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How Workplace Diversity Initiatives Affect Employees

Introduction and Relevance

Organizations have come to recognize the value of implementing diversity policies, as diverse companies are more profitable and productive, which leads to their competitive advantage (Herring, 2009). This diversity-centered movement has inspired researchers to develop best practices (Offermann & Basford, 2013) and initiatives (Kalev et al., 2006; Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 1998) to incorporate diversity in the workforce. This implementation is in part due to the legal system's continuous development of its laws regarding the topic of workplace diversity. The U.S. legal system has addressed gender-based workplace situations, which include harassment, discrimination as well as women's and parents' inherent rights (Grossman, 2016). Organizations have addressed these pressing social issues, like gender equality (GE), through gender-targeted diversity initiatives used to support female employees (e.g. gender pay-gap assessments, sexual harassment training, women's networks). Apart from the added benefits that come from complying with governmental mandates, organizations implementation of target specific diversity policies is more effective (Windscheid et al., 2017). Thus, segueing into this research's focus on businesses' gender-targeted policies in the U.S.

Businesses are where full-time employees spend approximately 37 to 50 hours per week, depending on the country of residence (World Population Review, 2020). For a five-day workweek, this ranges anywhere from 7-10 waking hours at work. With this in mind, businesses are at the forefront of determining people's perceptions about diversity and women in the workforce. Furthermore, it is necessary that businesses take this task upon themselves since women experience gender inequality at their workplace. For instance, although women in the U.S. comprise 46.8% of the workforce, they are underrepresented in both managerial positions (40.4%) and on corporate boards (29.3%; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020), resulting in their underrepresented status. Since GE suggests "equal rights, responsibilities and

opportunities of women and men and girls and boys," as these are human rights (UNWomen, 2001), this is a prime example revealing the inequalities women face within the workforce, in addition to the negative impacts of both structural inequalities and gender discrimination (for more information see Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015; Triana et al., 2019). Apart from facing these institutional inequalities at their workplace, women are also the target of male backlash. According to Caleo and Heilman (2019) experiencing this backlash can negatively impact women and how they view their organization. To counter these negative situations and deconstruct this male-driven environment, organizations develop gender-based initiatives. Although some of these gender policies result in their intended benefits for women (Settles et al., 2007), others can result in male backlash (Knutson, 2002), which is counterproductive and the reason for some scholars' focus on how to avoid this form of resistance (e.g. Caleo & Heilman, 2019).

Generally, an organization's implementation of diversity initiatives is both internally and externally executed. For instance, examining prospective employees' perceptions of an organization's justification for implementing gender-based initiatives (Windscheid et al., 2017) provides an external focus. However, this lacks insight into the actual workplace and how employees receive news of a GE policy's implementation, as the gravity is lost on those reading about a seemingly implemented policy for an organization that they are deliberating working for, compared to those already employed, as they are more likely to be invested. Employees are a key component in creating a diverse, inclusive organization and until recently, there was a lack of research addressing organizations' communication and employees' perspectives about diversity initiatives, specifically those addressing women. Considering that employees' attitude and support for gender-targeted policies have been tied to an organization's justification as to why it is being implemented (Hardacre & Subašić, 2018; Scarborough et al., 2019), an organization's internal communication plays a vital role in an employee's perspective.

Furthermore, although there has been reference to the justice and business justifications' frequent usage in GE initiatives (Flood et al., 2018, p. 18), their comparison has yet to be examined; for this reason, the present study seeks to clarify whether using one or both justifications, is advantageous for an organization.

This research focuses on the connection between backlash literature and a policy's justification. Since a gender-targeted policy's justification and male backlash are deciding factors as to whether or not an employee supports and feels positively toward said policy, a business's internal communication is a key factor as to whether or not the desired result is produced. Furthermore, it is important that a diversity policy's launch is met with employees' support and positive attitude, as they lead to the policy's efficacy (Dobbin et al., 2015; Dobbin & Kalev, 2016; Hiemstra et al., 2017). Ergo, this research aims to provide a solid foundation for organizations to build upon when announcing a new diversity policy's implementation by measuring employees' overall level of support and backlash (i.e. attitude and emotion) toward their organization's implementation of a gender policy. An experimental survey was developed to determine if these variables are affected by the organization's justification for why the gender-based policy is needed (i.e. business, justice, a mix of both and none) and if gender moderates this relationship (i.e. male backlash). Subsequently, this research seeks to provide organizations with the benefits of using certain justifications with regard to GE as well as establishes the justice and business justification's impact on this communication. Additionally, although diversity policy research has explored the business justification (e.g. Kidder et al., 2004; Williamson et al., 2008), an uncoupled justice justification has yet to be researched, and this study is also intent on closing that gap.

Internal Effects of Diversity Initiatives

To include different groups in the organizational context, the term "diversity" has expanded and now ranges from demographic characteristics (e.g., race, gender, age) (Golembiewski, 1995) to beneficial differences that employees contribute to their companies (e.g. skills, knowledge, perspectives) (Roberson, 2006). Although expanding the term "diversity" in the business context is beneficial for understanding organizational diversity, when developing diversity initiatives, this could lead to umbrella programs that lack direction (Gołaszewska-Kaczan, 2017).

Employees' attitudes toward workplace diversity and diversity initiatives range from negative to positive feelings (De Meuse & Hostager, 2001; Kidder et al., 2004; Konrad & Linehan, 1995; Richard & Kirby, 1998) and in Hiemstra et al.'s (2017) survey design, they found that attitude toward diversity was the strongest factor when determining workers' intention to promote diversity initiatives in their workplace. Therefore, employees' attitude toward diversity is seen as a strong enabler of an organization's diversity policy. In addition to attitudes, there is a known connection between support and success of diversity practices (Dobbin et al., 2015; Dobbin & Kalev, 2016), which is dependent on the types and phrasing (i.e. justification) of diversity initiatives. Diversity initiatives can be broken down into two types: identity conscious initiatives and identity blind initiatives. Identity conscious initiatives are more specific because they specify the target group as well as which shortcoming is being met, whereas identity blind initiatives are broader-umbrella initiatives. Although an organization's identity conscious diversity policy produces more negative attitudes than identity blind initiatives (Konrad & Linehan, 1995), they are deemed more effective (Windscheid et al., 2017). Therefore, because it is more effective in the long-term and since diversity programs should target a specific underrepresented group, for the purpose of this

study, a gender-targeted, identity conscious initiative will be used. Since gaining employees' support and inducing a positive attitude are beneficial to a diversity policy's efficacy, both are tested in this study for a more conclusive understanding of best practices.

Women's Experience in the Workplace

Concerning an organization's GE efforts, there is already inconsistency between women and men's beliefs of how much the organization is doing: Women believe too little is being done, opposed to men's view that the organization does too much (Burke, 2005). This prefaces how GE initiatives are not inherently met with support, in addition to their leading to backlash, which produces additional negative consequences for female employees (Caleo & Heilman, 2019). It is reasonable to assume that as the recipients of male backlash, women have a higher perception of both personal and structuralized forms of discrimination, since they are confronted with both in their workplace. Additionally, their male colleagues have the ability to remain unphased by these inequalities (Wessel & Ryan, 2012). This finding further amplifies how different the same workplace can be for female employees compared to their male counterparts.

Deriving from these findings, in addition to accounting for the fact that men target women 42% of the time when bullying another in the workplace (Namie, 2021), women's experience of workplace hardships could presumably point to them having a more positive perspective on diversity initiatives. The impact of businesses' communication to counteract these workplace tribulations (Brannon et al., 2018; Knutson, 2002) and their centrality to correcting gender inequality is why this research seeks to further understand this connection between employees and gender-targeted initiatives.

