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# Promoting gender diversity with a general vs. specific diversity policy

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**MASTER'S THESIS**

# PROMOTING GENDER DIVERSITY
# WITH A GENERAL vs. SPECIFIC DIVERSITY POLICY

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**Abstract**

This study addresses the effectiveness of different framings of diversity policies to promote gender diversity in fictitious selection decisions. A diversity policy appears to promote gender diversity more strongly compared to when no diversity policy is present at all. In particular, a specific diversity policy, that focused on *how* a diversity goal is to be achieved, elicited targeted decision-making behaviour more strongly than having no diversity policy. In other words, when the decision encountered explicitly corresponded to that specific diversity policy (i.e., hiring decision), the female star applicant was more likely to be hired when participants were exposed to the specific diversity policy. Moreover, a difference in effect has been found between a generally-framed, that focused on the *spirit* behind a diversity goal, and a specifically-framed diversity policy whilst optimisation of the current experimental design. This study failed to explain that the effectiveness of the specific diversity policy is related to reductions in the engagement in moral rationalisation. However, the negative relation of moral rationalisation on the targeted decision-making behaviour is confirmed. Additionally, it is investigated whether the general diversity policy could affect multiple decision-making behaviours and thus depends less on the type of decision that was encountered. No significant supporting results are found.

**Keywords:**     Gender discrimination; Gender diversity; Diversity policy; Moral rationalisation; Ethical decision-making; Human Resource Management

# 1   Introduction

As of today, disparities between men and women persist in the European labour market, despite that the European Union provides a framework that safeguards the principle of gender equality in employment (Council Directive 2006/54/EC; Eurostat, 2009; Gutek, Cohen & Tsui, 1996; Petit, 2007; Zwiech, 2008). While women make up a vast majority of tertiary graduates (Eurostat, 2009, 2015; ILO, n.d.; Keinert-Kisin, 2016; Wilton & Purcell, 2010) and thereupon have made considerable progress in lower and middle ranks of management over the past decades, gender discrimination has prevented female advancement into leadership positions (Bell, McLaughlin & Sequeira, 2002; Burgess & Tharenou, 2002; Heilman, 1997; Kalev, Dobbin & Kelly, 2006; Keinert-Kisin, 2016; Maier, 1997; Matsa

& Miller, 2011; Roosevelt Thomas, 1990; Singh & Point, 2006). Women face significant barriers of managerial advancement such as for example, direct and indirect sexual harassment (Gayle Baugh, 1997), workplace bullying (Kishore, 2015) or the glass ceiling effect (Heilman, 1997; Maier, 1997). The latter refers to subtle barriers that often include gender stereotypes, lack of opportunities for women to gain job experience necessary to advance, the gender wage gap (Brynin, 2002; Eurostat, 2009; McIntyre, Moberg & Posner, 1980; Petit 2007; Warren, 2004; Zwiech, 2008) and the lack of top management's commitment to gender equity or equal employment initiatives. In August 2016, only 4% of the S&P Euro 350 (i.e., the 350 largest public companies in Europe) had a female CEO (S&P Global Market Intelligence, 2016). The reason is that leadership positions, characterized by power, influence and decision-making, are still considered traditionally "old boy networks" (Burke, 2002a; Heilman, 1997; Kalev, Dobbin & Kelly, 2006; Maier, 1997).

However recently, the demand for board and executive diversity has gained more popularity as female inclusion is increasingly recognised as a company's comparative advantage and long-term success factor (Bell et al., 2002; Burgess & Tharenou, 2002; Cassell, 1997; Chatman, Polzer, Barsade & Neale, 1998; Kirby & Harter, 2003; Kochan et al., 2003; McIntyre et al., 1980). Increased female diversity in higher positions provides differentiation of opinions and leadership styles within the decision-making process (Gilligan, 1982; Gul, Srinidhi & Ng, 2011). Female leaders create a climate for tolerance of differences (i.e., race, ethnicity, culture, religion, physical ability) as they monitor the application of social justice and equity policies in recruitment (Adams & Funk, 2012; Burke & McKeen, 1996). Also, they support employee growth, participation and empowerment through training, mentoring programs and equitable pay for all employees. Female inclusion at the top has the additional function of mentoring and motivating the women in lower and middle ranks (*"Board Diversity"*, 2013, p. 2; Burgess & Tharenou, 2002; Matsa & Miller, 2011). There where women are in leadership positions, higher satisfaction and retention levels of other managerial and professional women are noticed, who could potentially become future executives and policymakers.

Consequently, both the public and private sector have made considerable efforts to improve the status of working women. Discriminated women often experience lowered job satisfaction, struggle with physical and physiological effects and are less likely to choose the same career (McIntyre et al., 1980). Others often quit to endeavour a self-employed career (Burke, 2002b; Williams, 2012) leading to substantial female talent drain. Over the last decades, governments have increasingly been introducing positive action initiatives (i.e., quotas, preferential treatment rules, …) that function as a push for women to enter the labour market or roll into leadership positions. On the other hand, companies have been voluntarily disclosing diversity statements to help shape how e.g. gender differences are to be considered, valued, and managed in the business world (Singh & Point, 2006). The term 'diversity policy' is used as an umbrella term for all such initiatives that commit to anti-discriminatory practices and foster equal opportunities.

In first instance, this study in the field of human resource management, explores whether the presence of a diversity policy has an impact on decreasing gender discrimination, more specifically female discrimination during hiring decisions. Whereas job applicants are supposed to be judged based on merit (Maier, 1997), research indicates that even meritocracy is currently being violated, with equally qualified women being significantly disadvantaged compared to men (Heilman, 1997; Keinert-Kisin, 2016). Second, the effect of different framing methods of diversity policies is at interest. It is questioned whether a specific diversity policy (i.e., "When applicants are equally qualified, the female applicant must be selected during hiring decisions") is more effective in promoting gender diversity compared to a general diversity policy (i.e., "All employees must appreciate and promote gender diversity"). This comparative study is primarily based on the work of Mulder, Jordan and Rink (2015) who studied the effects of specific and general rules on ethical decisions. Across five studies, they found that specifically-framed rules elicit ethical decisions more strongly than generally-framed rules. Conversely, the general rule did also have an effect, but less than the specific rule. Additionally, whereas a specific rule was only effective for behaviour explicitly covered or mentioned by the rule, a general rule was more effective when multiple behaviours were to occur. Similar results are investigated in the setting of

diversity policies. It is wondered if a general diversity policy is more effective when the decision does not correspond to the specific diversity policy for which it was originally introduced (i.e., hiring decision).

Mulder et al. (2015) found that the effectiveness of specific rules was explained by the reduction in people's engagement in moral rationalisation. It was harder for subjects to justify or search for arguments that their behaviour was not breaking the rule when they were exposed to a specific rule compared to a general rule. Previous research confirms that people use different mechanisms to convince themselves that unethical behaviour is morally permissible, by engaging in self-serving justifications or rationalisations (Bandura, 1999; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, 1996; Brown et al., 2011; Detert, Treviño & Sweitzer, 2008; Hsee, 1995, 1996; Mazar & Ariely, 2015; Moore, Detert, Treviño, Baker & Mayer, 2012; Osofsky, Bandura & Zimbardo, 2005; Schwitzgebel & Ellis, 2016; Tsang, 2002).

In examining the effects of different framing methods of diversity policies, this study contributes to the literature on human resource management, gender discrimination, behavioural economics, (business) ethics and law. It intends to provide a better understanding to (inter)national regulators and policymakers on the framing of diversity policies to promote gender diversity at companies. Additionally, as it will be tested whether a general diversity policy is more effective when multiple behaviours are targeted, it can provide proof how diversity policies can tear down the barriers to female managerial advancement and thus help to break the glass ceiling. On top of this, it is assumed that the findings might be beneficial for male-dominated sectors to create a more gender-balanced labour market. If there is a balance, it is expected that gender discrimination will occur less and vice versa. This might consequently have positive spill over effects towards the society.

This research will be discussed as follows: firstly, literature is reviewed on the promotion of gender diversity and on the theory of rules, to subsequently define the hypotheses. This is followed by the description of the methodology that is applied to this study. Next, the results of the statistical tests are described, continued by a thorough discussion of the findings. Additionally, its practical implications are noted. Finally, the limitations of this research are voiced, including recommendations for future research.

# 2 Literature review

## 2.1 Efforts on promoting gender diversity

### 2.1.1 Positive action

In 1961, the United States of America was the first country to enforce anti-discrimination laws to prevent differential treatment of previously disadvantaged groups on the labour market. President John F. Kennedy was the first to sign an order requiring government contractors to identify and eliminate any barriers involving the employment of minorities (among other things, women) (Graham, 1992). All companies subject to this order were from that moment liable and exposed to potential litigation. The collection of social policies intended to promote the inclusion of earlier discriminated groups is denoted as *positive action* in Europe and *affirmative action* in the United States (Agócs & Burr, 1996; Unzueta, Gutiérrez & Ghavami, 2009).

One popular public initiative falling under positive action are the traditional quotas, formulating target figures. Today, the European Commission has installed a regulation that acts to break the glass ceiling effect stating that by 2020, publicly listed companies must ensure that 40% of the non-executive board is held by the under-represented gender, which in most cases are women (European Commission, 2012). In April 2016, women accounted for only 23.3% of board members in the largest publicly listed companies registered in the EU countries (European Commission, n.d.). As of right now, only France,

Germany, Iceland, Italy, Norway and Spain mandate a minimum fraction of female directors on corporate boards (Adams & Funk, 2012; Bøhren & Staubo, 2014; Staley, 2016).

The effects of quotas are rather ambiguous. Companies falling under mandatory target figures, especially in the public sector, witnessed greater female participation rates and increased recruitment efforts to fight gender discrimination with the efficiency or performance of men and women not being harmed (Balafoutas, Davis & Sutter, 2016; Balafoutas & Sutter, 2012; Beaurain & Masclet, 2016; Holzer & Neumark, 2000; Kalev et al., 2006; Leonard, 1984; Verbeek & Groeneveld, 2012). Other research suggested that forced gender balance may produce firms with inefficient organisational forms or inefficient boards (Ahern & Dittmar, 2012; Bøhren & Staubo, 2014). Overall, this matter is controversial as it creates a thin line between the search for talent and tokenism (*"Board Diversity"*, 2013, p. 6; Unzueta, Gutiérrez & Ghavami, 2009). Women selected for leadership positions solely based on their gender are affected as well as they have a more negative view on their own abilities, take less credit for successes, indicate less interest in continuing the leadership role and are rated less favourable compared to women selected based on merit (Heilman, 1997). It is argued that voluntary change rather than pressure may take longer, but will deliver more sustainable results.

More recently, preferential treatment has gained more grounds. In this case, minority (i.e., female) applicants are favoured during the recruitment process even when they are not better qualified than the other applicants. A softer, less controversial variant on this rule, is tiebreak preferential treatment which favours women in case of equal performance or qualifications. Balafoutas and Sutter (2012) found that preferential treatment is the most successful intervention in terms of encouraging women, particularly high-performing women, to enter competitions. As a consequence of gender differences in competitive behaviour, talented women could be less allured by leadership positions, characterized by a highly competitive environment. In the same study, policy interventions in the laboratory were proven to reduce the gender gap compared to no policy intervention.

