The Lost Girls

An original research study exploring the underrepresentation of women in UK advertising agency creative departments, resulting in strategies for creative advertising, art and design educators that aim to help more women get in and get on in this role.

https://lostgirls.kathrynellis.co.uk

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all the Feminist and Social Constructivist theorists who have gone before, who led me to this important area of study. I hope to keep the conversation around gender asymmetry in the workplace you have begun flowing, and ensure Feminism is not forgotten.

I want to thank all participants in my primary research, and recognise their bravery in sharing experiences that are difficult and uncomfortable. Without them I would have been unable to co-construct a new set of knowledge and understanding. You remain anonymous, but you know who you are you wonderful ladies!

Thanks to my tutors, Mark and Richard, who have provided invaluable guidance.

Thanks to my beleaguered husband who kept me going, poured glasses of wine and cups of tea, fed the cat and did the washing while I was all consumed in studying, and frankly little use to anyone. Thanks to Jasper, my cat, too for keeping me company in the lonely place that is writing an MA Thesis.

Finally, thanks to you for reading. I hope you find this study interesting and inspirational of positive action in your own professional practice. To implement any of the strategies or access any of the resources outlined visit: https://lostgirls.kathrynellis.co.uk

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Abstract

Underrepresentation of women in creative departments is a pertinent moral, commercial and creative problem for the UK advertising industry and creative advertising, art and design education. Only 30% of advertising creatives are female, but over 60% of creative advertising, art and design students at HEIs are women. Female talent is being lost. This study investigates what happens to those Lost Girls and how we can save them.

Using Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and Social Constructivism as a lens through which to view the social systems of HEIs and creative departments, a range of causal factors for gender asymmetry and loss of female talent are identified. Original primary research, uncovering the lived experiences of students, educators and advertising agency employees, identifies eight acute causes that can be addressed by education. This unique understanding forms the basis for original educational strategies to help more women get into and get on in creative departments.

This study is significant because it is the first to evidence and explore the loss of female talent from advertising agency creative departments at this early stage, pre-entry to industry. By saving female talent before it is lost, it hopes to contribute towards a more representative and positive gender ratio in future. This will help education, students and the advertising industry flourish.

All materials for students and educators are publically available from:
https://lostgirls.kathrynellis.co.uk

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1. Introduction and Critical Analysis

1a. A problem with my professional pedagogic practice

This study explores the issue of gender asymmetry, or an imbalance in the ratio of male and female workers, in a very specific workplace. Gender asymmetry within the creative departments of UK advertising agencies, is the ultimate manifestation of a problem inherent in creative advertising, art and design education. We look at both areas here to evidence and explore the problem.

The creative department is one of four disciplines that make up an advertising agency:

Table 1: Main UK Advertising Agency Departments/Disciplines

Department/Discipline	Area of Responsibility
Account management	Manage client relations and the agency's remuneration and finance.
Project management or production	Manage internal and external resources and ensure work gets produced on time and on budget.
Account planning	Responsible for insights, research, communications strategy and evaluation of work.
Creative	Responsible for the ideas or concepts, which are then produced by specialist third parties.

I have worked as an account planner in UK advertising agencies since 2004, and during that time one thing has puzzled me. In every other discipline, there is an even male-female split, but creative departments have always been male dominated. When I started lecturing in advertising at Southampton Solent University this discrepancy became even more puzzling. I noticed that at least half of the students each year were female. If as many women were training to be creatives as men, then why was the ratio of females in creative departments so low? It was this anomalous observation that inspired my project.

Few reliable or replicable studies of workplace composition exist for the advertising industry (Mallia 2009, Ayhan 2010). The Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) Census surveyed employees of 229 agencies in 2016 and revealed the following gender splits:

Table 2: Advertising Departments/Disciplines by Gender – Creative Agencies (IPA 2016)

	Male		Female	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Account Management	1,408	36.7%	2,424	63.3%
Account Planning	455	53.6%	394	46.4%
Project Management	653	51.7%	609	48.3%
Creative	2,415	69.1%	1,082	30.9%
Total (includes other non-core functions not stated here)	8,041	50.9%	7,759	49.1%

Statistics support my observation that women are underrepresented in UK advertising agency creative departments. Census data (IPA 2016) is triangulated by smaller and/or more specific studies (Alvesson 1998, Nixon 2003, Broyles and Grow 2008, Mallia 2009, McLeod, O'Donohoe and Townley 2009, Ayhan 2010, Windels and Lee 2012, Boulton 2013, Grow and Deng 2014, Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2015, Hanan 2016, Montanaro 2016, Young Creative Council 2016). Despite countless industry initiatives there is empirical and anecdotal evidence that the balance of gender has not, and is not, shifting in a consistent or coherent manner (Klein 2010, Broyles and Grow 2011, IPA 2016, Joseph 2016, O'Reilly 2016, The Great British Diversity Experiment 2016, Glenday 2017, Simpson 2017). Statistics can be conflicting, but the majority of data shows gender asymmetry in creative departments is at least as bad as it was in the 1990s, if not worse (Doward 2000, Gregory 2009, Klein 2010, Gill 2011, Gill, Kelan and Scharff 2016, Glenday 2017).

When we look at education, again data is limited (Klein 2010, Creative Skillset 2010, Equality Challenge Unit 2010, Gill 2014, Hanan 2017). The most robust and recent figures, from the Guardian, show that 61.7% of the 49,920 students studying creative advertising, art and design at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in 2013 were female (Siddall 2014). So, on qualifying courses the gender ratio is 60-40 female-male, then in creative departments it completely flips to 70-30 male-female (Hanan 2017).

To validate broader research, I looked at data from the BA (hons) Advertising course I teach at Southampton Solent. I completed an analysis of graduate employment using LinkedIn. Most of my students join my professional network online and remain within it, which means I have six years of ex-students to use as a data source. I was able to manually code all graduates by gender and role:

Table 3: Southampton Solent University BA (hons) Advertising Graduate Current Employment by Gender (LinkedIn 2017)

	Male		Female	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Creative Department	25	61.0%	16	39.0%
Advertising Agency (Other roles)	27	29.0%	66	61.0%
Other CCI or Creative Marketing roles	35	44.0%	50	56.0%
Other roles/unemployed	8	35.8%	15	64.2%
Total	95	39.3%	147	60.7%

The overall split of graduates by gender is reflective of Guardian data, around 60-40 female-male (Siddall 2014). We see that male graduates have much higher representation in creative departments, in percentage terms and total numbers. Female graduates are much more likely to have ended up in advertising, marketing and creative industry roles, but less likely to have entered or stayed in creative departments. If we examine the data split by gender side by side, one can see that creative departments form a much higher percentage of employment for male than female graduates.
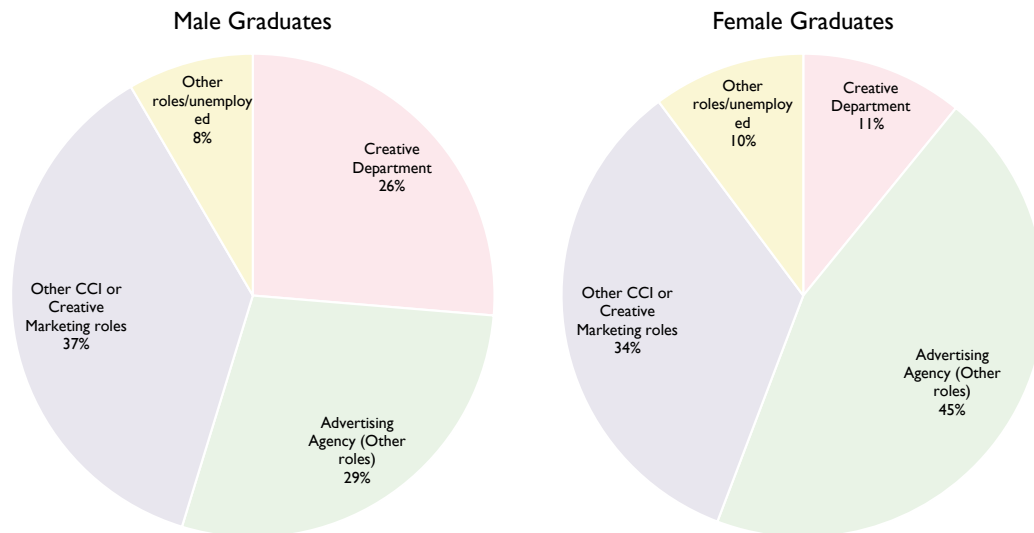
Figure 1: Southampton Solent University BA (hons) Advertising Graduate Current Employment by Gender (LinkedIn 2017)

Overall, data from industrywide studies and my own HEI, provides evidence that there is underrepresentation of women in creative departments, despite an overrepresentation of women on related courses. Up to 40% of females qualified for creative advertising roles are lost between graduation and permanent employment (Hanan 2017). I have termed this lost female talent **The Lost Girls**, hence the title of my report.

1b. Why this problem merits investigation

To justify my area of study I am not going dwell on moral and subjective arguments. I simply echo the perspective of other scholars who believe women should have the same "full opportunity" to reach their "full potential" as men (Connell 2005, Windels and Lee 2012, Eikhof and Warhurst 2013, Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2015). The uneven balance of women and men in creative departments, despite an equal ratio in other advertising agency disciplines and an overrepresentation in creative education, indicates that this is not the case.

The main reason a loss of female talent is a problem is commercial Women are involved in 80-85% of purchase decisions (Cadwalladr 2005, Broyles and Grow 2008, Gregory 2009, Mallia 2009, Broyles and Grow 2011, Windels and Lee 2012, Hunt, Layton and Prince 2015, Hanan 2016, Lacy 2017). However, numerous studies indicate women feel advertisers do not understand them, and they find the majority of texts either unappealing or alienating (Nixon 2003, Gregory 2009, Davies and Orbordo 2016, Hanan 2016, Lloyds Banking Group 2016, Smiley 2016, Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media and J. Walter Thompson 2017, Silverman 2017, Simpson 2017). If the majority of creative departments are staffed by men, it follows that the majority of texts speak from a masculine perspective, and may lack insight and understanding of women (Gregory 2009, Mallia 2009, Ayhan 2010). By balancing the gender asymmetry in creative departments, we may give women a greater voice in the production of texts, which should improve their effectiveness amongst female audiences (Broyles and Grow 2008, Ayhan 2010, Windels and Lee 2012, The Great British Diversity Experiment 2016, Lacy 2017, Rooney 2017).

A lack of female talent involved in the creation of advertising ideas also causes a creative problem. Empirical evidence shows that creativity benefits from diversity, due to a wider set of experiences, variety of problem solving approaches and perspectives being applied to any brief (Hunt, Layton and Prince 2015). Advertising texts could not just be more relevant, and hence effective, by involving women in their creation; they could also be more innovative and distinctive (Broyles and Grow 2008). These problems were neatly summarised by Grow and Deng:

> "The lack of women in advertising creative departments compromises creativity itself. Thus,
> in the end, this is not a gender problem. This is a business problem, a problem that
> advertising agencies ignore at their own peril."
>
> (2014 no page number)

As an advertising agency is only as strong as its creative product and its bottom line, gender asymmetry is a problem worth investigating. A more even gender split in creative departments could have overwhelmingly positive effects for the advertising industry and female creative graduates.

1c. Research questions and objectives

The ultimate ambition of this project is to tackle the drop out of female talent in education before it happens, and help more female graduates get into and get on as creatives in UK advertising agencies. I hope my work will contribute towards achieving a representative 50-50 male-female split in creative departments. This is morally, commercially and creatively important.

To develop valid strategies, we first need to better understand the problem and the reasons for it. Further exploration and explanation is necessary due to a lack of research into this specific area. My study comes from a Feminist, Social Constructivist perspective, which recommends the investigation of lived social experience within the organisations where I want to inspire change (Aacker 1990, Adkins 2004, McNay 2004, Skeggs 2004, McLeod, O'Donohoe and Townley 2009, Hesse-Biber 2014). My primary research is significant, because unlike existing research, it looks at lived experiences in education as well as industry, and attempts to specifically address the loss of female creative graduates who would otherwise never make it as far as a creative department.

Research Questions

1. **Understanding the problem through research:** What causes the loss of female talent between graduation from creative advertising, art and design courses and UK advertising agency creative departments? What happens to these Lost Girls?
2. **Addressing the problem with pedagogic practice:** What role can creative advertising, art and design education play in addressing this loss of qualified female talent? What strategies be designed to ensure more female students get in and get on in UK advertising agency creative departments?

Research Objectives

1. Critically evaluate existing literature and explore current pedagogic and industry practice and experience, to better understand the pertinent problem of a loss of qualified female talent and the subsequent underrepresentation of women in UK advertising agency creative departments.
2. Use primary and secondary research to identify and validate causes for this problem, which could present challenges for female graduates of creative advertising, art and design attempting to enter creative roles.
3. Assess female creative advertising, art and design students' level of awareness and preparedness for some of the challenges they may face related to prominent causal factors identified, in order to isolate those causes most in need of addressing.
4. Isolate the most acute causes and challenges that could be addressed by creative advertising, art and design education, and develop responses to address them.

1d. Relevant audiences for my project

Due to the narrow scope of this study, I specifically have developed strategies for the BA (hons) Advertising course I teach at Southampton Solent. However, there are learnings that could be applied to most creative advertising, art and design educators' professional pedagogic practice. Outside my peers at Southampton Solent, I believe there are four audience who will find this study and the resulting strategies relevant and actionable.