In prior research, women and men's support toward as well as attitudes about diversity initiatives were distinguishable (Harrison et al., 2006; Kidder et al., 2004; Mor Barak et al.,

1998; Scarborough et al., 2019; Windscheid et al., 2017). Furthermore, both attitude and emotions are known detectors of backlash against women (Brescoll et al., 2018; Kidder et al., 2004). Therefore, this study's focus on gender-targeted policies led to the following research question:

RQ1: How is an employee's gender associated with their support for, as well as attitude and emotion toward their business's diversity initiative?

Gender Discrimination

Structural gender discrimination's reinforcement through workplaces' HR-related practices and policies leads to inequality among female employees (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015), and is why governmental mandates have addressed this topic internationally. Although this form of discrimination is internationally recognized, acknowledging that it happens does not necessarily cross over into individual beliefs. For instance, upon review of different diversity policies, employees' attitude and support were significantly influenced by participants' beliefs about inequality's role in discrimination (Scarborough et al., 2019). Furthermore, their finding that "women tended to have greater beliefs in discrimination, and thus more support for diversity policies, than whites and men" (ibid., 2019, p. 207) is further supported by Hunt's (2007) review of inequality where white women's support for diversity initiatives differed from white participants in general, whom most likely had difficulties perceiving structural discrimination (Adams et al., 2008), as it is not blatant. However, when either male or female employees perceive gender discrimination in their workplace or experience it themselves, it affects their organizational perception, negatively impacts their attitude, and leads to women's lower job satisfaction as well as negative business outcomes, all of which negatively impact the organization (Kluegel, 1990; Settles et al, 2007; Triana et al., 2019; Williamson et al., 2008; Willness et al., 2007). Workplace barriers for female

employees does not end with these attributed consequences of both personal and structural discrimination, as discussed in the next section.

Backlash

Male backlash occurs when men exhibit resistance towards organizational policies and initiatives that benefit marginalized employees (Burke, 2005, p. 167). Specifically, male employees view GE initiatives negatively because they believe that they are discriminated against or viewed unfairly (i.e. by being a man), GE has already been achieved and those receiving the preferential treatment are less qualified (Brannon et al., 2018; Burke, 2005; Flood et al., 2018; Heilman & Welle, 2006; Knutson, 2002). Relative to GE, male backlash can present itself in a variety of ways (Burke, 2005) — expressed both formally or informally, in a collective or individual manner (Flood et al., 2018, p. 10). An individual's resistance to these efforts is exhibited through backlash (Wiggins-Romesburg & Githens, 2018) and regardless of how it is presented, women and organizations experience the brunt of the consequences when men perceive these GE policies as challenging the organization (i.e. a male beneficial culture) and view women as the sole beneficiaries reaping the benefits (Rudman & Phelan, 2008). For instance, female employees are put in a difficult position, where they are confronted with backlash, for seemingly normal workplace behavior. They receive backlash when exhibiting dominant, leadership qualities (Brescoll et al., 2018) and when failing to align with workplace expectations of assisting others and performing helpful, but low-impact tasks (Chang & Milkman, 2020, p. 3). By innately conducting positive work behavior or not seizing the opportunity to accomplish tasks that produce minimal reward, women should be seen as attempting to advance their careers and should not be met with backlash. This study focuses on individual backlash because male employees could exhibit this form of resistance when confronted with a gender-targeted policy.

Following Williamson et al.'s (2008) finding's logic that underrepresented applicants perceived an organization positively as long as there was a diversity initiative present and that women represent this study's underrepresented group, female employees should be more supportive of a diversity policy independent of the justification for its implementation. Correspondingly, women have expressed more positive attitudes than men towards diversity policies (Harrison et al., 2006; Kidder et al., 2004). Furthermore, women value and support gender-targeted initiatives more than men (Mor Barak et al., 1998; Scarborough et al., 2019), especially when they specify how they assist GE (Windscheid et al., 2017). Men's adverse reaction toward a new gender policy was inferred because when those in a position of power (i.e. men) feel that their autonomy is being taken away, it results in backlash (Brannon et al., 2018). To assess this resistance, this study measures backlash indicators (i.e. negative emotions and attitudes) that have been used to detect backlash toward diversity initiatives in prior research (e.g. Brescoll et al., 2018; Kidder et al., 2004). With both men and women's stances clearly stated, this study assumes the following:

H1. Women will have a higher support (H1.1) as well as a more positive attitude (H1.2) and emotion (H1.3) toward their company's new diversity policy compared to their male colleagues independent of the justification.

Diversity Management

Although expectations are placed on businesses to comply with stakeholders demands, businesses expect managers to operate in accordance with these societal values, like the promotion of equality, and to ensure that the business is perceived in a positive light both internally and externally (Chan et al., 2014; Corley et al., 2001). The distinction between managers and employees is evident since managers are more supportive of workplace diversity (Hiemstra et al., 2017), which is most likely due to their responsibility to enact these diversity

initiatives. This internal managerial approach to diversity is called diversity management (DM). DM influences employees' perception of organizational justice and fairness (Girish, 2015), which can be positively or negatively perceived based on a manager's approach. According to Ely and Thomas (2001), when managers use the integration and learning perspective approach, although potentially benefiting the company, they create an inclusive environment where employees feel valued, whereas other approaches lead to employees recognizing their company as the only beneficiary. Ultimately, managers can either respect (i.e. justice) or merely tolerate (i.e. business) diversity (Lozano & Escrich, 2017). Overall, past literature has established that businesses' DM approaches resemble those communicating a business or justice motive to employees.

Justification

A company's motive for implementing a diversity policy is reflected in its internal communication. When an organization explains its implementation of a gender-targeted policy, it could either justify its actions or use an excuse (Shaw et al., 2003), like a governmental mandate, permitting organizations to use the government as a scapegoat. Nonetheless, the organization could decide to use a justification to explain its reasoning for a gender-based policy; however, there is no guarantee that in doing so the company is perceived positively (Williamson et al., 2008). As a lack of a justification leads to female employees' overall negative attitude toward the organization and themselves (Richard & Kirby, 1998), the logical action plan is for organizations to provide a justification for a gender-targeted policy. Both the justice and business justification are frequently used to frame GE initiatives (Flood et al., 2018, p. 18). They are assumed to decrease employees' resistance toward diversity policies and are deemed more advantageous to an organization than merely filling a board quota for legitimacy purposes (Chang & Milkman, 2020, p. 4; Chrobot-Mason et al., 2008, p.36), however this

reasoning for the justice case has yet to be confirmed. Pursuing this further, the current study addressed this assumption through the following:

RQ2: Does a company's justification of a diversity initiative garner more employee support and induce more positive attitudes and emotions? If so, which type of justification, business case or justice case leads to these results?

Business Justification

In past research, scholars noticed how businesses viewed an employee using a cog-in-the-wheel metaphor (Cheney & Carroll, 1997, p. 6), which discredits the advantage of having an experienced employee. Businesses should find value in each employees' contribution (i.e. cog), since it affects the functionality of the business (i.e. wheel). Nevertheless this standpoint has yet to change. When a company considers diversity by conducting itself through the business case, its communication mentions the company's competitive advantage, stakeholder relations, bottom line or how offering diversity initiatives leads to increased profits (Bendick et al., 2001; Cox & Blake, 1991; Koivunen et al., 2015). If DM links an inclusive environment and diverse workforce with an organization's success, it reveals the organization's business motivation (Ravazzani, 2016; Robinson & Dechant, 1997; van Dijk et al., 2012). When managing diversity, this lucrative motivation is commonly used when framing GE. The business case to frame GE (BCGE) argues that women in the workforce lead to profitable results. The BCGE is a predominant frame due to its backing by governmental institutions as well as its disclosure of a financial benefit (Cullen & Murphy, 2018). Although researchers found that when compared to an affirmative action justification, a business justification was more supported and resulted in a significantly more positive attitude (Kidder et al., 2004), this does not mean that it is guaranteed to unfailingly lead to GE (Cullen & Murphy, 2018). Consequently, this frame not only distracts from women's inequality, but when businesses

merely use employees for their own financial gain and do not recognize the ethical imperative for a symbiotic relationship, they are misplacing their focus. This is unfortunate since reciprocating also yields profitable results (Freeman et al., 2007; Cheney & Carroll, 1997). Although when compared with other justifications, the business case may not be the most supported, it should also not lead to contrary results.