Whereas positive action's goal is primarily to increase the numerical representation of minorities (i.e., women) as a commitment to end discrimination, it was not designed to address the issue of integrating and retaining the women hired under its requirements (Agócs & Burr, 1996; Verbeek & Groeneveld, 2012). Agócs and Burr (1996) mentioned that positive action policies do not create an environment of change such that women would get full and equal opportunities in the workplace and enjoy equitable career development opportunities and rewards for their contributions. As a reaction to the socially less popular positive action initiative, a human resource management intervention known as 'managing or valuing diversity' has been adopted in a growing number of workplaces. Since this is a voluntary business approach, the application of diversity management varies widely across different countries and companies, which makes it hard to research its effectiveness. Important to note is that companies are still more likely to focus on anti-discrimination measures (i.e., positive action initiatives) rather than valuing diversity (Kaptein, 2004).

### 2.1.2   Managing diversity

With marketplaces being more global, organisations are challenged with the diversity and inequality of their client, customer, and employee populations. One of the contributions to workplace inequality of companies is the voluntary disclosure of diversity policies. These aim for broad organisational change that involves changing individuals' attitudes and behaviours while at the same time changing the organisation's philosophy and culture. Consequently, its culture, policies and procedures result in greater equity for minorities and women, as well in greater benefits to the company (Agócs & Burr, 1996).

Singh and Point (2006) found that 241 large European companies increasingly disclose equality and diversity policies with gender and ethnicity being cited most frequently (Singh & Point, 2003). Some examples of publicly available diversity statements are: "We aim to reflect market diversity with internal diversity" or "We must always hire the best people we can find, which consists of both men and women".

Based on these examples, it is noticed that diversity policies focus more on the message and thus morality of people towards gender diversity. They provide the freedom in how to achieve gender diversity goals, whereas positive action initiatives are more specific in how to achieve these goals.

Ultimately, other but less used tools of top European companies for promoting diversity are in-house diversity training programs, the use of images of gender (and ethnic) diversity on the website, publication of prizes and symbols of awards (e.g., Best Workplace for Working Mothers) and the provision of statistics of the demographics of employees (Singh & Point, 2006).

> **Hypothesis 1.** The presence of a diversity policy induces an ethical hiring decision in favour of a female star applicant more strongly compared to no diversity policy.

## 2.2 Theory on rules

As both governments and companies increasingly participate in the battle for gender diversity, it is wondered which policies – generally-framed versus specifically-framed – are most effective in what situation. Since policies mostly comprise of rules or guidelines installed by top management[1], it is necessary to have a better understanding on how rules function, how they are framed, and what the effect will be on our decision-making behaviour. Afterwards, the theory will be applied to diversity policies to compare the effects. Yet despite a specific and general diversity policy have the common purpose of promoting gender diversity within a company, it is expected that their different framing influences their effectiveness differently.

### 2.2.1 Functions of rules

Rules are put in place for various reasons. Generally, rules provide us with guidelines on how to behave and to not only act in our self-interest (Michael, 2006). We impose rules on ourselves when the collective outcome of doing so is better than the outcome in which we all act on independent judgement (Goldman, 2006). Moreover, organisational policies are based on companies' values and are used to guide the behaviour of its employees (Goldman, 2006; Schwartz, 2001). They may prescribe required behaviour on dealing with specific issues, by setting up rules and procedures (Pater & Van Gils, 2003).

From a psychological perspective, rules have a *deontological function* of communicating our duties and rights, to avoid negative outcomes (Rawls, 1955). A common given example are traffic rules prohibiting excessive speeding to protect people (Kaplow, 1992; Michael, 2006). It follows that rules are *informative* on what behaviour is allowed and what not. We comply by the rules, not because we have been exposed to the harmful consequences of the prohibited behaviours, but simply because the rule is present (Michael, 2006) and that we are convinced of its utility. In this manner, we yearly file our personal taxes not because we witnessed high penalties before, but simply because there is a tax code.

From a legal perspective, rules might affect behaviours beyond the willingness to obey the law. Rules are expected to shape the social norms of a given society, also referred to as the *expressive function* of law (Funk, 2007; Sunstein, 1996). For example, anti-discrimination and equality laws help shifting social norms and social meaning to ensure that people are treated equally. Society itself might influence rules as well, attributing to the *normative function* of rules. Spielthenner (2015) states that a rule can specify what we "must", "should" or "ought" do. In this way people are encouraged to act or behave in a socially desired way within a given context. Thereupon, any organisational policy can be understood as a normative rule.

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[1] We are aware about the potential debate of putting policies on equal terms with rules. Technically, there exists a difference. According the Cambridge Dictionary a rule is "an accepted principle or instruction that states the way things are or should be done, and tells you what you are allowed or not allowed to do". On the other hand, a policy is "a set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that has been agreed to officially by a group of people, a business organisation, a government, or a political party". Whereas the term 'diversity policy' is already widely accepted and used in the business world to address (gender) discrimination, it is opted to use the theory on rules to policies and therefore behold them as synonyms.

Despite the contrary, rules or policies do not automatically have a positive impact on the targeted decision-making behaviour (Michael, 2006; Pater & Van Gils, 2003; Pomeroy, 2006; Raiborn & Payne, 1990; Zhang, Gino & Bazerman, 2014). Although rules and regulations on anti-discrimination and equal opportunities in employment have shown beneficial results (Balafoutas et al., 2016; Balafoutas & Sutter, 2012; Beaurain & Masclet, 2016; Holzer & Neumark, 2000; Kalev et al., 2006; Leonard, 1984; Verbeek & Groeneveld, 2012), gender discrimination in recruitment decisions still takes place (Agócs & Burr, 1996; Eurostat, 2009; Gutek et al., 1996; Holzer & Neumark, 2000; Petit, 2007; Zwiech, 2008). For this reason, this research focuses on organisational policies (i.e., diversity policies) and its effects on hiring decisions.

### 2.2.2 Framing rules

The framing of organisational decision-making policies is considered important in how they will attain its desired result. Raiborn and Payne (1990) firstly point out that one should be aware of the desired message of rules: the letter or the spirit of the rule. The former refers to *how* to reach a desired outcome, while the latter considers the larger picture, the ethical morality, behind a situation. Additionally, the researchers acknowledged that *comprehensiveness*, *clarity,* and *enforceability* are essential qualitative conditions for policies that govern ethical behaviour. First, the aspect of comprehensiveness serves as covering virtually any conduct. The broader scope conforms to the idea of the spirit of law and may cover many different behaviours. Consequently, it is questioned whether the vagueness attributes to the effectiveness of rules. Second, clarity refers to the absence of ambiguity, doubt or vagueness which contrasts to comprehensiveness. Clear rules should be understandable, concise and specific with as a consequence that behaviour contrary to the rule is considered as an obvious violation and unethical. Third, a rule must be enforceable, meaning that it must contain a specific description regarding the expected behaviour and punishments so that people are aware of the consequences of their actions. Altogether, a useful rule should be (1) comprehensive in indicating the extent of its provisions, (2) clear and understandable to the average person, and (3) enforceable by specifying the complications of improper behaviour.

Markedly, a trade-off of comprehensiveness for clarity and enforceability is often observed. This is where the distinction between a general and specific diversity policy is made. A general diversity policy (i.e., "All employees must appreciate and promote gender diversity") is comprehensive, but not clear and thus less enforceable. It follows that a general diversity policy looks at the larger picture, the spirit, and hence the morality on gender diversity. Therefore, this policy is rather about valuing diversity. On the other hand, a specific diversity policy (i.e., "When applicants are equally qualified, the female applicant must be selected during hiring decisions") is clear and enforceable, but not comprehensive. Therefore, this targeted approach gives clear directions on how to promote gender diversity at a company. In other words, the letter of the policy is emphasized and rather recognised as positive action (i.e., tiebreak preferential treatment)

### 2.2.3 Effects of specific rules on ethical decisions

To our knowledge, only work by Mulder, Jordan and Rink (2015) addressed the issue of different framing of rules and its meaning to ethical decision-making. Based on the study of Raiborne and Payne (1990), general rules were considered comprehensive, while specific rules had features of both clarity and enforceability. By carrying out five studies, Mulder et al. studied the impact of specific and general rules, through people's reduced engagement in moral rationalisation, on ethical decisions. The ethical intentions of the participants, followed by their engagement in moral rationalisation, were measured by using two different scenarios:

1. Scenario 1: Participants were asked to imagine that they had a friend who has major debt to different people, including the participant. They were told that the friend would fully reimburse

the participant if they accepted his offer, but then there would be less money left to be divided among other creditors. Afterwards, participants were asked whether they would accept the €1000 offered by their friend.

2. Scenario 2: Participants were asked to imagine that they worked for an accountancy office and that they were responsible for giving accountancy declarations to companies. One day, the client offered the accountant concert tickets as a "thank you" for the years of good work. Afterwards, participants were asked whether they would accept the concert tickets offered by their client.

In Scenario 1, rules on the context of an approaching bankruptcy were introduced. The general rule stated that "one is not allowed to disadvantage creditors". The specific rule stated that "one is not allowed to accept a payment from someone who is about to go bankrupt". In Scenario 2, rules on accountants' interactions with clients were introduced. The general rule stated that "accountants should not engage in conflicts of interest". The specific rule stated that "accountants should not accept gifts from clients". Support was found for the prediction that a specific rule elicits ethical decisions more strongly than a general rule. In terms of this study, the specific diversity policy is expected to elicit a hiring decision in favour of the star female applicant more strongly compared to a general diversity policy and compared to no policy.

> **Hypothesis 2.** A specific diversity policy induces an ethical hiring decision in favour of a female star applicant more strongly compared to a general diversity policy and compared to no diversity policy.

Mulder et al. (2015) also investigated alternative explanatory mechanisms for the stronger effect of specific rules such as the deterrence and connection explanations. The former refers to the third element (i.e., enforceability) of Raiborn and Payne (1990) on how to frame rules: whether reduced moral rationalisation of specific rules remained impactful when participants were assured that there was no chance that unethical behaviour would be detected or punished. The latter examines that, due to its abstract nature, people may fail to see the connection between a general rule and the targeted ethical behaviour and hence explains why specific rules are more effective than general rules. No support for both explanatory mechanisms, why people are more inclined to behave ethically in the presence of a specific rule, was found.