Table 4: Appropriate Audience for this Study

Group	Reason for Relevance	Specific Individuals or Organisations
Educators at HEIs offering creative advertising, art and design courses	This study will provide them with directly implementable strategies to better prepare female students for entry into creative departments, and hence improve their graduate employment rates.	• University of the Arts, London • University of East London • Buckinghamshire New University • University of Gloucestershire
Female students at HEIs offering creative advertising, art and design courses	Reading this research will raise their awareness of some of the challenges they may face when applying for and working in entry level roles. It will also include a combination of individual initiatives to empower them.	• University of Lincoln • Leeds Arts University • Falmouth University • London Southbank University • University of the Creative Arts, London • London College of Communication
Advertising industry bodies, organisations and policy makers	This study should build their understanding of the causes for a loss of valuable female talent. It will also outline strategies they could help implement within education and industry to address this problem.	• Creative Equals • She Says • Token Man • The 3% • Young Creative Council • IPA • Creative Skillset • MAA • Advertising Association • The Drum
Advertising agencies	My research and strategies will propose ways they could work with educational organisations to increase their uptake of valuable female talent.	Heads of Human Resources and Talent, as well as senior level creatives responsible for recruitment into their departments.

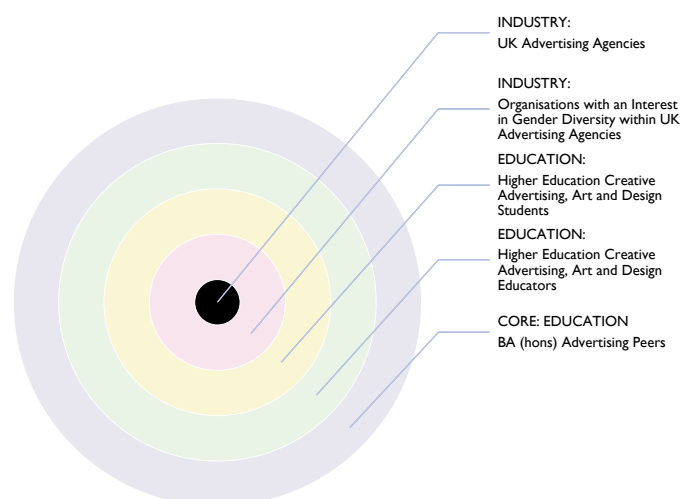These audiences range from gaining direct, to indirect benefit, as illustrated.

INDUSTRY:
UK Advertising Agencies

INDUSTRY:
Organisations with an Interest in Gender Diversity within UK Advertising Agencies

EDUCATION:
Higher Education Creative Advertising, Art and Design Students

EDUCATION:
Higher Education Creative Advertising, Art and Design Educators

CORE: EDUCATION
BA (hons) Advertising Peers

Figure 2: Appropriate, Intended Audiences for this Study

2. Review of Literature

Critical evaluation and application of relevant theory, critical positions and practice:

    a. Overview of existing literature

    b. Development of a theoretical framework

2. Review of Literature

2a. Overview of existing literature

Only a small body of literature looks at the lived experiences of workers in advertising agency creative departments (Hackley 1998, Hackley and Kover 2007, Mallia 2009, McLeod, O'Donohoe and Townley 2011, Windels and Lee 2012). The most probable reason for this lack of study is the misperception that advertising is a progressive, cool, creative and egalitarian industry, where the male-female workforce outside creative departments is split 50-50. So, gender asymmetry in creative departments has not been obvious or expected (Florida 2004, Connell 2005, Dutta 2008, Ayhan 2010, Klein 2010, Gill 2011, Gill 2014, Eikhof and Warhurst 2013).

Most research exploring gender in advertising agencies centres on issues pertinent for in-life talent, like the lack of females in senior roles, limited progression and recognition, and the drop out of talent related to maternity leave and motherhood (Mallia 2009, Broyles and Grow 2011, McLeod, O'Donohoe and Townley 2011, Boulton 2013). These studies are useful in identifying specific causal factors for gender asymmetry, which I can apply (Ibarra 1992, Doward 2000, Broyles and Grow 2008, Gregory 2009, Mallia 2009, Boulton 2013, Dent 2016, Hanan 2016). But no historic research exists that looks specifically at the pipeline of female talent from education to junior level creatives in the UK. There is a gap in the literature, which others have asked to be filled (Hackley 1998, Windels and Lee 2012).
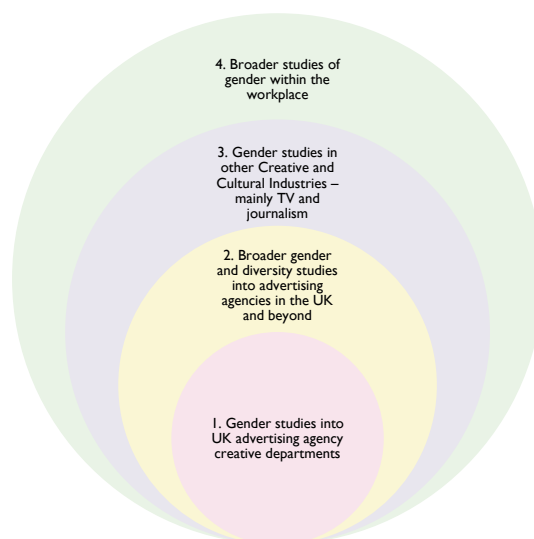
4. Broader studies of gender within the workplace

3. Gender studies in other Creative and Cultural Industries – mainly TV and journalism

2. Broader gender and diversity studies into advertising agencies in the UK and beyond

1. Gender studies into UK advertising agency creative departments

Figure 3: Scope of Relevant Literature and Practice Analysed and Applied

Due to the lack of specific study, it has been necessary to review a broader set of literature (outlined in Figure 3.) to identify theoretical and critical positions that could offer potential explanations for the loss of female talent between creative education and creative departments (Leidner 1991, Aacker 1992, Benson 1999, Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, Hesmondhalgh 2010, Eikhof and Warhurst 2013, Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2015,

Dent 2016). One useful theoretical framework, applied across many similar studies, is Bourdieu's Theory of Practice (Bourdieu 1977, Benson 1999, Shi 2001, Reay 2004, Walther 2014, Dent 2016). This forms the basis for Social Constructivism, a theoretical framework which argues the practices, hierarchies and divisions that form the structures of power in our day to day life are created by social interactions (Shi 2001, Walther 2014, Kamberelis, Dimitriadis and Welker 2016). Social Constructivism has been embraced by Feminist scholars to explain the asymmetries, hierarchies, inequalities and divisions that occur around gender (Shi 2001). For me, it has provided a clear and coherent way to see the social structure of advertising agency creative departments and the gender relations within them.

Essentially, Bourdieu describes any socially structured body as a field, within which agents interact (Bourdieu 1998, Benson 1999, Reay 2004). Here, the field is an advertising agency creative department and the agents are those working within it, or a creative advertising, art and design course and its students and educators. An agent's position within the field is established through habitus, which is the field's accepted system of perception, practice and behaviour (Bourdieu 1989, Bourdieu 1990, Shi 2001, Reay 2004, Windels and Lee 2012). Habitus is a pre-conscious, taken for granted understanding amongst all agents within a field, learned through experience (Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu 1990, McCall 1992, Reay 2004, Cooper 2008, McLeod, O'Donohoe and Townley 2009, Walther 2014). It sets out the ways in which females and males are expected to behave, and which gender is superior or inferior (West and Zimmerman 1987, Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, Schippers 2007, Ayhan 2010). Social power is granted to those recognised to have high levels of capital due to their traits, achievements, wealth; or in the case of Feminist theory, the fact that they are male rather than female (Adkins 2004, Skeggs 2004, Eikhof and Warhurst 2013). In this way, a course or a creative department is "gendered" not "gender neutral", because it holds patterns of power that advantage men and disadvantage women (Schippers 2007, Aacker 2010).

Feminist research analysing gender disadvantage in education and the workplace has applied Bourdieuian Social Constructivism as a tool to illuminate and map what otherwise may have been abstract, invisible or unrelated norms (Aacker 1990, McClelland 1990, Moi 1991, Scott 1992, Adkins 2004, McNay 2004, Reay 2004, McLeod, O'Donohoe and Townley 2009, Shi 2009, Boulton 2013). Skeggs puts it well when she suggests Bourdieu offers Feminist scholars an "explanatory power that is not offered elsewhere" (2004 p.21). Using Social Constructivism as a framework, I could see I had to unearth the "deeply buried" habitus and illuminate the mechanisms that produce and reproduce gender hierarchies (West and Zimmerman 1987, Bourdieu 1996, Adkins 2004, Reay 2004 p.431, Walther 2014). This is a necessary first step towards developing educational strategies that enable more women to get into them and succeed. Bourdieu states "To change the world, one has to change the ways of world making" (1989 p.23).

2b. Development of a theoretical framework

Using Social Constructivism as a lens, I have developed an original framework that maps 11 potential reasons for my pertinent problem; the loss of qualified female graduate talent from UK creative departments. Each of the distinctly different factors (black boxes in Figure 4.) have emerged through the application of broader theoretical frameworks (coloured circles) to the specific field of advertising.
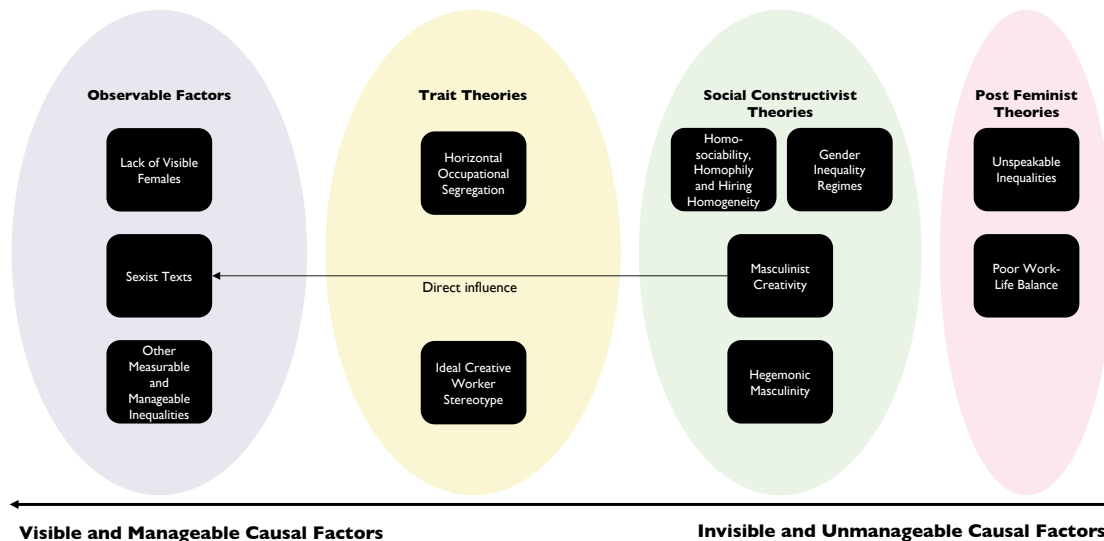

Figure 4: Potential Causal Factors for the Loss of Qualified Female Creative Graduate Talent Within UK Advertising Agency Creative Departments

This does not claim to be an exhaustive list, but it provided a comprehensive overview of existing relevant literature that could form a basis for discussion, exploration and validation in my primary research.

Potential causal factors are categorised from visible to invisible and manageable to unmanageable. The concept of visibility is derived from the definition of habitus as unconscious, implicit, and "deeply buried" (Bourdieu 1984, Bourdieu 1990, Reay 2004 p.431, Adkins 2004, Skeggs 2004, Phoenix and Pattynama 2006, Gill 2011, Gill 2014, Boulton 2013, Walther 2014). Aacker (1990) identifies covert and overt controls for gendered hierarchy, which helped me classify causes along this spectrum.

The more invisible the cause the more unmanageable it is (Gill 2014, Jones and Pringle 2015). Unmanageable practices cannot be addressed with equal opportunities programmes, diversity policies and anti-discrimination laws as they are too subtle (Gill 2014). This arguably makes causes at the invisible and unmanageable end of the spectrum the most enduring and dangerous, partially explaining why this problem has not yet been resolved.

Within the scope of this study there is not enough space to evaluate each causal factor in detail; however, Table 5. gives an overview of each one, it's theoretical and empirical roots and how it applies to the fields of a creative department and creative education.

Table 5: Potential Causal Factors in Detail

Causal Factor	Theoretical and Empirical Roots	Application to advertising creative departments
Observable factors These factors are less based in the "deeply buried" habitus of everyday interaction, they are industrywide, systemic and observable (Reay 2014 p.431).		
Other manageable and measurable inequalities Management and organisational policies and practices can fuel gender asymmetry and allow sexism to flourish. In particular, the absence or presence of maternity policies, flexible working, equal pay or regulation of recruitment.	First identified by organisational theorists who explored the impact of policy on gender inequality (Aacker 2006, Schippers 2007, Eikhof and Warhurst 2013). Specific manageable inequalities to the creative industries have been identified by comparing them with other sectors (Alvesson 1998, Nixon 2003, Eikhof and Warhurst 2013).	Advertising is a neoliberal industry made up of small entrepreneurial businesses. This means gender inequalities that exist are not tackled with formal legislation and industrywide initiatives. Often pay, maternity policies and ratios of women in senior roles can look unfavourable versus other professions where diversity is more formally enforced.
Lack of visible females It can be difficult for women to see a path to success in fields dominated by men, as there are few women in the senior positions to aspire to. Women can also suffer from a lack of female mentors to pass on the right skills, advice and tools in their early years.	Statistics demonstrate a low level of senior women creatives, on awards panels or featured in industry press (Cadwalladr 2005, Broyles and Grow 2009, Ayhan 2010, Broyles and Grow 2011, Boulton 2013, Hanan 2016).	Only 11% of creative directors are female. Females are less awarded and credited in industry press. There are few senior female role models and mentors, so young female creatives find it difficult to be what they cannot see.
Sexist texts Media texts often display a dominant maleness, in their style, humour, language and protagonists. The masculine appeal of media texts could inspire more men and fewer women to work in these industries.	Media and gender representation studies, as well as content analysis and comment from producers, demonstrate a long history of sexist texts in advertising (Gregory 2009, Mallia 2009, Broyles and Grow 2011, Buonanno 2014).	Female graduates do not see advertising texts as representing them, and some seem sexist. As they do not aspire to the women in advertising, they do not feel the creation of advertising is a desirable career for them.

