The Influence of Gender-Nonconformity and Gender on Ratings

of Job Applicants

Social, Health & Organizational Psychology

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#### Abstract

This thesis investigates the possible influence of gender non-conformity on applicants' chances in the job market and whether this effect is different for gender non-conforming men than for gender non-conforming women. Gender non-conformity means that a person does not look or act in accordance with cultural norms about gender roles. A sample of anonymous participants (n = 243) evaluated the online CV of a job applicant who had ostensibly applied for a job as a junior lawyer. All participants received a CV that was the same in all aspects except the picture. Participants were randomly assigned either a picture of a gender conforming woman, a gender non-conforming woman, a gender conforming man, or a gender non-conforming man. Participants rated the applicant's competence and hireability and determined the amount of salary they would offer the applicant. Participant scores on modern sexism and endorsement of traditional masculinity were also measured, because it was hypothesized that these could be moderators for gender specific non-conformity bias. Gender non-conformity and gender interacted significantly for hireability and for offered salary. Gender conform men are seen as more hirable than gender conform women, while there is no difference in hireability between gender non-conform applicants. Gender non-conform women are also seen as more hirable than gender conform women. Gender conform men are offered significantly more salary than gender non-conform men. Sexism and endorsement of traditional masculinity were not found to interact with gender or gender non-conformity.

Keywords: gender non-conformity; hireability; job discrimination

The Influence of Gender-Nonconformity and Sex on Ratings of Job Applicants

Judging job applications requires one to make important decisions based on relatively little information. During the process, explicit and implicit factors may contribute to the decision-making process of the person judging the hireability of the candidate. The effect of gender in the hiring process is already well-known: men have an advantage over women (Moss-Racusin, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham, & Handelsman, 2012). However, the way gender is expressed also influences how people are treated (Gordon & Meyer, 2008). This thesis investigates the influence that gender non-conformity has on the chances of an applicant in the job market and if this effect is different for gender non-conforming men than for gender non-conforming women. If this is the case, it means that attention should be brought to this issue, so that measures can be taken to decrease the impact of the stigma and make the job market fairer for more individuals.

When studying gender from a social perspective, often a distinction is made between gender and sex. Sex refers to the biology of a body, while gender refers to a set of behaviors, including appearance, thoughts, personality and interests, that have been socially constructed by a culture (Butler, 1988). Supporters of the idea that gender and sex are two separate aspects of a person argue that the differences in behavior between the sexes are entirely determined by upbringing and cultural notions about how a member of a certain sex is supposed to act (Butler, 1988). The manner in which an individual is performing their gender is called *gender expression*. Examples of gender expression are wearing makeup or enjoying cars. The two sets of gender expression that are traditionally linked to the male and female gender are called *gender roles*. Wearing makeup is part of the female gender role and enjoying cars is part of the male gender role. People can choose what parts of the dominant conventions of their gender they choose to perform. When a part of the gender expression of a person, either in behavior and/or appearance, does not follow the cultural norms about their

gender role, this can be categorized as *gender non-conforming* or 'GNC' (Gordon & Meyer, 2008). In Western culture both a man wearing make-up and a woman being excited about cars would be considered as gender non-conforming. In every culture, there are norms about socially acceptable ways to express one's gender. A classic survey of 110 different cultures shows that in all of them, boys and girls are expected to have or acquire sex-specific skills, self-concepts and personality attributes (Barry, Bacon, & Child, 1957). However, even though it is expected that people adhere to gender roles, in all cultures many people, to some extent, do not conform to the preconceived notions of how gender is supposed to be performed.

It is important to note that gender non-conformity does not refer to transgender individuals. A person who is transgender does not identify with the gender that they were assigned at birth and instead identifies with a different gender (Koch & Bales, 2008). A person who is gender non-conforming performs their gender in a way that is not the cultural norm (Gordon & Meyer, 2008). Transgender people can therefore be both gender nonconforming if they choose to not perform their identified gender according to cultural norms, and also if they do express their gender in accordance with cultural norms about their actual gender. The same goes for cisgender people, who can either conform or not conform to their gender expression according to cultural norms. Being trans- or cisgender is a matter of gender identity, while gender non-conformity is a matter of gender expression.

Gender non-conforming people face prejudice (Gordon & Meyer, 2008). A study found that young people who are non-conforming to their gender role face more prejudice when they are growing up, and are more likely to be the target of violence compared to people who conform to their gender in a socially acceptable way (Wyss, 2004). In a sample of Dutch youth and young adults, it was found that gender non-conformity predicts lower psychological wellbeing, and was related to perceived experiences of stigmatization, partially via homophobic name calling (Baams, Beek, Hille, Zevenbergen, & Bos, 2013; van Beusekom, Baams, Bos, Overbeek, & Sandfort, 2016).

This thesis focuses on the effect of gender and gender non-conformity on the hiring process. The effect of gender on hireability is already well established in literature. In a study done by Corinne Moss-Racusin et al. (2012) it was found that when people are asked to judge CVs on hireability where the only difference is a female or a male name, people strongly favor the male CV. They also judge the male applicant as more competent and offer him higher starting salaries. However, because gender non-conforming people face prejudice, it is also reasonable to assume that when people are applying for a job, they are not only partly judged on their gender, but also on their performance of the gender. This can ultimately determine whether they get hired for a job.

In a Rule, Bjornsdottir, Tskhay, and Ambady (2016) study, it was found that perceivers rated gay and straight males as more suited for professions that fit with their social group stereotype (nurses, pediatricians, and English teachers vs. engineers, managers, surgeons, and math teachers). These evaluations were not based on explicitly stated sexual orientations, but on assumptions based on photos of their faces and likely based on perceived gender non-conformity. In a different study, about political candidates, it was found that voters prefer males for tasks they perceive as more stereotypically masculine and female candidates for more stereotypically feminine tasks. However, when voters perceive a female candidate as masculine, they prefer masculine tasks for her and they prefer feminine tasks for more feminine male candidates (Lammers, Gordijn, & Otten, 2009). This implies that people do not only pay attention to gender, but also to gender expression when they are judging someone for a position.