Some claim that a company's reasoning should not be completely separated from ethics (Freeman et al., 2007), nor can it desert its fundamental roots. The confusion between the justice and business case is in part due to a combination of the two in an organization's explanation of its motivation for implementing a policy. Therefore, this study takes a mixed justification of both the justice and business case into consideration, as it is a motivation that is used in practice.

Justice Justification

Tomlinson and Schwabenland (2009, p. 105) represented the justice case, which expresses diversity initiatives as a company's moral and ethical obligation, through the sentence: "The alternative to the business case is to argue that equality and social justice are desirable ends in themselves; such arguments having a moral, rather than a utilitarian foundation." Flood et al. (2018, p.6) compiled important organizational strategies to garner employee support, which included framing the GE initiative through a justice justification. Furthermore, an organization's aim, when exemplifying moral soundness, is explained through the social justice aspect of DM. However, determining a company's motivation for practicing diversity, between these two cases, can lead to confusion (van Dijk et al., 2012).

Organizations are inherently motivated by profit and therefore, it is feasible to relate a business-reasoning to all actions, including philanthropic. To properly analyze the justice case, one must take into consideration the possibility of this justification resulting in a financial

benefit, but also recognize that this is not the explicit objective. For instance, in Özbilgin et al.'s (2016) study, the global value chain's approach, even with the intention of complete fairness and equality, still resulted in a financial pursuit. Other scholars have used virtue ethics to decrease the motivational confusion between the justice and business case by providing a moral reasoning (González, 2003) and ensuring a moral situational context. However, this virtue ethics case is based on terms of an individual's pursuance (see van Dijk et al., 2012) or as an organization's integrational, inclusion approach (see Rabl et al., 2018) to be ethical. Although an organization performs better when it acts ethically and those managing behave similarly (Wu, 2002), an individual behaving unethically still impacts the organization's ethicality (Rieck, 1998). Thus, showing how virtue ethics is more of an internal choice, being that it must be inherent in all parts of the organization. Furthermore, in a message, a justice motive fully emulates social justice within reason, as it is a business and being ethical is beneficial (Rabl et al., 2018).

Bridging the Justification and Backlash Literature

Ramifications due to backlash can be reduced depending on the approach that a company uses to frame a diversity policy, since it is the integral factor resulting in the relationship between a diversity policy and backlash (Knutson, 2002). Although in both Kidder et al.'s (2004) study of backlash's effects on justifications regarding ethnicity-based policies and Brescoll et al.'s (2018) gender-based study gender was not a moderator, both attitudes and negative emotions were significant in helping to detect backlash. Gender's lack of moderation was attributed to Kidder et al.'s (2004) review of racial diversity initiatives and in Brescoll et al.'s (2018) study, most likely due to the specification of the gendered scenarios. In addition to its focus on male backlash and gender-based initiatives specifically, this study differs by measuring variables differently and attempting to prevent past studies shortcomings; these

differences are detailed in the methods section. Furthermore, since male backlash plays an integral role in women's workplace experiences, it is important to understand if this form of resistance can be mitigated through the policy's justification.

Although there is lower job satisfaction among employees if a work environment is perceived as negative for women, men's job satisfaction can remain unaffected when perceiving this negative environment, if they feel supported by their organization (Wessel & Ryan, 2012). Men's ability to see past their organization's inequality does not make them an ally of a justice reasoning. Generally, the underrepresentation of certain groups can provide similarities between them, like their divergence from White men, who are more than fairly represented. In Williamson et al.'s (2008) study, the business justification's description of a win-win situation for everyone led to White applicants' positive response, whereas underrepresented applicants favored the ideological justification's reinforcement of a moral and legal standpoint. To draw a parallel to this study with women comprising the underrepresented group compared to men, since the business case exhibits group gains (e.g. working for a more successful company), men could derive personal benefits and perceive the business justification better than a justification with seemingly no benefits besides those for another. Additionally, since male backlash and the negative outcomes succeeding it are present when men feel they have something to lose (Brannon et al., 2018; Rudman & Phelan, 2008), this resistance should be less present with a justification that exemplifies the organization's potential as a whole. Women, on the other hand, would prefer the justice justification providing a more moral imperative similar to that of the ideological justification in Williamson et al.'s (2008) study. As it was concluded earlier that women notice discrimination against themselves in their workplace (Settles et al, 2007; Triana et al., 2019; Willness et al., 2007), this justification would not be as troubling as the business justification, which has a more profit-oriented outcome than ethical aim.

Seemingly both male and female employees would rather a justification provided for a better understanding of the policy. According to Richard and Kirby (1999), no justification of a policy produced more negative attitudes toward a diversity policy as opposed to when there was a justification present. In some cases, no justification also produced less support (Scarborough et al., 2019). Since gender is the proposed moderator and male backlash targets women who have reaffirmed their lack of moral ambiguity, in addition to men's strive to maintain a beneficial workplace, the current hypothesis was formed:

H2: In women, a justice justification will bring about stronger employee support as well as more positive attitudes and emotions, compared to a business justification, while in men this effect will be reversed. No justification will bring about the least amount of support as well as a more undesirable attitude and emotion toward their business's diversity initiative in both genders.

The United States in a GE Context

Since this research is using a U.S.-based employee sample, the U.S. legislation regarding GE should be taken into consideration to better discern the country's societal expectations. Triana et al. (2019) found that employees' perception of gender discrimination in their workforce negatively impacts their attitudes and work-related outcomes, and when employed in a country with strong governmental backing of GE and high gender egalitarianism, this effect is stronger. For this purpose, it is important to note that the U.S. does not have a strong governmental backing. For instance, no U.S. federal laws mandate paid parental leave or other maternity benefits, and the legislation has failed to eliminate the ever-present gender pay gap, which according to the European Parliament (2012), increases with parenthood. The non-effectiveness of this legislative framework is evident through the Global Gender Gap report's focus on women's inequality, where the U.S. ranked 53rd out of 153 countries and held a position in the bottom quarter of Western European and North American

countries (World Economic Forum, 2020). In addition to the lack of governmental backing, practices that support gender egalitarianism within the U.S. tend to be relatively low (GLOBE, 2020). Since countries high in gender egalitarianism strive for GE in all aspects (Emrich et al., 2004), Triana et al. (2019) made the connection that those employed in these counties have a lesser tolerance for gender discrimination than those in countries where they are accustomed to this form of discrimination. Upon consideration of this study's sample, participants' understanding of structuralized gender discrimination might not be very high, which could affect how they perceive this policy, since GE is not institutionally valued (i.e. the lower governmental support of GE combined with gender egalitarianism practices that are lower on the spectrum when compared to other countries).

