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Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

"Jobs for All Genders
Effects of Gender-Fair Language in Job Advertisements on the Perception of a Company's Perceived Diversity, Efforts to Foster Inclusion and Corporate Social Responsibility"

verfasst von / submitted by

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Gendering Job Advertisements

Beginning in early childhood girls and boys are exposed to sex-specific socialization. While growing up, they are surrounded by a society with expectations and prejudices according to their sex. Thus, humans have all been taught to follow sexual roles including their behavior, opinions, and values (Grubb & Turner, 2012). The first time was in the late 1960s when the distinction between gender and sex aroused and brought a vital definition. On the one hand, *sex* is the biological part of a human, and on the other hand, *gender* is a socially constructed, psychological, and behavioral part of a person (West & Zimmermann, 1987).

Particularly when it comes to career, women have often been discriminated against based on their sex and the ascribed gender roles. In the foregone years, research also laid a focus on gender-sensitive language concerning job advertising. Thus, displaying the problem that occurs if vacancies are only addressing men, for instance, by using the masculine form only and therefore not explicitly including women (Bertogg et al., 2020; Chowdhury & Gibson, 2019; Gaucher et al., 2011; Temizkan et al., 2020). Also, the phenomenon of *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR) and the relationship to (potential) employees was investigated intensely (Albinger & Freeman, 2000; Avery & McKay, 2006; Backhaus et al., 2002; Greening & Turban, 2000; Gully et al., 2013). The upswing of the topic lays in the *individualization* of women. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) described that today, women are deciding their life path based on their expectations regardless of societal norms. The authors called that phenomenon *Bastelbiografie* (handcrafted biography), where people are free to choose whether they prefer staying unmarried, childless, and focus on their career or if they want to follow the traditional path of the breadwinner and the housewife or combine both. Especially in the context of the profession, most women in the last decades did not follow the traditional path of staying home but became more interested in following their careers (Chowdhury & Gibson, 2019). However, women are still being discriminated against

at their workplace (Bertogg et al., 2020; Gaucher et al., 2011; Horvath & Sczesny, 2016; Temizkan et al., 2020). For instance, Eurostat (2021) depicted that the gender pay gap in the unadjusted form in Austria was the 3rd highest in the European Union in 2019 with 19.9%. Thus, on average women work every 5th year for free compared to men. Even though female professionals are already discriminated against, they feel the urge to work even harder than their counterparts because they have the impression as if they had to compensate for the existing structural inequality themselves (Bertogg et al., 2020; Chowdhury & Gibson, 2019; Temizkan et al., 2020).

Gender mainstreaming (GM) was introduced in Europe to increase gender equality (Lomazzi & Crespi, 2019). It is defined as a wide-ranging and demanding concept for gender equality that shall enable equity in organizations (Mense, 2010). For instance, women should have the same admission to resources, rights, and a proper work-life balance (Lomazzi & Crespi, 2019). Their implementation shows that European countries agreed on the fact that there is a problem that needs to be actively solved. The Austrian Ministry for Women and Public Services published an action plan for the equality of men and women in the labor market (Österreichs Bundesministerium für Frauenangelegenheiten und Öffentlichen Dienst, 2010). A so-called *Frauenquote* was invented, which forces organizations to prioritize the female applicant when she equals the quality of the male applicant (Jarosch, 2001). As well as the Austrian government passed a law that all job advertisements must be written in a gender-fair way. Thus, it is regulated that the female gender must be included in the formulation (Bürger & Kainz, 2004). Even if all the above was done, Austria's policies are probably still responsible for the following findings.

Firstly, Horvath and Sczesny (2016) reported on an Austrian study that the laws were broken for most of the job advertisements looking for leadership positions as 27 out of 28 advertisements were written only addressing male candidates, thus, discriminating against

female applicants. Secondly, 68.3% of women between 15 and 64 were employed in 2020, 47.3% of them were in part-time jobs. In contrast, 76% of men were employed in 2020, only 10.7% of them part-time (Statistik Austria, 2021a). The greatest part (39.4%) of the part-time employed women reported that their part-time employment was due to caregiving duties. In comparison, only 7% of men were part-time employed because they were caring for their children or adults in need of care (Statistik Austria, 2021c). When it comes to parental leave, a total of 96% of babies are looked after by their mothers (Statistik Austria, 2020a). All these statistics determine that although regulations to impede gender inequality were set years ago, de facto there is still a rather traditional role allocation and unequal distributions. There is a massive lack of actual persistence of Austrian regulations due to outdated expectations. Albeit some of the policies would facilitate gender equality women are still put at a disadvantage. It has been displayed that gender-sensitive language in job advertisements affects women in their careers. Therefore, on the one hand, the Austrian government should be reminded of the current grievances and is induced to act accordingly. On the other hand, companies themselves are encouraged to act socially responsible and start managing diversity appropriately. This study shall help to do so.

Stereotypes and the societal belief system serve as justifications for the division of labor and the existing social inequalities (Gaucher et al., 2011). Sczesny and colleagues (2016) found a possible solution as gender-fair language can reduce gender stereotyping and gender discrimination. That holds not only for women, but men would also profit from a more inclusive wording as they might be interested in jobs traditionally for women and could feel as if they were not fitting well too. Moreover, Horvath and Sczesny (2016) investigated the perceived lack of fit of women for leadership positions due to the wording of job advertisements. Their results showed that female applicants were perceived to fit the position less well when only the masculine form or the masculine form including the sign (m/f)

(meaning that the job advertisement is addressing both men and women) was used. In contrast, when using gender-fair wording males and females were perceived as equally well-fitting for the leadership position.

Bertogg and colleagues (2020) focused on gender discrimination during the process of hiring in male-dominated fields. They found, that especially when searching for employees in high positions, women are often discriminated against. Looking at Austria, solely 4.2% of working women in contrast to 8.6% of men were in leadership positions in 2020 (Statistik Austria, 2021b). If the corporate structures allow for prejudices and discrimination and a country's policies offer the possibility, there will not be any gender equality in the hiring process (Bertogg et al., 2020). Consequently, there is the need for well-established constructs that help to attain a more open climate.

Overall, not only women and other members of diversity groups would benefit from more inclusive and diverse job offers, but also companies themselves would do good when being perceived as acting socially responsible and attracting the best workers (Greening & Turban, 2000; Hayles, 2014; Moers, 2013; Schmidpeter, 2019). The support of diverse traits would increase creativity and various points of view. Thus, it would broaden resources and encourage multidimensional thinking (Rahnfeld, 2019). Hence, acting socially responsible serves as a useful vehicle for competition (Bigné et al., 2012).

Altogether, gender-fair language and the fields of CSR, inclusion, and diversity are well-studied topics. However, so far, no other study has investigated these constructs in the context of gender-fair language in job advertisements. For the very first time, a researcher explores the effects of gender-fair versus masculine-only language in a vacancy on diversity, inclusion, and CSR. My contribution is to find whether gender-fair language influences the participants' perceptions of a company's efforts to account for these concepts. Further, I will

investigate if gender moderates those effects. Hence, the guiding research question of the study will be the following.

RQ: What effect does gender-fair language in job advertisements have on the perception of a company's diversity, efforts to foster inclusion, and Corporate Social Responsibility?

Theory and the Current State of Research

Gender-fair language in job advertising

Prior studies focused on the wording and gender-fair language in job advertisements and found that it has a strong effect on whether women feel as if they were suitable for the job and thus, intend to apply (Gaucher et al., 2011; Horvath & Sczesny, 2016; Sczesny et al., 2016). It might be explained by the signaling theory that "suggests that because applicants do not have complete information about an organization, they interpret the information they receive as "signals" about the organization's working conditions" (Greening & Turban, 2000, p. 258). Using masculine-only or gender-fair in contrast to gender-neutral language would signal the applicants specific information about the company. Thus, gender-fair language might signal recipients that the company is an attractive place to work, is conscious about ethics and fairness and that equality for both genders and diversity is pursued. Concomitantly, most of all, women would perceive it as more attractive than a masculine-only formulation (Greening & Turban, 2000; Kato & Kodama, 2016). Therefore, I hypothesize that the overall impression of the job advertisement is higher for the gender-fair version compared to the masculine-only vacancy. Following the signaling theory, I expect gender to moderate this effect. Greening and Turban (2000) further suggest that - based on the social identity theory – the female gender is supposed to have more impact than the male gender as they identify as part of the group themselves.

H1: If a job advertisement uses gender-fair language, the general opinion towards the job advertisement is higher compared to when it uses masculine-only language. This effect is more pronounced for females compared to males.