Causal Factor	Theoretical and Empirical Roots	Application to advertising creative departments
Trait theories These causes are derived from theorists who associate traits and types of work to either a masculine or feminine essential nature. The enduring concept of gender attributes differentiates these theories from Social Constructivism, but the recognition that gender is constructed through social interaction aligns them. Many criticise trait theories for being limited, outdated and over simplistic, hence they warrant contemporary exploration (Kanter 1977, Aacker 1990, Alvesson 1998, Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, Schippers 2007).		
Horizontal occupational segregation The gendering of roles and tasks based on the belief that some are better performed by women and others by men. Men are perceived as leaders and women as caretakers. "Women's work" involves organisation, administration, warmth, nurturing and communication. Masculine roles and tasks require authority, perseverance, competitiveness, self-promotion and assertiveness. Occupations or tasks perceived as masculine are often more prestigious, recognised and rewarded leading to inequality.	Sociological, anthropological and occupational theorists identify and describe male and female work (Goffman 1967, Goffman 1976, Spence and Helmreich 1978, Bem 1981, Reskin and Hartman 1986, Connell 1987, West and Zimmerman 1987, Leidner 1991, Spence and Buckner 2000, Anker 2001, Skeggs 2004, Bowles, Babcock and Lai 2005, Hewlett and Luce 2005, Aacker 2006, Browne 2006, Salminen-Karlsson 2006, Schippers 2007). In advertising specifically, theory is applied to explain the overrepresentation of women in account management and underrepresentation in creative (Ibarra 1992, Alvesson 1998, Gregory 2009, Mallia 2009, Ayhan 2010, Windels and Lee 2012).	The types of accounts and tasks allocated to young female creatives are often less prestigious and awarded. They are less likely to be put on pitches, and they may often be allocated assignments in gendered sectors like beauty, fashion and food. This can lead to frustration and a lack of job satisfaction.
Ideal creative worker stereotype A prefigured concept of an ideal creative worker is held by those hiring for the creative industries. The individual seen as the source of creativity is more often described using masculine traits like individualism, entrepreneurism or drive. Women who succeed often either have, or adopt, these masculine characteristics.	Feminist gender and stereotype theory is applied by cultural theorists to depict the Ideal Creative Worker (Anker 2001, Hesmondhalgh 2010, Allen et al 2012, Gill 2014, Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2015). This stereotype has been reinforced in advertising by research into real life creatives and representations in media (Alvesson 1998, Doward 2000, Anker 2001, Nixon 2003, Hackley and Kover 2007, Mallia 2009, Equality Challenge Unit 2010, Klein 2010, Broyles and Grow 2011, Windels and Lee 2012, Allen et al 2012, Gill 2014, Dent 2016).	When imagining the ideal creative director, and hence the type of person who would make the best applicant for that role, the stereotype and its traits seems more naturally male. Men are seen as a better "fit" for creative roles.

Causal Factor	Theoretical and Empirical Roots	Application to advertising creative departments
Social Constructivist theories These causes are all produced and enforced through everyday social interactions, and hence directly derived from the Bourdieuian construct of habitus.		
Homosociability, homophily and hiring homogeneity In many creative professions recruitment is reliant upon informal networks. Managers tend to like, socialise with and hire people similar to themselves A lack of formalisation in hiring processes allows bias to occur. With more men in powerful positions, more men are likely to be hired and promoted.	Social capital theory has been applied to the creative industries to demonstrate the importance of networks (Bourdieu 1989, Bourdieu 1990, Ibarra 1992, Benson 1999, Nixon 2003, McLeod, O'Donohoe and Townley 2011, Walther 2014). "Hiring homogeneity" was developed by Mallia (2009) to explain gender asymmetry in advertising recruitment.	We have an unconscious bias to communicate with, socialise with and recruit people who are like us. As most staff in creative departments are male, they are more likely to network with and recruit men. This is commonly referred to as "the old boys club".
Gender inequality regimes The habitus of many creative industries has been constructed by men, as they were, or still are, male dominated. In a competitive workplace, this can impede women's access to senior peers and good quality feedback, their ability to have their voices heard and ultimately their success. These small interactions cement male dominance in seemingly natural, everyday ways.	Inequality regimes were defined by Aacker (2006) as "the interlocked practices and processes that result in and maintain inequalities in all work organisations" (Aacker 2006 p.441). They have been substantiated by studies on creative industries, including advertising (Nixon 2003, Gregory 2009, Equality Challenge Unit 2010, Windels and Lee 2012, Allen et al 2013, Boulton 2013, Gill 2014).	The pattern of interrelated practices, processes, actions and meanings in advertising creative departments maintain gender inequalities. They lead to disparities in power, resources, rewards, opportunities and allocation of work that privilege men and subordinate women.
Masculinist creativity The creativity of a media text is difficult to judge objectively, hence decisions on which texts take primacy are made subjectively. A higher proportion of the gatekeepers, who decide which texts are suitable for public view, are male. Hence those that appeal to masculine tastes receive more recognition, awards and exposure.	Derived from theories that argue taste is socially constructed and evidenced in advertising by statistics that look at awarded work and lived experience (Csikszentmihalyi 1999, Nixon 2003, Cadwalladr 2005, Gregory 2009, Equality Challenge Unit 2010, Broyles and Grow 2011, Windels and Lee 2012, Boulton 2013, Gill 2014, Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2015, The Great British Diversity Experiment 2016).	There is no truly objective standard when it comes to assessing creative work. As men hold the majority of senior positions in creative departments they are the ultimate gatekeeper for any output. Their judgements often favour a masculine style of work which can involve masculine humour and unrealistic and unrelatable representations of women. This style of work is more often produced by male creatives, and hence their work receives prominence. This can be undermining and demotivating for female creatives.
Hegemonic masculinity Masculinity and femininity can be seen as a spectrum. The dominant, or hegemonic, masculinity in many creative and media industries has been identified as a "laddish locker room culture" characterised by masculine power, competition, male bonding and the sexualisation of women. This status quo privileges masculine interests, activities and values, and hence supports men's dominance.	The term was coined by Connell (1995) based upon theories of Gramscian hegemony. This culture has been found in many creative industries, including advertising (Nixon 2003, Gregory 2009, Equality Challenge Unit 2010, Windels and Lee 2012, Boulton 2013, Gill 2014).	The legitimate and dominant culture in many advertising agency creative departments is often described as similar to a "locker room", with male bonding, macho behaviour and sexist joking being commonplace. This can be off putting to many females, and less macho men, who do not naturally "fit" this type of environment.

Causal Factor	Theoretical and Empirical Roots	Application to advertising creative departments
Postfeminist theories These causal factors Postfeminist thinking, as they recognise a large proportion of women in Western society believe gender inequality is a thing of the past. This denial can itself reinforce and reproduce unequal systems and practices.		
Unspeakable inequalities Graduates entering creative and cultural industries are not aware of the "new subtle sexism" they may face. Many women born in the 80s and beyond, believe that gender issues have been fixed and no longer exist. Therefore, they accept that their lack of progression is "the way it is" or their fault as an individual. They believe they must adapt to a masculine system to succeed.	Unspeakable Inequalities was developed to describe denial and lack of discussion around gender issues amongst postfeminist generations (Gill 2014). Recent studies looking at how women in the creative industries rationalise their lack of progression have found evidence for this (Ayhan 2010, Dent 2016, Gill 2014, Gill, Kelan and Scharff 2016). Educational studies also identify a lack language amongst female students to describe the discrimination (Equality Challenge Unit 2010).	Women in creative departments experience the gender gap, gender inequality and sexism often, but do not have the language to discuss it. In our Postfeminist age, many assume that the battle for gender equality has been won, especially in a meritocratic and progressive industry like advertising. They often dismiss inequality or unfair treatment and blame it on another factor, like their age or experience.
Poor Work-Life Balance There is a perception that creative and cultural industries demand an inordinate amount of personal dedication to succeed. Working long, irregular hours is seen as standard practice, and family friendly flexi-time and flexi-place policies are less visible. Women believe that if they want a family they do not fit the industry, as opposed to seeing that the industry, or an individual role, could change to accommodate them.	This perception and reality is uncovered by studies that examine the loss of mothers as creative talent (Hewlett and Luce 2005, Mallia 2009, Creative Skillset 2010, Allen et al. 2013, Dent 2016).	Many young women cannot see how they would juggle the demands of a role as a successful creative director, which involves long and irregular working hours, tight deadlines and complete dedication, with the demands of a family in later life. So, some rule it out as a viable career early on.

In summary, an analysis of literature through a Social Constructivist lens, has provided a range of potential causes for the loss of female graduate talent and the resulting underrepresentation of women in UK advertising agency creative departments. The 11 causal factors identified form a grounded basis to illuminate analysis of primary research.

3. Methodology

a) Philosophical Worldview

b) Research Approach

c) Research Design

d) Research Methods

e) Self' Reflexive Analysis and Ethics

3. Methodology

My selection of methodology comprises of five interrelated factors, outlined in Figure 5, and critically explored here (Cresswell 2014, Naples and Gurr 2014).
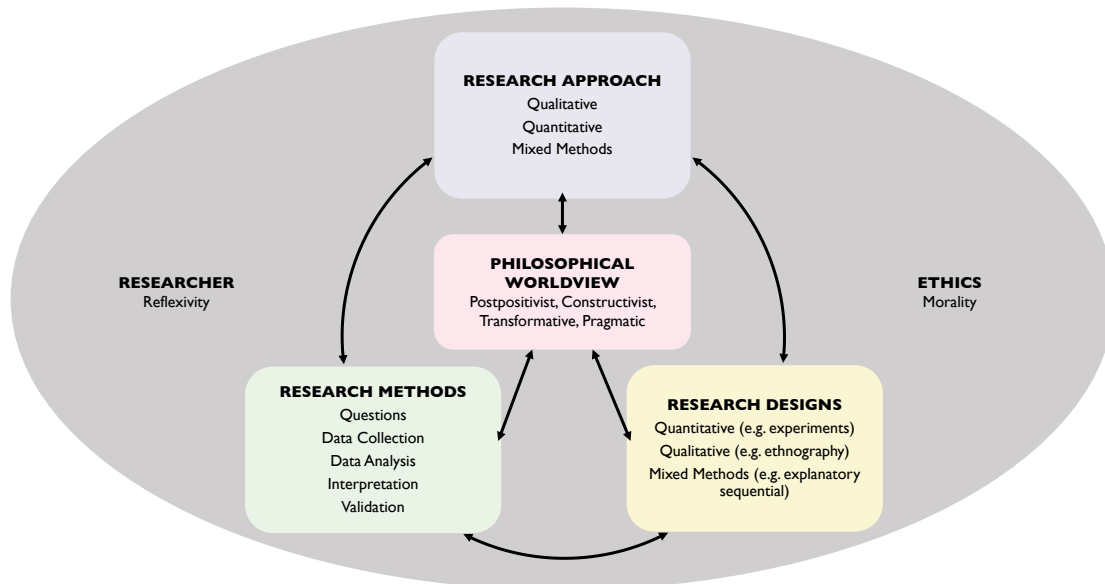

Figure 5: The Interconnection of Worldviews, Research Approaches, Designs and Methods (adapted from Cresswell 2014)

3a. Philosophical Worldview

This study draws on three Philosophical Worldviews. The main lens it uses to view the world is Social Constructivism (Bourdieu 1977, Bourdieu 1998, Benson 1999, Shi 2001, Reay 2004, Walther 2014, Dent 2016). As a Social Constructivist study, it aims uncover the "deeply buried" habitus in creative departments and education, to unearth the most acute causal factors for gender asymmetry (West and Zimmerman 1987, Bourdieu 1996, Adkins 2004, Reay 2004, Walther 2014). But my research di not simply seek to passively understand, it also aimed lead to the development of strategies to address gender asymmetry. In this way, it could be viewed as Transformative (Montell 1999, Cresswell 2014, Hesse-Biber 2014, Charmaz, Thornberg and Keane 2016, Kamberelis, Dimitriadis and Welker 2016). These two World Views determine various appropriate research approaches.

Finally, as this study sees gender asymmetry as problematic, it comes from a Feminist Standpoint (Dow and Condit 2005, Buonanno 2014). My acceptance of Feminist beliefs is important, not just for determining methodology, but also to enable reflexivity and ethical behaviour.

3b. Research Approach

A Social Constructivist worldview drew me towards the interactive and discursive research designs inherent in a qualitative approach (Angen 2000, Cresswell 2014, Frost and Elichaoff 2014, Denzin and Lincoln 2016 Kamberelis et al. 2016, Lincoln, Lynham and Guba 2016). This approach was most appropriate because "it consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible" in line with my need to uncover and understand "deeply buried" social practices (Denzin and Lincoln 2016 p.14).

