a point of view even if it's not a right one. I think that helped me work forwards because I have been. And then, I don't know.

HB: Did you find it hard to speak up in a male dominated department?

SF: No. I find it sometimes, but again. I have been often young for my role. Hmm and I remember my first review in advertising, and I thought I was treated like a child (laugh) but he was a much older English man. So yes, where that come from that, I never felt, even if no one agreed with me. I would say I am a good listener to so that's part of it.

HB: It's very good to not be shy in this field! So, I understood you never had any challenges on your way…

SF: No. Maybe, I always thought that the companies I worked for have been quite in a sense selfish and being like "oh, she is really good, and it is good for us". I don't think they were doing that to be kind or to have a female in their team. They thought "we need to keep this girl because she is valuable". HA, I didn't mean to sound arrogant, I am just trying to find a reason why I never faced barriers.

HB: No not at all, it totally makes sense.

SF: I think the companies I worked for just used me like they were being quite opportunistic themselves.

HB: It's very interesting because you were just good at your job and they didn't take your gender into consideration.

SF: Maybe being a young American in London made me stand out a bit more. I don't know.

HB: Hmm. My next question is quite broad. Would you consider yourself as successful in your career?

SF: I think up to some point I realized I was underpaid, now that I am in charge of what people get pay (laugh). And I remember actually, there were one particular move I made, where I asked for an increase that the people were almost kind as they thought it would be huge to me and I was actually getting paid what I was worth. I realized that, and I am you know, it is apparently a really female thing, but I am terrible at negotiating and that's the prize.

HB: Yes, it is quite hard for women to know their worth in some way. It seems like your career was quite smooth and were able to stand up when need.

SF: Hmm. I definitely had inappropriate behaviour from men and when they, it impacted my career and I also when I look back, I wish I probably did, I don't know how I could have handled that better.

HB: Could you maybe give me an example of inappropriate situation?

SF: It would be interesting to take into consideration growing up. In my case it was, I don't know. Hmm. You know there are things, when you look back you and I suddenly

wouldn't want my daughter to face that. So, that is probably, that sort of I don't know. I think both sides, men and women are trying to figure this out. It's an industry that is very, there is a lot of drinking and I think that makes it, and you know I met my husband at work so, a lot of relationship and friendship happen at work. It makes it complicated for sure. I enter the industry at the time it was far less acceptable for women to speak out about it.

HB: That's great thought that nowadays everyone is aware of the situation and we can speak about it. Would you work towards the goal of making the creative industries as a whole a better environment?

SF: It's a huge part of what I am doing or what I am trying to do at 72 and sunny. I am the head of college as well as strategy, so I help with HR, development and training, recruiting and all that stuff. We do things at our place to create a really vibrant, diverse culture where people can bring their true self to work.

HB: Do you have any examples of things you implemented in order to do so?

SF: Hmm. We do something like a regular open forum where we, which is voluntary, where people come together and have open conversation about everything or a theme I would say. Last year we had one around gender. It is about having a regular open forum, dialogue where people can talk about things that are disturbing them. We talk about mental health and introversion vs extraversion this year. It fits in the subject of diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation. For instance, the creative industries and advertising are quite extravert so we will try to see how introverts can contribute. So that's one thing we do. We also do something we call 72 & U which is about helping the next generation getting an experience in the creative industries so we work with local school to get kids between 10 and 13 to come during their school break and they do two weeks of crash courses in the creative industries. It's a social entrepreneurship program, so we do a partnership with a brand and the kids come in and make a project and the last day they have to make a film of the project they picked. And then there is a short film competition. It works well. So, 72 & U is another great example of that. Hmmm.

HB: Thank you for these examples, it is interesting and great to have so much opportunities within an agency.

The phone call stopped because Stephanie Feeney was at the airport and called Harmony Boda again later on.

SF: I am at the airport and you know I have a 2 years old child, so it is great to be at the airport alone, nothing is stressful.

HB: Oh a 2 years old, it is very sweet. How is it to balance your work life with your family?