However, solely using the masculine form in the vacancy would give women − who would be perfectly qualified − the impression as they or the company would not meet the standards and lose the motivation to apply. Gaucher and colleagues (2011) mentioned that unequal wording serves as a mechanism on an institutional level to maintain gender inequality. Adding the female form in the advertisement would increase the intention for women to apply and could provide for a big step towards a more gender-equal distribution. Further, the social identity theory suggests that identifying with a specific group and then being wittingly recruited will raise the attraction as prospective employees gain an insight into how being employed by that company would look like (Greening & Turban, 2000). A very important study was conducted by Avery and McKay (2006) who constituted that, factors regarding the job advertisement itself can have a high effect on the intention of minorities to apply. For instance, a female recruiter, the placement in a predominantly minority institution, or a highly diverse portrayed advertisement creates the impression that the company values diversity. Therefore, women and other minorities will be more likely to apply as they consider the company as it would appreciate them the way they are. I hypothesize that participants will be more likely to apply for a job written in a gender-fair way in contrast to a masculine-only one. However, following the signaling and social identity theory, I assume the impact will be stronger for women than for men, as their gender makes them part of a diverse group (Ginder et al., 2019; Greening & Turban., 2000; Hernandez Bark & Hentschel, 2019).

H2: The intention to apply for a job increases when a job advertisement is formulated gender-fair compared to masculine-only. This effect is more pronounced for females compared to males.

Diversity and its Management

Diversity and the research about it have become increasingly important over the last decades. Its origin stems from the US, where, in the 1980s, the first entrepreneurs and scholars found the enormous potential of diversity for companies. In Europe, it experienced an upswing in the second half of the 1990s and has been explicitly studied ever since (Mense, 2010; Süß, 2008). Different researchers included various features in their definitions (Gould et al., 2020; Hansen & Seierstad, 2017; Offermann & Basford, 2014). The list of traits is long, but for the sake of simplicity, this study will refer to the so-called *big six* of diversity: age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and most notably, gender (Maier & Ravazzani, 2019). In the following, the term *diverse* will be used to refer to a broad spectrum of diversity. It does not solely refer to gender. The reason for its rising relevance lies in the problem of a decreasing number of available and suitable personnel (Moers, 2013). Statistik Austria (2020b) forecasts the obsolescence of the Austrian population. Because the generation baby boomer who is still part of the labor market is soon to be pensionable. So, they will depend on younger generations to provide for their pension. Thus, the demand for suitable workers to substitute their positions is enormous.

On the one hand, there will be a lack of workers, and on the other hand, there are people of diverse groups seeking jobs. The lack of suitable employees could be covered if companies hired more people with diverse backgrounds. Hence, members of diverse groups have an enormous potential to counteract the upcoming grievances. Albeit, since human resources are a limited good, entrepreneurs face a so-called *War for Talents*. Moers (2013) states that therefore, companies are advised to strive for more diversity to rank in the top field.

Yet, the force of diversity is not limited to the rescue of the welfare system. It also has the power to help companies perform better in other ways. That leads to the term *diversity management* (DM) that has become a well-studied topic in social sciences (Mense, 2010; Süß,

2008). Even if it is similar to *gender mainstreaming* (GM), which refers to ethical and juridical elements, DM focuses more on economic factors. Additionally, DM includes various groups of diversity, such as LGBTQIA+ and People of Color. In contrast, GM focuses solely on gender (Mense, 2010). The construct of DM determines that diversity must be seen as a potential and hence should be fostered and valued. Yet, as diversity managements' goal is organizational change, it takes every stakeholder for diversity to function as they are all part of managing the process. If only the managers mandate a quota or a specific number of members of diverse groups, but their co-workers are not adding their contribution, the system will not succeed (Süß, 2008).

Studies have shown that diverse workgroups have much more potential than homogenous groups (Feuser, 2018; Schmidpeter, 2019). However, they must be well managed by their employers to embrace their full capability. Hayles (2014) lists several examples: the problem-solving, resolution of disputes, investment decisions, and developing social and personal skills. Süß (2008) adds that diversity enhances reputation, increases workplace satisfaction for existing employees, and other stakeholders such as customers with diverse traits will feel more addressed by diverse companies. All in all, the perception of various stakeholders that a company is diverse will be advantageous. In the context of this study, I will investigate whether the formulation of a job advertisement either gender-fair, masculine-only or gender-neutral will influence their perception of the company's diversity. So, if gender-fair language solely signals diversity in gender, participants might still perceive the company as supportive towards other diverse groups. The signaling theory proposes, that people build their perceptions employing the signals they get. In conclusion, the gender-fair and masculine-only wording of the vacancy will serve as a sign to the recipients and will influence their opinion about the company's diversity (Ginder et al., 2019; Greening & Turban, 2000; Hernandez Bark & Hentschel, 2019). Another advantage of diversity is that it

attracts job applicants of all kinds. Following the social identity theory especially people who are part of a diverse group will be more likely to apply for the job (Greening & Turban, 2000). Thus, I hypothesize that formulating the vacancy gender-fair will display the company as open to participants of all diverse groups and will therefore also be perceived as such. A job advertisement written in a gender-fair language will enhance the perception of a company's diversity more for females than for males.

H3: If a job advertisement uses gender-fair language, the perception of a company's diversity is higher compared to when it uses masculine-only language. This effect is more pronounced for females compared to males.

Inclusion

However, diversity is not the only concept vital in the context of social responsibility. Hayles (2014, p. 76) states that "diversity contributes to performance through inclusion". Even though both concepts are interdependent, they are still autonomous constructs. Inclusion is understood as the action that is necessary for diversity to develop. It serves as the tool to elicit everyone's potential, which will be beneficial for the company. Thus, inclusion and diversity are coherent, yet independent concepts. In contrast to diversity, which is rather theoretical, inclusion means practical behavior and action. This implies, setting a certain number of employees being part of a minority is describing diversity, but doing something to involve them as part of the company is what is meant by inclusion (Winters, 2014).

Hence, if companies are perceived diverse, it does not mean that they are automatically inclusive too. They might have a specific number of employees from several minority groups, however, if they do not take the suitable actions to include each of them in the company, their diversity will not result in beneficial outcomes in the long term. Inclusion takes time and must be aspired by every stakeholder. Regardless of the position, every member of the company must contribute to the inclusion of their colleagues (Hayles, 2014).

Winters (2014) proposed two levels that are necessary to reach inclusion. On the one hand, the micro-level consisting of emotional intelligence and intercultural skills. On the other hand, the macro-level including the corporate system and its values. Hence, for every member to feel included, it does not only take managers who theoretically build a corporate culture but each member of the staff. Therefore, employing diverse individuals is the first step of a long march (Offermann & Basford, 2014).

I hypothesize that the hiring process can be facilitated by formulating job advertisements inclusively. As this study focuses on the effects of gendered language it will also investigate whether the mere gender-fair formulation increases the recipients' perception of the company that it takes actions to foster inclusion. Referring to the attribution and the signaling theory, the wording of the vacancy will, on the one hand, serve as a sign, and on the other hand, the recipients will infer from the language used in the vacancy to the company's inclusiveness (Ginder et al., 2019; Greening & Turban, 2000; Hernandez Bark & Hentschel, 2019). Moreover, I will examine whether there is a gender-specific difference in this perception. As the social identity theory suggests, I expect those participants, who are female, and thus, part of a diverse group themselves will show a higher effect (Greening & Turban, 2000; Verčič & Ćorić, 2018).

H4: If a job advertisement uses gender-fair language, the perception of a company's efforts to foster inclusion is higher compared to when it uses masculine-only language. This effect is more pronounced for females compared to males.

Perceived Corporate Social Responsibility

Another concept considered is *Corporate Social Responsibility* (CSR), as gender-fair job advertisements might also affect the way stakeholders perceive a company's CSR. DM and CSR are often linked, as they are both focusing on an organizational level and are based on voluntary nature. Still, CSR is specifically focusing "beyond the organisational setting and

wider social good, building on ideas of societal justice and collectivism." (Hansen & Seierstad, 2017, p. 21). It was defined as "a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis" (European Commission, 2011, p. 3). Alniacik and colleagues (2020) and Bianchi and colleagues (2019), stated that CSR became vital to include for businesses as stakeholder's expectations rose over the last decades. Consumers are particularly the ones driving the CSR implementation as their perception of a company's CSR affects the purchase intention and is thus vital for sales (Alniacik et al., 2020). Bianchi and colleagues (2019) also found that perceived CSR has a strong effect on brand image. Another study by Becker-Olsen and colleagues (2006) investigated how consumer behavior is affected by the perception of CSR. Findings were that low-fit initiatives negatively influence consumer beliefs. High-fit and proactive initiatives, however, lead to a higher consumer belief, improved attitudes, and more positive intentions. Thus, it is beneficial to be perceived as a socially responsible company.