When considering my sample, I wanted to explore the lived social experience of individuals most likely to have encountered gender asymmetry within creative departments and education (Cresswell 2014). A Feminist or Transformative Worldview suggests it is best to study the marginalised group, as their exclusion from dominance gives them a "double vision" that allows them to both experience and observe habitus, hierarchies and capital (McNay 2004, Hesse-Biber 2014, Hesse-Biber 2014a, Naples and Gurr 2014 p.33). So, the majority of my participants were women:

Table 6: Sample Frame and Selection Criteria

Group	No. of Participants	Gender	Purpose for Selection	Corresponding Research Question and Objective
Creative advertising students at Southampton Solent University	3	Female	To assess their awareness and preparedness	Q.1&2 O. 2,3&4
Creative advertising educators at Southampton Solent University	1	Male	To discuss their students' awareness and preparedness and some of the educational responses they have already employed	Q.1&2 O.3&4
Individuals who studied creative advertising, art and design and have recently attempted to become creatives and succeeded or failed	2 succeeded 2 failed/chose not to	Female	To help identify and validate causes for gender asymmetry and loss of talent	Q.1 O.2&4
Creative directors at UK advertising agencies	3	Female	To give a picture of the social structures of creative departments, identify and validate causes for gender asymmetry and to discuss some of the strategies they have tried to tackle it	Q.1&2 O.2&4

I used purposive or judgement sampling, from my own networks (Hesse-Biber 2014a, Munday 2014). It was an appropriate sampling method pragmatically, due to timing and resource constraints, and logically, because participants could be handpicked to ensure they had relevant lived experiences. This meant I could capture a decent depth of data with a relatively small sample of ten participants.

3c. Research Design

Ethnography has been used well by other scholars looking at social interactions and hierarchies within advertising agencies (Alvesson 1998). But to unearth habitus, it was necessary to do more than observe and interpret behaviour. In-depth interviews enabled me to investigate the thoughts, perceptions and explanations behind participants' actions (Windels and Lee 2012, Hesse-Biber 2014a). This way it was possible to explore invisible and unmanageable causal factors, through interpretation of discourse.

3d. Research Methods

Data collection for this study manifested itself as a series of one hour interviews. Methods of inquiry were directed by phenomenological research, where participants describe their experiences in a social space (McNay 2004). I also applied oral history techniques from narrative research (McLeod et al. 2009, McLeod et al. 2011, Cresswell 2014, Hesse-Biber 2014a). An exploration of a participants' relevant life history was necessary as it was likely to impact on the way they rationalised their experiences (McNay 2004, McLeod et al. 2009). Finally, I made use of visual techniques, because they have been demonstrated as helpful in unearthing taken for granted constructs like stereotypes (DeVault 2016).

In line with my Social Constructivist Worldview and qualitative approach, all questioning was open ended (Windels and Lee 2012, Cresswell 2014). However, a purely inductive approach was not followed because I did not begin research with a completely open mind (Gabriel 2013). There was a pre-defined set of discrete concepts I wanted to explore, reminiscent of a more deductive approach (Gabriel 2013, Cresswell 2014, Hesse-Biber 2014a). Causal factors outlined in Figure 4, formed the basis for my semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured approach kept conversation focused, whilst leaving room for emergent discussion (Windels and Lee 2012, Hesse-Biber 2014a. Brinkmann 2016).

An appropriate method of data analysis for a qualitative Social Constructivist study is content analysis of interview transcripts. I used Charmaz's coding process, where an initial coding is used to identify frequent themes, then a second focused coding uses those themes to sort data (Charmaz et al. 2016). This reading and re-reading of transcripts encouraged me to move beyond literal, "first-level meaning" to uncover invisible and unmanageable causal factors (Charmaz 1995, Windels and Lee 2012, Hesse-Biber 2014a p395, Munday 2014, Kamberelis, Dimitriadis and Welker 2016, Perakyla and Ruusuvuori 2016).

3e. Self-Reflexive Analysis and Ethics

Coming from a Social Constructivist Worldview this study does not aim to offer a complete or correct picture or make generalisations, but it should be trustworthy, credible, transferable and confirmable (Denzin and Lincoln 2016). Harding (1993) refers to the pursuit of these factors as Strong Objectivity. I aim to achieve this by reflecting upon my own role in the research here.

For the last 14 years I have worked in UK advertising agencies, and have directly or indirectly experienced many of the causal factors explored. This made some of the participants' experiences uncomfortable to discuss (Olesen 2016). It may have meant factors I had personally experienced received greater attention in questioning and analysis (Frost and Elichaoff 2014). I attempted to manage for this by identifying a broad range of causal factors, which forced me to discuss those I was unfamiliar or uncomfortable with.

My gender may have influenced data collection, as 9/10 participants were women. Oakley (2016) suggests women are more enthusiastic about speaking to a woman than a male researcher. There was a danger that the research became a "cosy enterprise" based on shared gender experiences, a common criticism of Feminist research (Hesse-Biber 2014a). To counter this, I was careful not to express any endorsement, agreement or share any of my own experience in interviews. The use a semi-structured approach and visual aids helped maintain objectivity. One could argue my attempts to foster distance from the participant compromised the degree of familiarity, and hence the quality of information shared (Thomson and Holland 2010). However, I felt it was an appropriate and ethical way to behave.

My sampling method also raises some quality and ethical concerns. All participants were selected through my own professional network. This familiarity can be helpful in qualitative research, as one tries to create as naturalistic a setting as possible (Bell 2014, Kamberelis et al. 2016, Lincoln et al. 2016, Oakley 2016). But it led to some incidences of over sharing as participants felt too comfortable (Bell 2014). Also, some of the participants were students at Southampton Solent, or junior employees in advertising agencies. I did not teach or manage any of them directly, but I do hold a position of power. They may have felt obligated to participate or eager to please with their responses. I managed this by ensuring I sought informed consent formally and respectfully, in the same way as all other participants. I also arranged to interview all students and the junior creatives together so put them at ease (Munday 2014).

Finally, acting morally as a researcher is as essential to achieving Strong Objectivity as self-reflexivity (Denzin and Lincoln 2016). To ensure my practice was ethical I adhered to appropriate guidelines developed for Feminist research (Bell 2014). All communications with participants were private and respectful. Informed consent was sought on multiple occasions. First informally, when initial contact was made. Then formally in an email outlining further details of the study and what was required. It was also asked at the beginning and end of interviews. Participants then had the opportunity to review and edit their transcript, or refuse for their testimony to be used. This allowed them to manage for any oversharing, and remove any information that could be identifiable or inflammatory. I could not provide full confidentiality, as I selected and interviewed participants, but I did

guarantee anonymity. All interviews were held in a venue of the participant's choosing, as it could be dangerous to discuss work related experiences in their current workplace. All identifiable information has been removed from transcripts.

To summate my chosen methodology, I have adapted Cresswell's (2014) framework from Figure 5.
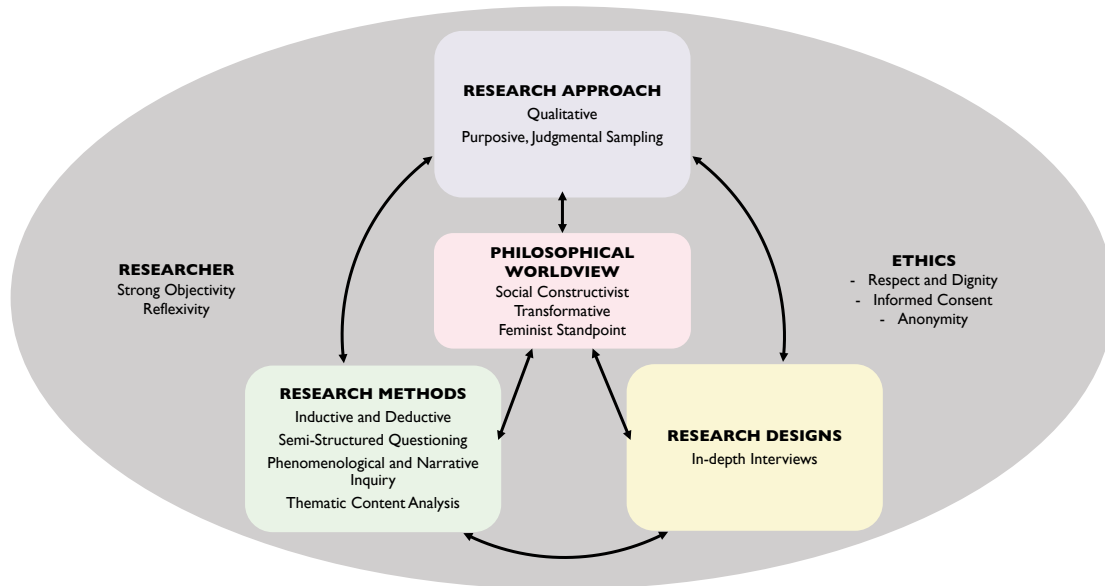

Figure 6: Relevant Research Methodology and Ethical Framework Selected for this Study (adapted from Cresswell 2014)

4. Findings and Analysis

Answering the Research Questions and Objectives and beginning to identify some valid educational strategies:

  a. What happens to the Lost Girls?
  b. What causes the loss of female talent? AND What role could education play in addressing the problem?
  c. Acute causes that could be addressed by education

4. Findings and Analysis

4a. What happens to the Lost Girls?

This study deliberately recruited two recent female graduates who had studied creative advertising, art and design courses, but were not working in a creative department. It was consequential that they had both secured equally skilled roles in advertising agencies, as an Account Manager and an Account Planner. Their career path supports my statistics from Southampton Solent:
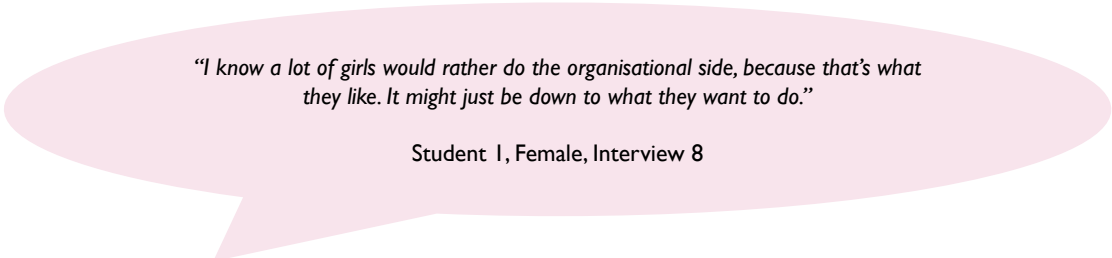
Table 3: Southampton Solent University BA (hons) Advertising Graduate Current Employment by Gender (LinkedIn 2017)

	Male		Female	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Creative Department	25	61.0%	16	39.0%
Advertising Agency (Other roles)	27	29.0%	66	61.0%
Other CCI or Creative Marketing roles	35	44.0%	50	56.0%
Other roles/unemployed	8	35.8%	15	64.2%
Total	95	39.3%	147	60.7%

It seems female graduates are not completely lost from the advertising industry, they simply enter roles outside the creative department. This may explain why, in departments like Account Management, 63.6% of employees are female (IPA 2016). This is a problem, because while other disciplines gain from female talent, creative departments still lose.

4b. What causes the loss of female talent? AND What role could education play in addressing the problem?

The fact that many female graduates were still entering UK advertising agencies, but in roles outside the creative departments offers evidence for horizontal occupational segregation. In particular, account management was a popular role for women (IPA 2016). This role is complimentary, not subordinate to the creative discipline, however, it involves many tasks which would traditionally align with "women's work" (Reskin and Hartmann 1986, Leidner 1991, Alvesson 1998, Mallia 2009, Ayhan 2010, Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2015). It is primarily an organisational and administrative role, combined with client relationship management which necessitates warmth, understanding and communication. This finding is not surprising, as it aligns with other studies (Alvesson 1998, Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, Mallia 2009, Ayhan 2010, Klein 2010, IPA 2016). The new learning is that this choice begins before entry into industry:

> *"I know a lot of girls would rather do the organisational side, because that's what they like. It might just be down to what they want to do."*
>
> Student 1, Female, Interview 8

Female students are aware of the masculine qualities necessary for success as a creative. Resilience, assertiveness, self-promotion or "upward networking", commercial nous and drive were all repeatedly referenced. These characteristics were inherent in female creative directors interviewed:

> *"I really love business and the idea of how you create value through concepts. So, I think that helped me stand out… I think business success is a more male thing. Being competitive is more of a male trait. Wanting to win seen as a male trait. Which are all things associated with success in our industry …I love winning. I hate losing."*
>
> Creative Director, Female, Interview 5

> *"My first job was at the coolest digital agency in the world. One of the guys who ran it came to my university and came to do a talk. I thought I want to work for you, so I went up to him and said, "I want to work for you". And he said, "I don't have a job for you. You're not classically trained. You don't know tech or typography or being a designer." So, I just worked really hard and kept bringing him my portfolio every time he was in town. And bless him, he saw me. Then finally gave me a job … You have to stick with it. It comes back to that tenacity I guess. You have to be, unfortunately, a bit louder and a bit tougher.'*
>
> Creative Director, Female, Interview 6

The issue is that many female students expressed a lack of confidence in exhibiting these traits:

> *"Honestly, I'm just terrified. I don't know how I'm going to do it. I have no idea how I'm going to make connections because if I'm in a group I'm fine, but if I'm on my own, I'm like, "Oh God". You need confidence, a lot of confidence. And self-assurance. Even if someone says, "This isn't good"; you have to bring yourself back up."*
>
> Student 2, Female, Interview 8

Female candidates for junior roles were reported as lacking the self-assurance exhibited by equivalent males:

> *"I was interviewing for a designer years ago. I had a woman and a man in their early 20s come in for the job. The women had an amazing portfolio but she said, "I've only really done Flash for six months". The guy came in with an equally good portfolio and said, "Of course I can do this job, I've done Flash for six months". Now, if I hadn't been a woman and I wasn't aware of the issue, which of those two people am I going to hire? The one who says, "Of course I can do it." There's that issue."*
>
> Creative Director, Female, Interview 6

So, some masculine traits are still essential for creative success, and female students' lack of confidence at exhibiting them is leading to horizontal occupational segregation. Education could intervene and help female students build confidence in these softer skills. Testimony from interviews, suggests this is an area overlooked by HEIs, and that teaching on presenting, resilience and assertiveness would be welcomed:

> *"I'd train them in what they say they want when they get into industry. Presentation skills, resilience, negotiation skills, how to sell your work."*
>
> Creative Director, Female, Interview 2

> *"Not just having to learn the writing but also about how you're getting that across and how you're positioning yourself as a creative in the room. No one ever really talks about that."*
>
> Brand Planner, Female, Interview 3

On the related concept of an Ideal Creative Director stereotype, this study challenges historic findings (Alvesson 1998, Hackley and Kover 2007, Gregory 2009, Mallia 2009, Grow and Deng 2014). Most studies were completed before 2010, and it seems the stereotype has shifted. I have used wordles to illustrate the traits participants used to describe the Ideal Creative Director. They have been classified as masculine or feminine

using a combination of the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (Spence and Helmreich 1978) and Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem 1974).