Methodology

Sample

This study's target population were employees that could be affected by diversity initiatives in their workplace (not self-employed). The sample was obtained through the data collection website, Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), which provides eligible employees with the chance to participate and has its own participation conditions, like confirming that employees are able to give consent and are of legal age (+18) to participate. Additionally, this study controlled for participants with the U.S. as their country of employment in the pre-screening process. After data cleaning, the final sample size was $N = 453$ employed participants with women accounting for $n = 163$ and men accounting for $n = 290$. The majority of participants were white/Caucasian (68%) and held at least a bachelor's degree (57.6%), with the average age of 38 ($SD = 10.37$). Most stated that they were employed at the employee level (70.2%) as opposed to those at the managerial level (29.8%).

Experimental Design

The gender-targeted policy's independent variable has four justifications to explain the policy's implementation. In this between-subjects experimental design, participants were randomly assigned to one of the conditions ($n = 109$ business; $n = 114$ justice; $n = 118$ mixed; $n = 112$ none), which asked about the diversity policy's implementation in their company, to better the experiment's ecological validity. To avoid employees attention narrowing on a policy's specifics and since many diversity policies (e.g. recruitment, mentorship, training) are similarly supported (Scarborough et al., 2019), this study used the general term "diversity policy" with regard to targeting women (for stimulus materials see Appendix A). Gender was used to moderate the correlation between the policy's justification and the dependent variables (i.e. support, attitude and emotion toward the diversity policy).

To inform and establish voluntary participation from participants, an informational letter including a processing agreement and anonymity grant was given but did not offer substantial insight into the research interest to avoid priming. Subsequently, the stimulus material and questionnaire, including the manipulation check, were given and followed by the control variables. After taking part in the research, participants were debriefed (full description in Appendix B).

Measures

To answer RQ1 and H1 (H 1.1, H 1.2, H 1.3), an independent samples t-test was run to test if gender had a direct effect on participants' support, attitudes or emotions. To answer RQ2 and H2, an initial regression analysis was run to determine the relationship between the different justifications on the dependent variables. Subsequently, a moderated regression was run via PROCESS, to test for an interaction effect with gender as moderator.

Manipulation

The pretest sample comprised $N = 40$ participants with the primary aim to ensure that they read and understood the stimulus. As participants were not able to identify the justification that they received $\chi^2(15) = 23.03$, $p = 0.08$, the manipulation had to be adjusted. For the final experiment, a time restraint minimum was included to ensure that participants read the full stimulus and the manipulation was positioned after the dependent variables, but before the controls. Additionally, the manipulation included a multiple choice of options, which were derived from past research. In the adjusted manipulation, one of the options were excluded, because it was deemed unnecessary to have six options for identification purposes. The final sample resulted in participants' statistically significant identification of the justification that they received, $\chi^2(12) = 88.610$, $p < 0.001$.

Support

All questions were according to a 7-point Likert scale. A factor analysis was first conducted to ensure construct validity, and then a Cronbach's alpha was analyzed to provide the reliability of each factor (see Table C1 for more information). Both support and attitude items ranged from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree). However, the only question with a different wording was a scale regarding participants' opinion on the policy (1 = Strongly oppose, 7 = Strongly favor). This question was taken from Scarborough et al.'s (2019) study, and one of five items that measured support. The other four items were taken from Heyden et al.'s (2017) repurposing of Bennebroek Gravenhorst et al.'s (2003) study. These items, that measured support for the policy, included the following employees' personal perceptions: perceived necessity, plan to partake, agreement and degree of enthusiasm. The reliability of the support scale was 0.92.

Attitude

Likewise, to measure male backlash, three items from Hiemstra et al.'s (2017) study were used to measure an employee's attitude toward the gender policy. These positive word measurements included: good, likable and useful. The policy's positive impact on the organization was included as well. The latter was added for gauging participants' attitude toward the final outcome of the policy with a negative outlook showing a more resistant attitude. All four items were reliable with $\alpha = 0.91$.

Negative Emotions

In both Brescoll et al. (2018) and Kidder et al.'s (2004) research, terms used to measure male backlash through emotions were deemed quite extreme in their wording for such a brief stimulus. This could have created a social-desirability bias with participants unwilling to respond to these highly volatile emotions, which were semi-unrealistic due to the brevity of the stimulus provided. It also could have created priming effects due to the one-sided emotions that were measured. Therefore, this study uses the backlash emotions: disgust, disdain, anger (Brescoll et al. (2018) from Okimoto & Brescoll's study, 2010), upset, as well as annoyed and resent (i.e. synonyms for irritable and hostile; Scherer, 2005) (Kidder et al. (2004) from Watson et al.'s scales, 1988). To avoid priming effects that could occur when only testing for negative emotions (Scherer, 2005), positive emotions from Watson et al.'s (1988) study were used for a masking effect. Emotions were measured by asking participants how they feel at the current moment (1 = Not at all, 7 = Very much). The six negative emotions had a high reliability ($\alpha = 0.95$).

Controls

This experimental design included multiple control variables that could potentially affect participants' support for the gender policy, as well as attitude and emotions toward said policy (see Table C2 for more information). Since the stimulus was phrased as coming from the participants' current employer, questions were asked regarding their workplace ranging from 1 (Not very diverse; Poor; No diversity initiatives in place) to 7 (Very diverse; Excellent; Many diversity initiatives in place), depending on the question. These three company-specific items created a reliable index ($\alpha = 0.78$). Due to belief in structural discrimination and personal gender-related discrimination experiences affecting employees in past studies, these were measured by replacing 'ethnicity' with 'gender' in James et al.'s (1994) 15 item workplace discrimination inventory (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree). A factor analysis of the four structural discrimination items resulted in one item with a considerably lower factor loading. Once removed, the structural discrimination index was reliable ($\alpha = 0.86$). Additionally, a factor analysis on all 11 personal discrimination items was run and it resulted in two factors. The main factor consisted of eight variables and had an Eigenvalue of 5.91. It was deemed a better measure of personal discrimination at the workplace and excluded the items: all people are treated the same, both genders get along well and promotions as well as rewards are not influenced by gender. Therefore, the eight-item index's reliability was 0.95. Furthermore, participants were asked for their employment position, as well as socio-demographic information.

Results

Initially, this study analyzed gender's association with the dependent variables, answering RQ1, through H1, which assumed female employee's higher support, more positive attitude as well as emotion toward the gender policy compared to their male counterparts. To

determine how both genders differ as a result of said policy, independent samples t-tests were run with gender split into two groups (Table 1). This t-test indicated that, with regard to support, women's mean was higher ($M = 5.66$, $SD = 1.20$) than men's ($M = 5.39$, $SD = 1.35$). As equal variances can be assumed ($F = 3.40$, $p = .07$), the difference between the two groups was statistically significant ($t(451) = -2.15$, $p = .032$). Thus, supporting H1.1. Although only marginally significant ($t(451) = -1.66$, $p < .10$) when equality of variance was supported ($F = 2.00$, $p = .16$), women tended to have a more positive attitude ($M = 5.63$, $SD = 1.25$) than men ($M = 5.42$; $SD = 1.38$). With regard to negative emotions, a higher score meant a lesser feeling of these backlash emotions with a tendency to be more positive. As equal variances were assumed ($F = 1.07$, $p = .30$), women had statistically fewer negative emotions than their fellow male workers ($t(451) = -2.12$, $p = .035$), which was expressed with their higher mean value ($M_{Female} = 4.95$, $SD = 1.84$; $M_{Male} = 4.56$, $SD = 1.95$). Therefore, H2.3 was supported.