To have a closer look, some scholars already shed light on CSR in the workplace (Catano & Morrow Hines, 2016; John et al., 2019; Puncheva-Michelotti et al., 2018). Grosser and Moon (2005) claim that the issues of gender equality and diverse workplaces have been noteworthy for CSR. They mention that CSR could serve as an instrument for GM. Greening and Turban (2000) found that potential employees are more likely to apply for jobs if they perceive the company as having a good *Corporate Social Performance* (CSP). CSP was defined as "a construct that emphasizes a company's responsibilities to multiple stakeholders, such as employees and the community at large, in addition to its traditional responsibilities to economic shareholders" (Greening & Turban, 1996, p. 658). The investigation of Zukin and Szeltner (2012) showed that 15% of employees would even go as far as to earn less in exchange for working for a socially responsible company. A particularly interesting paper

from John and colleagues (2019) found that organizational pride and identification mediated the relationship between CSR and workplace behavior. Employees' goal of making an impact on the world through their employment moderated this relationship. Albinger and Freeman (2000) found that CSP is attracting job seekers having a high level of job choice. Thus, the most qualified employees will be more attracted to an increasing level of CSP. Following Backhaus and colleagues (2002), diversity, environment, and community relations have the most attraction on job applicants. Attracting more women with job advertisements will be beneficial to the company itself. Droms Hatch & Stephen (2015) found that having a higher number of women in a company will increase the quality of CSR. Which in turn will positively affect the corporate reputation.

Thus, the gender-sensitive language and the perception of CSR are vital factors in job advertisements. Several studies have made interesting and important findings. Such as Catano and Morrow Hines (2016) who showed that job advertisements explicitly including strong CSR values are more likely to attract job seekers than job advertisement not mentioning their CSR. Puncheva-Michelotti and colleagues (2018) supported these results as their study found that job seekers are far more interested in job advertisements including information about their CSR. However, yet no other researcher focused on the difference between masculine-only and gender-sensitive language in job advertisements and the effects on the perception of the company.

As a justification serves again the attribution theory. It states that "Attributions that are perceived as more intrinsically motivated enhance CSR beliefs" (Ginder et al., 2019, p. 359). It influences the perception of the company, support provision, and intentions to purchase products, apply for jobs or recommend the brand to friends and family (Ginder et al., 2019). So, if people read a gender-fair text and interpret the intention for that behavior as intrinsic motivation, they will be likely to believe in a good overall CSR even if their socially

responsible actions are not explicitly mentioned. According to Droms Hatch & Stephen (2015), being female is expected to have a higher moderating effect on perceived CSR than being male as men have a less incarnated moral identity. Thus, I suggest gender will also influence the impact of gender-fair language. Hence, I formulated the following hypothesis.

H5: If a job advertisement uses gender-fair language, the perception of CSR is higher compared to when it uses masculine-only language. This effect is more pronounced for females compared to males.

All in all, this Master's Thesis aims to contribute to a more gender-equal labor market by investigating gendered language in job advertisements in the context of the perceived diversity, efforts to foster inclusion, and CSR. In turn, that implies the following visualized construct.

Figure 1

Study Design
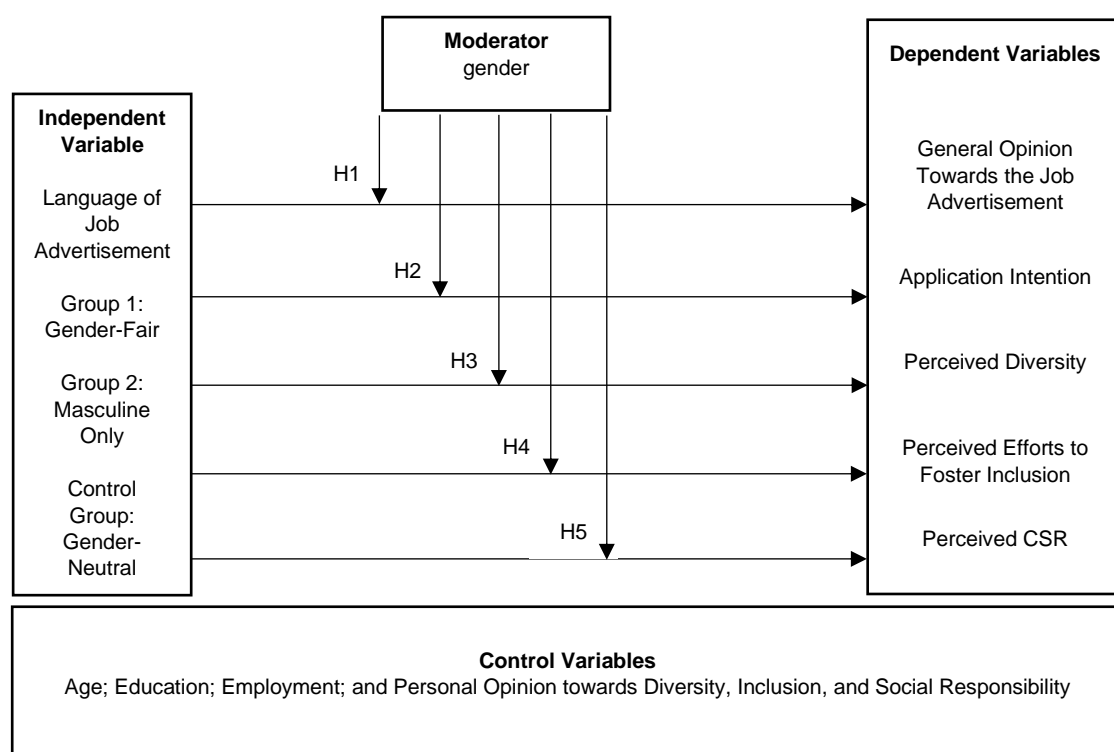
Procedure

This study followed a quantitative method using a between-subjects design. It tried to find if the mere gender-fair language in a job advertisement can change participants' perceptions of the company. Therefore, the independent variable was the language in a job advertisement. Within an experimental approach, I exposed recipients to an online survey and stimulus material. A cover story provided them natural access to the stimulus. Participants were students or young adults between 20 and 30 years who, at least, have completed the higher education entrance qualification. Hence, I excluded minors from the sample.

I randomly assigned the recipients to one of three experimental groups. The vacancy formulated gender-neutral, thus explicitly excluding both males and females so that the text is free of gender, served as a control group. Hence, they either saw a job advertisement using masculine-only wording, one with gender-fair language, or one that I formulated gender-neutral. The three different stimuli are in Appendix B. This study explored several dependent variables. As a replication of former studies, I looked at the influence the formulations of the vacancy have on the intention to apply for the job advertised. To generate new findings, I further ascertained the effects on perceived diversity, efforts to foster inclusion, and perceived corporate social responsibility. The sample consisted of 175 completed cases who fulfilled the requirements of being between 20 and 30 years old and having at least completed the A-levels or a comparable certificate. I recruited them by using the snowballing system. I contacted people I know and asked them to send it to their friends and family. Therefore, the questionnaire and the stimulus material were created in German.

To ensure the study does not harm any participants, a briefing included the necessary information about the topic and data protection measures. Participants were given the option to abort the survey at any time so their data will not be used for analysis. Then, they were explicitly asked for their consent before the manipulation started. In a debriefing, I disclosed

everything and gave them the option to contact me at any time. To make sure the study meets the ethical requirements, I submitted it to the department's IRB (IRB Approval ID: 20210419_027), where they classified it as standard research, fulfilling the demands of the Department of Communication at the University of Vienna.

Pre-Test

I conducted a pre-test to make sure that the questionnaire and the stimulus material work. Therefore, I created it on *SoSci Survey* and uploaded the link on *SurveyCircle*. I received 51 completed questionnaires. I deleted two recipients who did not meet the required age range and level of education ($N = 49$; $M_{age} = 24.37$, $SD = 1.97$; 71.4% female, 28.6% male; highest level of education: 30.6% high school diploma or equivalent and 69.4% University degree; employment: 30.6% not employed, 34.7% minor employed; 20.4% part-time, 14.3% full-time). Participants, who did not complete the survey, were excluded by the software before the download. There were no cases following a specific pattern (i.e., always answering with the same number). So, I did not exclude cases on this basis.

I constructed the stimuli based on two existing job advertisements on *LinkedIn* and reviewed several others to get a sense of the language and content used by various companies. Therefore, all three stimuli had the same layout as an actual job offer. To ensure the survey does not harm any existing companies, I created a logo including the artificial name *ConVie* (standing for Consulting Vienna) and added it to the job advertisements.

To test whether the stimulus material performed well, I looked at the recall and found that 85.7% remembered the brand name and 93.9% remembered the sector the job was addressing. Thus, the chosen name and sector performed well and were taken over in the main study too. I excluded the two participants who did not know both recalls. I measured *Attention* using a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = *Gar nicht aufmerksam* to 5 = *voll und ganz*

aufmerksam). Overall, recipients were rather attentive while reading the job advertisement (M_{att} = 4.04, SD = .74). I precluded the one who has read the stimulus rather inattentive.