SF: Well, I took a year off. In fact, my husband both took a year off together with the baby, which was very nice. I don't think that would have been possible if I would have work in America. So, I am very grateful to be a European citizen. Talking of gender, it was actually more difficult in a way for my husband because it seems weird in a way for men to do that. It is less easy to take time off as a man. Which kind of make me think at why there are so many men at senior positions, men can't or don't think about taking childcare. So, I am glad, in terms of leadership and gender bias there are two sides and two ways to look at the problem in total. So, lot of what I am doing at our company is to make sure that parents, without talking about maternity or paternity, can take parental leave and how we deal in general with parents. More balanced. And I also work 4 days ago, my husband as well. I am quite, I am very strict about Tuesday, so Tuesday is my day off and I am very off. It's really really hard, I think I didn't realize how many hours I worked. So, I had a kid and I could, I didn't want to work this kind of hours. And then we were like "oh my god, we work all the time!". It is definitely very challenging, and I am sure that hmmm. A huge part of female leadership in a lot of companies as a lot to do with them wanted a family and not able to keep on working in a certain way.

HB: Exactly. How was it when you decided to come back? Did you come back exactly at the same position as a year before?

SF: (laugh). I actually been made partner the day a left. I was 9 months pregnant and about to take a year off and they made me partner of the company.

HB: Wow that's great!

SF: So, I came back, yes, in a more senior position I guess you might say. For my husband as well. We work at the same company so it is probably, they made it great for once. I think it is a European thing for sure. A lot of my client, I work for Google a lot and lot of my clients are working mums and they, it was incredible for them at Google. Yes. I am also the first woman at my company, at that level to work part time. I do think that things are changing like you know it is becoming more expectable to come back and say, "I can take my job back but I also a bit of time to be a mum". I think that's a thing that is changing. When I was in London, the women working in leadership positions, nobody was working part time.

HB: Do you think it is because of the fact you work in a big scale agency and you have a team to support you. This team being willing to pick up some of your work?

SF: We are not that big, we do have 5 agencies, we are not a network agency. I know everyone in my company in Amsterdam. I think it helps that we are a company caring a lot about diversity. It would be a point of shame for them if they couldn't accommodate an office leader being a mum you know. I think that is changing.

HB: Hmm. Would you stated that women in leadership positions are good fit to the creative industries as do they make the creative industries a better environment and allow the organization to have better results.

SF: I think that diversity in general makes a better creative work, creativity and innovation. I really think if you gather a bunch of people from different background and experiences you would be have a better agency efficiency and people will push each other because they have better, a familiar idea about one and other. I don't think it is as simple as women making the creative industries a better environment. The more different people, the more interesting it will be.

HB: 72 and Sunny seems very willing to have lot of diversity and to promote it as well. Would you reckon the creative industries in general could do something in order to help women to progress in more leadership and senior positions?

SF: As a whole, I guess they should look at more different places to find more different people. I don't think it is particularly clear how to get into the creative industries. I don't think it is easy. Maybe working to reach out to people with different background. I remember when I was in London I work on this project for the BBC and they had this ad they will show in the UK to introduce young people to kind of creative career such as costume design. We are trying to do that with 72 & U which is incredible. We work with a charity and a non-profit in the Netherlands and they said between the age of 10 and 16 you are open minded about what you want to explore and be. Even if you come from a background where all the people around you are telling you what you should do. So, when you get to the age of 16 we start believing our surrounding. The idea behind the BBC class, which I don't know if it still runs, is sort of what we do for advertising at 72 & U. show young people and their families that you can make money with a creative career (laugh). What the creative industries are and how they break into them and what kind of goal you should work on if you are interesting or so. I think it is about opening up.

HB: Yes, I know what you mean, it is very confusing when you are interesting in the creative industries but it is such an unusual company structure or way of working, it is hard to get your head around it.

SF: And also, we can also say that diversity required patience. It could be very simple as the creative industries often includes different nationalities and English speakers should pay attention about the fact that people might not be able to get something in due to language. People come from different culture and they might have to be open to the fact that people take longer to get their head around things. Little practices in order to create a better efficiency.

HB: Interesting point. Alright, I think it is all for me, would you like to add anything?

SF: No, it was a great chat! Thank you very much for your time!

HB: Thank you!

Harmony Boda: Hi Maxine, thank you so much for taking time to answer some of my questions!

Maxime Penney: No worries, wait a minute I am in the corridor of the Soho house trying to find a quiet place.

HB: No problem, I will try to keep it short then.

MP: Alright.