Both gender non-conforming women and gender non-conforming men face prejudice, though it manifests in different ways. For gender non-conforming women, there is the socalled backlash effect where women who present as very competent are seen as breaking gender norms (Rudman & Phelan, 2008). A competent woman is evaluated as less likeable than an equally competent male, which decreases her hireability compared to his. This effect could mean that women who are actively breaking other gender norms, such as appearance, are therefore also judged less favorably on social outcomes and thus as less hirable than both gender conform men and women. This notion is corroborated by findings that suggest that women are more likely to be evaluated negatively than men, when their looks do not conform to gender role stereotypes (Oh, Dotsch, Porter, & Todorov, 2017).

However, gender non-conforming men also face discrimination that is specific to their gender in combination with their gender non-conformity. According to a study by Levy, Taylor, & Gelman (1995), men who engage in gender atypical expression often face more severe backlash than women. The tolerance for gender non-conformity for women in social conventions and moral rules increased with their age, adult women were more allowed to be masculine than female children, though tolerance for non-conformity in physical appearance stayed low. However, the tolerance for gender non-conformity for men stayed consistently low amongst all dimensions. This phenomenon can be corroborated by the theory of precarious manhood, which refers to the theory that masculinity is something that is easier taken away from men than femininity is from women, which means it requires more constant proof and validation (Vandello, Bosson, Cohen, Burnaford, & Weaver, 2008). Womanhood is often perceived as something innate, while manhood is a construct that requires constant proof through action. This means that a woman has to engage in relatively little active gender expression to be perceived as feminine, while a man has to engage in more active gender expression to be considered masculine. This is why it is relatively easier for a man to be perceived as gender non-conforming than for a woman.

Because there are theories about gender non-conforming men and women that argue in different directions for who faces more prejudice, it is not immediately clear which gender would be rated more negatively on hireability. It is likely that the judgement for both parties will run through different dynamics: gender non-conforming women experience a backlash effect, while gender non-conforming men are relatively quicker seen as gender nonconforming, but it is difficult to say which effect will dominate. Hence, we expect that the gender non-conformity effect will negate the gender effect: gender conform men will be rated more hirable than gender conform women, but gender non-conform men and women will be rated the same, or at least more similar.

**Hypothesis 1:** We expect that gender non-conforming applicants will be rated more negatively on their CV than gender conforming applicants in terms of hireability, perceived competence and salary offers. We expect a direct effect of conformity (conforming vs. nonconforming) on hireability, with conforming applicants receiving a higher score on hireability than people who are non-conforming.

**Hypothesis 2:** We expect that gender non-conforming men will be rated the same on their CV as gender non-conforming women in terms of hireability, perceived competence and salary offers. Gender conforming men will be rated higher than gender conforming women in terms of hireability, perceived competence and salary offers, because of the gender effect found in Moss-Racusin et al. (2012).

**Hypothesis 3:** We also expect a three-way interaction between gender conformity and sexism (high vs. low sexism) and a three-way interaction between gender conformity and endorsement of traditional masculinity (high vs. low endorsement) on ratings of hireability, perceived competence and salary offers. Participants who score high on sexism will rate gender non-conform women more negatively than gender conform women than participants who score low on sexism. Participants who score high on sexism will give the same low score

to gender non-conforming women and men. Participants who score low on sexism will give the non-conforming applicants a higher score. Participants who score high on endorsement of traditional masculinity will rate gender non-conforming men more negatively than gender conforming men than participants who score low on endorsement of traditional masculinity and will give both women the same score.

#### Method

#### **Participants**

A power analysis that assumes that we will find a small to moderate effect size of r = 0.12 was conducted, based on the study conducted by Rule et al. (2016, *N*=201), the study that compared the hireability ratings for certain jobs between men who were perceived as gay and men who were perceived as straight based only on a picture of their face. With an alpha of 0.05 and a power of 0.80, the smallest projected sample size needed for a 2x2 MANOVA with this effect size is N = 120 for this simplest between group comparison. The largest projected sample size, for a 2x2x2 MANCOVA is N = 967.

The link for the questionnaire was disseminated via social media and the personal contacts of the researchers. The questionnaire was online for two weeks, from April 25<sup>th</sup> to May 9<sup>th</sup>, during which period the data was collected. Participation in the questionnaire, which took about 20 minutes to complete, was without reward. 410 participants consented to participate in the survey, though only 209 participants finished the survey to the end, defined by a 100% or 98% completion rate, which means there are 202 incomplete responses. 243 participants filled out a sufficient number of questions to be used for the analyses in the current study. The demographic questions about the participants were asked at the end of the survey, which means that most participants who did not finish the questionnaire, did not indicate their demographic information.

Of the 207 participants who filled out the question about sex assigned at birth, 60 were male assigned at birth (29.0%), 147 were female assigned at birth (71.0%) and 0 were intersex. The mean age of the participants was 37.14 years (*SD*=15.4), with 41.24 years (*SD*=15.8) as the mean age for men and 35.54 years (*SD*=15.0) as the mean age for women. The minimum age of respondents was 19 years and the maximum age was 77. 6 participants indicated they were transgender or gender fluid and 2 indicated they preferred to self-describe their gender identity. 178 participants indicated their sexuality as heterosexual and 28 as LGB+. 128 participants indicated university (Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs) as their highest completed education level, 45 indicated HBO, 18 indicated VWO and 14 indicated either MBO, HAVO or VMBO. One participant indicated in the comments that they had filled out the wrong education level, so their data was altered manually accordingly. When excluding all LGBT+ participants, leaving only cisgender heterosexual participants, the group was composed of 54 males (31.8%) and 116 females (68.2%).