### 2.2.3.1 Moral rationalisation

The stronger effect of a specific rule on ethical decisions has been explained by Mulder et al. (2015) by the reduction of engagement in moral rationalisation. This mechanism enables people to reinterpret immoral (unethical) behaviour as moral (ethical) and to erect a psychological barrier between their misbehaviour and the self-concept (Brown et al., 2011, p. 2; Schwitzgebel & Ellis, 2016; Tsang, 2002). People tend to shift their decision-making criteria and seek for justifications to suit their unethical behaviour. This seems to be in line with literature on motivated reasoning and (un)ethical decision-making where several researchers have argued that people use different mechanisms to convince themselves that their unethical behaviour is morally permissible (Bandura, 1999; Bandura et al., 1996; Brown et al., 2011; Detert et al., 2008; Hsee, 1995, 1996; Mazar & Ariely, 2015; Moore et al., 2012; Osofsky et al., 2005; Schwitzgebel & Ellis, 2016; Tsang, 2002). It stated that people who make decisions in ways that breach accepted moral or ethical norms, decide to morally disengage and try to minimise their immoral or unethical behaviour. Hence, moral rationalisation is found to have a negative effect on ethical behaviour (Detert, Treviño & Sweitzer, 2008).

> **Hypothesis 3.** Moral rationalisation is negatively associated with an ethical hiring decision in favour of a female star applicant.

Bandura (1999) suggested different techniques on how people morally rationalise immoral behaviour. For example, people minimise the consequences of their unethical behaviour, morally justify their unethical behaviour, shift the responsibility of the decision, and more. On top of this, Brown et al. (2011)

and Hsee (1995, 1996) discussed how ambiguity plays a central role to the process of moral rationalisation. If violating a policy is unambiguously obvious, moral rationalisation will be difficult and thus lower (Mazar & Ariely, 2015). Following this reasoning, a specific diversity policy (i.e., "When applicants are equally qualified, the female applicant must be selected during hiring decisions") covers very specific conduct, providing clarity and hence offers less leeway to morally rationalise that acting against the policy is morally permissible. Au contraire, a general diversity policy (i.e., "All employees of the firm must appreciate and promote gender diversity") might provide more room for moral rationalisation as it provides no clear directions on how to achieve the preferred behaviour and might be perceived as ambiguous (Verbeek, & Groeneveld, 2012). Mulder et al. (2015) were able to replicate previous findings and showed that a specific rule evokes ethical decision through reducing people's engagement in moral rationalisation.

For example, when an organisation adopts a general diversity policy to promote gender diversity, recruiters may still be reluctant to hire new female employees. With the theory on moral rationalisation in mind, it is expected that recruiters look for arguments to deny female applicants while at the same time they try not to breach the policy. For instance, they can argue that hiring an extra female employee might not have contributed to more gender diversity. Whereas the specific diversity policy clearly shows top management's commitment to hire the most qualified women on the labour market. This policy gives less freedom to self-justify or morally rationalise that recruiters can hire a male applicant. In this case, hiring the equally qualified man is an obvious violation to the policy, which will be associated with lower levels of moral rationalisation.

> **Hypothesis 4.** A specific diversity policy decreases people's engagement in moral rationalisation more strongly than a general diversity policy and when there is no diversity policy.

> **Hypothesis 5.** People's engagement in moral rationalisation mediates the relationship between a diversity policy and an ethical hiring decision.

### 2.2.4 Effects of general rules on multiple ethical decisions

General rules, characterised by its comprehensiveness and vagueness, offer a complexity of considerations which provides more opportunities to morally rationalise self-interested actions (Hsee, 1995; Schwitzgebel & Ellis, 2016). This is not necessarily negative as they may influence other relevant behaviours beyond those explicitly mentioned in a specific rule. General rules keep us focused on the broader picture (i.e., promoting gender diversity), while specific rules divert our attention away by describing very precisely *how* to achieve the targeted ethical behaviour (Braman & Easter, 2014; Hsee, 1996; Michael, 2006). General rules might allow for positive spill over effects by encouraging behaviours that were initially not intended to occur, but are also beneficial in achieving that broader picture. For example, while top management's commitment to gender diversity might primarily be to hire the best female applicants, recruiters or other managers can lean on a general diversity policy when an award, off-the-job training or pay raise is to be given to either a man or a woman. Suppose a general diversity policy does positively influence such opportunities for female star employees, this can be a tool to break the glass ceiling effect and tear down the managerial barriers to advancement.

Whereas the effect of specific rules was significantly stronger than general rules on targeted ethical behaviours, Mulder et al. (2015) also studied the effects of generally-framed rules. It was questioned whether general rules influence relevant ethical behaviours beyond those explicitly mentioned in the specific rule. Repeatedly, Scenarios 1 and 2 were used (see Subsection 2.2.3 – Effects of specific rules on ethical decisions). However, extra conditions were created: participants in Scenario 1 received the specific rule from Scenario 2 and vice versa. As predicted, the effect of the general rule on people's ethical intentions did not depend on the decision they encountered. Therefore, general rules were shown to affect multiple ethical decisions. On the other hand, the specific rule was only successful in eliciting ethical intentions when it explicitly corresponded to the decision at hand. When the specific rule

did not correspond with this decision, it had no effect. These results were also positively tested in a field setting involving the goal of discouraging littering and keeping a public space clean.

**Hypothesis 6.** The type of decision encountered, whether corresponding or not corresponding to the specific diversity policy, moderates the relationship between a diversity policy and an ethical selection decision.

**Hypothesis 6a.** The effectiveness of a general diversity policy does not depend on the type of decision encountered, and thus affects multiple ethical selection decisions in favour of a female star profile.

**Hypothesis 6b.** The effectiveness of a specific diversity policy does depend on the type of decision encountered, and thus does not affect multiple ethical selection decisions in favour of a female star profile.

# 3 Methods

## 3.1 Participant and procedure

For this study, a web-based experiment was designed and the data was collected using the survey software Qualtrics. In pursuance of increasing the response rate, the experiment was conducted in Dutch considering that most of the expected participants live in the Flemish part of Belgium. Participants were recruited through snowball sampling. Initially, the link to the experiment was made public on online social networks, which participants eventually started sharing with their own network[2]. The experiment took on average ten minutes to complete. Participation was voluntary. This was, among other things, mentioned to the participants in an informed consent to which they all agreed before the start of the experiment.

Ultimately, 147 participants were randomly assigned to one of the six experimental conditions and completed the experiment in private settings (i.e., computer or tablet at home, school, work, …). Participants were allocated to either (1) the group with a general diversity policy (i.e., "All employees must appreciate and promote gender diversity"), (2) the group with specific diversity policy (i.e., "When applicants are equally qualified, the female applicant must be selected during hiring decisions"), or (3) the control group with no diversity policy. Each of these groups were subdivided in two other conditions related to the type of decision encountered which was either (1) non-corresponding to the specific diversity policy (i.e., award decision) or (2) corresponding to the specific diversity policy (i.e., hiring decision).

The experiment ended with six questions related to the socio-demographic characteristics of those who partook ($n$ = 137)[3]. Relatively more women participated in the experiment, representing 60.4% of the dataset. The age of participants ranged from 18 to 86 years ($M_{age}$ = 36.0, $SD$ = 18.11). More young adults (up to 30 years) joined the experiment representing 59.7% of the sample. 96.4% of the participants were Western. The highest level of education obtained by the participants is respectively a professional bachelor (30.9%), an academic master (28.8%), secondary education (20.9%), an academic bachelor (15.1%), lower education (3.6%) and a doctorate (.7%).

The majority of the sample consisted of students (41%) while the other participants worked full-time (27.3%), were retired (10.8%), worked part-time (8.6%), were self-employed (7.9%) or unemployed (2.9%). Of all participants, 23.1% had up to 10 years of selection experience (such as hiring decisions,

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2    We thank all participants who were so kind-hearted to do this.

3    Eight participants did not answer the socio-demographic questions and are reported missing.

promotion, job assignments, …), while 12.9% had 12 to 45 years of experience. 64% of the dataset had no experience in making selection decisions.

The distributions of the socio-demographic characteristics across the experimental conditions were examined on the basis of chi-square tests. None of the distributions were significantly different (all $p$ > .05). This demonstrates that the randomisation was successful.

## 3.2  Experimental design

The experiment had a 3 (diversity policy: general/specific/absent) x 2 (type of decision: non-corresponding to specific diversity policy/corresponding to specific diversity policy) between-subjects design and existed out of two decision dilemmas. As an introduction to the first decision, all participants were asked to imagine that they were part of a recruiting team for an American technology company called *Successful IT* located in Ghent, Belgium. They were asked to hire a new manager assistant. It was indicated that this was an entry level job for talented graduates who are interested in the technological sector. The only requirement mentioned was that the applicants should hold a Master's degree in Economics or Business.

After the description of the hiring scenario, a diversity policy was introduced on how the company promotes gender diversity within the technological sector. It was commented that men are remarkably more represented in the sector compared to women. In the group with a general diversity policy condition, the policy stated that "all employees of Successful IT must appreciate and promote gender diversity". In the group with a specific diversity policy condition, it was mentioned that "when applicants are equally qualified, the female applicant must be selected during hiring decisions". In the control group, no diversity policy was presented to the participants.

In this first decision, all participants were asked to make the same hiring decision. A selection of four profiles of applicants was given. The participants were told that this selection was made by a reliable online recruiting system of the company. Each profile contained scores of personality and skills tests on ten: (1) a Dutch language test, (2) an English language test, (3) logical reasoning, (4) project planning, and (5) communication skills. Two profiles were equally qualified as they had an equal total score, with one being a man (Pieter Verbeek) and one being a woman (Laura Van den Broeck). These profiles will be referred to as respectively the male star applicant and the female star applicant. The two other profiles, again a man (Henri Renard) and a woman (Nathalie De Smet), were given lower total scores to create a significant difference with the star applicants. Participants were asked to choose one of the profiles as if they were to hire one of them at that very moment for the function of manager assistant. After making this decision dilemma, people's engagement in moral rationalisation was measured.

Next, a second decision was introduced. The same setup as the first decision was used but participants were allocated to either (1) a decision that was non-corresponding to the specific diversity policy (i.e., award decision; $n$ = 73) or (2) a decision that was corresponding to the specific diversity policy (i.e., hiring decision; $n$ = 74). In the group of the non-corresponding decision, participants were asked to award one of four employees as 'Best Employee of the Year'. Participants were told that each profile received an equal number of votes from other employees. In the group of the corresponding decision, the same scenario was used as in the first hiring decision. For both the non-corresponding as the corresponding type of decision, the same selection of four profiles was given. In this way only the type of decision is manipulated and no difference in results is caused by a difference in names and/or test scores of the profiles. Two profiles were equally qualified, with one being a man (Lucas Martin) and one being a woman (Sophie Mertens). These profiles will be referred to as respectively the male star applicant (employee) and the female star applicant (employee). The two other profiles, again a man (Simon Verproest) and a woman (Marie-Laure Petit), were less qualified. Participants were asked to choose one of the profiles as if they were to hire (award) one of them at that very moment for the

function of manager assistant (as 'Best Employee of the Year'). The full setup of the experiment can be found in Appendix A.