HB: So, I will start by explaining a bit of context first. I am finishing my master's degree in management and thus I am writing my thesis about female leadership in the creative industries. Would you mind introducing yourself?

MP: I am Maxine Penney, I founded FreshhhConnections which is a creative agency but makes introductions for small to medium size businesses so and I started that one year ago.

HB: Alright, how did you enter the creative industries? Were you working in the sector before founding your agency?

MP: I always had a large network in the creative industries from London and from here (Amsterdam) although I really never truly worked in the creative industries, I had a lot of people I work with together in it. I found that people were really neutralizing their network properly and that they were so involved in the creative work let say, they don't want to go out and network or doing new business or writing introduction emails or collecting feedback. They don't want to do it so; I just take the time to do that for them while they can focus on the creative projects. So, if I take out the pain of them doing that, that is something quite unique, especially here in Amsterdam. And especially internationally as well.

HB: That's a great concept indeed especially since the creative industries is based on network, right?

MP: Yes. I think it took me about 10 years to know my own personal strength and I didn't really have that much guidance or many mentors, especially female mentors. It, really something I worked on myself.

HB: Yes, it is not easy to enter the creative industries if you don't have mentors, especially as a woman.

MP: Yes, and it is quite a closed industry as well if you are not really hard core or studied anything relative to it. Sometimes, not all the times, because I also know a few people that have been able to sort of enter as a junior account manager or a junior project manager within an agency and they can work their way up but that's also quite rare as well.

HB: Yes definitely. What were you doing before?

MP: I was in creative recruitment for 4 years. So, I worked with freelance creative and I helped them to introduce them to agencies and companies for design project. Before that I was an assistant at Nike and at Philips in London, yes, an executive assistant. So yes, I really switch carriers (laugh).

HB: When you were working for Nike or Philips, did you see any internal work with creative agencies that makes you change of side?

MP: I mean yes, both Philips and Nike have such large companies, working at agencies sides seems to make more a difference than client side.

HB: I see. So basically, without working directly in the creative industries, you built your own network, which is not that easy. Did you have the impression that when entering the creative industries, you faced some challenges, not just as a female but in general?

MP: Hmmm. I felt that the industry is quite closed even though if you know everyone. Sometimes it is hard for people to take the time because they are so busy and also people are so busy, there are a lot of freelancers and it is hard to keep track on what is everyone doing. There is not really a platform to go, that's why I wanted to create a space where people can go, and I can introduce their work without them having to go to those huge events. And again, I would go for them. Because the industry is about trust. It is hard to enter if they don't know you, people will never come back to you. There is not lot of people who have the energy to, you know, maybe it is just that I had the opportunity to change my career, I would like to always give that opportunity to other people as well. Help them to be well represented, something that they might not be able to do themselves. Introduce them in the right way.

HB: It's a great business idea! Did you ever have the impression to face any gender barriers?

MP: Yes, unfortunately from women. (laugh). I had this conversation with a friend of mine about it lately. Yes, female, that is a woman that hold me back or be a bit harder in the term of they struggled themselves to get where they are. It is dominated by a few … old dinosaurs (laugh).

HB: I never thought of that being possible to be honest.

MP: Yes, because when we speak about gender bias we tend to think of, you would think you would stop getting somewhere because of a male but actually, unfortunately, especially in a small place such as the creative industries it seems to be the other way around. Female leadership can be very aggressive there, not supportive which is also one of the reasons why I started because I would like to be the kind of person that runs an agency and helps to educate and help people grow up.

HB: It's very good to want to help people after a bad experience. When this person has been, sort of challenge you to grow in a way, how did that actually happen? And how did you react?

MP: So, you would maybe invest in a project that takes time and energy and that would be kind of agreed on it. After time, it is hard if you don't have guidance. It didn't happen in a really black and white way but more feedback and criticism, but it was like "oh you did a really great job" but on the side of that she was "oh no, I think it was rubbish actually". It was really undermining actually. It happened with 3 female leadership position that I experience under.

HB: So, they were basically trying to hold you back?

MP: Yes, hold you back. Not giving you the confidence of, you know.

HB: How did you react to that? Did that motivate you to push hard?

MP: Yes, it wasn't easy at that time but actually and eventually I am super grateful because it made me to think and do what I am doing now, so…Yes, I think in a way it turns its way back on its head. If they can do it, so can I. It's actually a very positive thing like OK, what I am going to do is do it this way, and also talk to your peers and gain knowledge or information about how you would like to see the industry to change.