The majority of participants who quit the survey early, did so right after giving consent or on the second page where the CV was shown, which means they did not fill out any of the questions in the questionnaires (N= 151). 51 participants filled out some of the questions, but not all, and their data will be used in the analysis to the point where they stopped answering, which makes the sample size 243 for the analysis of H1and H2 and the sample size 220 for the analysis of H3. The participants who did not fill out any of the questions were excluded from the analysis. Missing values were 39.2 % of the data and a missing value analysis indicated they were randomly distributed across CV conditions.

### Procedure

The participants were invited with a link to take part in an online survey in which they were asked to rate job applicants based on their CV. Before the questionnaire was started, information about the researchers was provided, participants were asked to give informed

consent, were informed that they were allowed to stop at any time and were given information about the anonymization of the data. They were also given the email address of the Utrecht University ethical committee, where they could file complaints about the study, if any. The participants could only participate if they were 18 years or older. After obtaining informed consent, the participant was instructed to read a fake job ad looking for applicants for a job of junior lawyer, which was written by one of the researchers. Afterwards, they were randomly assigned to see one of the four CVs (gender non-conforming woman, gender-conforming woman, gender non-conforming man, gender conforming man). The four versions of the CVs were identical apart from the differing photos (see Materials). Of the participants who filled out at least one of the gender non-conforming condition, 55 were assigned to the male gender conforming condition and 64 were assigned to the male gender non-conforming condition.

The participants knew that the experiment was to determine what people look at when judging CVs but were not aware that the pictures on the CV were manipulated and were not aware that the purpose of the study was to examine the effect of gender non-conformity on applicant evaluations. They were then asked about their perceived hireability of the applicant through three different questions. They were also asked about perceived applicant competence through three different questions and were asked to choose an appropriate starting salary for the applicant. Next, the participants were instructed to fill out the Modern Sexism Scale and the Meanings of Adolescent Masculinity Scale (Oransky & Fisher, 2009; Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995). Then, the participants were asked control questions about the picture they had seen on the CV and about the job of junior lawyer. Finally, the participants were asked about their demographics and were given the option to leave a comment. Because the procedure was entirely anonymous, it was not possible to contact the participants afterwards

for a debriefing. Due to the possibility of participants discussing the research purpose with future participants, it was also decided not to reveal the true purpose of the study at the end. **Materials** 

**Job Vacancy.** The participants of the study were asked to read a vacancy ad for the position of junior lawyer. This ad was written by the researchers and was based on several different vacancy ads for jobs as junior lawyer (see appendix A).

**CVs.** The CVs are of fictional applicants for a job as a lawyer, a job that in the Netherlands has an equal number of males and females working in the field, which makes it a job that is not explicitly gendered. The name of the fake applicant was Robin Jansen, a name which is both gender neutral and relatively common, which means participants will be less likely to negatively judge the applicants on unfamiliar names (Cotton, O'Neil, & Griffin, 2008). There were four versions of the CV: two with a gender conforming person (man or woman) and two with a gender non-conforming person (man or woman). The CVs included a manipulated photo, provided by a study by Jones et al. (2018). In this study, pictures of a man and a woman have been manipulated to look more feminine or more masculine. This was done by manufacturing a male and female prototype, through averaging the shape, color, and texture information from images of 50 young white men and women and merging these prototypes with symmetrized faces of either men or women. This resulted in masculinized and feminized versions of the original faces that differed in sexually dimorphic shape characteristics only. The faces from the Jones database that were chosen for this study were model 'Herbert' and model 'Irena', which were picked by the researchers, based on our own perceptions, for being about equally attractive. The male and the female face that have been manipulated to look more like the other gender are taken as gender non-conforming, i.e. the masculinized female face and the feminized male face. All faces were photoshopped on the same body, wearing neutral professional attire (see appendix B).

#### Measures

**Hireability.** Hireability was assessed on a three-item scale, as used the Moss-Racusin et al. (2012) study: "How likely would you be to invite the applicant to interview for the job?", "How likely would you be to hire the applicant for the job?" and "How likely do you think it is that the applicant was actually hired for the job they applied for?". Response options were 1 - not at all, 2 - not, 3 - rather not, 4 - hard to say, 5 - rather yes, 6 - yes and 7 - very much. Items were averaged to compute the student hireability scale, such that higher score on the scale reflected greater perceived hireability [a= 0.904] (see appendix C).

**Competence.** Competence was also assessed on a three-item scale, as used in the Moss-Racusin et al. (2012) study: "Did the applicant strike you as competent?", "How likely is it that the applicant has the necessary skills for this job?" and "How qualified do you think the applicant is?" Response options were on the same scale as hireability. These questions were averaged to compute the competence score, such that a higher score meant a greater perceived competence [a=0.924] (see appendix C).

**Salary.** The participant was asked to select what they thought was an appropriate starting salary for the applicant, where the middle option was the average starting salary for junior lawyers in the Netherlands:  $\in$ 1700,  $\in$ 2000,  $\in$ 2300,  $\in$ 2600,  $\in$ 2900,  $\in$ 3200,  $\in$ 3500 and  $\in$ 3800 (see appendix C).