Table 1

Independent Samples Test

Dependent Variable	Group Statistics			Equality of Variance	t-test for Equality of Means		
	Gender	*N*	*M (SD)*	*F (Sig.)*	*t(df)*	*p*	*95% Conf.*
Support	Male	290	5.39 (1.35)	3.40 (.07)	-2.15 (451)	.032	[-.52, -.02]
	Female	163	5.66 (1.20)				
Attitude	Male	290	5.42 (1.38)	2.00 (.16)	-1.66 (451)	.098	[-.47, .04]
	Female	163	5.63 (1.25)				
Negative Emotions	Male	290	4.56 (1.95)	1.07 (.30)	-2.12 (451)	.035	[-.76, -.03]
	Female	163	4.95 (1.84)				

The groups (by justification) were homogeneous in various control variables including gender ($\chi^2(3) = 5.46$, $p > .05$), position ($\chi^2(9) = 7.84$, $p > .05$), education ($\chi^2(12) = 10.15$, $p > .05$), ethnicity ($\chi^2(18) = 17.95$, $p > .05$), age ($F(3,449) = 1.56$, $p > .05$), personal discrimination ($F(3,449) = 0.03$, $p > .05$), structural discrimination ($F(3,449) = 0.04$, $p > .05$) and company specifics ($F(3,449) = 0.87$, $p > .05$) indicating that randomization was successful. Therefore, no covariates were included. As the data was not normally distributed to run an ANOVA, moderated regression analyses were used to answer H2, with regard to the moderation. Prior, in response to RQ2's inquiry about whether or not different justifications produce advantageous results and which justification this can be attributed to, regressions were run. Moreover, the moderated model was run three times, once for each dependent variable, using Hayes's (2018) tool, PROCESS's model 1. This model assessed the conditional effect of X (justification) on Y (support, attitude and negative emotion) in condition of a moderator — W (gender) — and the HC3 heteroskedasticity-consistent estimator was used for estimating standard errors (Hayes & Cai, 2007).

Table 2

Results of Simple and Moderated Regressions

	Support				Attitude				Negative Emotions			
	Coeff	*SE*	*t*	*p*	*Coeff*	*SE*	*t*	*p*	*Coeff*	*SE*	*t*	*p*
Business (B)	-.03	.18	-.18	.86	.04	.18	.20	.84	-.13	.26	-.50	.62
Justice (J)	.07	.17	.43	.67	.06	.18	.32	.75	-.23	.26	-.90	.37
Mixed (M)	.02	.17	.14	.89	.06	.18	.32	.75	-.13	.25	-.53	.60
B vs. None x Gender	.39	.37	1.05	.30	.56	.38	1.48	.14	.74	.52	1.41	.16
J vs. None x Gender	.58	.35	1.62	.11	.56	.37	1.51	.13	.44	.55	.80	.42
M vs. None x Gender	.64	.37	1.72	.09	.65	.39	1.69	.09	.66	.53	1.23	.22

Note. Coefficients are unstandardized.

As X was a multicategorical variable, the analyses were run relative to the control group (no justification). Before running the moderated regression, initial regression analyses' models

showed that there were no significant differences between the justifications for support ($R^2 = .001$, $F(3, 449) = .13$, *ns*), attitude ($R^2 = .000$, $F(3, 449) = .05$, *ns*) nor negative emotions ($R^2 = .002$, $F(3, 449) = .27$, *ns*), as seen in Table 2. Similarly, the overall moderation model also resulted in insignificant effects for support ($R^2 = .02$, $F(7, 445) = 1.59$, *ns*), attitude ($R^2 = .02$, $F(7, 445) = 1.15$, *ns*) and negative emotions ($R^2 = .02$, $F(7, 445) = 1.08$, *ns*). Overall, the conditional effects of X did not differ from each other with gender acting as a moderator (Table 2); thus, H2 was rejected. For additional understanding as to how employees' beneficial reactions were distributed between the different justifications for a policy's implementation, see Table 3's descriptive statistics for the dependent variables and moderator.

Table 3

Compared Means of Justification x Dependent Variable and Gender

Gender	D.V.	Business	Justice	Mixed	None
Both	Support	5.44 (1.33)	5.55 (1.27)	5.49 (1.33)	5.47 (1.31)
	Attitude	5.49 (1.33)	5.51 (1.31)	5.51 (1.31)	5.46 (1.42)
	Negative Emotions	4.69 (1.92)	4.59 (1.90)	4.69 (1.99)	4.82 (1.87)
n		109	114	118	112
Male	Support	5.33 (1.49)	5.42 (1.37)	5.29 (1.32)	5.51 (1.26)
	Attitude	5.35 (1.50)	5.42 (1.44)	5.35 (1.23)	5.53 (1.38)
	Negative Emotions	4.41 (2.03)	4.49 (1.91)	4.46 (1.99)	4.85 (1.88)
n		63	82	72	73
Female	Support	5.60 (1.05)	5.88 (.91)	5.81 (1.30)	5.39 (1.43)
	Attitude	5.68 (1.04)	5.80 (.89)	5.77 (1.39)	5.31 (1.49)
	Negative Emotions	5.08 (1.70)	4.85 (1.86)	5.04 (1.97)	4.77 (1.89)
n		46	32	46	39

Note. Standard deviation in parentheses.

Although postulated in the theory section that those of opposite genders would have different beliefs in structuralized forms of gender discrimination taking place, as well as recognize or experience personal forms of gender discrimination differently, there was no

statistically significant correlation between gender and belief in structural or personal gender discrimination taking place. These findings are presented in Table C3 with the means, standard deviations and intercorrelations of the study's measures — which were run with Kendall's tau, as the data was not normally distributed. These correlations were run to further assess if this study presented noteworthy correlations. Although some correlations were significant, to avoid multicollinearity problems that could come from only assessing strongly correlated variables with support, attitude and negative emotions, stepwise regressions were run to indicate if there were any significant direct effects between controls on the dependent variables.

The standardized beta coefficients were reported in the following regressions. With regard to support, when including company-specific information, age and gender, this model accounted for 14.5% of the variance. With company specifics indicating a medium association with support ($\beta = .37$, p = .000) and being the largest of this model's predictors ($\Delta R^2 = .13$, $F(1, 451) = 68.50$, $p = .000$). Furthermore, age ($\beta = -.10$, p < .05) and gender ($\beta = .09$, p < .05) had a small association with support as seen from the changes they made to the variance (age: $\Delta R^2 = .01$, F (1, 450) = 5.25, p < 0.05; support: $\Delta R^2 = .01$, F (1, 449) = 4.39; p < 0.05). Regarding attitude, including both the company-specific index ($\Delta R^2 = .10$, F (1, 451) = 47.16; p < 0.05) and age ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, F (1, 450) = 6.23; p = 0.01) accounted for 10.7% of the variance. Therefore, there was a medium association between the company-specific index and attitude ($\beta = .32$, p = .000), whereas with age a small negative association took place ($\beta = -.11$, p = .01). The stepwise regression that was run with negative emotions only accounted for 2% of the variance and will not be further discussed. The association between the company-specific index and it's larger prediction for support and attitude coincide with the small, positive correlation found between those that recognized their company as doing well on the diversity front with both support ($\tau_b = .26$, $p = .000$) as well as attitude ($\tau_b = .23$, $p = .000$) toward said policy. Implications from these findings are interpreted in the discussion section.

Furthermore, apart from the hypothesized effects, there were other noteworthy insights. Separate analyses were done taking position (employee vs. managerial level) and ethnicity (non-White vs. White) into consideration. Consistent with Hiemstra et al.'s (2017) finding, albeit marginally significant (t(451) = -1.667, p = .097), a t-test showed those at the managerial level held a more supportive tendency toward a gender policy (M = 5.64, SD = 1.16) compared to those at the employee level (M = 5.43, SD = 1.36). Additionally, t-tests indicated that White participants were marginally less supportive (t(451) = -1.724, p = .085) and demonstrated a slightly less favorable attitude (t(451) = -1.697, p = .090) toward the gender-targeted policy compared to non-White participants (support: M_{White} = 5.42, SD = 1.34; $M_{non\text{-}White}$ = 5.64, SD = 1.218; attitude: M_{White} = 5.42, SD = 1.38; $M_{non\text{-}White}$ = 5.65, SD = 1.23), which was similar to Scarborough et al.'s (2019) findings. All other t-tests with respect to the other dependent variables — independent of justification — were not significant. Consistent with this study's findings, there was no significant interaction effect with position nor ethnicity as moderator.