HB: Yes exactly, trying to make change. How did you react face to this person?

MP: I initially tried to have an open conversation with her but when I realized that wasn't going to go anywhere, I decided to leave.

HB: Totally understandable. Would you consider yourself as successful in your job?

MP: (laugh)

HB: Yes, it is a pretty broad questions, I can help you a bit. Both ways, do you feel that your achievement are been well recognized? But are you also happy with your career?

MP: I think for myself; I would say yes because it already been one year and even if it doesn't continue, even that in itself is a success. Hmm and also I got to experience lot of you know speaking at events, moderating events, my opinion is heard and valued in terms of the creative industries so people still approach me to ask for my opinion or to work

together so I think it is a success. In terms of other people saying that I am successful, I think people gave me the feedback that they like the new way that I am working so, again, it is a unique service for the creative industries so people has come and said it is an interesting way and maybe other people can adapt to that way of working. I would say yes. Yes, as well.

HB: Wow, congratulations, I think it is impressive±

MP: Yes, I can be happy! I have my freedom.

HB: You also mentioned before that you are sort of working towards the goal of making the creative industries a better environment.

MP: Well, I would actually say a little bit more inclusive and give different opportunities to people coming from outside of Amsterdam potentially, people of colour, women, hmm. Yes, just being a little more open in the inclusion. I noticed that if I go to any events or if I look over my career here, I can probably name all the people of colour on one hand in the creative industries and that as nothing to do with us but it is how we educate and where we present these opportunities to people going to universities or colleges. For me, inclusion would be a use way of changing that.

HB: Alright, so would you say that for instance diversity in the creative industries can increase the sector efficiency as well as making it a better place?

MP: I think for a better environment we need to be a bit more open. For instance, when I was working in creative recruitment and especially now Brexit happening, a lot of people are coming over from the UK and they have really good portfolio and the industry is quite closed for them here because they are like "oh we already know everyone anyway". And I am like "what about this great new person?", why don't they want to take a chance on them? For instance, you know, I am not Dutch but I have been living here for 10 years so I understand the market quite well and yet there is still some people that are divided on either to stay local or open it up, which I think if you want to be international in the creative industries, then of course you have to open up. So, why is it still closed, why aren't they ready for new people opportunities? Not even open to having conversations. I mean there are more layers of that like trust of the client they work with, but to give an opportunity if it could work. I think it would be one step further.

HB: It's an interesting point of view! My next question is, you sort of gave me your idea of the creative industries and especially in Amsterdam, but yourself do you feel at place in this world?

MP: Yes, after 10 years for sure. I think it is because of I really worked for it; I really made my place here. I think yes, indeed, I feel like if I ask the question to people will respond to me and will have an opening to think about it, so I am grateful for that, but I think it could be more.

HB: I can imagine, and I think it is quite impressive the way you ended up here. Do you think women in management or in leadership fit well the creative industries? You know, according to the society as well as the literature, women can be described as sensitive and men can be described as tough or bossy, right?

MP: I think it is the other way around (laugh).

HB: I wish it was!

MP: One thing is that we are quite luck as well in Amsterdam. In London it is still quite hard and especially in the US to have female representation. In Amsterdam I think there is a lot of women in the creative industries so, I don't think that's so bad. I think they should focus on people from other ethnicity or people of colour, that is the next step. In term of what you ask, leadership, I think it could be a lot more education on that.

HB: Yes, I understand. My next and last question is how could the creative industries can push forwards for women leadership?

MP: I think more open conversations, we had an event on leadership so again, quite a lot of "say men or women" you know these people but what would you like to see in leadership. And I think even just that conversation was really interesting to people to open up about their experiences. I think it is about people listening and understanding and having a platform for that. Maybe if there was, I don't know if workshops would work, you know what I mean: "oh you are going to be a boss, so go to this workshop". Although, that does help, we use to have that at Philips for people in management, there were often a two weeks courses and we would do roleplays in order to put them in situation because you know, not everyone was meant to be a boss but because someone left doesn't mean that the next person in line is ready for this position. Just more open conversations.

HB: Thank you very much Maxine! Really appreciate you took time for that.