**Modern sexism.** Modern sexism was measured on an eight-item scale, based on The Old-Fashioned and Modern Sexism scale, developed by Swim et al. (1995). In this scale, sexism is characterized by continued denial of discrimination against women, antagonism against women's demands and a lack of support for policies designed to help women. The Modern Sexism Scale originally measured both modern (with items such as "Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the United States") and old-fashioned sexism (with items such as "Women are generally not as smart as men"), but to prevent the questionnaire

from taking too long for the participants, the decision was made to only measure modern sexism, as it is most relevant to the current study. The questions were also tailored to the Netherlands, since this is the country that is most relevant to the majority of participants (i.e., "Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the United States" was changed into "Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the Netherlands"). Items were measured on a 7-point scale (*'not at all'* to *'very much'*) and were averaged to compute the modern sexism score, such that a lower score on the scale reflected higher participant sexism [a= 0.833]. Examples of questions were "Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the Netherlands" is no longer a problem in the Netherlands to sexual discrimination" and "It is rare to see women treated in a sexist manner on television\*" in which questions marked with an asterisk are coded in reverse (see appendix C).

**Endorsement of traditional masculinity.** The endorsement of traditional masculinity was measured with a seventeen-item scale, based on The Meanings of Adolescent Masculinity scale (Oransky & Fisher, 2009). This scale was developed to assess the endorsement of male gender norms in adolescent boys, through interview data and focus group discussions. In this scale, male gender norms are defined as constant effort, emotional restriction, heterosexism, and social teasing. The Meanings of Adolescent Masculinity scale was also determined to be too long and was also shortened by removing questions with the lowest factor loading from each subscale: three from the first three subscales, and two from the last subscale, social teasing, because it was significantly shorter than the others, which lead to eleven questions being removed in total. Items were measured on a 7-point scale (*'not at all'* to *'very much'*) and were averaged to compute the endorsement of masculinity score, such that a higher score on the scale reflected higher endorsement of traditional masculinity [a= 0.898]. Examples of questions were "A guy must always appear confident even if he isn't", "It is not important for

guys to listen to each other's problems" and "A guy who wears nail polish is hard to take seriously" (see appendix C).

**Manipulation checks and control variables.** To test the assumption that the pictures used were indeed read as masculine or feminine versions of faces, at the end of the study, the participants were asked to rate the face they had previously seen on the CV on how feminine and masculine they seemed to them on a 7-point scale (*'not at all'* to *'very much'*). To test the assumption that both face-bases used were of equal attractiveness, and because attractiveness can influence the judgement of their hireability by the participants, the participants were also asked to rate the face they had just seen on attractiveness on the same scale (Quereshi & Kay, 2006).

#### Results

### **Testing assumptions**

The assumption that the job of junior lawyer is seen as gender neutral in the Netherlands is tested with a repeated measures ANOVA where it was tested if a significant difference existed between the answers to the question how masculine the job of junior lawyer seemed to the participant and the answers to the question of how feminine the job of junior lawyer seemed to the participant. Participants gave significantly different scores on the masculinity of the junior lawyer job [M= 4.64, SD = 2.07] as to the femininity of the job of junior lawyer [M= 4.44, SD=1.97], F (1, 209) = 5.02, p=0.029]. This means people found the job of junior lawyer significantly more masculine than feminine and the assumption of equal scores was violated.

The assumptions that the four CV pictures that were used were indeed read as more or less feminine or masculine by the participants when they were gender non-conforming or not was tested, as well as the assumption that the base faces were of equal attractiveness. The femininity of the face was tested with a 2x2 ANOVA with femininity as the dependent

variable. There was a significant main effect for gender [F(1,170) = 129.6, p<0.001], a significant main effect for conformity [F(1,170) = 5.69, p=0.018] and a significant interaction [F(1,170) = 34.4, p<0.001]. All faces were rated significantly different on femininity, with the gender conforming woman rated the most feminine [M=5.25, SD=0.99], followed by the gender non-conforming woman [M=4.65, SD=1.13], followed by the gender non-conforming man [M=3.70, SD=1.34], followed by the gender conforming man [M=2.28, SD=1.01]. The masculinity of the faces, tested in the same way, had a significant main effect for gender [F(1,170) = 38.7, p<0.001], but not for conformity. There was a significant interaction between gender and conformity [F(1,170) = 23.1, p<0.001]. The gender conforming man is rated most masculine [M=5.40, SD=0.181], followed by the gender non-conforming faces [M=4.40, SD=0.190] and [M=4.14, SD=0.183], followed by the gender conformity is rated significantly different for both faces.

To test for equal attractiveness, a 2x2 ANOVA was performed, with the dependent variable being the attractiveness score each picture had received in the study (see figure 1).



Figure 1: Score of attractiveness for men and women on a scale of 1 to 7. The blue line represents gender conforming applicants and the red line represents gender non-conforming applicants.

Both main effects were significant. Women [M=4.48, SD=1.51] received higher scores on attractiveness than men [M=3.69, SD=1.34] [F(1, 209) =10.1, p=0.002] and gender conforming people [M=4.44, SD=1.41] received higher scores than gender non-conforming people [M=3.76, SD=1.48] [F(1,209) =14.1, p<0.001]. The interaction between gender and conformity was not significant. There was no significant difference in attractiveness between the gender conforming male and female or between the gender non-conforming male and female.

Through making three boxplots of the scores on hireability, competence and salary offers, the outliers were identified. The analysis of H1 and H2 will be performed twice: once with the outliers included and once with the outliers removed. Levene's test indicated equal variances (F= 0.837, p=0.475). A Shapiro-Wilk test indicates that there is no significant normal distribution in the scores on dependent variables hireability (W=0.939, p<0.001), competence (W=0.939, p<0.001) and salary (W=0.837, p<0.001). This means the assumption of normality is violated. The data was normalized by reflecting and computing the logarithm of the dependent variables hireability, competence and salary.

#### Main Analyses

Table 1

Averages and Standard Deviations of the Core Variables						
Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation				
Hireability	5.01	1.18				
Salary	4.48	1.64				
Competence	5.22	1.09				
Modern sexism	5.44	1.17				
Endorsement of traditional masculinity	3.25	1.60				

Averages and Standard Deviations of the Core Variables

*Note.* Scores taken on a scale of 1 to 7.