General Discussion

Interestingly, since both men and women had similar perceptions of structural and personal forms of gender discrimination, recognition of gender discrimination could not be attributed to the differences between men and women's reactions toward the gender policy. Although this was assumed in the theory section, due to Scarborough et al.'s (2019) research pointing to this as their explanation for women's higher support of diversity initiatives, it did not coincide with this study's findings. This research is attributing these gender specific differences to male backlash. Since men's inaction and/or lack of support are still expressions of backlash, as discussed in Flood et al.'s (2018) findings, their lack of support and more negative attitudes as well as emotions are further expressions of an overall resistance toward a new gender policy. Furthermore, as both forms of discrimination did not contribute to predicting employees' reactions, this was addressed by taking Triana et al.'s (2019) findings

into account. The perceptions of both structural ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.82$) and personal ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 1.82$) forms of discrimination were lower than if the data indicated a mid-level average (i.e. $M = 4$). These U.S.-employed participants' lower perceptions could be due to their country of employment, since the U.S.' lack of GE legislative support and the country's lower gender egalitarian practice scores lead to discrimination potentially being overlooked, more so by those in American society, where it is commonplace.

This research also expands upon past research by focusing on workers' reactions toward a policy being implemented at their workplace and using this as a base for workers' responses. Plus, it accounts for organizational differences through employees' perceptions. Originally the company-specific variables were included to address a situation where an employee reported their company as doing well at DM and therefore, account for their lesser support, as they would have perceived that diversity issues are already being taken care of. Surprisingly, this was not the case and those that believed that their company was doing well on the diversity front were more supportive and had more positive attitudes toward said policy. However, this study phrased company-specific questions about diversity in general (see Appendix B) and did not specifically ask about how a worker's company is doing with regard to GE specifically. Therefore, it is inconclusive if: (1) employees' felt that diversity is being managed properly, but there could be improvements made to gender in the workplace, or (2) working for a seemingly inclusive work environment leads to workers' higher value of these types of programs in their workplace. If the latter is true, it would illustrate the significant impact of fostering a diverse work environment.

Implications for Research

A further understanding of what an organization can do to better ensure an advantageous response from its employees is valuable, since implementing a new gender policy

can affect employees differently. Despite no one justification being overwhelmingly met with support and an infinitesimal amount of backlash, this interchangeability of these justifications is still noteworthy. Considering that Williamson et al.'s (2008) ideological justification was the closest to measuring the justice case, with an incorporation of moral responsibility and governmental mandates, it still did not embody the pure justification itself. While the results do not ascertain which justification leads to a newly implemented gender policy's efficacy, the once inconclusive and postulated about justice justification has now been considered and this research gives reference as to where routine business practice justifications fit in relation to each other (see Table 3). Thus, research regarding diversity policies' justifications is no longer limited to the business case and those centered around Affirmative Action, but has a new, established path that can be pursued.

Although gender did not moderate the relationship between common GE justifications and employees' reactions, this revealed more about the justifications' lack of a direct effect than gender's role in workers' reactions. The results have reinforced past findings that gender does make a difference when measuring employees' reactions. Women's overall backing of a new gender-targeted policy was significantly different when compared to their male counterparts, who did not contradict backlash literature, since their responses fell in line with the assumption that they would exhibit more negative emotions when faced with a new gender-based policy. Furthermore, the moderation's insignificance and justification's lack of differentiation meant that the only part of the policy left to incite male backlash was that women were the beneficiary. These findings elaborate upon Brescoll et al.'s (2018) experiments by measuring male backlash using a gender-based policy that is tailored to that specific type of backlash, instead of backlash in general. Although negative attitude and emotions were this study's main backlash indicators, men's lack of support further exposed their resistance toward

said gender policy. Hence, researchers should consider using support similarly to how attitude is used when measuring for male backlash.

Implications for Organization's and Management

Organizations should announce a new gender policy's implementation through a justice justification because its foundation is based on inclusivity. Although support for a gender policy's launch is important, there is more to a policy's implementation than just explaining its reasoning, since the entirety of the organization needs to be on board for DM to work properly. The justice justification is already used in practice either by itself, or when intermingled with the BCGE justification, for companies' internal communication. Those that utilize this justification, when implementing a gender equalizing policy, find it to be rewarding. Ultimately, when organizations develop ethical virtues and approach DM with a justice-based foundation, they are anticipating employees to identify with these values and demonstrate a similar ethical behavior (Kaptein, 2008); ergo, Rabl et al. (2018) tested these perceptions, to find that employees do act accordingly, with their compliance further demonstrating their support for seemingly ethical behavior. Thus, organizations should recognize the incentive of acting ethically and inclusively, and this initiative should be reflected when justifying a gender policy's implementation. Overall, the justice justification presents the first step in creating a foundation of moral integrity, and organizations should want to establish this— if for no other reason than for the purpose of attaining the additional, long-term benefits that coincide with an inclusive approach.

Since diversity policies are usually spearheaded by management and managers are further tasked with ensuring GE in the workplace, they should acknowledge and be mindful of those groups who will express more resistance. If those in management want to proactively address and anticipate challenges that are more likely to ensue when implementing a gender-targeted policy, they should not let their personal support bias them into thinking that

employees think similarly, and they should anticipate resistance from men as well as White employees.

Conclusion

Although this study attempted to clarify which justification is the most advantageous for an organization, the results did not provide a straightforward answer. Correspondingly, there is not a simple connection between backlash literature and a policy's justification. However, male backlash was attributed to the gap between men and women's mutual approval for a policy aimed at gender equity. Unfortunately, the benefits that derive from equality in the workplace and organizational attempts at achieving GE are still hindered by male backlash. Even so, the workplace is where strides toward GE need to be met with solidarity, and this duty to create this unanimity is up to organizations. Although some governments have introduced strong GE legislation, others have not. Furthermore, even those that have introduced strong GE legislation cannot influence those in the workplace to agree with GE initiatives as it is up to organizations to inspire and show the value of an inclusive workplace.

In this research, the different justifications did not result in significantly different reactions from workers. Nonetheless, this research established how an uncoupled justice justification in businesses' internal diversity policy communication could be used and measured. Correspondingly, this study advises that a justice justification be the preferred reasoning that organizations provide to employees for a diversity policy's implementation. This is not because the justification itself will lead to advantageous results, but the meaning behind it and what an organization is attempting to achieve by using it will have a significant impact on GE, which will subsequently lead to the policy's efficacy. Businesses need to go above and beyond the expectations of their stakeholders and the public at large. It is their duty to communicate about workplace gender-based policies as unbiased and accurately as possible.

As per this research, implementing a new gender-based policy with a strive for equality in the workplace is an excellent starting point.