In total, 46 valid cases were left. The randomization worked; however, the data cleaning caused an imbalance (50% gender-fair, 21.7% masculine-only, and 28.3% gender-neutral). Also, women still dominated gender by a total of 73.9%. To prevent an imbalance in the main study, I included the age range and required level of education in a declaration of consent and focused on consciously recruiting more men. The reliability analysis showed that all the variables were reliable ($\alpha \geq$ .7). A smattering of items could have been excluded to gain even better results (e.g. "Das Unternehmen bemüht sich bewusst darum Minderheiten eine Jobchance zu bieten." and the reversed item "Interne Probleme aufgrund der Unterschiedlichkeit der Mitarbeitenden hindern einige Arbeitsteams daran, ihre maximale Leistungsfähigkeit zu entfalten."; based on Mor Barak et al., 1998). As the differences would not have been considerable, I decided to leave them in the questionnaire and foreclose them from the index should they have more impact on the main study.

Measurements

After disclosing information about the study and data protection, I asked the participants to consent to attend and checked if they met the preconditions (age between 20 and 30 years and at least completed A-levels or comparable degree). If they agreed, I exposed them to a cover story that I implemented to increase their credibility. Then they were randomly assigned to one of the three stimuli. Of the 176 completed questionnaires, 154 met all the requirements mentioned before (M_{age} = 24.33, *SD* = 2.05; gender: 44.2% male, 55.2% female and .6% diverse; education: 39.6% high school diploma or equivalent and 60.4% University degree or equivalent; level of employment: 22.1% not employed, 23.4% minor employed, 23.4% part-time and 31.2% full-time). The number of males and females approximately resembles the distribution of students in Austria. As the last census, which was

conducted in 2011, reported 53.6% females and 46.4% males at Universities, FHs, and Academies. Unfortunately, the diverse gender was not explicitly specified in the census (Statistik Austria, 2013).

Firstly, I asked them about the dependent variable *General Opinion Towards the Job Advertisement* using five items by stating how much they agree on a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 = *stimme nicht zu* to 5 = *stimme z*u (e.g. "Im Allgemeinen finde ich die Stellenausschreibung gut.", "Die Stellenausschreibung ist sorgfältig gestaltet."; based on Diehl et al., 2016; Flanagin & Metzger, 2000 & 2007). The index ($M = 3.53$, $SD = .75$) was found reliable ($\alpha = .79$)

Secondly, I measured the second dependent variable *Intention to Apply for the Job* by asking for their consent for the following two items: "Ich wäre daran interessiert, mich bei dem Unternehmen für einen Job zu bewerben." and "Ich würde mich sehr anstrengen, um für dieses Unternehmen arbeiten zu können." (based on Greening & Turban, 2000) using a 5-point Likert-scale (again ranging from 1 = *stimme nicht zu* to 5 = *stimme zu*). The index ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 1.07$) turned out reliable ($\alpha = .84$).

Thirdly, they were asked about their perceptions of the CSR, their perception of the company's efforts to foster inclusion and the perceived company's diversity, again using a 5-point Likert-scale. The index of *Perceived CSR* included three items (e.g. "Das Unternehmen handelt sozial verantwortungsbewusst gegenüber der Gesellschaft.", "Das Unternehmen verhält sich verantwortungsbewusst gegenüber der Umwelt."; based on Bigné & Andreu, 2004; Bigné et al., 2005; Shin et al., 2016). It was reliable ($M = 3.11$, $SD = .64$, $\alpha = .73$). The index to test for *Perceived Efforts to Foster Inclusion* again consisted of three items. (e.g. "In dem Unternehmen bemüht man sich darum, Minderheiten zu integrieren.", "Das Unternehmen investiert ausreichend Zeit und Geld in die Sensibilisierung für Vielfalt in der Belegschaft und damit verbundene Schulungen.", based on Mor Barak et al., 1998). The index

was almost found as reliable (M = 3.11, SD = .64, α = .69), however, to meet the standards of social science ($\alpha \geq$ .7) I excluded the item "Das Management ermutigt die Mitarbeitenden, untereinander unterstützende Netzwerke zu bilden." to get a more reliable result (M = 2.47, SD = .87, α = .79). Four items tested *Perceived Diversity* (e.g. "In diesem Unternehmen werden alle Bewerbungen gleichbehandelt, ungeachtet des Alters, der Ethnizität, einer Behinderung, der sexuellen Orientierung, der Religion oder des Geschlechts.", "In diesem Unternehmen werden Mitarbeitende vom Management fair beurteilt, unabhängig des Alters, der Ethnizität, einer Behinderung, der sexuellen Orientierung, der Religion oder des Geschlechts.", based on Mor Barak et al., 1998). The index was reliable (M = 2.83, SD = .77, α = .82).

To check whether participants read the stimulus material attentively, I included recall measures by asking about the company's name and its sector. Both consisted of three wrong answers and the correct one. To prevent them from guessing and thus skewing the results, I asked them to not answer the question, should they not know the correct one. Moreover, they were asked to state their honest estimation how attentive they read the job advertisement in an *Attention Check* by asking "Wie aufmerksam haben Sie die Stellenausschreibung gelesen?" using a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = *Gar nicht aufmerksam* to 5 = *voll und ganz aufmerksam*).

Afterwards, I inquired them about their *General Opinion about Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Responsibility* using a 5-point Likert-scale. *Diversity* consisted of four items (e.g. "Ich denke, dass Vielfalt in der Belegschaft ein wichtiges Unternehmensthema ist.", "Ich fühle mich wohl bei Menschen, die ein anderes Alter, Ethnizität, sexuelle Orientierung, Religion, Geschlecht oder eine Behinderung haben.", based on Mor Barak et al., 1998) *Inclusion* of two items ("Interne Probleme aufgrund der Unterschiedlichkeit der Mitarbeitenden hindern einige Arbeitsteams daran, ihre maximale Leistungsfähigkeit zu

entfalten.", "Unabhängig von der Position, ist es Aufgabe aller, Minderheiten im Unternehmen bewusst zu integrieren.", based on Mor Barak et al., 1998) and *Social Resposnsibility* of three items. (e.g. "Die soziale Verantwortung von Unternehmen ist mir wichtig.", "Ich bin persönlich an der sozialen Verantwortung eines Unternehmens interessiert, für das ich arbeite.", based on Spiggle et al., 2018). The one reversed item of *Inclusion* "Interne Probleme aufgrund der Unterschiedlichkeit der Mitarbeitenden hindern einige Arbeitsteams daran, ihre maximale Leistungsfähigkeit zu entfalten." was later recoded but still excluded from the analysis as it failed the test for reliability. Then, the variable was found reliable ($M = 4.33$, $SD = .54$, α = .80).

Lastly, I asked the respondents about some of their sociodemographic data, namely *Gender*, *Age*, *Education*, and *Current State of Employment*. A debriefing clarified the artificiality of the stimulus and the aim of the study. The questionnaire, including all items and their exact sources, is attached in Appendix A.

Results

Attention Check

Of all recipients who completed the questionnaire and fulfilled the required age and level of education, 89.7% remembered the company's name correctly. 96% of the sample chose the correct sector. I excluded those who answered both of them false or decided not to answer from further analysis. 56.6% stated they read the job advertisement (thoroughly) attentive. 32.6% said they had a medium level of attention. I removed the 9.1% who were not at all attentive or not very attentive from further analysis. All in all, I excluded a total of 22 cases. In the end, the sample consisted of 154 valid participants.

Main Effect on General Opinion Towards the Job Advertisement

To find evidence for the first hypothesis, that the general opinion towards the job advertisement increases when it is formulated gender-fair compared to masculine-only I made

use of an Analysis of Variances. I found that participants' general opinion towards the job advertisement significantly differed between the groups (F (2, 151) = 7.42; p = .001). Those who were assigned to the gender-fair job offer had a more positive opinion towards the job advertisement (*M* = 3.73, *SD* = .73) than both the gender-neutral (*M* = 3.64, *SD* = .65) and the masculine-only (*M* = 3.21, *SD* = .77) groups. The post hoc tests LSD found that the masculine-only group significantly differs from both gender-fair (p = .000) and gender-neutral (p = .003). However, there is no statistically significant difference between gender-fair and gender-neutral (p = .495).

Main Effect on Job Application Intention

In line with H2, I tested whether the intention to apply for the job increases when the job advertisement is formulated gender-fair compared to masculine-only by an Analysis of Variance. The sample size per group was bigger than 30 and close to a normal distribution. The samples were randomly chosen, and the scores on the test variable are independent. The variances were homogenous as the level of significance is higher than .05. Therefore, all the preconditions for an ANOVA were fulfilled. Those who were assigned to the gender-fair job advertisement were nearly as likely to apply (*M* = 3.05, *SD* = 1.03) as those reading the gender-neutral text (*M* = 3.03, *SD* = 1.06). They were both more appealing to the recipients than the masculine-only version (*M* = 2.68, *SD* = 1.11). However, this finding was not statistically significant (F (2, 151) = 1.85; p = .161). Thus, the hypothesis had to be rejected.