## 3.3 Measures

*Diversity policy.* Based on the work of Raiborn and Payne (1990), a general and specific diversity policy are framed. The general diversity policy stated that "all employees of Successful IT must appreciate and promote gender diversity". It is comprehensive and emphasises the broader picture or spirit behind the policy, namely to promote gender diversity. The policy is rather vague and lacks clarity on *how* a company wants to promote gender diversity. On the other hand, the specific diversity policy mentioned that "when applicants are equally qualified, the female applicant must be selected during hiring decisions". This policy lacks comprehensiveness but is concise and does provide directions how to promote gender diversity at a company. Note, the spirit or broader picture of the diversity policy is not literally mentioned.

*Ethical decision.* The question "If you would have to hire one of the applicants at this very moment, who would this be?" (1 = *less qualified man (woman)*, 2 = *female star applicant*, 3 = *less qualified woman (man)*, 4 = *male star applicant*) measured the ethical decisions. In the group with a non-corresponding decision to the specific diversity policy (i.e., award decision), participants received the question: "If you would have to award one of the employees at this very moment, who would this be?". In each group, the female star applicant was the second answer, while the male star applicant was the fourth answer. In the first decision, the less qualified man was the first answer, the less qualified woman the third answer and vice versa in the second decision. This qualitative dependent variable was dichotomized as 0 = not female star applicant and 1 = female star applicant. Meaning that, all participants who did not follow the policy and thus did not hire (award) the female star applicant (employee) were recoded as "0" while those who did hire (award) the female star applicant (employee) were recoded as "1".

*Moral rationalisation.* The engagement in moral rationalisation on unethical behaviour, meaning not hiring the female star applicant, was measured by the following six statements: (1) "When I hire the male star applicant, I do not disadvantage anyone", (2) "When I hire the male star applicant, I strengthen the team, which is good for the team", (3) "The company needs both male and female employees, so it is okay if I choose the male star applicant", (4) "When I do not choose to hire the female star applicant, this is without big consequences for society", (5) "I am not at fault when I hire the male star applicant because probably everybody does it as well", (6) "When I hire the male star applicant, this does not bring my objectivity as members of the recruiting team in danger" (1 = *totally disagree*, 7 = *totally agree*; $\alpha$ = .73). The statements were based on three rationalisation techniques developed by Bandura et al. (1996): (1) minimizing the consequences (statements 1 and 2), (2) moral justifications (statements 3 and 4), and (3) shifting responsibility (statement 5 and 6).

*Type of decision.* For the second ethical decision, the group of participants that received a hiring decision received a type of decision that corresponded to the specific diversity policy. Those who received the instructions to make an award decision received a type of decision that does not correspond to the specific diversity policy. Hence, the variable was dichotomised as 0 = non-corresponding to specific diversity policy and 1 = corresponding to specific diversity policy.

### 3.3.1 Manipulation and attention check

Different manipulation checks were introduced in the experiment to explore whether the manipulation of diversity policy (the independent variable) and the ethical decisions (dependent variables), namely the scores of the personality and skills tests, were successful. One attention check was added during the first decision.

After making the two ethical decisions, participants were asked to indicate which instructions they received at the beginning of the experiment (1 = *"When applicants are equally qualified, I must select*

*the female applicant during hiring decisions"*, 2 = *"As an employee of Successful IT, I must appreciate and promote gender diversity"*, 3 = *"I received no instructions"*). Only when participants could correctly remember, the data may be considered as fully trustworthy. A second manipulation check was related to the dependent variables. It was investigated whether the participants correctly interpreted the higher overall scores of the personality and skills tests of the star applicants. In this experiment, all participants should have decided to hire (award) one of the star applicants (employees). As for the attention check, participants were asked to indicate answer 5 = *somewhat agree* in between the six statements that measure moral rationalisation.

## 3.4 Analyses

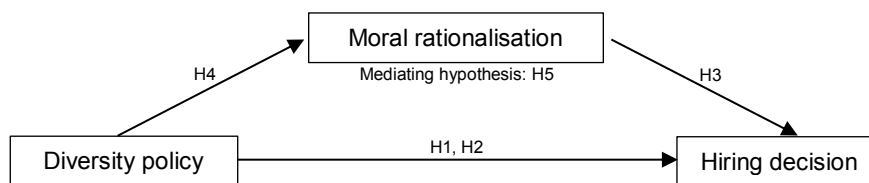### 3.4.1 First ethical decision: hiring decision



**Figure 1.** Graphic representation of the interrelationships between the central variables in the first ethical decision.

To test Hypothesis 1-2, both a chi-square test and logistic regression analyses are used to inspect whether the presence of a diversity policy (independent of being general or specific), or the absence of a diversity policy has an influence on the first ethical decision of the participants. By means of a crosstabulation, the distribution of hiring decisions is reviewed. Compared to no diversity policy, it is expected that when participants are exposed to a diversity policy (independent from the type of framing), the female star applicant is predominantly indicated as preferred applicant to hire (Hypothesis 1). Additionally, it is predicted that the female star applicant is more likely to be hired when participants are exposed to a specific diversity policy (Hypothesis 2). In case of a specific diversity policy, it is most likely to hire the female star applicant compared to the control group. The results of the general diversity policy will fall in between.

On the other hand, two logistic regression models are formed to be able to more extensively explore the dataset. Since the diversity policy (independent variable) exists out of three categories, it is necessary to compare all categories to each other. In the first logistic regression model, the independent variable is Helmert-contrast coded (see Table 1). This means that each category (except the last) is compared to the mean effect of all subsequent categories (Field, 2009, p. 371). More specifically, this model contrasts (1) the control group to the mean effect of both diversity policies, and (2) the general to the specific diversity policy. In the second logistic regression model, the independent variable is deviation-contrast coded (see Table 1). This means that each category is compared to the control group. More specifically, this model contrasts (1) the general diversity policy to the control group, and (2) the specific diversity policy to the control group.

**Table 1.** *Helmert-contrast coding and deviation-contrast coding of diversity policy (independent variable)*

| | Parameter coding | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Model 1: Helmert-contrast coding | | Model 2: Deviation-contrast coding | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| No diversity policy | .667 | .000 | -1 | -1 |
| General diversity policy | -.333 | .500 | 1 | 0 |
| Specific diversity policy | -.333 | -.500 | 0 | 1 |

Hypothesis 3-5 are tested with hierarchical regression analyses and subsequent mediation analyses. All analyses are conducted by an add-on for SPSS, namely PROCESS, which is a bootstrapping macro for simple mediation or moderation (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). Similar to Hypothesis 1-2, two models are formed with diversity policy (independent variable) Helmert-contrast coded in the first model and deviation-contrast coded[4] in the second model. The initial effect values ($B$ coefficients) are derived from multiple regression analyses, as Proost, van Ruysseveldt and van Dijke (2012) explained using this analytical strategy. They described that "[b]ootstrapping then generates a sampling distribution of the product term of the $B$ coefficients by randomly sampling sets of cases from the original sample and computing the product term" (p. 14). Additionally, they mention that "[f]urther corrections are then applied to adjust for differences between the product term derived from the original sample and the median product terms of the bootstrap estimates, resulting in bias corrected bootstrap intervals" (p. 14). In this research, a bootstrap was performed with 5000 iterations.

Firstly, the main effect of participants' engagement in moral rationalisation on the ethical decision is measured (Hypothesis 3). Lower levels of moral rationalisation are forecasted to be negatively related to the likelihood that participants hired the female star applicant. Second, the main effect of diversity policy on people's engagement in moral rationalisation is tested (Hypothesis 4). It is predicted that a specific diversity policy decreases people's engagement in moral rationalisation the most. The group with a general diversity policy should give moderate levels of moral rationalisation and in absence of a diversity policy, higher levels are expected. Afterwards, the people's engagement in moral rationalisation is assessed as a mediator (Hypothesis 5).

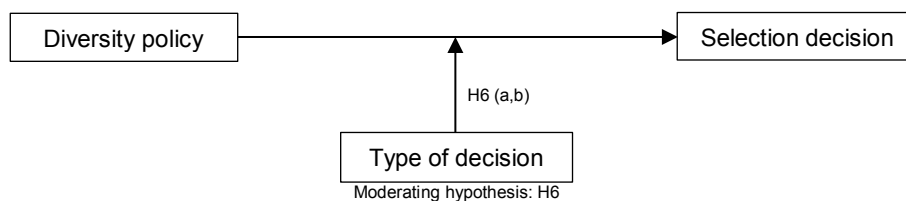### 3.4.2    Second ethical decision: selection decision



**Figure 2.** Graphic representation of the interrelationships between the central variables in the second ethical decision.

Finally, Hypothesis 6 is tested with hierarchical regression analyses and subsequent moderation analyses. In line with Hypothesis 1-5, two models are formed with diversity policy (independent variable) Helmert-contrast coded in the first model and deviation-contrast coded[4] in the second model. Hypothesis 6 investigates the type of decision (i.e., corresponding or not corresponding to the specific diversity policy) as moderator in the relationship between a diversity policy (independent variable) and the ethical decision (dependent variable). Furthermore, Hypothesis 6a and 6b explore the relationship at all levels of the moderator. Hypothesis 6a states that the general diversity policy promotes gender diversity during multiple selection decisions since its effectiveness does not depend on the type of decision encountered. In other words, the female star employee is most likely to be awarded in the group of the general diversity policy. Hypothesis 6b instigates that the specific diversity policy is only effective to promote gender diversity when the type of decision encountered explicitly corresponds to the policy. In other words, the female star employee is less likely to be awarded in the group of the specific diversity policy.

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[4]    In the PROCESS macro, the deviation-contrast coding is named differently, viz. effect-contrast coding. The method of coding the independent variable is identical as displayed in Table 1. To keep things simple, we will continue to refer to it as deviation-contrast coding.

# 4 Results

## 4.1 Manipulation and attention checks

Before starting the analysis of the hypotheses, it is investigated whether the manipulations were successful and correctly remembered by the participants. In first instance, at the end of the experiment, participants were asked to indicate to which experimental group they were assigned. 107 of 147 participants (72.8%) properly recalled the instructions at the beginning of the experiment, viz. the diversity policy (i.e., general, specific or no diversity policy). The cases that failed to correctly remember the instructions are reviewed but no irregularities, indicating that the answers were unreliable, are found. The most failures are detected in the groups of the general and specific diversity policy. It is assumed that the participants got confused when reading the answers since the general and specific diversity policy are closely related. It is presumed that the participants remembered that the diversity policy was about gender diversity, but not whether it was the specific or general diversity policy. Anyway, the 40 'failing cases' were excluded to perform all the tests and only for Hypothesis 2, different results were found. By excluding cases from the rather small dataset, the statistical power of the study would decrease and therefore it is decided to include all 147 cases and only report the different result for Hypothesis 2 in the concerned Subsection 4.2 – Hypotheses testing.

Second, it is verified whether the participants correctly interpreted the higher overall scores of the personality and skills tests of the star applicants. In the first decision, seven participants did not hire one of the star applicants. In the second decision, four participants did not hire (award) one of the star applicants (employees). One participant did not hire (award) one of the star applicants (employees) in both decisions. Hence, in total, ten participants failed this manipulation. The cases that failed to indicate one of the star applicants (employees) are reviewed but no anomalies in their responses are found. All tests are run excluding these ten cases but no difference in results is observed. Consequently, it is decided not to delete any of the 'failing cases'. The ten cases are included in the dichotomized dependent variables as 1 = not female star applicant.