Limitations and Future Research

Future research should expand upon the justice justification and where it is situated, not just with regard to gender-based policies, but diversity policies in general. Additionally, the policy's short description or the lack of using a more specific policy could have contributed to a diminutive understanding of the initiative's objective. Although it was suggested to do so from past research, it is still possible that the inclusion of a more supported or controversial policy could potentially have made a difference. Therefore, it should be kept in mind as a possible limitation, and future research could qualitatively ask participants about their interpretation of said policy. Alternatively, determining whether or not workers' perceptions of their workplace's diversity and DM are an accurate representation would assist in deciding if these company-specific measures contribute to the results. If this is measured and is decidedly accurate, research can further inquire about an employee's organization's DM with more specificity. Furthermore, qualitative interviews with this study's participants would have created a more comprehensive understanding as to the differences between the genders. Also, since backlash is not always immediately expressed and can develop in the long-term, feelings could also be measured, since they are not as fleeting as emotions, which are situationally expressed.

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Appendix A
Stimulus Manipulations

Please imagine that you receive an email from your organization's top-management about a new policy. The following is what you understand from the email.

Business Justification	Justice Justification
Your organization is planning to implement a new diversity policy targeting women. It states that this policy is necessary because the organization's female employees are a valuable resource, and supporting women to thrive fosters a competitive advantage. The email mentioned that this policy will be implemented soon.	*Your organization is planning to implement a new diversity policy targeting women. It states that this policy is necessary because it is a moral imperative to treat everyone in the workforce fairly, and supporting women to thrive fosters equality and fairness. The email mentioned that this policy will be implemented soon.*

Mixed Justification	No Justification
Your organization is planning to implement a new diversity policy targeting women. It states that this policy is necessary because the organization's female employees are a valuable resource and it is a moral imperative to treat everyone in the workforce fairly. Thus, supporting women to thrive fosters equality and fairness as well as a competitive advantage. The email mentioned that this policy will be implemented soon.	*Your organization is planning to implement a new diversity policy targeting women. The email mentioned that this policy will be implemented soon.*

Note. The text that varied by condition is in *italics*.

Appendix B
Structure of the Questionnaire

Page 1: *Consent and anonymity grant*

Welcome! Thank you for participating in this study on employees' perceptions of employee-related policies in their work organization. You will be asked to read a statement about a policy, imagining that it is issued by your own work organization, followed by a series of questions regarding how you would perceive and feel about this. Therefore, we are looking for participants who are currently employed in a company or organization (yet not self-employed).

The study is conducted by researchers from the University of Vienna, Austria, and results are only used for academic purposes.

Before you start answering the questions, please read the following information carefully:

- Participation in the study is voluntary and you may stop taking the questionnaire at any time.

- Your participation will be anonymous. You will not be asked for your name or the name of your employer at any point. Consequently, your answers cannot be traced back to you and will be kept strictly confidential.

- Your information will only be used for scientific purposes. The research does not follow any commercial interest.

- If you have any questions about this survey, please contact the study director (email provided)

- For basic legal questions in connection with the DSGVO/FOG, please contact the Data Protection Officer of the University of Vienna at verarbeitungsverzeichnis@univie.ac.at

In addition, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the data protection authority (e.g. via dsb@dsb.gv.at).

In order for you to participate in this study, we now need your consent. By moving forward, you agree to the statement: "I have been informed about my rights in the context of the survey and would now like to participate."

Page 2: *Stimuli*

Note. Participants received one of the four stimuli mentioned in Appendix A.

Page 3: *Support Measured*

Please indicate what you think of the policy you just read being introduced into your organization by agreeing or disagreeing with the following statements: (1 = Strongly disagree 7 = Strongly agree)

I believe that this diversity policy will contribute positively to my organization.; I am an advocate for this policy's implementation.; I am enthusiastic about this policy's implementation.; I am proud that my organization is implementing this diversity policy.

Page 4: *Level of Support Continued*

How much would you oppose or favor the policy being introduced in your organization? (1 = Strongly oppose 7 = Strongly favor)

Page 5: *Attitude Measured*

Please indicate to what extent you agree to the following statements: (1 = Strongly disagree 7 = Strongly agree)

I think it is good that my organization is implementing this new diversity policy.; I like the idea of my organization's new diversity policy.; I think this new diversity policy is useful for my organization.; I think this new diversity policy will impact my organization positively.

Page 6: *Emotions Measured*

After reading about your organization's new policy, how much do you feel _____ at the current moment:

Disdain; Proud; Angry; Interested; Disgusted; Excited; Upset; Inspired; Annoyed; Determined; Resentful; Enthusiastic

Page 7: *Manipulation Check*

How much attention did you pay to the message regarding the alleged new policy in your organization that was presented before? (1 = No attention 7 = Full attention)

Page 8: *Manipulation Check of Justification*

Which of these options most apply to the alleged new policy that was presented before? Your organization is incorporating the new policy…

*Please tick one option.

(…since it leads to a competitive advantage.; …since it is fair and the organization's moral obligation to do so.; …since it is the organization's moral obligation to do so and leads to a competitive advantage.; …since the government mandated the organization to incorporate diversity in the workforce.; …None of these were used.)

Page 9: *Company Specific Questions*

The following questions are regarding your organization.

Thinking about the organization you work for: How do you perceive your organization's current diversity status (e.g. racial, gender, age, disability, etc.)? (1= Not very diverse 7 = Very diverse)

Page 10: *Company Specific Questions Continued*

Thinking about the organization you work for: How many diversity initiatives do you believe your organization has in place? (1 = No diversity initiatives in place 7 = Many diversity initiatives in place)

Page 11: *Company Specific Questions Continued*

Thinking about the organization you work for: How do you perceive your organization is doing on the diversity matter? (1= Poor 7 = Excellent)

Page 12: *Structural-Workplace and Personal Discrimination*

How much do you agree with the following statements? (1 = Strongly disagree 7 = Strongly agree)

I have sometimes been unfairly singled out because of my gender.; Prejudice exists where I work.; Where I work all people are treated the same, regardless of their gender.; At work I feel socially isolated because of my gender.; At work female employees receive fewer opportunities.; There is *no* discrimination at my present job.; Where I work male employees are treated better than female employees.; At work people are intolerant of females.; Supervisors scrutinize the work of female employees more than that of male employees.; Where I work people of different genders get along well with each other.; At my present job, some people get better treatment because of their gender.; There is discrimination where I work.; At work I am treated poorly because of my gender.; At my present place of employment, people of the other gender do not tell me some job-related information that they share with members of their own group.; Where I work promotions and rewards are not influenced by gender.

Page 13: *Demographic Information and Revocation Opportunity*

What is your age? _____

What is your gender? (1 = Male, 2 = Female, 3 = Other (please specify): _____)

What is your ethnicity? (1 = White or Caucasian, 2 = Hispanic or Latino, 3 = Black or African American, 4 = Asian or Asian American, 5 = American Indian or Alaska Native, 6 = Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, 7 = Another ethnicity)

What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

*If you are currently enrolled in school, please indicate the highest degree you have received. (1 = Less than a high school diploma, 2 = High school degree or equivalent, 3 = Bachelor's degree or equivalent (e.g. BA, BS), 4 = Master's degree or equivalent (e.g. MA, MS, MEd), 5 = Doctorate (e.g. PhD, EdD), 6 = Other (please specify): _____)

What is your position in your organization? (1 = Employee, 2 = Manager, 3 = Upper management, 4 = Director or equivalent)

What is your current employment status? (1 = Employed full-time (35+ hours a week), 2 = Employed part-time (less than 35 hours a week), 3 = Self-employed, 4 = Retired, 5 = Unemployed, 6 = Unable to work)

Comments and possibility of revocation: In the following comment field, you are welcome to leave us comments on this survey. You can also note here if, after completing the questionnaire, you do not want your data to be used for the study. (_____)