Table 2								
Pearson correlations of the Core Variables and Significance								
Variable		<u>Hireability</u>	Qualified	<u>Salary</u>	Modern	Endorsement		
					sexism	of traditional		
						masculinity		
Hireability	Pearson	х	$.827^{**}$	.273**	.127	057		
	Correlation							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	Х	.000	.000	.060	.399		
Competence	Pearson	$.827^{**}$	Х	.299**	.117	030		
	Correlation							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	Х	.000	.082	.658		
Salary	Pearson	.273**	.299**	Х	.169*	044		
	Correlation							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	Х	.013	.527		
Modern sexism	Pearson	.127	.117	.169*	Х	386**		
	Correlation							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.060	.082	.013	Х	.000		
Endorsement of	Pearson	057	030	044	386**	Х		
traditional	Correlation							
masculinity	Sig. (2-tailed)	.399	.658	.527	.000	Х		

Note. \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Hireability scores were subjected to 2x2 MANOVA with gender and conformity.

Simple main effects of gender or non-conformity on hireability showed no significance. There was, however, a significant interaction effect of sex and gender conformity on hireability [F (1, 250) = 4.41, p = 0.037] (see figure 2). Gender conforming women [M=4.80, SD= 1.19] scored significantly lower on hireability than gender conforming men [M = 5.25, SD = 1.06]. There was no significant difference on hireability between gender non-conforming men and women, or any of the other groups.



Figure 2: Score of hireability for men and women on a scale of 1 to 7. The blue line represents gender conforming applicants and the red line represents gender non-conforming applicants.

The 2x2 MANOVA for perceived competence was not significant for the simple main effects of gender or conformity. Interaction between the two variables gender and conformity also showed no significance. The effect of gender expression on salary offers was also not significant for the simple main effects of gender or conformity. The interaction between the two variables gender and conformity also showed no significance. Excluding the outliers from the analysis did not change these results.

The 2x2 MANOVA was performed a second time, this time excluding participants who were not cisgender or heterosexual, to determine if this group had significantly influenced the outcome. The assumptions were tested again and did not have significantly different outcomes. In this subgroup too, the main effects of conformity and gender on hireability were not significant and the interaction between the two variables gender and conformity was significant [F(1, 170) = 7.48, p = 0.007] (see figure 3). Gender conforming females [M=4.74, SD= 1.19] still scored significantly lower on hireability than gender conforming males [M=5.38, SD=0.896]. Gender non-conforming women [M=5.19, SD=1.23] now scored significantly higher than gender conforming women [M= 4.74, SD= 1.19]. There was still not a significant difference for hireability between gender non-conforming men and women, or gender conforming and non-conforming men.



*Figure 3: Score of hireability for men and women, given by cisgender heterosexual participants only, on a scale of 1 to 7. The blue line represents gender conforming applicants and the red line represents gender non-conforming applicants.* 

The effect of gender conformity on perceived competence was still not significant for the main effects or interaction between the two variables gender and conformity. The main effects of gender and conformity on salary offers were also still not significant. However, the interaction of conformity and gender for salary offers was now significant [F(1, 184) = 4.80, p = 0.030]. Gender conforming men [M=4.97, SD=1.21] scored significantly higher on salary offers than gender non-conforming men [M=4.28, SD= 1.57]. There were no significant differences in salary offers between any of the other applicants.



*Figure 4: Score of competence for men and women, given by cisgender heterosexual participants only, on a scale of 1 to 7. The blue line represents gender conforming applicants and the red line represents gender non-conforming applicants.* 



*Figure 5: Score of salary offers for men and women, given by cisgender heterosexual participants only, on a scale of 1 to 7. The blue line represents gender conforming applicants and the red line represents gender non-conforming applicants.* 

To test the third hypothesis (H3), two 2x2x2 ANOVA analyses are performed, comparing between applicant gender, conformity, and sexism scores on the ratings of hireability, competence and salary, and testing a three-way interaction between applicant gender, conformity and endorsement of traditional masculinity on the ratings of hireability, competence and salary. LGBT participants were excluded for these analyses.

In the 2x2x2 MANOVA with sexism scores, there are no significant main effects for gender, conformity, or sexism score on hireability score. There were also no significant interactions between the variables. There was also no significant main effect for gender,

conformity, or endorsement of traditional masculinity on hireabilty score, nor significant interactions.

There were no significant effects for gender, conformity, or sexism score on competence score, nor significant interactions. No significant main effects were found for gender, conformity, or endorsement of traditional masculinity on competence score, nor significant interactions.

There were no significant main effects for gender, conformity, or sexism score on salary offers. There were also no significant interactions. There was no significant main effect for gender, conformity, or endorsement of traditional masculinity on salary offers, nor significant interactions.

#### Attractiveness as covariate

The analyses were performed again with the attractiveness score of the applicants as a covariate. All analyses were performed on the cisgender heterosexual sample only. The 2x2 gender and conformity MANCOVA with hireability as the dependent variable had similar outcomes as the MANOVA: the main effect for gender and conformity were both not significant and the interaction between gender conformity was [F(1, 170) = 6.54, p = 0.011]. Gender conforming females [M=4.74, SD= 1.19] still scored significantly lower on hireability than gender conforming males [M=5.38, SD=0.896]. Gender non-conforming women [M= 4.74, SD= 1.19] and there was still not a significant difference for hireability between gender non-conforming men. Attractiveness of the applicant was a significant covariate [F(1, 170) = 4.28, p = 0.040] in this analysis for hireability, which means attractiveness significantly predicts for hireability.