Main Effect on Perceived Diversity

Based on the literature, I assumed that a job advertisement using gender-fair language increases the perception of a company's diversity compared to using masculine-only (H3). As an analysis strategy, I again used an Analysis of Variance. Indeed, participants who were assigned to the gender-fair vacancy perceived the company as more diverse (*M* = 3.1, *SD* = .71) than then gender-neutral (*M* = 2.88, *SD* = .72) and the masculine-only (*M* = 2.55, *SD* = .81) groups. This finding was found statistically significant (F (2, 151) = 6.01; p = .003). The

post-hoc test LSD found there is a statistically significant difference between masculine-only and gender-fair (p = .001) and gender-neutral (p = .025). Again, gender-fair and gender-neutral did not differ significantly (p = .213). Therefore, the hypothesis was supported.

Main Effect on Perceived Efforts to Foster Inclusion

The fourth hypothesis focused on inclusion. I hypothesized that a gender-fair job advertisement increases the perception of a company's efforts to foster inclusion more compared to a masculine-only job advertisement. The finding of the Analysis of Variances supported this assumption as participants who were exposed to the gender-fair job advertisement perceived the company as more inclusive ($M = 2.75$, $SD = .88$) than the gender-neutral ($M = 2.45$, $SD = .85$) and the masculine-only ($M = 2.20$, $SD = .80$) vacancy. This finding was found statistically significant ($F (2, 151) = 5.19$; $p = .007$). The post-hoc test LSD showed there is a statistically significant difference between masculine-only and gender-fair ($p = .002$). But this does not apply to the differences between masculine-only and gender-neutral ($p = .148$) and those between gender-fair and gender-neutral ($p = .067$). Thus, the hypothesis was supported.

Main Effect on Perceived CSR

Lastly, in H5 I assumed that a gender-fair job advertisement increases the perception of CSR more compared to a masculine-only job advertisement. Findings of the Analysis of Variances were that those who I exposed to the gender-fair version of the job offer perceived the company as more socially responsible ($M = 3.16$, $SD = .63$) than those who read the gender-neutral ($M = 3.09$, $SD = .65$) or the masculine-only ($M = 3.09$, $SD = .67$) version. This finding was not found statistically significant ($F (2, 151) = .12$; $p = .820$). Consequently, the hypothesis was rejected.

Moderating Effect of Gender on General Opinion Towards the Job Advertisement

Since in H1 I hypothesized that the effect of the language used in the job advertisement on general opinion towards the job advertisement would be moderated by

gender and that the influence would be stronger for women, I conducted a moderation analysis using Model one of the *PROCESS macro for SPSS* using 5,000 bootstrap samples (Hayes, 2017). I did not find a significant effect for gender (b = .09, SE = .14; LLCI = -.199, ULCI = .372) including the control variables age (b = .01, SE = .03; LLCI = -.054, ULCI = .073); education (b = -.15, SE = .13; LLCI = -.408, ULCI = .099); employment (b = .02, SE = .06; LLCI = -.100, ULCI = .131); and participants' opinion towards diversity, inclusion, and CSR (b = .13, SE = .12; LLCI = -.101, ULCI = .364). None of them was found having a significant impact. Accordingly, gender did not moderate the relationship between the language used in the vacancy and the general opinion towards the job advertisement. Against my assumption, the effect is not more pronounced for women than men.

Moderating Effect of Gender on Job Application Intention

Another assumption was that gender moderates the relationship between the formulation of the job offer and the intention to apply for the job (H2). This effect was not supported (b = .15, SE = .21; LLCI = -.267, ULCI = .576). Also, age (b = .04, SE = .05; LLCI = -.057, ULCI = .131); education (b = -.11, SE = .19; LLCI = -.488, ULCI = .259); employment (b = .02, SE = .09; LLCI = -.153, ULCI = .187); and participants' opinion towards diversity, inclusion, and CSR (b = .09, SE = .17; LLCI = -.251, ULCI = .434) were not significantly influencing this effect. So, I cannot conclude that the influence of the language used in the vacancy on the job application intention is more distinct for females than males.

Moderating Effect of Gender on Perceived Diversity

In hypothesis three I stated that the effect of the advertisement's language on the perceived diversity of the company is stronger for women than for men. When looking at the moderating effect of gender in general there cannot be found a statistical significance (b = .23, SE = .15; LLCI = -.062, ULCI = .517). Age (b = .01, SE = .03; LLCI = -.057, ULCI = .073); education (b = -.18, SE = 13; LLCI = -.440, ULCI = .074); employment (b = .08, SE = .06;

LLCI = -.034, ULCI = .200); and participants' opinion towards diversity, inclusion, and CSR (b = -.03, SE = .12; LLCI = -.264, ULCI = .207) did not influence the effect. The hypothesis that the effect is higher for women than men was not supported.

Moderating Effect of Gender on Perceived Efforts to Foster Inclusion

Lastly, I assumed that the effect of language used in the job advertisement on perceived efforts to foster inclusion is more pronounced for females than males (H4). Gender in general resulted in a statistically significant finding (b = .35, SE = .16; LLCI = .024, ULCI = .675; R^2-change = .03, F (1, 146) = 4.50, p = .036. So, 3% of the variance is explained by gender. The influence of the control variables age (b = -.04, SE = .04; LLCI = -.109, ULCI = .036); education (b = -.15, SE = .15; LLCI = -.436, ULCI = .141); employment (b = .05, SE = .07; LLCI = -.082, ULCI = .181); and participants' opinion towards diversity, inclusion, and CSR (b = -.09, SE = .13; LLCI = -.354, ULCI = .176) were not found statistically significant. I used dummy variables to find that female gender significantly affected the relationship (b = .45, SE = .17; LLCI = .119, ULCI = .792; R^2 change = .04, F (1, 146) = 7.15, p = .008; so did male gender (b = -.40, SE = .17; LLCI = -.736, ULCI = -.063; R^2 change = .03, F (1, 146) = 5.51, p = .020. Thus, the female gender explains 4% of the variance and the male gender 3%. Unfortunately, the group of diverse gender only existed of one person. So, a separate analysis was not possible. I can conclude that both being male, or female positively influenced the effect of the language in the vacancy on the perceived efforts to foster inclusion.

Moderating Effect of Gender on Perceived CSR

Again, I hypothesized that gender has a moderating effect on the relationship between the language used in the job advertisement and the perceived CSR (H5). The analysis did not result in a statistically significant finding (b = .14, SE = .13; LLCI = -.106, ULCI = .391). The control variables age (b = .01, SE = .03; LLCI = -.049, ULCI = .062), education (b = -.19, SE = .11; LLCI = -.409, ULCI = .031), employment (b = .10, SE = .05; LLCI = -.005, ULCI = .196) did not significantly influence the effect. However, participants' opinion towards

diversity, inclusion, and CSR (b = .22, SE = .10; LLCI = .018, ULCI = .422) significantly influenced the effect. Thus, with a more positive opinion towards those concepts perceived CSR of the company improves. Still, I cannot conclude that the relationship between the language used in the vacancy and the perceived CSR is more distinct for females than males.

Discussion

Based on prior studies that already intensely investigated the effect of gender-fair language (Gaucher et al., 2011; Horvath & Sczesny, 2016; Sczesny et al., 2016), and signaling theory, I hypothesized that gender-fair wording would reveal the recipients signals about the company's values and habits (Greening & Turban, 2000; Hernandez Bark & Hentschel, 2019). Hence, the vacancy that was formulated gender-fair would have the strongest effect on the positive opinion towards the job offer, the application intention, the perceived diversity of the company, their efforts to foster inclusion, and perceived CSR.

Indeed, those assigned to the gender-fair job offer had a more positive opinion towards the job advertisement than those who saw the masculine-only or the gender-neutral version. Thus, not only is it obligatory for vacancies in Austria to be formulated in that way (Bürger & Kainz, 2004), the results also show that if companies use a gender-fair wording, the job offers will be perceived as better, more interesting, more appealing, and more trustworthy compared to when a company neglects explicitly including the female gender. Further on, those I assigned to the gender-fair job advertisement were nearly as likely to apply as those reading the gender-neutral text but were both more appealing to the recipients than the masculine-only version. Even though this finding was not statistically significant, this might be due to the sector the job was advertised for. Hence, even if I cannot conclude that the application intention rises, at least the general opinion towards the job advertisement increased.