Page 14: *Debriefing Information*

Debriefing Information: Thank you for your participation in this study! Your participation is greatly appreciated. Earlier in the consent form you were informed that the purpose of the study was your company's introduction of a new policy. In actuality, this study is about discovering the affects gender targeted diversity policies have on employees. Therefore, different justifications were used to explain why your company was implementing the policy for either diversity or gender-specific purposes, which you read at the beginning of the study. This study strives to understand if a businesses' justification and/or the target of the policy affected employees' overall support for the policy and attitude as well as emotions toward said policy.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, its purpose or procedures,

please feel free to contact the researcher, (email provided)

Appendix C
Additional Information in Tables

Table C1

Contents of Dependent Variables' Descriptives, Factor Loadings and Cronbach's alpha

	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	% Variance
Support: $\alpha = .92$, $M = 5.49$, $SD = 1.31$, $N = 453$		3.83	76.56
I am proud that my organization is implementing this diversity policy.	.90		
I am enthusiastic about this policy's implementation.	.90		
I am an advocate for this policy's implementation.	.87		
I believe that this diversity policy will contribute positively to my organization.	.86		
How much would you oppose or favor the policy being introduced in your organization?	.85		
Attitude: $\alpha = .91$, $M = 5.49$, $SD = 1.34$, $N = 453$		3.18	79.58
I think this new diversity policy is useful for my organization.	.91		
I think this new diversity policy will impact my organization positively.	.90		
I like the idea of my organization's new diversity policy.	.89		
I think it is good that my organization is implementing this new diversity policy.	.88		
Negative Emotions: $\alpha = .95$, $M = 4.70$, $SD = 1.92$, $N = 453$		4.76	79.27
Angry	.92		
Disgusted	.91		
Upset	.91		
Annoyed	.88		
Disdain	.88		
Resentful	.85		

Note. α: Cronbach's alpha, *M*: mean, *SD*: standard deviation, *N*: number of cases.

Table C2

Contents of Control Variables' Descriptives, Factor Loadings and Cronbach's alpha

	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance
Company Specifics: α = .78, *M* = 5.22, *SD* = 1.18, *N* = 453		2.10	69.97
How do you perceive your organization's current diversity status (e.g. racial, gender, age, disability, etc.)?	.85		
How do you perceive your organization is doing on the diversity matter?	.83		
How many diversity initiatives do you believe your organization has in place?	.83		
Structural Discrimination: α = .86, *M* = 3.78, *SD* = 1.82, *N* = 453		2.43	60.70
There is discrimination where I work.	.90		
Prejudice exists where I work.	.90		
At work people are intolerant of females.	.82		
Personal Discrimination: α = .95, *M* = 3.71, *SD* = 1.82, *N* = 453		5.91	73.85
At work I am treated poorly because of my gender.	.89		
Supervisors scrutinize the work of female employees more than that of male employees.	.89		
At work I feel socially isolated because of my gender.	.87		
Where I work male employees are treated better than female employees.	.86		
At work female employees receive fewer opportunities.	.86		
At my present place of employment, people of the other gender do not tell me some job-related information that they share with members of their own group.	.86		
At my present job, some people get better treatment because of their gender.	.85		
I have sometimes been unfairly singled out because of my gender.	.80		

Note. α: Cronbach's alpha, *M*: mean, *SD*: standard deviation, *N*: number of cases.

Table C3

Means, Standard Deviations and Kendall Tau Correlations for Main Variables

Variable	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Gender	.36 (.48)	-										
2. Age	37.82 (10.37)	.01	-									
3. Ethnicity	.68 (.47)	.09	.08*	-								
4. Position	.30 (.46)	-.02	.10**	-.02	-							
5. Education	4.01 (.93)	-.04	-.02	-.18**	.09	-						
6. Structural Discrimination	3.78 (1.82)	.01	-.01	-.07	.03	.25**	-					
7. Personal Discrimination	3.71 (1.82)	.04	-01	-.05	.01	.28**	.72**	-				
8. Company Specifics	5.22 (1.31)	.01	.07*	-.08	.09*	.16**	.15**	.20**	-			
9. Support	5.49 (1.31)	.08*	.01	-.08	.05	-.05	.01	.04	.26**	-		
10. Attitude	5.49 (1.34)	.06	-.01	-.07	.04	-.04	-.02	.01	.23**	.79**	-	
11. Negative Emotions	4.70 (1.92)	.08*	.01	.01	-.03	-.14**	-.09**	-.11**	.03	.17**	.18**	-

Note. $N = 453$. Gender: 0 = male, 1 = female; Ethnicity: 0 = non-white, 1 = white; Position: 0 = employee level, 1 = managerial level; Education: 1 = less than h.s. to 6 = doctorate.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$, two-tailed.

Abstract

This study aims to identify whether or not a business's justification for implementing a gender-targeted policy impacts employees' support, attitude and emotion toward said policy. Diversity management literature lays the foundation for this study's utilization of both the justice and business justifications. Subsequently, literature on these justifications further certify their place in organizations' internal gender-based communication. Furthermore, male backlash literature explains how some men exhibit resistance toward women and their progression in the workplace. Fundamentally, this study connects these two bodies of literature through an online experimental survey focused on common gender equality justifications (i.e. business, justice and a combination of the two), and backlash indicators addressing the differences experienced by both men and women relative to a gender equalizing policy. With a final sample of N = 453 employees, the t-tests indicated women's higher support and more auspicious attitudes toward a new gender policy, while men exhibited resistance through their overall lesser acceptance. Although gender was predicted to moderate the relationship between the policy's justification and employee's support as well as backlash indicators (i.e. attitude and emotion), the regression analyses did not signify gender's moderation nor a significant difference between the justifications, which was noteworthy. Furthermore, this research further established the justice justification's place compared to other justifications, which future researchers can now expand upon.

Keywords: justification, gender, backlash, workplace diversity policy

Abstract

Ziel dieser Studie ist herauszufinden, ob die Rechtfertigung eines Unternehmens für die Implementierung einer geschlechtsspezifischen Initiative die Unterstützung, die Einstellung und die Emotionen der Mitarbeiter gegenüber dieser Initiative beeinflusst. Basierend auf Literatur zum Diversitätsmanagement betrachtet diese Studie Diversitätsinitiativen aus sowohl gerechtigkeits- als auch aus wirtschaftlichen Gesichtspunkten. Darüber hinaus erklärt die Literatur zum männlichen Backlash, dass einige Männer Widerstand gegen Frauen und deren Weiterentwicklung am Arbeitsplatz zeigen. Diese Studie verbindet diese beiden Ansätze der Literatur durch eine experimentelle Online-Umfrage, die sich auf gängige Rechtfertigungsgründe für die Gleichstellung der Geschlechter (d. h. wirtschaftliche Gründe, Gerechtigkeitsgründe und eine Kombination aus beiden) konzentriert, sowie auf Backlash-Indikatoren, die sich mit den Unterschieden in der Wahrnehmung der Gleichstellungsinitiativen befassen, sowohl bei Männern als auch bei Frauen. Bei einer Stichprobe von $N = 453$ Mitarbeitern zeigten die t-Tests, dass Frauen eine positivere Einstellung gegenüber einer neuen Gleichstellungsinitiativen hatten und eine solche mehr unterstützten, während Männer eher Widerstand zeigten, was sich in ihrer insgesamt geringeren Akzeptanz widerspiegelte. Obwohl vermutet wurde, dass das Geschlecht die Beziehung zwischen der Rechtfertigung der Initiative und der Unterstützung der Mitarbeiter sowie den Indikatoren für die Gegenreaktion (d.h. Einstellung und Emotion) moderieren würde, zeigten die Regressionsanalysen weder eine Moderation des Geschlechts noch einen signifikanten Unterschied zwischen den Rechtfertigungen.

Schlagwörter: Rechtfertigung, Geschlecht, Backlash, Diversitätsinitiative am Arbeitsplatz