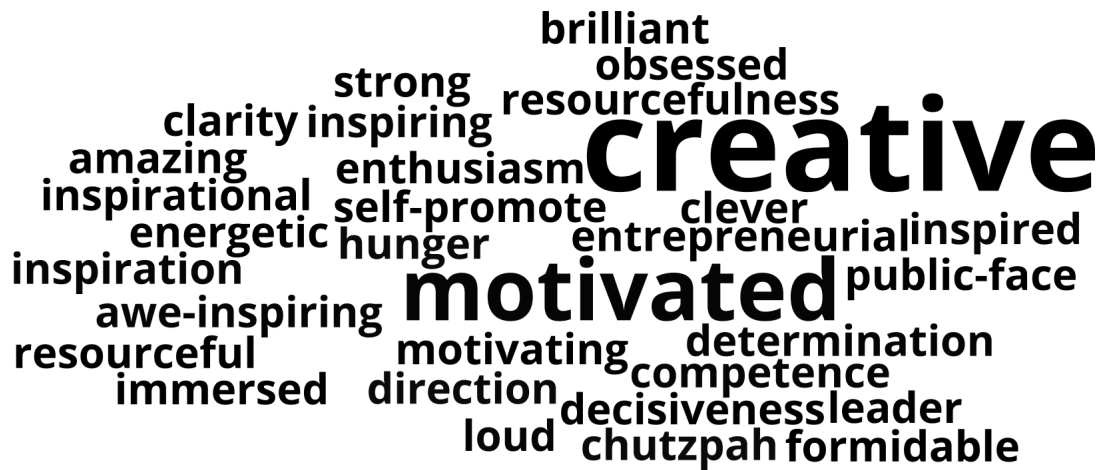Masculine traits related to creativity, motivation and leadership were still referenced:

Figure 8: Masculine Traits Used to Describe the Ideal Creative Director

But, in conflict with previous research, feminine traits were more commonly used to describe the Ideal Creative Director. Dominant descriptors were related to "bringing out the best in people", approachability, empathy and clear communication.

Figure 9: Feminine Traits Used to Describe the Ideal Creative Director

The type of creative director in demand today seems more gender balanced, as summarised by one Creative Director:

"I think the ideal creative director has two parts. Part of it is inspiration. You need to set a direction for the team, encourage them to be better, go out and be the physical, public face of the agency, bring amazing creativity back as much as possible. Put things in place to keep people inspired. So, there's an inspiration job. Then I think the other part is what I call clear enablement. It is providing clarity to teams working on the direction they are going in, not setting that direction but helping them find it themselves."

Creative Director, Female, Interview 6

The stereotype of the bullish male creative genius is dying out:

"I think it's dying out, which is great. … I can only think of one or two who may be a little bit like that. Who have that really bullish, alpha male type way of running their departments. So, I think it's changing for the better."

Creative Director, Female, Interview 6

"I notice with the older generation, men are men … The moment you drop the age bracket below 50 and you start talking to younger men it's different. They are much more engaged, much more approachable and not as aggressive."

Junior Creative 1, Female, Interview 1

One potential explanation offered for the shift in the Ideal Creative Director Stereotype was the increased prominence of women in this role. Statistics do not support a large increase in female creative directors, but the new generation of women want to make themselves more visible (IPA 2016, Hanan 2017):

"They [the female creative directors of the past] sat in an ivory tower, and quite liked the idea of being the only female. They didn't understand why we needed more. They never tried to pull anyone else up. They didn't spend a lot of time trying to help. Now we all spend a lot of time trying to help and talking about it."

Creative Director, Female, Interview 5

Worryingly, this new breed of successful women is not being seen by female students. They struggled to envision an Ideal Creative Director as a woman, despite describing their traits as feminine. They blamed the fact that they had not worked with women in a position of power, either in education or creative departments:

"I've only ever had one female creative director. She was part of a team. I was only there for three months. I rightly, or wrongly, always associate creative director with a male role because I've only ever had a male creative director."

Junior Creative 2, Female, Interview 1

"Male. I've never worked with a female creative director ...I've worked in a few agencies and they've always been male. I've worked with a few female teams, but never a female creative director."

Account Manager, Female, Interview 4

Female students struggled to name any creative role models. When interviewing their tutor, he initially only named men when asked about industry greats. This supports the causal factor around a lack of visible females, and suggests education could do better at showcasing female creatives and their work. This definitely worked for one of the junior creatives:

"When I went to a conference for creative women, this was such a massive turning point. She invited all the great women from advertising. Since then things have shifted for me because I have people I follow now and look up to."

Junior Creative 1, Female, Interview 1

As the Ideal Creative Director Stereotype moves from an overt and aggressive masculinity, the hegemonic masculinity in creative departments is also evolving. This was the primary reason given by historic studies for the loss of female talent and hence the increasing underrepresentation of women up the creative hierarchy (Alvesson 1998, Connell 2005, Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, Gregory 2009, Mallia 2009, Windels and Lee 2012, Boulton 2013, Grow and Deng 2014, Davies and Orbordo 2016). But participants in this study report the creative "lad's locker room" as becoming less and less the norm. Aggressive and exclusive creative departments were undesirable workplaces for men and women, associated with the big, old fashioned agencies who were not producing good work.

> *"It's become one of the most important things, the environment. When I look at a job - if it's aggressive and they're going to pitch teams against each other and make everyone fight for the job – then I think no."*
>
> Junior Creative 1, Female, Interview 1

Even though the hegemonic masculinity is no longer macho and juvenile, it is still competitive. This could still be a shock for women coming from education, which is a safer and more nurturing space. Junior creatives found this challenging at the start of their career, and cited it as one reason why some of their peers gave up on creative roles:

> *"There are other people there who want that job. You are pitted against each other … There are all these people raring to go, who will take you down. They were lovely, but you could see the glint in their eyes … Once you're older you have the confidence and can hold yourself. But the first couple of years are pretty brutal."*
>
> Junior Creative 2, Female, Interview 1

If one looks at masculinity and femininity on a scale, there is evidence of a shift towards a softer masculinity as hegemonic within UK advertising agency creative departments:

Majority of UK Advertising Agency Creative Departments Circa.1990s and 2000s

Majority of UK Advertising Agency Creative Departments Today

Hyper Masculinity
Locker room culture

Hyper Femininity
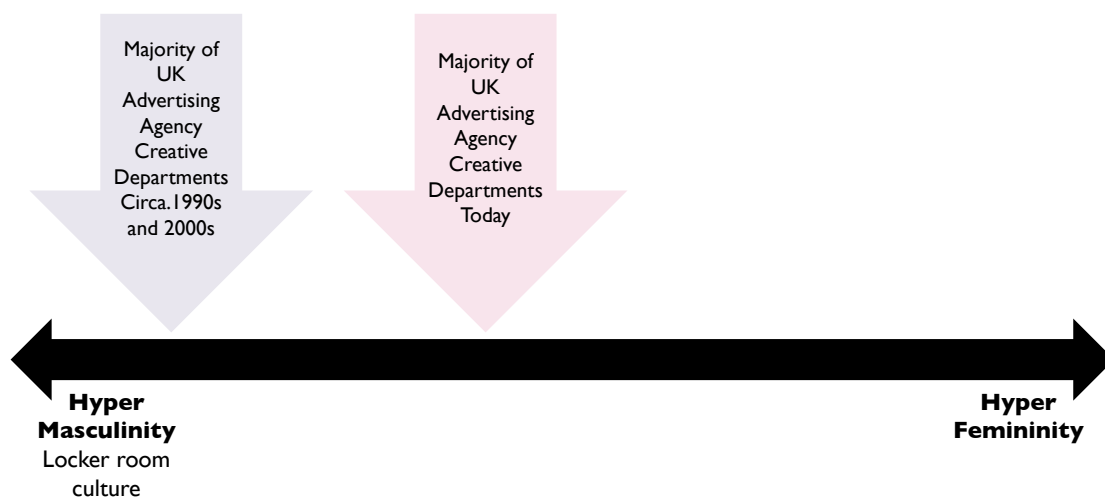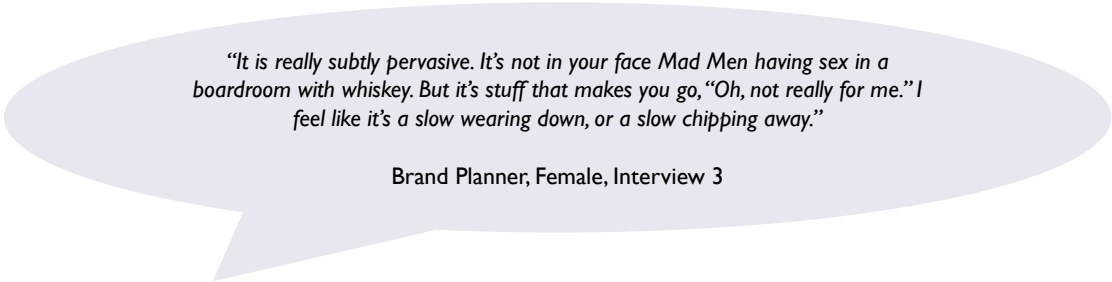
Figure 10: Shift in the Hegemonic Masculinity in UK Advertising Agency Creative Departments

This may be a move towards the "positive hegemony", described by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005 p.833), where gender equality and the abolition of gender hierarchies is possible. However, it seems some elements like

competition, conflict and banter may never disappear, because they are seen as necessary to producing great creative work (Nixon 2003). Education needs to better prepare students for this.

While overtly macho and sexist behaviour was dying out, practices of "subtle sexism" were still prevalent. This offers support for postfeminist assertions that "Sexism isn't dead. It just got more covert" (Dutta 2008, Broyles and Grow 2011, Gill 2011).

> *"It is really subtly pervasive. It's not in your face Mad Men having sex in a boardroom with whiskey. But it's stuff that makes you go, "Oh, not really for me." I feel like it's a slow wearing down, or a slow chipping away."*
>
> Brand Planner, Female, Interview 3
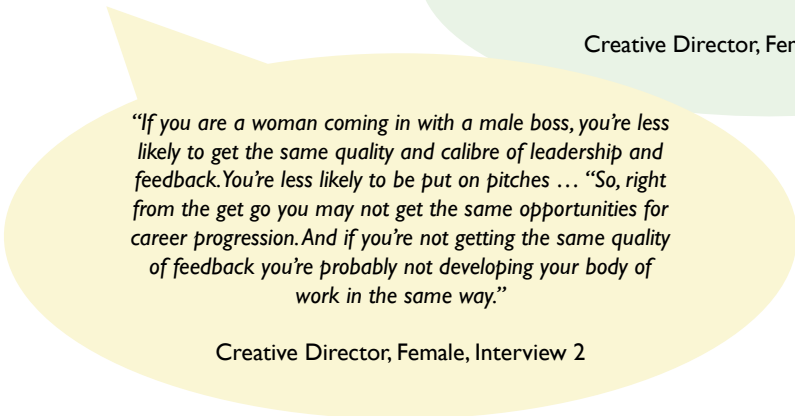
There were reports of gender inequality regimes in workplace interactions, related to opportunities for career development and the quality of feedback women were offered by predominantly male superiors.