A 2x2 gender and conformity MANCOVA with competence as the dependent variable also yielded the same results as the MANOVA. Both the main effects and the interaction effect for gender and conformity for perceived competence of the applicants were insignificant. However, attractiveness of the applicant was again a significant covariate [F (1, 170) = 6.35, p = 0.013], which means attractiveness significantly predicts for competence score too.

A 2x2 gender and conformity MANCOVA with salary offer as the dependent variable and attractiveness as a covariate also yielded the same significance results as the MANOVA. Both main effects were insignificant, but there was a significant interaction between gender and conformity [F(1, 166) = 4.47, p = 0.036]. However, when computing the pairwise comparisons, there were no significant differences between any of the groups. This is likely due to the low sample size which causes this analysis to be underpowered when adding a covariate. When pairwise comparison tests are statistically underpowered, it is less likely to detect significant differences (Klockars & Sax, 1986). Attractiveness of the applicant was not a significant covariate for salary offers.

A 2x2x2 gender, conformity and sexism score MANCOVA with hireability as the dependent variable and attractiveness as a covariate gave insignificant results for the main effects, the interactions and the covariate. A 2x2x2 gender, conformity and endorsement of traditional masculinity MANCOVA with hireability as the dependent variable and attractiveness as a covariate also gave insignificant results for the main effects, the interactions and the covariate.

A 2x2x2 gender, conformity and sexism score MANCOVA with competence as the dependent variable and attractiveness as a covariate gave insignificant results for the main effects and the interactions. The covariate attractiveness was significant [F(1, 159) = 5.03, p = 0.026] which means attractiveness still significantly predicts for competence score. A 2x2x2 gender, conformity and endorsement of traditional masculinity MANCOVA with hireability as the dependent variable and attractiveness as a covariate also gave insignificant results for

the main effects and the interactions. The covariate attractiveness was again significant [F(1, 160) = 5.95, p = 0.016].

A 2x2x2 gender, conformity and sexism score MANCOVA with salary offer as the dependent variable and attractiveness as a covariate gave insignificant results for the main effects and the interactions. A 2x2x2 gender, conformity and endorsement of traditional masculinity MANCOVA with salary offers as the dependent variable and attractiveness as a covariate also gave insignificant results for the main effects, the interactions and the covariate.

#### Discussion

The main aim of this study was to investigate the effect of gender non-conformity in men and women on their perceived hireability, competence and salary offers.

Hypothesis 1 stated that a gender non-conforming applicant is rated more negatively on their CV than gender conforming people in terms of hireability, perceived competence and salary offers. This hypothesis was not supported by the data. When analyzing the whole sample, there are no significant differences in perceived hireability, competence and salary offers between gender conforming and gender non-conforming applicants. The main analysis, analyzing the sample with LGBT participants excluded, so that the sample consists only of straight cisgender people, shows that the gender conforming women score significantly lower than the gender non-conforming women on hireability. This contradicts the literature that found that there is significant prejudice against gender non-conforming people, because in the findings of this study, the gender non-conforming woman is preferred over the gender conforming woman (Gordon & Meyer, 2008). The score on perceived competence is not significantly different. When comparing within the genders, gender non-conforming men score significantly lower on salary offers than gender conforming men but score the same on hireability and perceived competence. This finding is supported by literature that says there is prejudice against gender non-conforming people, because gender conforming men are preferred over gender non-conforming men (Gordon & Meyer, 2008).

Hypothesis 2 stated that gender non-conforming men are rated the same on their CV as gender non-conforming women in terms of hireability, perceived competence and salary offers, while gender conforming men would score significantly higher than gender conforming women. This hypothesis can be half supported. No significant differences have been found in the scores of hireability, perceived competence and salary offers between gender non-conforming men and women. Gender conform women are seen as significantly less hirable than gender conform men, but they receive the same scores for competence and salary offers. This contradicts the findings in the Moss-Racusin et al. (2012) study, in which a significant difference was found for all three outcomes.

Hypothesis 3 stated that sexism and endorsement of traditional masculinity both interact with scores of hireability, perceived competence and salary offers, predicting that participants who score high on sexism would rate gender non-conform women more negatively and participants to score high on endorsement of traditional masculinity would rate gender non-conform men more negatively. This hypothesis cannot be supported. No significant interactions were found between sexism scores or endorsement of traditional masculinity of the participants and their given scores on hireability, perceived competence and salary offers. The findings that no significant interaction was found with endorsement of traditional masculinity contradicts the precarious manhood theory, which predicted that high endorsement of traditional masculinity would translate to a greater preference for gender conforming men as opposed to gender non-conforming men (Vandello & Bosson, 2013).

There were two significant main effects for attractiveness of the applicants: females were seen as significantly more attractive than men and conforming people were seen as significantly more attractive than non-conforming people. When interpreting the results of the MANCOVA with attractiveness as a covariate, it is important to keep in mind that the limited sample size causes this analysis to be underpowered and can therefore not be used to reach a conclusive analysis. The analysis can however give an idea about directional tendencies in terms of finding the relation between scores of hireability, perceived competence and salary offers and score of attractiveness of the applicant. Adding attractiveness as a covariate does not change the significance of any of the results for the research questions. It was however found that attractiveness is a significant covariate for hireability score and competence.

#### Reflection

There are several possible explanations for the outcome of the study. This study measured the effect of gender non-conformity using manipulated pictures, as used in the Jones et al. (2018) study. However, gender non-conformity is not found in appearance only, but can also be found in behavior. This means that it is possible that prejudice on gender nonconformity has a different effect on hireability, competence or salary offers when looking at a picture only. For example, the backlash effect as found by Rudman & Phelan (2008) was about gender non-conform behavior only and not about appearance. However, in the Oh et al. (2017) study, it was found that trustworthiness and dominance are negatively correlated for impressions of female faces and they are judged more negatively when their looks do not conform to gender stereotypes. The job of lawyer is often seen as a high-competence, lowwarmth profession, which means the negative rating on trustworthiness might not have affected the gender non-conforming woman as much (Fiske & Dupree, 2014).