The demand for suitable employees is rising. Moers (2013) suggested companies to recognize the potential of diversity and begin positioning themselves on a broader base to

have an advantage in the competition of getting the best employees. So, I hypothesized that a gender-fair language in a job advertisement would help companies being perceived as more diverse. Indeed, it is statistically significant that participants who I assigned to the gender-fair vacancy perceived the company as most diverse. Especially those companies affected by the War for Talents are advised to follow this trend as it improves the chances to get more and highly qualified people to apply.

Hayles (2014) mentioned, just because a company is perceived as diverse does not mean it is inclusive too. Because even if its employees are part of various minority groups, if the company does not also make an effort to include them, the diverse staff will not have the possibility to contribute their potential. As Offermann and Basford (2014) and Winters (2014) described, employing a diverse staff is the first step of many. Thus, I also investigated whether the participants perceive a gender-fair job advertisement as more inclusive. Those, who I exposed to the gender-fair job advertisement, perceived the company as significantly more inclusive than the recipients of the masculine-only version.

In line with Alniacik and colleagues (2020) and Bianchi and colleagues (2019), I also focused on CSR as it became increasingly important for businesses. Stakeholders' expectations of a company's social responsibility rose in the foregone decades. Thus, I had a look at the effect between gender-fair language and the perception of CSR. The foundation of my assumption was the attribution theory. It states that when people perceive attributions as intrinsically motivated it enhances their beliefs in social responsibility. So, I expected recipients who read the gender-fair text to interpret the intention for that formulation as intrinsic motivation and consequently perceive the company as having a good CSR (Ginder et al., 2019). The results revealed that there is a trend that those who were exposed to the gender-fair version of the job offer perceived the company as more socially responsible than

those who read the gender-neutral or the masculine-only vacancy. But even if their beliefs were enhanced, I did not find statistical significance for this tendency.

Moreover, I expected women to be stronger affected by the differences between the stimuli. I applied two theories that serve as an explanation for my assumption. Firstly, the signaling theory proposes that people build their perceptions employing the signals they get. In conclusion, the wording of the vacancy will serve as a sign to the recipients and will influence their opinion about the company and its vacancy (Ginder et al., 2019; Greening & Turban, 2000; Hernandez Bark & Hentschel, 2019). Secondly, the social identity theory suggests, if prospective employees can identify with a specific group their attraction will be higher. So, when their gender is explicitly mentioned in the vacancy, they get the impression that they are valued by the company and a good fit (Greening & Turban, 2000; Kato & Kodama, 2016). Thus, I included gender as a moderator and analyzed its influence on the effects using PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2017). Further, I included the covariates of age; education; employment; and general opinion about diversity, inclusion, and CSR. Against my assumptions, gender did not moderate the general opinion towards the job advertisement, the intention to apply for the job, and the perceived diversity. Nor did I find statistical significance for the perceived CSR. However, the control variable Personal Opinion towards Diversity, Inclusion and Social Responsibility significantly influenced this non-significant finding. The only effect that was significantly moderated by gender is the influence of the language used in the advertisement on perceived efforts to foster inclusion. For both men and women, the effect got stronger.

So, most of these findings are contrary to my hypotheses and the theories I based them on. For instance, following Droms Hatch & Stephen (2015), women were expected to have a higher moderating effect on perceived CSR since they have a higher incarnated moral identity. When looking at the control variable Personal Opinion towards Diversity, Inclusion,

and Social Responsibility, it is indeed shown that women score significantly higher. But this control variable did not significantly influence the effects. Thus, the findings are more in line with Greening and Turban (2000), who found males positively reacting to gender equality displayed by companies.

I only found one significant moderating effect of gender. Against my assumptions, gender did not moderate most of the direct effects mentioned above. That might be due to the less traditional and more emancipated mindset of young and well-educated people no matter what gender they are. It seems as if young men collaborate with women fighting against gender inequality and endorse a gender-fair hiring process. My findings would back the theory that men appear to think equally as women that a masculine-only formulation is less attractive than a gender-fair one and perceive the company as more diverse and inclusive. Yet, since the study was following an experimental design, it faced limitations to external validity. There is no possibility to generalize these findings.

Limitations and Future Research

Of course, the research faced several limitations. The study is limited to a homogenous sample and a small size of 154 valid cases. For instance, the recipients were all highly educated. It would be interesting to differentiate between lower and higher levels of education to find if there are similarities and distinctions between the groups. Furthermore, I limited the age range to 20–30-year-olds. So, the focus was laid solely on young humans who might be still in education, are just finishing their studies, or are new to the work environment. More studies focusing on either young people who, for instance, just graduated from a vocational school, or older generations who have already worked several years and might have more experiences with vacancies would be beneficial. In this case, it could be tested, if age moderates these findings.

Other researchers could additionally investigate different ways of gender-fair language. I used the asterisk, as it is used commonly and includes humans, who do not define themselves as male or female, but non-binary too. However, there are several other possibilities to make language gender-fair, such as the colon, the underscore character, the slash, or the *Binnen-I* (a word-internal capital I) (Kotthoff, 2020). For job advertisements specifically, there are further possibilities to only use the masculine-only form and add a (male or female) or a (m/w/d) in the headline to state that they are not only addressing men (Cieszkowski, 2015). It would be interesting if the effects would change based on the way the vacancies are made gender-fair.

Further, it would be relevant to look at various platforms where jobs are advertised (e.g. XING, stepstone, and jobs.at), or compare them to jobs offered on the companies' website. The platform itself might influence how the job advertisement, and accordingly the company, are perceived. Maybe the effects would be higher when the vacancy is embedded in a company's website as it can be linked more directly.

The factor that has probably the most potential to be influential is the COVID-19 pandemic which has been omnipresent in professional and private talks for the last 1 1/2 years. It caused the rate of unemployment to rise immensely. A report from the Austrian *Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich* (Public Employment Service Austria) declared that straight through all generations and job sectors people lost their job (Arbeitsmarktservice, 2020). But women are the ones who are suffering most from the consequences the pandemic has brought (Foissner et al., 2021; Hammerschmid et al., 2020). Accordingly, a part of my sample might have been victims of the current circumstances, which might have affected their answers. On the one hand, it could be that they are generally more likely to apply for the job and oversee apparent drawbacks of job advertisements as they are in desperate need of a job. On the other hand, they might be facing psychological illnesses and cannot go through a hiring process

(Probst et al., 2020). It would be interesting to replicate this study as soon as the economy became more stable again and see whether the influence of the language has an even higher impact.

Conclusion

The results showed that the direction of the assumptions was right as for every direct effect there is at least a tendency that using gender-fair language is beneficial. Answering the RQ what effects gender-fair language in job advertisements has on the perception of a company's diversity, efforts to foster inclusion, and CSR I can conclude that except for CSR I could find a statistically significant result. I also included a replication testing whether the job advertisement, in general, is perceived more positively and if the application intention increases due to the gender-fair formulation. I found a statistically significant result for the general perception but did not find support for the intention to apply. Hence, if a company strives to be perceived as diverse, inclusive, socially responsible, and, in general, a nice place to work and apply to, it is advised to watch its wording in vacancies.

Even though the study faced several limitations, it made a vital contribution to the topic of gender-fair language. Moreover, the statistical significances of some effects show the importance of the issue and that we can no longer renounce using gender-equal language in job advertisements. As Gaucher and colleagues (2011) determined, a one-sided language serves as an institutional-level mechanism to maintain gender inequality. Hence, formulating texts in a gender-fair way would attract more women and could provide a big step towards a more gender-equal distribution in the workforce. That is not only relevant for further research but even more interesting for companies facing problems in the War for Talents or wanting to be perceived as more socially responsible, diverse, and inclusive. The findings of this research contribute to the importance of gender-fair language and its positive effect on the perception

of a company. Still, there are many more steps ahead towards a non-discriminatory labor

market.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

Manipulation Check: General Opinion Towards the Job Advertisement

(items 1–3 based on Diehl et al., 2016; items 4–5 Flanagin & Metzger; 2000, 2007)

Bitte denken Sie an den Artikel zurück und geben Sie an, wie stark Sie den jeweiligen Aussagen zustimmen.

Im Allgemeinen finde ich die Stellenausschreibung gut.

Im Allgemeinen finde ich die Stellenausschreibung interessant.

Im Allgemeinen finde ich die Stellenausschreibung ansprechend.

Die Stellenausschreibung ist vertrauenswürdig.

Die Stellenausschreibung ist sorgfältig gestaltet.

5-Point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *stimme nicht zu* to 5 = *stimme zu*

Intention to Apply for the Job

(items 1–2 based on Greening & Turban, 2000)

Als nächstes geht es darum, wie Sie das Unternehmen bewerten. Bitte beachten Sie, dass es dabei nicht um den konkreten Fachbereich oder Ihre Ausbildung geht. Bewerten Sie bitte unabhängig vom Anforderungsprofil und den genauen Arbeitsaufgaben in der Stellenausschreibung, ob Sie für diese Firma arbeiten wollen würden, wenn Sie auf Jobsuche wären.