> *"I've seen a lot of that happening, where you present your ideas where you get spoken over the top of. Where you get excluded from meetings. There's a lot of that that happens."*
>
> Creative Director, Female, Interview 6

> *"If you are a woman coming in with a male boss, you're less likely to get the same quality and calibre of leadership and feedback. You're less likely to be put on pitches … "So, right from the get go you may not get the same opportunities for career progression. And if you're not getting the same quality of feedback you're probably not developing your body of work in the same way."*
>
> Creative Director, Female, Interview 2

But for most, gender inequality regimes were not a pressing issue inside the workplace. Incidences of differential treatment happened rarely, and they reported being able to address them. For example, if they were repeatedly given female brands to work on:

> "You can leave yourself open to this. I know that we have specifically spoken about, and told creative directors and recruiters that we're meeting, you're not just whacking us on a make-up brand… You can say no … It can be addressed."
>
> Junior Creative 2, Female, Interview 1

Whilst gender inequality regimes were being challenged at work, they were still dangerously pervasive in social spaces. Females of all levels reported exclusion from socialising. Some incidences were explicit about the prohibition of women, whereas others simply made it difficult for them to get involved:

> "They played shooting up games, there was the boys email club where they all used to send stuff round to each other. So, you felt excluded as a female."
>
> Creative Director, Female, Interview 5

> "The number of fucking golf days my CEO goes on … That's when the real business happens … I think there are so many of these, not just conversations, but these spaces, women simply don't enter into."
>
> Brand Planner, Female, Interview 3

> "The nearly all male creative department went on a night out. They went to strip club. I just peeled off and went home …I thought that was odd. I thought why would you do that? I thought why would you cultivate something not accessible? Why was that how they were bonding?"
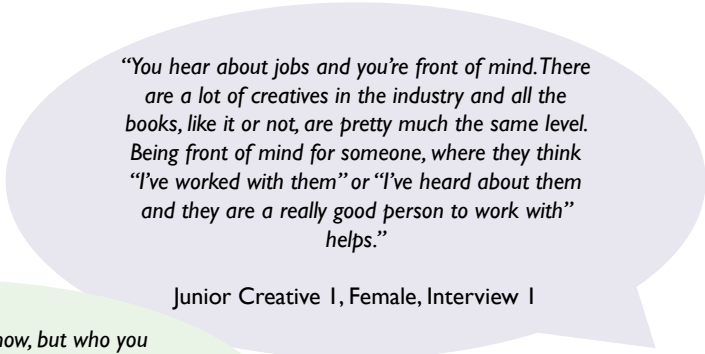>
> Junior Creative 2, Female, Interview 1

Even an "all-inclusive" trip to the pub could be fraught with pitfalls:

> "A lot of the situations where you build those networks are alcohol based. I think potentially you watch yourself a bit more in those situations. I don't want you to think I'm coming on to you. I don't want to embarrass myself. Whereas I think guys maybe have a bit more freedom in that."
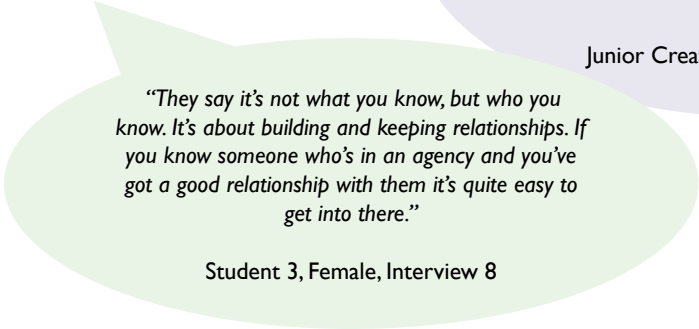>
> Junior Creative 2, Female, Interview 1

In some professions, this may not be an issue, but as an advertising creative strong informal networks and socialising are essential to career progression (Ibarra 1992, Alvesson 1998, Broyles and Grow 2008, Gregory 2009, Mallia 2009, McLeod et al. 2009, Ayhan 2010, McLeod et al. 2011, Windels and Lee 2012, Grow and Deng 2014). Participants in this study were well aware of this:

"You hear about jobs and you're front of mind. There are a lot of creatives in the industry and all the books, like it or not, are pretty much the same level. Being front of mind for someone, where they think "I've worked with them" or "I've heard about them and they are a really good person to work with" helps."

Junior Creative 1, Female, Interview 1

"They say it's not what you know, but who you know. It's about building and keeping relationships. If you know someone who's in an agency and you've got a good relationship with them it's quite easy to get into there."
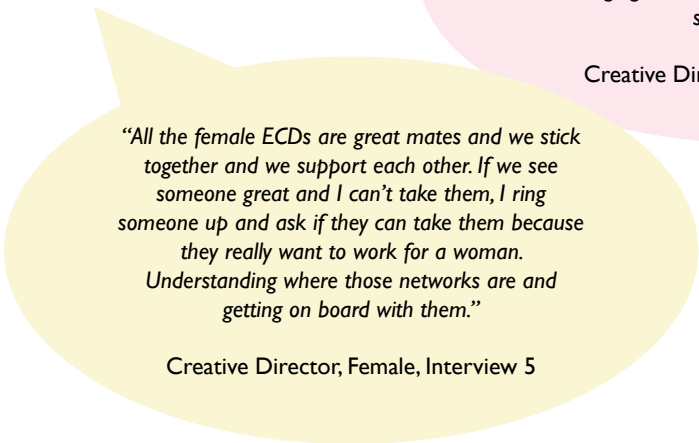
Student 3, Female, Interview 8

My research supports previous studies in their conclusion that exclusion from socialising can hinder the careers of women. But interviews with successful female creatives alluded to a short-term solution. They were forming their own "old girls network", recommending female talent, sharing contacts and creating safe spaces where women could get together and network:

""The network thing absolutely works. We run all female portfolio surgeries a couple of times a year and that definitely works, because you get your work in front of interesting people who might hire you. Encouraging women to put themselves out there and show their stuff."
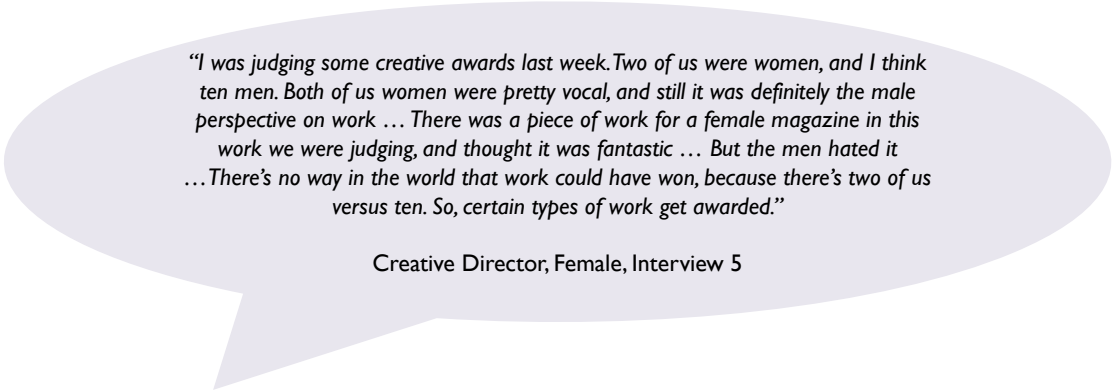
Creative Director, Female, Interview 6

"All the female ECDs are great mates and we stick together and we support each other. If we see someone great and I can't take them, I ring someone up and ask if they can take them because they really want to work for a woman. Understanding where those networks are and getting on board with them."

Creative Director, Female, Interview 5

These networks were well known in industry, but not by female students. One female creative stated, "There is a strong support network. It's just not very visible" (JC1, Female, Interview 1). A review of key UK female creative networks, She Says and Creative Equals, demonstrates that there are events, training courses and mentoring schemes that could be easily accessed by students. Education could do better at promoting them.
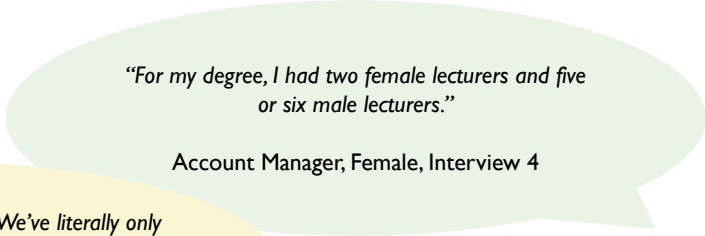
There was no evidence that sexist tests were putting women off careers in advertising. In fact, participants referenced campaigns like Always "Like a Girl" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjJQBjWYDTs) and "This Girl Can" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dk0ggY5IvTs) that were extremely inspirational for women considering a creative career. But the related masculinist creativity was still evident, in line with earlier research (Alvesson 1998, Cadwalladr 2005, Ayhan 2010, Boulton 2013, Grow and Deng 2014, Hanan 2016):

> *"I was judging some creative awards last week. Two of us were women, and I think ten men. Both of us women were pretty vocal, and still it was definitely the male perspective on work … There was a piece of work for a female magazine in this work we were judging, and thought it was fantastic … But the men hated it …There's no way in the world that work could have won, because there's two of us versus ten. So, certain types of work get awarded."*
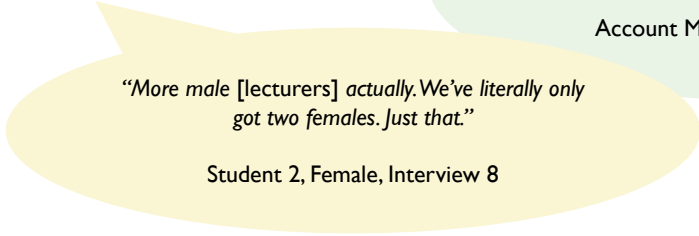
> Creative Director, Female, Interview 5

What this research adds is a hypothesis that masculinist creativity is already present in education. Many tutors on creative advertising, art and design courses are ex-creative directors. The proportion of female creative directors has been 11% at best (IPA 2016). So, it follows that the majority of educators are men, something confirmed anecdotally by students and junior workers:

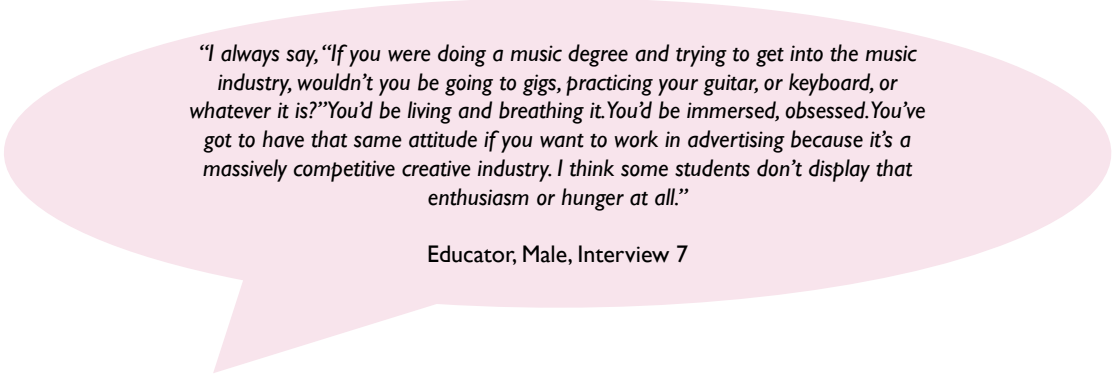> *"For my degree, I had two female lecturers and five or six male lecturers."*

> Account Manager, Female, Interview 4

> *"More male* [lecturers] *actually. We've literally only got two females. Just that."*

> Student 2, Female, Interview 8

As discussed previously, most of the industry greats showcased by tutors were male, and the majority of best practice shown was completed by men. Educators may unconsciously place higher value on masculine texts. They may also favour male students, as their description of an Ideal Creative Director echoed the old, all-consumed and driven, masculine stereotype (Alvesson 1998, Florida 2004, Equality Challenge Unit 2010, Allen et al, 2013, Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2015, Dent 2016).

"I always say, "If you were doing a music degree and trying to get into the music industry, wouldn't you be going to gigs, practicing your guitar, or keyboard, or whatever it is?" You'd be living and breathing it. You'd be immersed, obsessed. You've got to have that same attitude if you want to work in advertising because it's a massively competitive creative industry. I think some students don't display that enthusiasm or hunger at all."

Educator, Male, Interview 7

Female students and junior workers, felt men fared better on their courses:

"I think the boys flourished more than the girls personally. I can't really put my finger on it, but if I listed the top five people on my course, they would all have been boys. And all of the people who have done best in my year group, in my peer group, they all have been boys as well."
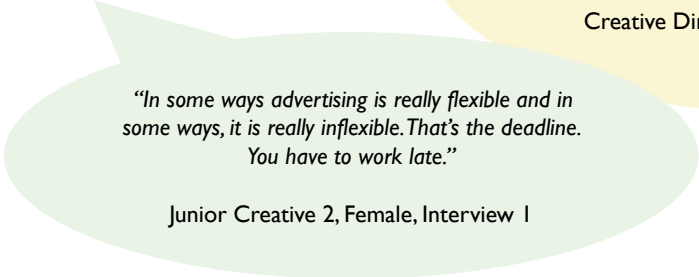
Account Manager, Female, Interview 4

This hypothesis is in no way conclusive and needs further research, but educators may harbour unconsciously biased judgements on what constitutes the best of the type of creative individual and work that privileges male students and masculine creativity. At Southampton Solent, at least, this does not seem to be reflected in grades, but if male work frequently receives prominence in class, exhibitions and awards and more public praise, it could lead to a belief amongst female students that they are not as good. Educators need to be challenged in their creative judgements. Strategies should be employed to increase inclusion and appreciation of advertising texts made by women, and/or with a feminine voice.