We also found that the participants did not see the job of junior lawyer as gender neutral but found it more masculine than feminine. This could therefore explain why the gender conforming man was seen as more hirable for the job than the gender conforming woman, as the gender conforming woman was rated lowest on masculinity. It is possible that the participants were unconsciously selecting applicants on masculinity. This would be corroborated by the Rule et al. (2016) study, where it was found that pictures of male faces that were perceived as gay were seen as more suitable for feminine jobs, while pictures of male faces that were seen as straight were seen as more suitable for masculine jobs. Because all the participants in this study had to go on were pictures of faces, in effect this study was researching gender non-conformity, as homosexuality for men is often associated with femininity (Beusekom et al., 2016). This finding is also corroborated by Lammers et al. (2009), where it was found that voters prefer political candidates that they perceive as masculine for masculine tasks and feminine candidates for feminine tasks, regardless of gender.

The difference between gender conforming men and women is found is every sample, but when only measuring the data of straight, cisgender people, there are also significant differences in hireability scores between gender conforming and non-conforming women and in offered salary between gender conforming and non-conforming men. When excluding the LGBT participants, the hireability ratings for both feminine applicants (the gender conforming woman and the gender non-conforming man) stay the same, but both masculine applicants (the gender conforming man and the gender non-conforming woman) are rated higher.



Figure 6: Score of hireability for men and women, comparing the whole sample with cisgender heterosexual participants only, on a scale of 1 to 7. The blue line represents gender conforming applicants and the red line represents gender non-conforming applicants. The dotted lines represent the scores given by cisgender heterosexual participants only.

It seems, therefore, that cisgender heterosexual participants favor masculinity in applicants for the junior lawyer job. A possible explanation for this is that there is a slightly higher percentage of men in the cisgender heterosexual group than in the full sample (29.0% vs. 31.8%) and they might have simply been selecting on their own preference for masculinity. It is also possible that LGBT people themselves have a less strong preference for masculinity. This could be due to LGBT people having to consider their place in society more seriously than cisgender heterosexual people, which may have led to a more conscious devaluation of masculinity compared to cisgender heterosexual people, which may have weakened the results of the whole population. No literature was found about this possibility.

There were no significant interactions found between the hireability, competence and salary outcomes and sexism and endorsement of masculinity scores. It is especially strange that sexism did not interact with gender. The median score of sexism was slightly over 5, on a scale of 1 to 7, and there was an equal amount of people in the low sexism and the high sexism group. It is possible that participants did not fill out the sexism scale accurately because of a social desirability bias, but it is also possible that the Modern sexism scale did not accurately measure modern Dutch sexism, as it was developed in the United States and

was developed ten years ago. The average and median scores on the Meanings of Adolescent Masculinity scale were relatively low, both around 3 on a scale of 1 to 7. This means that the participants who were classified as highly endorsing traditional masculinity, were still relatively low in endorsing traditional masculinity. This could explain why endorsement of traditional masculinity did not interact with any of the other variables.

#### Limitations

The sample that was collected was a sample of convenience, meaning it was sampled from the personal network of the researchers. As such, the participants were mainly highly educated and mainly women and relatively young. Because the sample was not random, it is highly possible that they were not representative for the general population and participants were likely to give similar answers, due to being from a similar demographic group. Due to the nature of the study, it is also likely that there was a social desirability bias in the participants. Most people do not like to admit that they feel unfavorable towards certain types of people. For example, a comment that was received from one of the participants after the questionnaire was finished was that although they found the gender non-conforming male 'a creep', they had still given very positive scores on all three dependent variables, because they did not want to discriminate. What also can have influenced the hireability scores was that the participants were aware that they were not actually hiring a person for a job. Because they had no prospects of working together with the applicant in the future, they had less incentive to judge the CV harshly. They also did not have to take into account how well the applicant would fit in their own team.

At the end of the questionnaire, participants were able to leave comments about the questionnaire they had just taken, which some used to indicate problems they had had. Several people indicated that when choosing the starting salary for the applicant, it was not clear if this salary was gross or net income, which impacted the choice for some. People also indicated that they found it hard to judge the hireability, competence and salary offer of the applicant, based solely on their CV. One comment indicated that the participant had stopped filling out the questionnaire halfway through because they felt the questions were too biased toward the opinions of the researchers. Even though the questions in the questionnaire were selected from other studies, it is very possible that they were selected because of pre-existing biases of the researchers.

#### Conclusion

The conclusion can be drawn that gender non-conformity in men and women negates the gender effect. Gender non-conform people are seen as equally hirable, while gender conform people are rated significantly different. Participants mostly seem to prefer masculinity in applicants for the job of junior lawyer, regardless of gender. This could be caused by the finding that participants find the job of junior lawyer to be a masculine job. These effects were not moderated by the participants' sexism scores or endorsement of traditional masculinity.

Studies comparing the effect of gender non-conformity in appearance only for women with the effect for men when applying for a job have not been carried out before. This study proved that the effect of gender non-conformity when applying for a job is different for men and women. This study found that gender conforming women are discriminated against when applying for a job of junior lawyer, compared to gender conforming men and gender nonconforming women. Gender non-conforming men also face prejudice compared to gender conforming men, when it comes to offered starting salary. Future research should focus on redoing the experiment with a job that is genuinely perceived as gender neutral, to make sure the perceived gender of the job doesn't influence the results. The sample of participants should also be more randomized to avoid the overrepresentation of one certain group. Since an effect was found, future research should evaluate manners in which gender and gender non-conformity discrimination can be reduced in the job market, for example though raising awareness about gender non-conformity and educating hiring managers about this issue.