Third, an attention check was hidden between the six statements measuring people's engagement in moral rationalisation. When participants pass the attention check, it is concluded that people were focused and results are trustworthy. 129 of 147 participants (87.8%) correctly indicated the fifth answer as requested in the statement. The cases that failed the attention check are reviewed but no anomalies are found. Majority of the cases that failed the attention check did pass the other manipulation checks. The participants might therefore unconsciously have mistaken. All participants have been retained for the analyses, since all findings are unchanged irrespective of whether who failed the attention check are excluded.

## 4.2 Hypotheses testing

### 4.2.1 First ethical decision: hiring decision

To start, the impact of a diversity policy on a hiring decision is measured. Based on a cross tabulation (see Table 2), it can be observed that most people are more likely to hire the female star applicant when exposed to the specific diversity policy. As a result, the participants are more likely to follow what is mentioned in the specific diversity policy (i.e., "When applicants are equally qualified, the female applicant must be selected during hiring decisions"). The majority of the group with a general diversity policy is also more likely to hire the female star applicant. In absence of a diversity policy, there is only a very small difference between the participants who hired the female star applicant and those who did

not. A chi-square test indicates a significant association between the three experimental groups and the hiring decision ($\chi^2(2) = 6.96$, $p = .03$, Cramer's $V = .22$)[5].

**Table 2.** *Crosstabulation of first ethical decision across experimental groups (n = 147)*

| | First ethical decision: hiring decision | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Female star applicant | | Not female star applicant | |
| | *n* | % of total | *n* | % of total |
| General diversity policy | 32 | 21.75 | 17 | 11.55 |
| Specific diversity policy | 40 | 27.2 | 11 | 7.5 |
| No diversity policy | 25 | 17 | 22 | 15 |
| Total | 97 | 66 | 50 | 34 |

To discover where the difference in significance between the experimental groups is situated, two logistic regression analyses are conducted[6] (see Table 3). Diversity policy (independent variable) in the first model is Helmert-contrast coded and deviation-contrast coded in the second model (for description of contrast-coding methods, see Subsection 3.4 – Analyses and Table 1). In the first model, the contrast between the control group and the presence of a diversity policy (mean of general and specific) gives a significant result. The *B* coefficient is negative, meaning that in the absence of a diversity policy the odds of hiring the female star applicant decreases with .43 compared to a diversity policy. Hence, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

However, no significant difference between the general and specific diversity policy is detected. Note that there is a tendency of the *B* coefficient to be negative, implying that when exposed to the general diversity policy, the odds of hiring the female star applicant tend to decrease compared to a specific diversity policy. In the second model, also the contrast between the general diversity policy and the control group is non-significant. Though, the contrast between the specific diversity policy and the control group gives a significant result. The *B* coefficient is positive, which shows that when exposed to the specific diversity policy, the odds of hiring the female star applicant increase with 1.835. To make a double check, a 2 (diversity policy: specific/absent) x 2 (hiring decision: female star applicant/not female star applicant) chi-square test[7] derives the same significant result ($n = 98$, $\chi^2(1) = 6.98$, $p = .008$, Cramer's $V = .27$). Consequently, Hypothesis 2 is only partially supported.

Additionally, it is worth mentioning that the tests were also run when excluding all the 40 cases that failed the manipulation check related to the diversity policy (independent variable). In this case, three out the four contrasts from the first and second model were significant ($n = 107$, $\chi^2(2) = 10.65$, $p = .005$)[8]. In the absence of a diversity policy, the odds of hiring the female star applicant decreased compared to when a diversity policy was present ($B = -1.30$, $SE = .48$, $p = .007$, $OR = .27$). Prominently different from the previous analyses, where no cases were excluded, is the significant difference between the general and the specific diversity policy ($B = -1.40$, $SE = .70$, $p = .045$, $OR = .25$). In this case, when exposed to a general diversity policy, the odds of participants to hire the female star

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5   The data was screened for violation of assumptions prior to the analysis. None of the assumptions for the chi-square test were violated. (1) No cell of the crosstabulation has an expected count less than 5 (<20%). (2) The minimum expected count is 15.99 (>1).

6   The data was screened for violation of assumptions prior to the analyses. None of the assumptions for the logistic regression models were violated. (1) Collinearity statistics are obtained by running a linear regression analysis using diversity policy (independent variable) and the ethical decision (dependent variable). Quasi multicollinearity is ruled out since the tolerance value is 1 (>.2) as well as the VIF value (<5). (2) No outliers are detected because no standardised residual has a value larger than two or lower than minus two. (3) There is no quasi-complete separation since (a) there are no large standard errors observed for the variables in the equation, (b) the crosstabulation of the diversity policy and the hiring decision shows no cell with a zero value, and (c) no warning is given concerning the iteration process of the logistic regression. The estimation terminated after four iterations because the parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

7   The data was screened for violation of assumptions prior to the analysis. None of the assumptions for the chi-square test were violated.

8   The data was screened for violation of assumptions prior to the analyses. None of the assumptions for the logistic regression tests were violated, except three cases with studentized residuals greater than |2.00| were listed.

applicant decreased with .25 compared to the specific diversity policy. When comparing to the control group, the general diversity policy is not significantly different ($B = -.26$, $SE = .32$, $p = .41$, $OR = .77$), while the specific diversity policy does give a significant result ($B = 1.13$, $SE = .44$, $p = .01$, $OR = 3.10$). Hence, Hypothesis 2 is fully supported when excluding all the cases that failed the manipulation check related to the independent variable.

**Table 3.** *Results of mediated hierarchical regression analyses for the first ethical decision (n = 147)*

| | Model 1 | | | Model 2 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Moral rationalisation*[a] | *First ethical decision: hiring decision* | | *Moral rationalisation*[a] | *First ethical decision: hiring decision* | |
| *Predictors* | | *Step 1*[b] | *Step 2*[c] | | *Step 1*[b] | *Step 2*[c] |
| Control vs. diversity policy | −.19 | −.83* | −.97* | | | |
| General vs. specific | .19 | −.66 | −.59 | | | |
| General vs. control | | | | .16 | −.05 | .03 |
| Specific vs. control | | | | −.03 | .61* | .62* |
| Moral rationalisation | | | −.48** | | | −.48** |
| Constant | 3.93*** | .68*** | 2.60*** | 3.93*** | .68*** | 2.60*** |

*Note.* Control = control group. Diversity policy = general and specific diversity policy. General = general diversity policy. Specific = specific diversity policy. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, *** $p < .001$
[a] $F(2, 144) = .82$, $MSE = 1.23$, $p = .44$.
[b] $R^2 = 1$ (Hosmer & Lemeshow), .05 (Cox & Snell), .07 (Nagelkerke). Model $\chi^2(2) = 7.08$, $p = .03$
[c] $R^2 = .34$ (Hosmer & Lemeshow), .10 (Cox & Snell), .14 (Nagelkerke). Model $\chi^2(3) = 15.1$, $p = .002$

Next, a significant negative relationship was found between people's engagement in moral rationalisation and the ethical decision. The findings of the hierarchical regression analyses show a negative *B* coefficient, implying that the odds to hire the female star applicant decrease with .62 when moral rationalisation goes up by one unit. On the other hand, an independent samples *t*-test revealed that participants who hired the female star applicant were associated with lower levels of moral rationalisation ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.05$). The opposite was true for those who did not hire the female star applicant ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 1.15$). Since the main effect of moral rationalisation on an ethical decision is found, Hypothesis 3 can be supported.

Subsequently, it is expected that the specific diversity policy reduces people's engagement in moral rationalisation more strongly compared to a general diversity policy and compared to no diversity policy. However, no (main) effect of diversity policy on people's moral rationalisation is found. Viewed from another side, a one-way ANOVA on moral rationalisation demonstrates no significant variation between the three different groups ($F(2,144) = .82$, $p = .44$), all post hoc comparisons $p > .05$ using Bonferroni[9]. Therefore, no support for Hypothesis 4 is found.

Lastly, the bootstrap mediation analyses showed that the indirect relationships of the three diversity policy conditions with the ethical decision, via moral rationalisation, were not significant since the zero value was not included in the 95% confidence intervals. In the first model, the contrast of the control group to a diversity policy gave an indirect $b = .09$, 95% CI $[-.43, .07]$ while the contrast of the general to the specific diversity policy resulted in an indirect $b = .09$, 95% CI $[-.10, .44]$. In the second model, the contrast of the general diversity policy to the control group showed an indirect $b = -.08$, 95% CI $[-.30, .03]$ while the contrast of the specific diversity policy to the control group demonstrated an indirect $b = .02$, 95% CI $[-.11, .17]$. Hence, Hypothesis 5 is rejected.

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[9]  Equal variances are assumed since the Levene's test for equality of variances is non-significant ($F(2,144) = .13$; $p = .88$).

### 4.2.2 Second ethical decision: selection decision

In this second part of the analysis, multiple decision-making behaviours are at interest. Here, two types of decisions are introduced: one not corresponding to the specific diversity policy (i.e., award decision) and one corresponding to the specific diversity policy (i.e., hiring decision). Initially, the dataset is explored by means of a crosstabulation to derive some preliminary results (see Table 4).

**Table 4.** *Crosstabulation of second ethical decision across experimental groups (award: n = 73, hiring: n = 74)*

| | Second ethical decision: selection decision | | | | | | | |
| | Non-corresponding decision: award | | | | Corresponding decision: hiring | | | |
| | Female star employee | | Not female star employee | | Female star applicant | | Not female star applicant | |
| | n | % of total | n | % of total | n | % of total | n | % of total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| General diversity policy | 12 | 16.45 | 10 | 13.7 | 14 | 18.9 | 13 | 17.55 |
| Specific diversity policy | 12 | 16.45 | 13 | 17.8 | 11 | 14.9 | 15 | 20.3 |
| No diversity policy | 13 | 17.8 | 13 | 17.8 | 8 | 10.8 | 13 | 17.55 |
| Total | 37 | 50.7 | 36 | 49.3 | 33 | 44.6 | 41 | 55.4 |

The division of the second ethical decisions for both the non-corresponding ($\chi^2(2)$ = .21, $p$ = .90) as the corresponding type of decision ($\chi^2(2)$ = .99; $p$ = .61) are roughly equally distributed across the experimental groups[10]. In the group of the non-corresponding decision, barely any difference in results is observed. As for the group with the corresponding decision, the female star applicant is less likely to be hired. Especially the participants exposed to a specific diversity policy, which corresponds to that selection decision, repressed to hire the female star applicant more often. The same phenomenon is observed for the control group. However, none of the chi-square tests is significant and thus no conclusion(s) can be drawn.

In line with previous observations, the hierarchical moderated analyses find no significant results at all levels of the type of decision (moderator)[11] (see Table 5). Hence, there is no moderation of the type of decision to the relationship of the diversity policy to the second ethical decision. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 is refuted.