Another causal factor prevalent surprisingly early on in women's career progression was concern around work-life balance. This was, to a degree, based upon reality. It seems many agencies have adjusted recruitment policies to foster diversity, but other manageable inequalities around their family friendly policies lag behind (Joseph 2016, O'Reilly 2016, Lacy 2017, Simpson 2017):

> *"I think becoming a mother has been difficult in the creative industries. It's not being a woman, it's being a mother that becomes complicated … We're treated like this nuisance, that we're four days a week and we're not really dedicated blah, blah blah."*
>
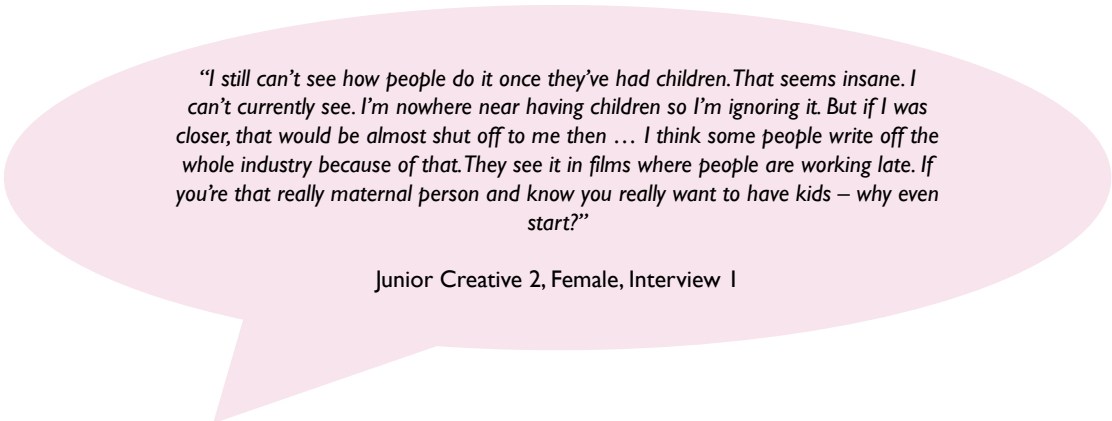> Creative Director, Female, Interview 5

> *"In some ways advertising is really flexible and in some ways, it is really inflexible. That's the deadline. You have to work late."*
>
> Junior Creative 2, Female, Interview 1

This is unsurprising, but the part relevant to education, is the perception that creative roles are not complementary to motherhood begins very early on. It was a major concern for junior level workers interviewed, to the extent that some were considering leaving the industry before they decide to have children. They agreed this could lead to some female graduates never applying for roles in creative departments:

> *"I still can't see how people do it once they've had children. That seems insane. I can't currently see. I'm nowhere near having children so I'm ignoring it. But if I was closer, that would be almost shut off to me then … I think some people write off the whole industry because of that. They see it in films where people are working late. If you're that really maternal person and know you really want to have kids – why even start?"*
>
> Junior Creative 2, Female, Interview 1

Female creative directors pointed out that there were many successful women, including themselves, that were mums. There may be a role for education in incorporating successful mums and their experiences in teaching to challenge negative perceptions.

The final causal factor was uncovered when assessing female students' level of awareness and preparedness for some of the challenges they may face due to their gender. It draws on the theoretical construct of unspeakable inequalities. This study is extremely valuable, as participants spanned the full range of career development, from student to creative director, and can therefore show that awareness and acceptance of gender inequality grows with experience in industry. Many creative directors started off in denial of sexism, as they were from the first postfeminist generation.
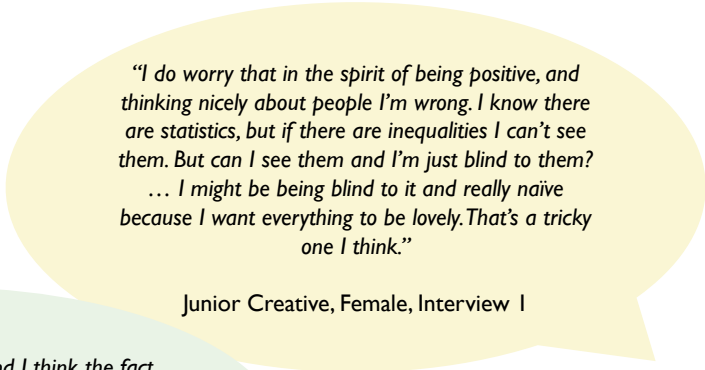
> "It's really hard. I came through the 90s when it was all the ladette stuff. It was so deeply uncool to talk about inequalities. We thought, "We don't have inequality, everything's equal". It was a flash out tits kind of culture. Women completely overlooked the fact that we were in a really, really bad place... I'm hoping that will change and that people are starting to get language for it."
>
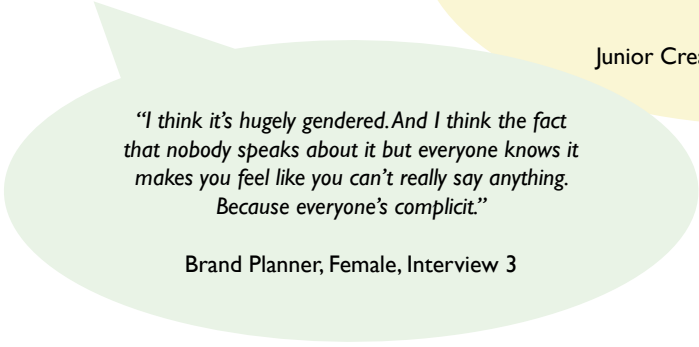> Creative Director, Female, Interview 6

Through experience and necessity, they had to accept that gender inequality existed, it was impacting upon their career development and they had to speak out about it. Now, female creative directors had sophisticated language for describing and calling out even the most implicit interactions that resulted in gender inequality. They felt it was their responsibility to do this, and most were involved in gender diversity initiatives.

Junior staff were only just becoming conscious. Many self-identified when presented with descriptions of unspeakable inequalities. Like other participants in studies that explore this phenomenon, they frequently stated they had not personally experienced gender discrimination, despite some being visible in their testimony (Equality Challenge Unit 2010, Allen et al. 2013, Gill 2014, Gill, Kelan and Scharff 2016). Even if they could see inequality, they found it difficult to speak about.

> "I do worry that in the spirit of being positive, and thinking nicely about people I'm wrong. I know there are statistics, but if there are inequalities I can't see them. But can I see them and I'm just blind to them? … I might be being blind to it and really naïve because I want everything to be lovely. That's a tricky one I think."
>
> Junior Creative, Female, Interview 1

> "I think it's hugely gendered. And I think the fact that nobody speaks about it but everyone knows it makes you feel like you can't really say anything. Because everyone's complicit."
>
> Brand Planner, Female, Interview 3

Students had a complete lack of awareness or acceptance of gender inequality:

"None of you mentioned the fact that you are a woman might hold you back, do you think that might be a pitfall?"

Interviewer, Interview 8

"I don't think in this industry, in this day and age, I don't think it is. Maybe in other things, but because it's creative, no."

Student 2, Female, Interview 8

When provided with facts evidencing gender asymmetries in UK advertising agency creative departments, they experienced a high degree of disbelief and dissonance. Gender did not serve as a possible explanation:

"Is that statistic right?"
Student 3, Female, Interview 8

"Maybe the girls' lives went in different directions?"
Student 2, Female, Interview 8

"Just because you've done a course in something doesn't mean that's what you actually do."
Student 1, Female, Interview 8

"After the course, they might have decided that it wasn't what they wanted to do after all. But it seems like a complete waste of time."
Student 3, Female, Interview 8

"It could be our interests? There could be less females that want to be in that big management role. It could be a pure mind-set thing?"
Student 1, Female, Interview 8
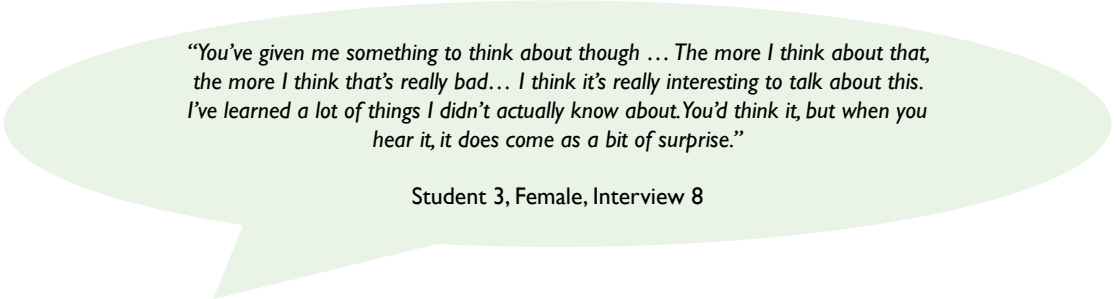
"Maybe in the past. Going into it, and where we're still so young, we've got a positive mind-set where we think gender doesn't matter. Nowadays so many people talk about feminism, like Emma Watson from Harry Potter. Loads of people want to make a change. A real female thing. That's why we haven't really got that worry, because in this day and age it's not really a big deal."

Student 3, Female, Interview 8

Many challenged the accuracy and recency of statistics, or they tried to explain them as down to the individual choices of women, in line with the findings of others (Equality Challenge Unit 2010, Dent 2016, Gill, Kelan and Scharff 2016).

This study supports postfeminist scholars, in demonstrating a denial and lack of discussion around gender inequality, combined with a subtler sense of sexism and social exclusion, is extremely dangerous (Ayhan 2010, Equality Challenge Unit 2010, Gill 2011, Gill 2014, Gill, Kelan and Scharff 2016). It allows the habitus that creates and recreates gender asymmetry to continue to exist. A valuable strategy would be to open up the conversation on gender inequality amongst female students and educators. Simply presenting them with statistics and stories to reflect upon, as I did in my interviews, would be helpful. Students fed back that they found interviews gave them a lot to think about, and many began to change their opinions in the space of the one hour interview session.

> *"You've given me something to think about though … The more I think about that, the more I think that's really bad… I think it's really interesting to talk about this. I've learned a lot of things I didn't actually know about. You'd think it, but when you hear it, it does come as a bit of surprise."*
>
> Student 3, Female, Interview 8

This study is significant as it provides evidence that female students are already experiencing many of the causal factors for gender asymmetry in education. And if not then, during the unpaid work placements they are now expected to complete before gaining a permanent paid position (Equality Challenge Unit 2010, Allen et al. 2013, Young Creative Council 2016). They are already lost before industry can address the problem. To save the Lost Girls, education needs to raise the level of awareness, acceptance and preparedness for some of the challenges female students may face in industry related to their gender.

4c. Acute causes that could be addressed by education

This study does not claim to offer a complete picture of the causal factors for gender asymmetry in UK advertising agency creative departments, but it does identify eight of the most acute causes, that can be addressed by education. It demonstrates that despite a relatively even gender ratio on creative advertising, art and design courses, an asymmetric habitus that privileges men are already present. Most worryingly, female students' lack of awareness and ability to discuss gender inequality is preventing them from preparing for it.

In summary, I have adapted Figure 4 to show the eight acute causes substantiated by primary research, which my subsequent strategies will attempt to address:
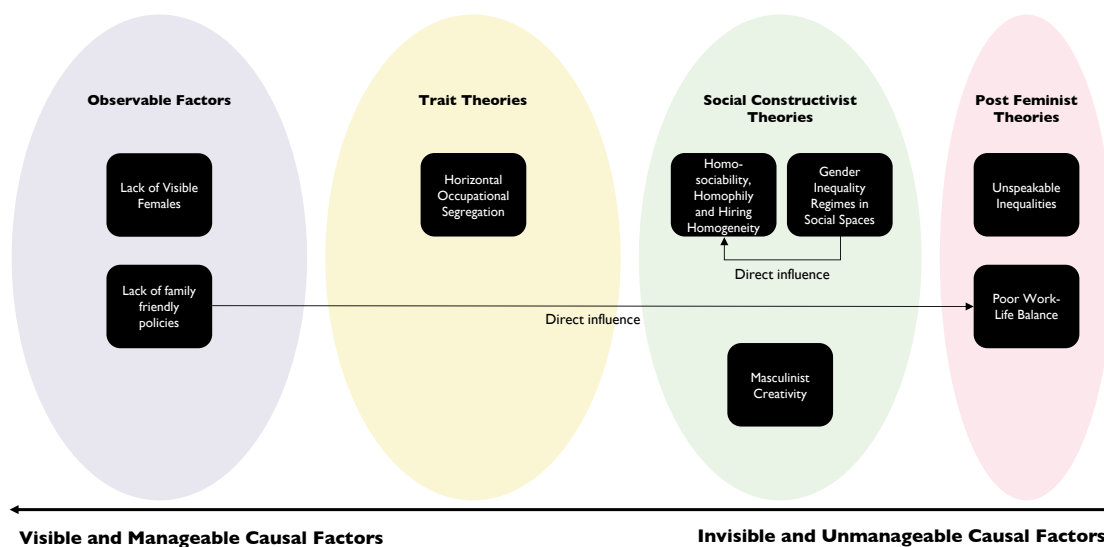

Figure 11: Acute Causal Factors for Gender Asymmetry Evidence by Primary Research

5. Strategies

Educational strategies, resources and an action plan aimed at addressing the issue of gender asymmetry in UK advertising agency creative departments, and the resultant loss of talent from creative advertising, art and design Higher Education courses.

5. Strategies

This is a small-scale study, with a small sample, and the strategies I propose here recognise this. The gender balance in UK advertising agency creative departments will not shift to 50-50 overnight, nor solely due to my actions. Many causal factors exist within industry, and this study only proposes educational initiatives. Significantly changing the gender asymmetry and retaining female talent will take further research and collaboration between both parties. However, Aacker (2006 p.455) notes that most successful change projects target a limited number of "inequality-producing mechanisms". So, my strategies focus on the eight acute causal factors prevalent in education and industry, identified by my primary research.

This study and resultant strategies can achieve two things. Firstly, it can tackle the most dangerous causal factor, unspeakable inequalities, by raising awareness of this issue within education. Gender asymmetry in creative departments is well recognised amongst people working in advertising agencies, and organisations, like She Says, the IPA, Creative Social and Creative Equals, are taking steps to address it. But, this study has evidenced awareness is non-existent amongst female students. I agree with Mallia (2009 p. 10) that courses preparing women for these roles have an "ethical responsibility" to give a realistic picture of their prospects. So, I will provide and promote publically available resources to help creative advertising, art and designs students and educators have frank discussions around the state of the industry today when it comes to gender, and ensure unspeakable inequalities are spoken about.

Secondly, I aim to better prepare female students for the asymmetric system they are hoping to enter. A lot of support exists for female creatives within industry, but this comes too late. The girls are already lost. I want to connect women with support whilst they are still in education.