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Appendix A: Job Vacancy for a Junior Lawyer

# Will you become our new junior jurist?

The Harlem group is looking for new talent and is looking for you!

# The position

When you are working at our ambitious office, you will work on preparative and supportive tasks for our jurists and lawyers. In complex legal situations you will look for the best solution and present this to the lawyers. You will do these tasks within an established processing time and at a high qualitative level! You will preserve this quality by continuing to develop yourself on content level as well as on skills. We will help you with this by paying attention to your personal development and providing guidance. Our company is growing, and this is why we are looking for you!

## What we ask

Of you, we ask for a flexible attitude, and ample availability. Next to an excellent command of the Dutch language, you have excellent communicative skills. You have a wide interest in various areas of law. We ask for a completed university level education in law (Bachelor), with preference for employment law as the primary area of study.

## What we offer

- With this position, you will have the opportunity to gain practical experience, during or after your Master's education.
- A job for 32 hours a week.
- Salary in line with market practice.

# **Interested?**

Did you become completely enthusiastic? Send your CV and a motivation letter to <u>a.d.degroot@Harlemgroup.nl</u>.

## Appendix B: CVs and Manipulated Photos Used in the Study

# **CV Robin Jansen**

#### PERSONAL

Name:Robin JansenBorn:17-02-1995Address:Cremerstraat 10, 3532 BW, UtrechtPhone number:06-22745384E-mail:RobinJansen@hotmail.com



#### EDUCATION

2018 - today	Master of Dutch Law, Faculty of Law				
2015 2010	Otrecht University, Utrecht				
2015 - 2018	Bachelor of Law, Faculty of Law				
	Utrecht University, Utrecht				
2009 - 2015	VWO, Vuurvogel, Arnhem				
	Profile Economics & Society				
WORK EXPERIENCE					
2015 - today	Court clerk at the court of Gelderland, location Arnhem,				
	Department Family and Youth law				
2013 - 2015	Supermarket shelf filler, Albert Heijn, Arnhem				
EXTRACURRICULAR	ACTIVITIES				
2015 - today	Secretary, Rechtswinkel Utrecht				
	<ul> <li>Taking care of, among other things, setting the agenda,</li> </ul>				
	taking notes, and maintaining e-mail contact with employees				
	and external parties.				
	<ul> <li>Checking advice before it is sent to clients.</li> </ul>				
	<ul> <li>Holding consultation hours in which clients are provided</li> </ul>				
	with legal advice.				
SKILLS					
Languages	English (fluent), German (basic), French (basic)				
Software	Microsoft Office	_			
INTERESTS & ADDIT	ONAL INFORMATION				
Experience abroad	Volunteer work in Thailand (3 months in 2014)				

Figure 7: Gender conform female applicant CV





 $Figure \ 8: \ Gender \ conform \ (left) \ and \ Gender \ non-conform \ (right) \ female \ (upper) \ and \ male \ (lower)$ 

# Hireability (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012)

Please rate your agreement with the statements on the following scale:

- 1 not at all
- 2-not
- 3 rather not
- 4 hard to say
- 5 rather yes
- 6 yes
- 7 very much

## Student competence:

- 1. Did the applicant strike you as competent?
- 2. How likely is it that the applicant has the necessary skills for this job?
- 3. How qualified do you think the applicant is?

## Student hireability:

- 1. How likely would you be to invite the applicant to interview for the job?
- 2. How likely would you be to hire the applicant for the job?
- 3. How likely do you think it is that the applicant was actually hired for the job they applied for?

## Salary conferral:

If you had to choose one of the following starting salaries for the applicant, what would it be?

- €1700
- €2000
- €2300
- €2600
- €2900
- €3200
- €3500
- €3800

# Modern Sexism Scale (Swim et al., 1995)

Please rate your agreement with the statements on the following scale:

- 1 strongly disagree
- 2-disagree
- 3 more or less disagree
- 4-undecided
- 5 more or less agree
- 6 agree
- 7 strongly agree

## Modern sexism

1. Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the Netherlands. \*

2. Women often miss out on good jobs due to sexual discrimination.

3. It is rare to see women treated in a sexist manner on television. \*

4. On average, people in our society treat husbands and wives equally.  $\ast$ 

5. Society has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement. \*

6. It is easy to understand the anger of women's groups in The Netherlands.

7. It is easy to understand why women's groups are still concerned

about societal limitations of women's opportunities.

8. Over the past few years, the government and news media have been showing more concern about the treatment of women than is warranted by women's actual experiences. \*

Items marked with an \* are coded in reverse.

## Meanings of Adolescent Masculinity Scale (Oransky & Fisher, 2009)

Please rate your agreement with the statements on the following scale:

- 1 strongly disagree
- 2-disagree
- 3 more or less disagree
- 4-undecided
- 5 more or less agree
- 6-agree
- 7 *strongly agree*

Constant Effort

A guy should always seem as manly as other guys that he knows.

A guy should never back down from a challenge in public.

Acting manly should be the most important goal for guys.

A guy must always appear confident even if he isn't.

## Emotional Restriction

It is not important for guys to listen to each other's problems.

It is weird for a guy to talk about his feelings with other guys.

Guys should not talk about their worries with each other.

It is not a guy's job to comfort a friend who is upset.

Heterosexism

A guy who wears nail polish is hard to take seriously.

It is embarrassing to have a lot of gay friends.

Being thought of as gay makes a guy seem like less of a man. It would be embarrassing for a guy to admit he is interested in being a hairdresser.

A good way to seem manly is to avoid acting gay. *Social Teasing* 

A guy should be able to take teasing from his friends.

There is nothing wrong with a guy who picks on his friends.

It is normal for guys to make fun of their friends.