However, it is decided to interpret the *B* coefficients to apprehend the directions of the results. Similarly to Hypothesis 1, there seems to be an indication that the odds to hire (award) the female star applicant (employee) decrease in the control group compared to a diversity policy. Contrary to the results of Hypothesis 2, in the second ethical decision, the general diversity policy increases the odds to hire (award) the female star applicant (employee) compared to the specific diversity policy and compared to no diversity policy. The specific diversity policy decreases the odds to hire (award) the female star applicant (employee) compared to the control group.

Since Hypothesis 6 is rejected, Hypothesis 6a and 6b are automatically as well. As a matter of further exploration of the data, the *B* coefficients are still interpreted at all levels of the type of decision (moderator) (see Table 5 and Table 6). In line with Hypothesis 1, it can be said that when there is no diversity policy, the odds of hiring (awarding) the female star applicant (employee) decreases compared to when a diversity policy is present. Hypothesis 6a stated that a general diversity policy does not depend on the type of decision encountered. In both the first and second model, the positive *B* coefficient for the general diversity policy in the group of the non-corresponding type of decision confirms this tendency. Hence, the general diversity policy positively impacts the odds to award the female star employee. Hypothesis 6b focused more on the specific diversity policy, which is expected

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[10]   The data was screened for violation of assumptions prior to the analysis. None of the assumptions for the chi-square tests were violated.

[11]   The data was screened for violation of assumptions prior to the analysis. None of the assumptions for the logistic regression analyses were violated.

to only be effective when the decision encountered explicitly corresponds to that diversity policy. Indeed, the specific diversity policy negatively impacts the odds to award the female star employee compared to the general diversity policy and no diversity policy.

**Table 5.** *Results of moderated hierarchical regression analyses for the second ethical decision (n = 147)*

| | Second ethical decision: selection decision | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Model 1 | | | Model 2 | | |
| Predictors | Step 1[a] | Step 2[b] | Step 3[c] | Step 1[a] | Step 2[b] | Step 3[c] |
| Control vs. diversity policy (1) | −.18 | −.20 | −.05 | | | |
| General vs. specific (2) | .32 | .33 | .26 | | | |
| Corresponding decision (CD) | | −.27 | −.27 | | | |
| (1) × CD | | | −.32 | | | |
| (2) × CD | | | .12 | | | |
| General vs. control (3) | | | | .22 | .23 | .15 |
| Specific vs. control (4) | | | | −.10 | −.10 | −.11 |
| Corresponding decision (CD) | | | | | −.27 | −.28 |
| (3) × CD | | | | | | .17 |
| (4) × CD | | | | | | .04 |
| Constant | −.10 | .04 | .03 | −.10 | .04 | .03 |

*Note.* Control = control group. Diversity policy = general and specific diversity policy. General = general diversity policy. Specific = specific diversity policy. *p < .05
[a] $R^2$ = 1 (Hosmer & Lemeshow), .006 (Cox & Snell), .008 (Nagelkerke). Model $\chi^2$(2) = 7.08, *p* = .65
[b] $R^2$ = .99 (Hosmer & Lemeshow), .01 (Cox & Snell), .01 (Nagelkerke). Model $\chi^2$(3) = 1.53, *p* = .68
[c] $R^2$ = 1 (Hosmer & Lemeshow), .01 (Cox & Snell), .02 (Nagelkerke). Model $\chi^2$(5) = 1.75, *p* = .88

In the end, Hypothesis 1-2 are also (re)considered for the corresponding type of decision. However no significant results are found, there seems to be an indication that also Hypothesis 1 is supported in the second hiring decision. Namely, a diversity policy tends to increase the odds to hire the female star applicant compared to no diversity policy. On the contrary, the opposite result of Hypothesis 2 is assumed in the second hiring decision. Contrasted to the specific and no diversity policy, the *B* coefficient of the general diversity policy is positive. This means that it increases the odds to hire the female star applicant. Compared to the control group, the specific diversity policy appears to decrease the odds to hire the female star applicant.

**Table 6.** *Conditional effects of diversity policy on second ethical decision at all values of type of decision*

| | | Model 1 | Model 2 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Non-corresponding decision (award) | Control vs. diversity policy (1) | −.05 | |
| | General vs. specific (2) | .26 | |
| | General vs. control (3) | | .15 |
| | Specific vs. control (4) | | −.11 |
| Corresponding decision (hiring) | Control vs. diversity policy (1) | −.37 | |
| | General vs. specific (2) | .38 | |
| | General vs. control (3) | | .31 |
| | Specific vs. control (4) | | −.07 |

*Note.* Control = control group. Diversity policy = general and specific diversity policy. General = general diversity policy. Specific = specific diversity policy. *p < .05.

# 5 Discussion

## 5.1 Theoretical contributions

In first instance, this research investigated the effectiveness of a diversity policy to promote gender diversity in a selection context at a company. More specifically, two ethical selection decisions (i.e., hiring and award decision) were introduced to study ethical decision-making behaviour in relation to gender diversity. It is found that the male star applicant was significantly more favoured during the first hiring decision when there was no diversity policy present. Hence, it appears that gender discrimination occurs less when a diversity policy (independent of its framing) is disclosed by a company. This result attributes to previous similar findings on gender discrimination (Agócs & Burr, 1996; Eurostat, 2009; Gutek et al., 1996; Holzer & Neumark, 2000; Petit, 2007; Zwiech, 2008). Additionally, in line with other research, the presence of a diversity policy appears to help promote gender diversity and hence increases female selection rates (Balafoutas et al., 2016; Balafoutas & Sutter, 2012; Beaurain & Masclet, 2016; Holzer & Neumark, 2000; Kalev et al., 2006; Leonard, 1984; Verbeek & Groeneveld, 2012).

Moreover, the different framing of diversity policies (i.e., general versus specific) was studied to improve their effectiveness to promote gender diversity. As forecasted, the specific diversity policy showed the strongest ethical decision-making behaviour in the first decision, namely a hiring decision. In other words, the female star applicant was more likely to be hired in the hiring decision compared to a general diversity policy and compared to no diversity policy. This is in line with the findings of Mulder et al. (2015) where specifically-framed rules were found to be more effective for ethical decisions compared to generally-framed rules. A specific diversity policy provides clarity and is concise as it explicitly states what ethical behaviour is expected (Raiborn & Payne, 1990). A violation against the specific diversity policy is therefore obvious.

However, it must be noted that no difference in effect is found between a general and specific diversity policy when all the participants of the experiment are included in the analysis. This finding counters with the study of Mulder et al. (2015) where it was discovered that there was a difference in effect between a general and specific rule. On the contrary, a significant difference between the general and specific diversity policy has been found when all participants who failed the manipulation check related to the diversity policy (independent variable) were excluded from the analysis. Resultantly, the hypothesised results of this study seem to be supported and hence provide opportunities to optimise this current experimental design in future research.

Surprisingly, in the second ethical decision, a non-significant but opposite result is found. In the group where the type of decision encountered explicitly corresponded to the specific diversity policy (i.e., hiring decision), an adverse effect of the specific diversity policy was observed. This conflicting result also been found in previous research (Michael, 2006; Pater & Van Gils, 2003; Pomeroy, 2006; Raiborn & Payne, 1990; Zhang et al., 2014). Whereas the odds to hire the female star applicant (significantly) increased in the first hiring decision when exposed to a specific diversity policy, the odds (non-significantly) decreased in the second hiring decision. It is supposed that this phenomenon contributes to the literature on moral licensing (Monin & Miller, 2001). Moral licensing has been captured and documented in various domains (e.g., for recruitment and sexism, see Monin & Miller, 2001; for racism, see Effron, Cameron & Monin, 2009; for charity donations, see Khan & Dhar, 2006). Merritt, Effron and Monin (2010) expressed how "past good deeds can liberate individuals to engage in behaviours that are immoral, unethical [...]" (p. 344). Meaning that, prior moral or ethical behaviour can license subsequent actions that are morally or ethically questionable (Zhong, Liljenquist & Cain, 2009). Further research is recommended to discover whether the moral licensing effect is significantly present in this experimental setting. The moral self-image scale developed by Jordan, Gino, Leliveld and Tenbrunsel (2015) can therefore be included and be measured after each decision.

In line with previous research, moral rationalisation is found to be positively related to unethical behaviour (Bandura, 1999; Bandura et al., 1996; Brown et al., 2011; Detert et al., 2008; Hsee, 1995, 1996; Mazar & Ariely, 2015; Moore et al., 2012; Osofsky et al., 2005; Schwitzgebel & Ellis, 2016; Tsang, 2002). Participants increasingly engaged in moral rationalisation when they did not hire the female star applicant and hence searched for justifications and arguments to morally disengage from their unethical behaviour. Therefore, people's engagement in moral rationalisation is found to be a main explanatory mechanism why participants are less likely to hire the female star applicant and thus acted against what was mentioned in the specific diversity policy.

Brown et al. (2011) and Hsee (1995, 1996) discussed how ambiguity plays a central role to the process of moral rationalisation. If violating the diversity policy is unambiguously obvious, moral rationalisation will be difficult and thus lower (Mazar & Ariely, 2015). It follows that a specific diversity policy decreases moral rationalisation more strongly compared to a general diversity policy, however, this result has not significantly been demonstrated. Nevertheless, the results go in this direction and are expected to occur as proven in previous literature when replicating this study, considering the limitations.

Contrary to the work of Mulder et al. (2015), the relationship of diversity policy (independent variable) and the ethical decision (dependent variable), through moral rationalisation is not found to be significant in this study. However, there is a tendency that the group with the specific diversity policy was associated with lower levels of moral rationalisation and a higher likeliness to hire the female star applicant. On the other hand, the group with the general diversity policy was associated with slightly higher levels of moral rationalisation and a lower likeliness to hire the female star applicant compared to the specific diversity policy. These indications go parallel with what is argued in the literature. It is suggested to increase the sample size in order to create higher statistical power to support the results. On the other hand, it can be argued that the work of Mulder et al. is potentially not applicable to this experimental setting, or the manipulations were not as successful as in their study. This concern is further discussed in Subsection 5.2 – Limitations of present study and future directions.

Lastly, the effectiveness of a diversity policy is tested to multiple ethical decisions. The specific diversity policy is expected to divert away the attention from the spirit behind the policy by precisely describing the behaviours necessary to achieve the targeted ethical behaviours (Braman & Easter, 2014; Hsee, 1996; Michael, 2006). Therefore, it is said that the type of decision encountered, whether corresponding or not corresponding to the specific diversity policy, moderates the relationship between the diversity policy (independent variable) and the second ethical decision (dependent variable). In other words, the specific diversity policy is only successful in promoting gender diversity for the situation it is installed. The moderation was not proven to be significant, contrary to what is found in the study of Mulder et al. (2015). Although, the data seems to indicate that, when exposed to a specific diversity policy, the participants were less likely to award the female star employee since this decision did not correspond to the policy, as hypothesised.