The format of my initiatives has been inspired by Allen et al. (2013), who suggest that Higher Education staff and students respond well to toolkits with practical recommendations. To spark discussion on a topic with a high level of disbelief and denial, I thought it would be necessary to use collaborative learning activities, similar to those developed for education by Sheryl Sandberg's organisation, Lean In: (https://leanin.org/education). And to equip students and educators, simple toolkits that could be kept for reference, similar to materials from the Equality Challenge Unit (https://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/diversity-equality-and-access-toolkits/) seemed appropriate. All materials are downloadable and printable for immediate use or storage. They are publically available online so they can be bookmarked or shared electronically. By making them as easily accessible as possible I hope to maximise usage. Find everything here: https://lostgirls.kathrynellis.co.uk.

To address the issue of unspeakable inequalities I developed an original lesson plan for a Diversity Discussion Session, initially for my teaching at Southampton Solent University. It is designed to get female students critically evaluating the industry by giving them facts, sharing the experiences of other women and providing the language to identify and speak out about inequality. Card based activities and provocative discussion pieces incite them to reflect on the impact this phenomenon might have on their career path. The majority of the session is group

discussion, much like a research focus group, as they are proven "consciousness raising" and social change tools (Montell1999, Munday 2014).

Attendance at the session was a point of deliberation. One could suggest it is unfair to exclude male students, and some scholars argue that any strategy to tackle discrimination against women will fail if men are not involved (Connell 2005). However, some of the activities in the session are similar to those used in my interviews with the female students. I ensured these groups were all female, so participants felt comfortable sharing their experiences related to gender, and it worked well (Bell 2014, Hesse-Biber 2014a, Oakley 2016). After consultation with my educational peers, we agreed it would be best if the session was women only.

Male educators would be included, as it is advantageous to engage and educate them. They are the gatekeepers in education, who are legitimising some causal factors like horizontal occupational segregation and masculinist creativity (Connell 2005, Aacker 2006, Equality Challenge Unit 2010). It seems from my research that educators want all their students to thrive, and that any bias is unconscious. Hence, subtly educating them by getting them to deliver the Diversity Discussion Session and review related resources seems like a more appropriate strategy than specific training, which could be seen as accusatory.

To support the session there are PDFs that outline Eight Great Actions educators can take to tackle this issue, and Five Fantastic ones for students. These resources provide positive and active outcomes. This is essential because best practice suggests women's discussion and networking sessions are most successful when they are task-related and provide meaningful outcomes (Kanter 1977, Ibarra 1992).

These resources tackle each of the eight most acute causal factors for gender asymmetry and loss of female graduate talent, unearthed by my primary research. Initially I did consider creating things like a resilience training programme, content from successful females or a social networking platform where female students could find female mentors. But all of these things already exist through organisations like Sprint, She Says, Creative Social and Creative Equals and they are all open to students. So, my resources primarily aim to connect students and educators with the support and inspiration already on offer:

Table 7: How My Strategies Tackle the Acute Causal Factors for Gender Asymmetry

Causal Factor	Strategy for Educators	Strategy for Students
Unspeakable inequalities	• Diversity Discussion Session • Stats and Stories cards to give contemporary context and spark discussion • Aggregating up to date news and views on this topic in one place at https://lostgirls.kathrynellis.co.uk/#non-sticky • Use Let's Imagine article to challenge denial and create dissonance	
Lack of visible females, especially successful mums	• List of successful female creatives to use in lectures, contact to come and hold guest lectures and follow in social media • Suggest showcasing female ex-students who have seen creative success	• List of successful female creatives to follow in social in social media
Horizontal occupational segregation	• List of organisations who can provide training in soft skills females feel less confident exhibiting, to enable them to consider the more assertive and individualistic creative role	
Homosociability, homophily and hiring homogeneity	• List of organisations and events who foster all female creative networks, mentoring schemes and portfolio critiques • List of successful female creatives to contact for work placements or to review work	
Gender inequality regimes in social spaces	• List of organisations who host female networking and social events • Diversity Discussion Session to discuss these experiences and develop language to call them out • Sharing of Stories from professional's lived experience to show what students could encounter	
Masculinist creativity	• List of awards and sites that give primacy to work by women, work with a feminine voice or viewpoint or work that deals with female issues to develop their appreciation for this type of work • Recommendation to break up same sex teams to foster a more diverse set of people working together	• List of awards and sites that give primacy to work by women, work with a feminine voice or viewpoint or work that deals with female issues to give them something different to aspire to
Lack of family friendly policies and poor work-life balance	Within the scope of this study it is impossible to address the policies of agencies, but we can begin to address the perception that success as a creative is impossible to achieve if you want a family by: • Showcasing mums who are successful creatives and blogs that particularly deal with this lived experience, for example: http://motherland.net/regulars/how-i-make-it-work-kimberley-gill/ • Using the Diversity Discussion Session to urge students to think of strategies to tackle related challenges they may face	

As part of my intervention I sought feedback on all of my strategies from relevant teaching peers at Southampton Solent. Firstly, the Head of Advertising, Marketing and Communications, as he would provide final approval for the Diversity Discussion Session to be incorporated into the syllabus and my resources used. I also sought feedback from the Associate Lecturer responsible for delivering many of the creative modules on the MA and BA Advertising courses, as he was likely to deliver my proposed lesson and resources. Successful change projects need support from insiders, so I wanted to get key individuals involved early on, and give them a sense of involvement in the creation of initiatives (Aacker 2006). Both believed the session and resources would be extremely valuable to themselves, students and other teaching peers:

It definitely contributes to a gap in the research. It's surprising how little there is in this area.

The website is a good way of assembling all the resources and allowing students to comment. It empowers them to contribute to the debate if they feel passionately.

A session like this is so carefully put together and includes a lot of resources. That's fantastic.

The MA is crying out for this type of session, which is a critical look at the industry. Getting students to look critically at the industry is one of the hardest things to do.

I really like the use of card exercises and catalysts as they can discussed collaboratively within the group. It's not something that's happening to them, it's positive and proactive. It's active learning within the session and online as well.

Figure 12: Feedback on my Strategies from Southampton Solent Teaching Peers

Full next steps are in my Action Plan (Table 8a), but it is likely my session will become a permanent fixture and my resources will be promoted to all students and educators on the BA (hons) Advertising, BA (hons) Marketing with Advertising Management and all MA courses in the School of Advertising, Media and Communications from October 2018.

Although my study does not claim to make broad generalisations, strategies and resources could be transferable to other HEIs. Action needs to spread beyond Southampton Solent to make any significant impact on the gender asymmetry. So, I have made everything publically available through the creation of https://lostgirls.kathrynellis.co.uk. This site houses all of the resources and lesson plans developed for Southampton Solent. In addition, it gives an overview of my project and provides a space for up to date news and views on the topic of gender asymmetry in advertising agency creative departments. The WordPress format allows easy updating, comments and discussion to ensure recency, relevance and improvement based upon feedback. It becomes a place where the conversation on gender asymmetry can continue, therefore tackling unspeakable inequalities through its existence.

My Action Plan outlines how I will promote the site to the main HEIs who offer creative advertising, art and design courses. I foresee raising awareness of this issue in education, sharing resources and connecting industry and education to tackle this problem as the focus of my Unit 5 exhibition.

I shared my website and resources with my research participants, as many are part of the relevant audiences for my strategies, outlined in Section 1d. I felt it would be useful to gain their feedback and turn them into advocates before a bigger launch. They indicated that my strategies are valid, convincing and interesting, which has given me confidence to promote them to a broader audience

Thank you so much Kathryn - there are some amazing resources here.
Educator

Definitely useful, yeah. If you just draw on the same pool of "the greats", creative heavy weights, because it has historically been a male preserve then you do tend to trot out the guys to follow.
Educator

I think it's really good. It will cause a shift in awareness and about time too! I got it straight away.
Creative Director

This is brilliant - well done.
Creative Director

Figure 13: Feedback on my Strategies from Interview Participants

The action plan below outlines how I intend to continue to spread the findings of my study and my strategies in order to continue to tackle gender asymmetry in UK advertising agency creative departments moving forward. There is still a long way to go after this project is handed in!

Table 8a: Action Plan to Tackle Gender Asymmetry in UK Advertising Agency Creative Departments and Stem the Loss of Female Creative Talent

Action Step	Timings	Necessary Resources and Tactics	Potential Challenges	Result
AIM: Incorporation of Diversity Discussion Session in Southampton Solent syllabus				
Sharing of Diversity Discussion Session Lesson Plan and resources with the Head of Advertising, Marketing and Communications and an Associate Lecturer at Southampton Solent University	**Complete** 29th November and 6th December 2017	• WIP lesson plan and resources	Scheduling a convenient time with teaching peers	• Feedback • Sens of inclusion and support amongst teaching peers • Endorsement from the Head of School • Approval from the AL for me to trial the Diversity Discussion Session with his students • An agreed action plan, in line with organisational procedure
Share Diversity Discussion Session Lesson Plan and resources with the Lecturer who runs the Professional Practice module so they can deliver the session in the 2018/2019 academic year	Once both are finalised for MA Hand In 18th December 2017	• Final lesson plan and resources • Endorsement from the Head of School	Scheduling a convenient time with teaching peers	• Lecturer confident enough to deliver the Diversity Discussion Session
Trial of Diversity Discussion Session using current lesson plan, with final year female BA (hons) Advertising students	Teaching Period 2, beginning January 2017	• Arrange date with Associate Lecturer in charge of Creative Pathway module	• Approval of AL • Finding a convenient time • Correct delivery of the session – I may deliver first time	• Awareness of issue raised amongst female students • Feedback from students and lecturer • Creation of student advocates for the session • Lecturer confident enough to deliver in future
Delivery of the Diversity Discussion Session for all final year students on BA (hons) Advertising, BA (hons) Marketing with Advertising Management and all MA courses in the Advertising, Marketing and Communications school	2018/2019 academic year and beyond	• Improved lesson plan and resources based upon feedback from trial session	• Correct delivery of the session – I may help out with the first few	• Continual delivery of the session • Awareness of issue raised amongst female students • Hopefully, improvement in the number/ratio of female students gaining roles in creative departments – more than the current 11%

Table 8b: Action Plan to Tackle Gender Asymmetry in UK Advertising Agency Creative Departments and Stem the Loss of Female Creative Talent

Action Step	Timings	Necessary Resources and Tactics	Potential Challenges	Result
AIM: Promotion of Website and Resources to encourage wider use by creative advertising, art and design Higher Education students and educators				
Super soft launch of site to participants in my primary research	**Complete** December 2017	• Email sent directly to participants	Narrow timeframe to gain feedback and approval	• Approval of all materials used on the site and in resources • Feedback and positive endorsement
Soft launch to broader Advertising, Marketing and Communications faculty at Southampton Solent University	Before the end of term on 20th December 2017	• Email sent to peers by Head of School • Head of School to discuss at next faculty meeting	Endorsement of Head of School	• Use of the site and resources within Southampton Solent • Feedback from peers
Invite broader audience to my Unit 5 Event, which will promote the resources there and showcase the organisations referred to educators and students	Early January 2018	• Online event sign-up on Lost Girls site • Email invite and send to organisations outlined in Table 4 • Post event on LinkedIn and Twitter • Incite organisations supportive of my cause to also promote the event	Driving up attendance	• Traffic to the Lost Girls site – even if people do not sign up to the event they can check out and use the resources there • Increase awareness of the issue amongst relevant audiences
Lost Girls Live Event	Early February 2018	• Space to hold the event – McCann London date TBC • Presentation from me • Speakers from organisations I want to showcase to educators and students • Means to capture feedback at the event - video vox pops of attendees, feedback forms left on seats and follow up email	Capacity and availability of event space	• Increased awareness of the issue • Connect HEIs with organisations that can provide training and support for students • Improved preparedness of female students • Feedback to inform the next phase of the site and resources or provide inspiration for future research • Support of educators and students, which could lead to the roll out of the Diversity Discussion Session and resources • Support of industry bodies and advertising agencies who could fund future research or initiatives

5. Summary and Conclusions

Recap on:

- The significance of this study

- Limitations of this research and its strategies

- Recommendations for further research

- A picture of success

6. Summary and Conclusions

This study accepts it has limitations. It cannot completely explain or resolve the issue of gender asymmetry in UK advertising agency creative departments. I believe large-scale systemic change would require more research to quantify and evidence the acute causal factors explored. This would require collaboration between HEIs, industry bodies like the IPA and agencies, alongside access to their staff, students and employability data. This is a logical next step to validate my findings and propose further strategies to stem the loss of female graduate talent from creative roles.

However, this research is significant because it explores the experiences of students and educators as well as advertising agency staff. This has led to the identification of eight acute causal factors for gender asymmetry that can be addressed by creative advertising, art and design education:

1. Unspeakable inequalities or a denial of gender issues
2. Lack of visible females, especially successful mums
3. Horizontal occupational segregation due to a lack of confidence in masculine soft skills
4. Homosociability, homophily and hiring homogeneity
5. Gender inequality regimes in social spaces
6. Masculinist creativity
7. Lack of family friendly policies
8. A perception of poor work-life balance

This understanding has allowed me to propose valid and convincing educational strategies to resolve this problem. I urge educators and students to adopt and apply my learnings and strategies made publically available here: https://lostgirls.kathrynellis.co.uk, to give their female students a better chance of getting into and getting on in UK advertising agency creative departments.

In this way, I hope to open up the pipeline of female talent entering creative roles. The more women who enter creative departments, the more the system has to change to accommodate them, or they will change the system from within. I cannot change the habitus, but I believe helping women into this field will change it over time. This echoes pragmatic Bourdieuian scholars who suggest wholesale, radical change to a social structure may be implausible, but change can emerge from the margins (Butler 1997, McNay 2004). I believe a new positive hegemony can emerge that welcomes diversity and hence fosters more commercial and creative success for UK advertising agencies (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, Aacker 2006, Gill, Kelan and Scharff 2016, The Great British Diversity Experiment 2016). Something both education and industry should care about.

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