Ich wäre daran interessiert, mich bei dem Unternehmen für einen Job zu bewerben.

Ich würde mich sehr anstrengen, um für dieses Unternehmen arbeiten zu können.

5-Point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *stimme nicht zu* to 5 = *stimme zu*

Perceived CSR

(item 1 based on Bigné & Andreu, 2004; item 2 based on Bigné et al., 2005; item 3 Shin et al. 2016)

Nun habe ich ein paar Fragen dazu, wie Sie das Unternehmen wahrnehmen. Auch wenn Sie nicht viel über das Unternehmen wissen, nutzen Sie bitte den Eindruck, den Sie aufgrund der Stellenanzeige von dem Unternehmen gewonnen haben, um die folgenden Aussagen zu bewerten.

Das Unternehmen handelt sozial verantwortungsbewusst gegenüber der Gesellschaft.

Das Unternehmen behandelt seine Belegschaft gut.

Das Unternehmen verhält sich verantwortungsbewusst gegenüber der Umwelt.

5-Point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *stimme nicht zu* to 5 = *stimme zu*

Perceived Efforts to Foster Inclusion

(items 1 & 3 based on Mor Barak et al.;1998)

Nutzen Sie bitte auch für die nächsten Fragen den Eindruck, den Sie aufgrund der Stellenausschreibung von dem Unternehmen gewonnen haben, um die folgenden Aussagen zu bewerten.

Das Management ermutigt die Mitarbeitenden, untereinander unterstützende Netzwerke zu bilden.

In dem Unternehmen bemüht man sich darum, Minderheiten zu integrieren.

Das Unternehmen investiert ausreichend Zeit und Geld in die Sensibilisierung für Vielfalt in der Belegschaft und damit verbundene Schulungen.

5-Point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *stimme nicht zu* to 5 = *stimme zu*

Perceived Diversity

(items 1, 3–4 based on Mor Barak et al., 1998)

Nutzen Sie bitte auch für die nächsten Fragen den Eindruck, den Sie aufgrund der Stellenausschreibung von dem Unternehmen gewonnen haben, um die folgenden Aussagen zu bewerten.

In diesem Unternehmen werden alle Bewerbungen gleichbehandelt, ungeachtet des Alters, der Ethnizität, einer Behinderung, der sexuellen Orientierung, der Religion oder des

Geschlechts.

Das Unternehmen bemüht sich bewusst darum Minderheiten eine Jobchance zu bieten.

In diesem Unternehmen werden Mitarbeitende vom Management fair beurteilt, unabhängig des Alters, der Ethnizität, einer Behinderung, der sexuellen Orientierung, der Religion oder des Geschlechts.

Das Management trifft Entlassungsentscheidungen auf faire Weise, unabhängig von Faktoren wie Alter, Ethnizität, Behinderung, sexueller Orientierung, Religion oder Geschlecht.

5-Point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *stimme nicht zu* to 5 = *stimme zu*

Recall

Anschließend folgen zwei Fragen, die aufzeigen sollen, wie einprägsam der LinkedIn Eintrag war. Bitte versuchen Sie nicht zu raten, da dies die Ergebnisse verzerrt.

Wie lautete der Name der Firma, die die Stelle ausgeschrieben hat?

1= ConVie

2= Schröck GmbH

3= RSOX

4= Steinhartz

Für welche Branche wurde der Job ausgeschrieben?

1= Unternehmensberatung/Consulting

2= Lebensmittelproduktion

3= Maschinenbau/Engineering

4= Bankwesen/Finance

Attention Check

Bitte geben Sie eine ehrliche Abschätzung an.

Wie aufmerksam haben Sie die Stellenausschreibung gelesen?

5-Point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *gar nicht aufmerksam* to 5 = *voll und ganz aufmerksam*

Participant's Opinion towards 1. Diversity (1–4), 2. Inclusion (5 –6), and 3. Social

Responsibility (7–9)

(items 1, 3–5 based on Mor Barak et al., 1998; items 7–9 based on Spiggle et al., 2018)

Jetzt interessiere ich mich noch für Ihre allgemeine Meinung zu Diversität, Inklusion und sozialer Verantwortung. Bitte geben Sie an wie stark Sie den jeweiligen Aussagen zustimmen.

Ich denke, dass Vielfalt in der Belegschaft ein wichtiges Unternehmensthema ist.

Ich denke, dass vielfältige Teams effektiver arbeiten.

Ich denke, dass unterschiedliche Sichtweisen einen Mehrwert schaffen.

Ich fühle mich wohl bei Menschen, die ein anderes Alter, Ethnizität, sexuelle Orientierung, Religion, Geschlecht oder eine Behinderung haben.

Interne Probleme aufgrund der Unterschiedlichkeit der Mitarbeitenden hindern einige Arbeitsteams daran, ihre maximale Leistungsfähigkeit zu entfalten. (Reversed; was later excluded from analysis)

Unabhängig von der Position, ist es Aufgabe aller, Minderheiten im Unternehmen bewusst zu integrieren.

Die soziale Verantwortung von Unternehmen ist mir wichtig.

Ich bin persönlich an der sozialen Verantwortung eines Unternehmens interessiert, für das ich arbeite.

Ich möchte mit meiner Arbeit einen Beitrag zur sozialen Verantwortung des Unternehmens leisten.

5-Point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *stimme nicht zu* to 5 = *stimme zu*

Demographics

Abschließend bitte ich Sie um einige Angaben zu Ihrer Person.

Gender

Welchem Geschlecht fühlen Sie sich zugehörig?

1= männlich

2= weiblich

3= divers

Age

Wie alt sind Sie?

in Jahren ___

Education

Bitte geben Sie Ihren höchsten Bildungsabschluss an.

1= Pflichtschule

2= Lehre

3= Matura/Abi/ Studienberechtigungsprüfung

4= Universität/FH

Employment

Bitte geben Sie an in welchem Ausmaß Sie derzeit berufstätig sind.

1= nicht berufstätig

2= geringfügig

3= teilzeit

4= vollzeit

Appendix B

Stimulus Material

Wir suchen Unternehmensberater an unseren Standorten in Wien und Berlin!

Details zum Jobangebot:
Du suchst ein inspiriertes Team in einem wachsenden Unternehmen, das sich erfolgreich am Markt positioniert und etabliert hat, und möchtest spannende, nationale und internationale Kunden betreuen?
Dann möchten wir Dich kennenlernen!

Dein Profil:
- Absolvent oder Student in den letzten Semestern einer Universität oder Fachhochschule (Wirtschafts-, Rechts-, Sozial- und Geisteswissenschaften)
- Erste berufliche Erfahrung
- Kundenorientierte Wertehaltung
- Analytisches Denkvermögen und eine strukturierte Arbeitsweise
- Spaß an der Arbeit mit Kollegen und Interesse an Wissensaustausch
- Sehr gute Deutsch- und Englischkenntnisse in Wort und Schrift

Deine Aufgaben als Mitarbeiter:
- Persönlicher Betreuer von internationalen Kunden
- Analyse der Websites von Kunden anhand der wichtigsten SEO-Faktoren
- Zuständiger für die Erfolgsmessung
- Entwickler von KPI-Reports und Dashboards
- Grafische Konzeption und Layout diverser Projekte
- Enge Zusammenarbeit mit Kollegen

Wir bieten:
- Projekte mit Kunden aus den unterschiedlichsten Branchen
- Zertifizierung als Google Experte – wir sind Google Premier Partner Agentur
- Junge, ambitionierte Kollegen mit richtig Spaß an der Arbeit
- Diverse Mitarbeiter-Benefits wie zentraler Arbeitsort, flexible Arbeitszeiten, Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten, täglich frisches Obst

Gehalt:
Wir bieten ein Jahresgehalt ab EUR 30.000,00 brutto (Basis 38,5 h/Wo) sowie die Bereitschaft zur Überzahlung für Hochschulabsolventen und Berufserfahrung.

Du möchtest Teil vom ConVie Team werden?
Bitte schicke uns
- Deinen Lebenslauf mit Foto
- Ein Motivationsschreiben, in dem Du uns zeigst, was Dich an der Aufgabe motiviert
an bewerbung@ConVie.at

Weniger anzeigen ⌃

Karrierestufe	Beschäftigungsverhältnis
Berufseinstieg	**Vollzeit**

Tätigkeitsbereich	Branchen
Unternehmensberater, Manager, Projektmanager	**Management-Beratung**

Job advertisement used for the masculine-only experimental group

Linked**in** | Jobs ▼ | Unternehmensberater*in | Österreich

···

Unternehmensberater*in

ConVie Consulting GmbH Wien · Wien, Österreich

Vor 5 Tagen · ⊙ Gehören Sie zu den ersten 25 Bewerbern.