Contrarily, the general diversity policy is characterised by its comprehensiveness and vagueness which offers a complexity of choice considerations (Hsee, 1995; Schwitzgebel & Ellis, 2016). They might allow for positive spill over effects by encouraging additional ethical decision-making behaviour that is beneficial in achieving the spirit or moral behind the policy. However not significant in the second ethical decision, the data tends to indicate that both during the corresponding (i.e., hiring) and the non-corresponding (i.e., award) decision, the general diversity policy was more effective in promoting gender diversity compared to the specific diversity policy and compared to no diversity policy. As Agócs and Burr (1996) stated, managing diversity, which comprises more general gender diversity initiatives, results in greater equity for minorities (including women).

## 5.2 Limitations of present study and future directions

It is important to critically reflect on this research and its implemented methods to be attentive for future recommendations, especially since there has not been found support for all the hypothesised results.

First, a general reflection on (web-based) experiments is executed, followed by a critical review of this study. To finish, thoughts and ideas are voiced to serve as a guiding and inspirational tool for researchers in the same (and other) fields of study.

Since the rise of the Internet, web-based experiments have been a popular new tool for experimental research (Reips, 2000). However this method differs in some respects from traditional laboratory and field experiments, many advantages are offered: (1) an easier access to a diverse group of participants, (2) bringing the experiment to the participant and not the other way around, (3) more statistical power by accessing larger samples, (4) no interaction between the experimenter and the participants which offsets experimenter effects, and (5) better control over the variable(s) of interest and other confounding variables (Blank, Dabady & Citro, 2012).

On the contrary, (web-based) experiments can be disadvantageous in its course of action as well. External validity of experiments is generally low. Experimenters create highly controlled or artificial scenarios and people might produce results that cannot be reflected to the population (Reips, 2000). This experiment was rather complex, and thereupon similar results are questioned to be found when replicated in another location, different time with a different target group (Schanzenbach, 2012). Also, no long run effect of the manipulation was possible to be visualised since this was a cross-sectional study (Blank et al., 2012; Reips, 2000; Schanzenbach, 2012).

Especially with web-based experiments, self-selection can be a problem. However, here, all Flemish citizens of 18 years or older were targeted which did not cause self-selection to be a burden. Though, the dataset is rather small ($n$ = 147). Especially, the size of the experimental groups was limited in the second ethical decision, with less than 30 cases in each group. It is therefore recommended to work with a larger dataset to increase statistical power. Having a substantial number of participants permits to include control variables and search for considerable differences in results among these variables. Then, the problem of self-selection becomes apparent, making it more difficult to follow up whether the desired target group takes part in the study.

For example, 64% of the dataset had no experience in making selection decisions (such as hiring decisions, promotion, job assignments, …). It can be interesting to compose a group of only participants with experience in making selection decisions. Therefore, it is expected that it will require less effort from the participants to imagine the selection scenarios which makes it easier to fill in the questionnaire. It is forecasted that such participants are familiar to being exposed to diversity policies (or any other kind of policy) and potentially show different results. Furthermore, it might be interesting to test whether the same results are found in different selection decisions, such as decisions to offer off-the-job training or a pay raise to either a man or a woman. Also, the effectiveness of quotas or preferential treatment policies on promoting gender diversity can be tested.

In total, eight out of 155 participants dropped out during the experiment. It is possible that the experiment took longer than expected, was too difficult, participants got bored, tired or did not like the experiment and/or participants paused the experiment and afterwards forgot to continue. Contrarily, participants from laboratory experiments mostly show higher effort and motivation by being present at the laboratory which causes dropout rates to decrease (Reips, 2000), as well as less participants failing manipulation checks. The efforts and willingness to read or answer attentively decreases more when the experiment is conducted online. Locations such as home, school or the office have many distracting elements (i.e., confounding variables) causing the focus of the participants to decrease. A laboratory experiment is therefore recommended.

When looking more into detail to the experimental design, some thoughts are made to possibly explain the results differing from those of Mulder et al. (2015). First of all, the manipulation of the specific diversity policy (i.e., "When applicants are equally-qualified, the female applicant must be selected during hiring decisions") might have failed during the second ethical decision. It is supposed that only the first part of this diversity policy (i.e., "When applicants are equally-qualified, the female applicant must be selected [...]") is remembered correctly by the participants. The fact that this policy is only

applicable during hiring decisions might have been forgotten causing the participants to apply this policy also to the non-corresponding type of decision (i.e., award).

It can be added that, when assigned to the group with a specific diversity policy, the first ethical decision might unconsciously have influenced the second non-corresponding decision. If participants in the first ethical decision correctly executed what was mentioned in that policy, they might have tried to do the same for the award decision. However, the participants might have thought they were doing the right thing by awarding the female star employee (which is in line with the first part of the specific diversity policy), while forgetting that the policy did not apply to the non-corresponding type of decision. Furthermore, it is inviting to include an experimental group where both a specific and general diversity policy are displayed to the participants. The existence of a potential cumulative effect by combining different framings of diversity policies can be investigated in this way as well.

Also, it is proposed to randomise the order of the measures of the dependent variable(s) and people's engagement in moral rationalisation. This is to ensure that the participants' rationalisations were truly a product of the manipulations of the diversity policy and not a response to justify an unethical decision.

With respect to the term 'unethical', another important comment can be made. In the research of Mulder et al. (2015), all scenarios were pilot tested to ensure that the behaviours described clearly implied a violation of the general rule condition. If participants do not understand how the general rule is connected to the targeted ethical behaviour, no strong effect can ever be yielded in this condition. In this research, none of the scenarios were pilot tested and it is assumed that hiring (awarding) the male star applicant (employee) is not considered a violation of the general diversity policy (i.e., "All employees must appreciate and promote gender diversity") by the participants. The qualifications of applicants (employees) is one of the most important factors when decision makers review an application. Since the male star applicant (employee) was equally qualified as the female star applicant (employee) and the term gender diversity covers men as well as women, no violation to the general diversity policy is expected[12]. Therefore, it is highly recommended to perform a pilot test when replicating this research.

## 5.3   Practical implications

More and more talented female graduates are entering the labour market, whilst experiencing the persistent gender discrimination during, among other things, the recruitment process. Since female inclusion is increasingly recognised as a company's comparative advantage and long-term success factor (Bell et al., 2002; Burgess & Tharenou, 2002; Cassell, 1997; Chatman et al., 1998; Kirby & Harter, 2003; Kochan et al., 2003; McIntyre et al., 1980), the implementation of a diversity policy to promote gender diversity may come in handy. In such a way, organisations can accept the challenge to reflect the diversity and inequality of their client, customer and employee populations. This initiative emphasises the organisation's philosophy and culture while at the same time it changes individuals' attitudes and behaviours towards gender diversity. Hence, the stereotypical male-breadwinning phenomenon is weakened and the position of women is more empowered in society.

In this experimental, artificial setting, a diversity policy was proven to be successful in promoting gender diversity during a hiring decision. Obviously, more studies will be required in order to make any generalizable statements. However, this does not mean that policymakers and regulators should simply install a diversity policy and let it takes its course. In the literature, culture and effective communication are recognised as key components to a policy's success (Stevens, 2008; Weeks & Nantel, 1992). Treviño, Weaver, Gibson and Toffler (1999) noted that policies and its precepts must be discussed between employees and management which will eventually contribute to the success of the ethical policy. Stevens (2008) stated that "codes [policies] functioned not as a set of stand-alone rules, but as an integrated, embedded part of a larger part of organi[s]ational culture" (p. 604). It continued that "codes [policies] do not work when they are written by management and passed down to employees as

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[12]   We thank all participants who commented on the experiment and shared this insight.

a mandate" (p. 607). Thereupon, policymakers and regulators should not only stare blindly on a diversity policy and ignore other initiatives.

This research is also valuable to the public regulator. From a law perspective, the distinction made between general and specific diversity policies can be compared to the distinction between standards and rules (Kaplow, 1992). A rule entails specific statements on what behaviour is permissible and hence, provides content to the law. A standard leaves out any specification of what behaviour is permitted, not bringing content to the law. Hence, the economic consequences (i.e., litigation costs) of misconduct, when having a rule, are well-known.

Lastly, the engagement in moral rationalisation must be understood as well to decrease unethical or immoral behaviour. More specifically, to decrease favouritism towards male applicant or employees. Moral rationalisation allows an individual to autonomously engage in immoral or unethical behaviour while still seeing the self as moral or ethical (Tsang, 2002). Thereupon, this process must be minimalised and brought to the attention by/to policymakers and regulators. Tsang (2002) suggested some prevention methods for moral rationalisation, such as superiors giving commands in person and not indirectly over the phone, increase the responsibility given to the decision makers, increase humanising of subjects in the selection decisions, and more.

# 6   Conclusion

In an experimental selection context, a diversity policy is proven to be effective in promoting gender diversity during a hiring decision. Especially a specifically-framed diversity policy, which focused on *how* to achieve a diversity goal, was significantly more successful compared to no diversity policy. Whilst optimisation of the current experimental setting, a difference between a general and specific diversity policy was apparent in terms of promoting gender diversity. A general diversity policy, which focused on the *spirit* of a diversity goal, appeared to decrease the odds to hire a female star applicant compared to a specific diversity policy. Also, the mediating role of people's engagement in moral rationalisation, when making the selection decision, is considered but no support has been found. Though, moral rationalisation is found to positively impact favouritism towards the male star applicant. In a second selection decision, the type of decision, whether corresponding or not corresponding to the context of the specific diversity policy, is regarded as a moderator. In such manner, it is tried to establish evidence that a general diversity policy has positive spill over effects and affects multiple ethical decision-making behaviour to promote gender diversity at a company. Again, no support was found.

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## *Appendix A: Setup experiment*

### A.1 Introduction

Beste deelnemer,

Welkom op de vragenlijst ter ondersteuning van mijn Master Thesis over de invloed van richtlijnen tijdens selectieprocedures. Mijn naam is Elisabeth en ik studeer Handelswetenschappen met als afstudeerrichting Internationale Relaties aan de KU Leuven te Brussel.

Met dit onderzoek, onder begeleiding van Prof. dr. Karin Proost, analyseer ik binnen een fictief selectiescenario hoe verschillende richtlijnen invloed hebben op onze beslissingsprocessen. Aan de hand van deze resultaten zullen de effecten van verschillende richtlijnen in kaart gebracht worden. Deze resultaten zullen verwerkt worden in een aanbeveling naar zowel (inter)nationale wetgevers als werknemers binnen beleidsfuncties.

Deze vragenlijst neemt ongeveer 15 minuten in beslag. Uw medewerking is anoniem en zal tevens enkel voor onderzoeksdoeleinden van de thesis gebruikt worden. Er zijn geen juiste of foute, goede of slechte antwoorden.

Op het einde van deze vragenlijst zal u uw e-mailadres kunnen achterlaten indien u op de hoogte wil gesteld worden over de resultaten van het onderzoek.

Indien u vragen of opmerkingen heeft, dan kan u me steeds mailen op: elisabeth.haeck@student.kuleuven.be.

Bedankt voor uw waardevolle medewerking,

Elisabeth Haeck

### A.2 Informed Consent

Geïnformeerde toestemming:
- Ik begrijp wat van mij verwacht wordt tijdens dit onderzoek.
- Ik weet dat ik deelneem aan het onderzoek in kader van de Master Thesis van Elisabeth Haeck, onder begeleiding van Prof. dr. Karin Proost.
- Ik begrijp dat mijn deelname aan dit onderzoek vrijwillig en anoniem is. Ik heb het recht om mijn deelname op elk moment stop te zetten. Daarvoor hoef ik geen reden te geven en ik weet dat daaruit geen nadeel voor mij mag ontstaan.
- Ik weet dat de resultaten van dit onderzoek enkel voor wetenschappelijke doeleinden zullen gebruikt worden.
- Voor vragen of opmerkingen weet ik dat ik na mijn deelname terecht kan bij: elisabeth.haeck@student.kuleuven.be.
- Ik weet dat ik op het einde van het onderzoek mijn e-mailadres kan achterlaten indien ik op de hoogte wil gesteld worden van resultaten van het onderzoek.
- Voor eventuele klacht of andere bezorgdheden omtrent ethische aspecten van deze studie kan ik contact opnemen met de Sociaal-Maatschappelijke Ethische Commissie van KU Leuven: smec@kuleuven.be.

Ik heb bovenstaande informatie gelezen en begrepen:

❍ Ik ga akkoord en wens deel te nemen aan het onderzoek. (1)
❍ Ik ga niet akkoord en wens niet deel te nemen aan het onderzoek. (2)

### A.3 Scenario description

Gelieve onderstaande instructies aandachtig te lezen:

Veronderstel dat u werkt voor het Amerikaanse technologiebedrijf 'Successful IT' gevestigd in Gent. Uzelf maakt deel uit van het wervingsteam. Het bedrijf is op zoek naar een nieuwe manager assistant. Dit is een starterspositie voor talentvolle afgestudeerden met interesse voor de technologische sector. Als enigste voorwaarde dienen de kandidaten een Master binnen Economie en Bedrijfskunde te bezitten.

### A.4 Diversity policy

#### *Specific diversity policy*

Genderdiversiteit - verscheidenheid aan mannen en vrouwen - is een probleem binnen de technologische sector, waarbij mannen opmerkelijk meer vertegenwoordigd zijn dan vrouwen. 'Successful IT' ziet het belang van gender-

diversiteit in en hanteert volgend diversiteitsbeleid: "Wanneer kandidaten gelijkaardig gekwalificeerd zijn, dient men voorkeur te geven aan de vrouwelijke kandidate tijdens aanwervingsronden."

*General diversity policy*

Genderdiversiteit - verscheidenheid aan mannen en vrouwen - is een probleem binnen de technologische sector, waarbij mannen opmerkelijk meer vertegenwoordigd zijn dan vrouwen. 'Successful IT' ziet het belang van genderdiversiteit in en hanteert volgend diversiteitsbeleid: "Alle werknemers van Successful IT dienen genderdiversiteit te waarderen en te promoten."

## A.5 First ethical decision

Een betrouwbaar online aanwervingssyteem van het bedrijf maakte reeds een selectiegroep van 4 profielen aan. Elke kandidaat vervolledigde een vaardigheids- en persoonlijkheidstest. Alle deelaspecten van de test zijn even belangrijk voor het uitvoeren van de job.

| Laura Van den Broeck | |
|---|---|
| Taaltest (NL) | 8/10 |
| Taaltest (ENG) | 7/10 |
| Logisch redeneren | 7/10 |
| Project planning | 9/10 |
| Communicatievaardigheden | 9/10 |
| Totale score | **8/10** |

| Henri Renard | |
|---|---|
| Taaltest (NL) | 6/10 |
| Taaltest (ENG) | 5/10 |
| Logisch redeneren | 7/10 |
| Project planning | 4/10 |
| Communicatievaardigheden | 3/10 |
| Totale score | **5/10** |

| Pieter Verbeek | |
|---|---|
| Taaltest (NL) | 8/10 |
| Taaltest (ENG) | 8/10 |
| Logisch redeneren | 9/10 |
| Project planning | 7/10 |
| Communicatievaardigheden | 7/10 |
| Totale score | **8/10** |

| Nathalie De Smet | |
|---|---|
| Taaltest (NL) | 6/10 |
| Taaltest (ENG) | 6/10 |
| Logisch redeneren | 7/10 |
| Project planning | 5/10 |
| Communicatievaardigheden | 6/10 |
| Totale score | **6/10** |

Als u op dit moment iemand zou moeten kiezen om aan te werven, wie zou dit zijn?

- ❍ Henri Renard (1)
- ❍ Laura Van den Broeck (2)
- ❍ Nathalie De Smet (3)
- ❍ Pieter Verbeek (4)

## A.6 Moral rationalisation and attention check

Gelieve aan te geven in welke mate u akkoord gaat met de volgende stellingen:

| | 1 Helemaal niet akkoord | 2 Niet akkoord | 3 Eerder niet akkoord | 4 Neutraal | 5 Eerder akkoord | 6 Akkoord | 7 Helemaal akkoord |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Wanneer ik de beste mannelijke kandidaat aanwerf, benadeel ik niemand. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| 2. Wanneer ik de beste mannelijke kandidaat aanwerf, versterk ik het team, wat goed is voor het bedrijf. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |
| 3. Het bedrijf heeft zowel mannelijke als vrouwelijke werknemers nodig, dus het is niet erg dat ik voor de beste mannelijke kandidaat kies. | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ | ❍ |

| | 1 Helemaal niet akkoord | 2 Niet akkoord | 3 Eerder niet akkoord | 4 Neutraal | 5 Eerder akkoord | 6 Akkoord | 7 Helemaal akkoord |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. Wanneer ik er niet voor kies om de beste vrouwelijke kandidate aan te werven, zal dit geen grote gevolgen hebben voor de maatschappij. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. Gelieve bolletje 5 aan te duiden. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6. Ik ga niet in de fout wanneer ik de beste mannelijke kandidaat aanwerf want waarschijnlijk doet iedereen het. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 7. Wanneer ik de beste mannelijke kandidaat aanwerf, dan brengt dit mijn objectiviteit als lid van het aanwervingsteam niet in gevaar. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

### A.7 Instructions

U bent aan het tweede deel van deze vragenlijst gekomen. Gelieve uzelf opnieuw binnen de bedrijfscontext van Successful IT te plaatsen. U wordt gevraagd een tweede selectiebeslissing te maken.

### A.8 Second ethical decision

#### Non-corresponding decision: award decision

U wordt gevraagd een trofee uit te reiken aan de beste werkkracht van het jaar. Vier kandidaten kregen hiervoor evenveel stemmen. Elke kandidaat vervolledigde een vaardigheids- en persoonlijkheidstest. Alle deelaspecten van de test zijn even belangrijk voor het uitreiken van de trofee.

#### Corresponding decision: hiring decision

U wordt opnieuw gevraagd iemand aan te werven voor een starterspositie als manager assistant. Het online aanwervingssysteem maakte opnieuw een selectiegroep van 4 profielen aan. Elke kandidaat vervolledigde een vaardigheids- en persoonlijkheidstest. Alle deelaspecten van de test zijn even belangrijk voor het uitvoeren van de job.

| Simon Verproest | |
|---|---|
| Taaltest (NL) | 4/10 |
| Taaltest (ENG) | 4/10 |
| Logisch redeneren | 5/10 |
| Project planning | 6/10 |
| Communicatievaardigheden | 6/10 |
| Totale score | **5/10** |

| Marie-Laure Petit | |
|---|---|
| Taaltest (NL) | 5/10 |
| Taaltest (ENG) | 4/10 |
| Logisch redeneren | 5/10 |
| Project planning | 3/10 |
| Communicatievaardigheden | 3/10 |
| Totale score | **4/10** |

| Lucas Martin | |
|---|---|
| Taaltest (NL) | 7/10 |
| Taaltest (ENG) | 7/10 |
| Logisch redeneren | 7/10 |
| Project planning | 7/10 |
| Communicatievaardigheden | 7/10 |
| Totale score | **7/10** |

| Sophie Mertens | |
|---|---|
| Taaltest (NL) | 8/10 |
| Taaltest (ENG) | 7/10 |
| Logisch redeneren | 6/10 |
| Project planning | 8/10 |
| Communicatievaardigheden | 6/10 |
| Totale score | **7/10** |

Als u op dit moment iemand zou moeten kiezen om de trofee aan uit te reiken, wie zou dit zijn? / Als u op dit moment iemand zou moeten kiezen om aan te werven, wie zou dit zijn?

- ❍ Marie-Laure Petit (1)
- ❍ Sophie Mertens (2)
- ❍ Simon Verproest (3)
- ❍ Lucas Martin (4)

## A.9 Manipulation check

U nadert het einde van de vragenlijst.Gelieve aan te duiden welke instructies u in het begin van deze vragenlijst heeft gekregen: "Als medewerker van Successful IT dien ik genderdiversiteit te waarderen en te promoten." (1)

- ❍ "Wanneer kandidaten gelijkaardig gekwalificeerd zijn, dien ik voorkeur te geven aan de vrouwelijke kandidate tijdens aanwervingsronden." (2)
- ❍ Ik kreeg geen instructies. (3)

## A.10 Socio-demografic questions

Wat is uw geslacht?

- ❍ Man (1)
- ❍ Vrouw (2)

Wat is uw leeftijd? (e.g. 32, 53)

_____

Wat is uw afkomst?

- ❍ Westers (1)
- ❍ Latino (2)
- ❍ Arabisch (3)
- ❍ Aziatisch (4)
- ❍ Afrikaans (5)
- ❍ Ander: (6) _____

Wat is uw hoogst behaalde diploma?

*(Voor studenten: uw huidige opleiding telt niet als hoogst behaalde diploma)*

- ❍ Geen (1)
- ❍ Lager onderwijs (2)
- ❍ Middelbaar onderwijs (3)
- ❍ Professionele bachelor (4)
- ❍ Academische bachelor (5)
- ❍ Academische master (6)
- ❍ Doctoraat (7)
- ❍ Ander: (8) _____

Welke van onderstaande opties omschrijft het best uw huidige werksituatie?

- ❍ Part-time werk (1)
- ❍ Full-time werk (2)
- ❍ Zelfstandig (3)
- ❍ Gepensioneerd (4)
- ❍ Student (5)
- ❍ Werkloos (6)
- ❍ Ander: (7) _____

Hoeveel jaren ervaring heeft u in het maken van selectiebeslissingen zoals bijvoorbeeld aanwerving, promovering, taaktoewijzing enzovoort? (Indien geen ervaring, gelieve 0 in te vullen)

_____

## A.11 Closure of experiment

Indien u opmerkingen heeft over deze vragenlijst, kan u deze hier alvast vermelden:

_____

Indien u graag de resultaten van dit onderzoek wenst te ontvangen, gelieve hier uw e-mailadres achter te laten:

_____

U bent aan het einde gekomen van deze vragenlijst. Bedankt voor uw hulp!