Auf Firmenwebseite bewerben ⤴ | Speichern

Wir suchen Unternehmensberater*innen an unseren Standorten in Wien und Berlin!

Details zum Jobangebot:
Du suchst ein inspiriertes Team in einem wachsenden Unternehmen, das sich erfolgreich am Markt positioniert und etabliert hat, und möchtest spannende, nationale und internationale Kund*innen betreuen?
Dann möchten wir Dich kennenlernen!

Dein Profil:
- Absolvent*in oder Student*in in den letzten Semestern einer Universität oder Fachhochschule (Wirtschafts-, Rechts-, Sozial- und Geisteswissenschaften)
- Erste berufliche Erfahrung
- Kund*innenorientierte Wertehaltung
- Analytisches Denkvermögen und eine strukturierte Arbeitsweise
- Spaß an der Arbeit mit Kolleg*innen und Interesse an Wissensaustausch
- Sehr gute Deutsch- und Englischkenntnisse in Wort und Schrift

Deine Aufgaben als Mitarbeiter*in:
- Persönliche*r Betreuer*in von internationalen Kund*innen
- Analyse der Websites von Kund*innen anhand der wichtigsten SEO-Faktoren
- Zuständige*r für die Erfolgsmessung
- Entwickler*in von KPI-Reports und Dashboards
- Grafische Konzeption und Layout diverser Projekte
- Enge Zusammenarbeit mit Kolleg*innen

Wir bieten:
- Projekte mit Kund*innen aus den unterschiedlichsten Branchen
- Zertifizierung als Google Expert*in – wir sind Google Premier Partner Agentur
- Junge, ambitionierte Kolleg*innen mit richtig Spaß an der Arbeit
- Diverse Mitarbeiter*innen-Benefits wie zentraler Arbeitsort, flexible Arbeitszeiten, Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten, täglich frisches Obst

Gehalt:
Wir bieten ein Jahresgehalt ab EUR 30.000,00 brutto (Basis 38,5 h/Wo) sowie die Bereitschaft zur Überzahlung für Hochschulabsolvent*innen und Berufserfahrung.

Du möchtest Teil vom ConVie Team werden?
Bitte schicke uns
- Deinen Lebenslauf mit Foto
- Ein Motivationsschreiben, in dem Du uns zeigst, was Dich an der Aufgabe motiviert
an bewerbung@ConVie.at

Weniger anzeigen ⌃

Karrierestufe | Beschäftigungsverhältnis
Berufseinstieg | **Vollzeit**

Tätigkeitsbereich | Branchen
Unternehmensberater*in, | **Management-Beratung**
Manager*in, Projektmanager*in

Job advertisement used for the gender-fair experimental group

Linked**in** | Jobs ▾ | Unternehmensberatung | Österreich

ConVie

•••

Verstärkung in der Unternehmensberatung

ConVie Consulting GmbH Wien · Wien, Österreich

Vor 5 Tagen · ⏱ Gehören Sie zu den ersten 25 Bewerbern.

Auf Firmenwebseite bewerben ↗ | Speichern

Wir suchen Verstärkung in der Unternehmensberatung an unseren Standorten in Wien und Berlin!

Details zum Jobangebot:
Du suchst ein inspiriertes Team in einem wachsenden Unternehmen, das sich erfolgreich am Markt positioniert und etabliert hat, und möchtest spannende, nationale und internationale Unternehmen betreuen?
Dann möchten wir Dich kennenlernen!

Dein Profil:
- Abgeschlossenes oder laufendes Studium in den letzten Semestern einer Universität oder Fachhochschule (Wirtschafts-, Rechts-, Sozial- und Geisteswissenschaften)
- Erste berufliche Erfahrung
- Zielgruppenorientierte Wertehaltung
- Analytisches Denkvermögen und eine strukturierte Arbeitsweise
- Spaß an der Arbeit im Team und Interesse an Wissensaustausch
- Sehr gute Deutsch- und Englischkenntnisse in Wort und Schrift

Deine Aufgaben:
- Persönliche Betreuung von internationalen Unternehmen
- Analyse der Websites von Unternehmen anhand der wichtigsten SEO-Faktoren
- Zuständig für die Erfolgsmessung
- Entwicklung von KPI-Reports und Dashboards
- Grafische Konzeption und Layout diverser Projekte
- Enge Zusammenarbeit mit dem Team

Wir bieten:
- Projekte mit Unternehmen aus den unterschiedlichsten Branchen
- Google Zertifizierung – wir sind Google Premier Partner Agentur
- Junges, ambitioniertes Team mit richtig Spaß an der Arbeit
- Diverse Benefits wie zentraler Arbeitsort, flexible Arbeitszeiten, Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten, täglich frisches Obst

Gehalt:
Wir bieten ein Jahresgehalt ab EUR 30.000,00 brutto (Basis 38,5 h/Wo) sowie die Bereitschaft zur Überzahlung für Personen mit Hochschulabschluss und Berufserfahrung.

Du möchtest Teil vom ConVie Team werden?
Bitte schicke uns
- Deinen Lebenslauf mit Foto
- Ein Motivationsschreiben, in dem Du uns zeigst, was Dich an der Aufgabe motiviert
an bewerbung@ConVie.at

Weniger anzeigen ⌃

Karrierestufe	Beschäftigungsverhältnis
Berufseinstieg	**Vollzeit**
Tätigkeitsbereich	Branchen
Unternehmensberatung, Management, Projektmanagement	**Management-Beratung**

Job advertisement used for the gender-neutral control group

Abstract

Gender inequality in the labor market is still a widespread problem. Concomitantly, several researchers have been trying to find solutions to work against it. One of them is gender-fair language. We cannot overcome gender inequality as long as we use one-sided language. Hence, formulating texts in a gender-fair way would attract more women and could provide a big step towards a more gender-equal distribution in the labor market. But despite the numerous studies that have already explored the effects of gender-fair language in job advertisements, no researcher ever focused on its potential impact on perceived diversity, efforts to foster inclusion, and CSR. In this experiment, I exposed 154 participants to either a masculine-only, a gender-fair, or a gender-neutral formulated job advertisement on LinkedIn. The analysis for all direct effects revealed there was at least a tendency that gender-fair language is the most effective version. Gender-fair language in the job advertisement caused significantly the most positive results for the opinion towards the job advertisement, perceived diversity, and perceived efforts to foster inclusion. Based on the signaling, the attribution, and the social identity theory, I assumed that these effects would be more pronounced for females. Against the prevailing view, the results did not support these assumptions. Hence, my outcomes show that men are also positively reacting to gender-fair formulated vacancies.

Keywords: gender inequality, job advertisement, gender-fair language, diversity, inclusion, CSR

Zusammenfassung

Die Ungleichheit der Geschlechter am Arbeitsmarkt ist immer noch ein weitverbreitetes Problem. Demnach hat bereits eine Vielzahl an Forscher*innen versucht Lösungen zu finden, um dagegen anzukämpfen. Eine davon ist gendergerechte Sprache. Wir können Geschlechterungleichheit nicht überwinden solange wir eine einseitige Sprache verwenden. Somit würden Texte, die gendergerecht formuliert wurden, mehr Frauen anlocken und dazu beitragen, dass eine gendergerechte Verteilung am Arbeitsmarkt ermöglicht wird. Obwohl bereits zahlreiche Studien die Effekte von gendergerechter Sprache in Stellenausschreibungen erforscht haben, hat bisher noch kein*e Forscher*in den Fokus auf den möglichen Einfluss auf die wahrgenommene Diversität, Bemühungen Inklusion zu fördern und die soziale Verantwortung gelegt. In diesem Experiment habe ich 154 Teilnehmer*innen ein Jobangebot auf LinkedIn gezeigt, das ich entweder rein maskulin formuliert habe, gendergerecht oder genderneutral. Die Analyse hat ergeben, dass alle direkten Effekte zumindest eine Tendenz zeigen, dass gendergerechte Sprache die effektivste Version ist. Bei der generellen Meinung gegenüber dem Jobangebot, der wahrgenommenen Diversität und den Bemühungen Inklusion zu fördern erwiesen sich die Unterschiede zwischen den Gruppen sogar als statistisch signifikant. Basierend auf der Signal-, der Attributions- und der sozialen Identitätstheorie habe ich erwartet, dass diese Effekte für Frauen ausgeprägter wären. Entgegen der führenden Meinung haben die Ergebnisse diese Erwartungen jedoch nicht bestätigt. Vielmehr zeigen meine Ergebnisse, dass Männer ebenso positiv auf gendergerecht formulierte Stellenausschreibungen reagieren.

Stichwörter: Geschlechterungleichheit, Stellenausschreibung, gendergerechte Sprache, Diversität, Inklusion, soziale Verantwortung