

Ethnic Discrimination in the Workplace
Testing the Integration Paradox at the Municipality of Amsterdam

Hannah J. Hartgerink (6570119)

Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Utrecht University

201600013: Master's thesis Contemporary Social Problems

Supervisor: Dr. Lucas Drouhot

Second assessor: Dr. Weverthon Barbosa Machado

June 24, 2024

Word count: 9827

Preface

Before you lies my master's thesis 'Ethnic Discrimination in the Workplace: Testing the Integration Paradox at the Municipality of Amsterdam'. I have worked on this thesis from February to June 2024.

During the writing of this thesis, I was doing a research internship at the Verwey-Jonker research institute. The main project I worked on was a quantitative research the municipality of Amsterdam asked us to do, looking into the experiences of discrimination and other forms of undesirable behaviour among employees of the municipality. This kind of behaviour and experiences are problematic and the municipality wants to tackle this issue and create better policies. For this, more insights in this kind of behaviour and experiences is needed. I had the same motivation writing this thesis. (Perceived) discrimination is a complex problem with many possible negative consequences for individuals, organisations and society. My internship gave me the opportunity to do research on the topic of perceived discrimination in the workplace with the large and unique dataset of the study for the municipality. Within the research field of ethnic discrimination, the integration paradox has fascinated me since I first read about it, and it shows the complexity of the issue of perceived ethnic discrimination. This fascination drove me to focus my thesis on ethnic discrimination and incorporate the integration paradox in the research. I am very grateful for the opportunity to do this internship at Verwey-Jonker and to use this dataset for my master's thesis.

Thank you for reading, I hope you will enjoy it and learn something about the complexity and importance of this topic.

Hannah Hartgerink

Utrecht, June 24, 2024

Abstract

Dutch employees with a non-western migration background perceive high levels of discrimination in the workplace. This can have many negative consequences, such as lower levels of job satisfaction. Current research looked into a non-western migration background leading to lower levels of job satisfaction, through higher levels of perceived discrimination in the workplace, and if this was different for first- and second-generation immigrants. It also looked into whether the effect of a non-western migration background on perceived discrimination was stronger for higher educated and for female employees. This was tested among employees at the municipality of Amsterdam. First- and second-generation non-western immigrants both reported lower levels of job satisfaction than native Dutch employees, through higher levels of perceived discrimination. For first-generation, a direct effect not explained by perceived discrimination also remained. There were no differences found between first- and second-generation non-western immigrants. The effect of a non-western background was stronger for higher educated employees, and among second-generation immigrants it was weaker for female employees. Given the importance of the subject, more research should be done.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Perceived Discrimination, Workplace Discrimination, Integration Paradox, Gender

Ethical statement

This study is approved by the Ethical Review Board of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of Utrecht University. The approval is filed under number 24-1376.

Ethnic Discrimination in the Workplace: Testing the Integration Paradox at the Municipality of Amsterdam

In 2021, the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights (2021) wrote that there appeared to be an increased awareness and recognition of the existence of (institutional) racism in the Netherlands. In 2020, the Prime Minister of the Netherlands publicly acknowledged the existence of institutional racism in the Netherlands, being the first government representative to ever do that (The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, 2021).

The Dutch society is an ethnically diverse one. In 2019, almost 25% of the Dutch population had a migration background. 13% of the population has a non-western background. Among this group, the largest groups are people with a Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, or Antillean background (Andriessen et al., 2020). As acknowledged by the Prime Minister in 2020, the problem of racism certainly exists in the Netherlands (The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, 2021). According to the 2020 report of experienced discrimination of the Netherlands Institute for Social Research, people with a migration background experience discrimination relatively often. 8% of Dutch citizens experienced discrimination on ethnic grounds, and of all ethnic groups, people with a Turkish or Moroccan background most often experience discrimination. This discrimination takes place in different domains, one of which is the workplace (Andriessen et al., 2020).

Persistent inequalities between ethnic groups exist on the Dutch labour market. Compared to native Dutch people, people with a migration background in the Dutch labour market are more often unemployed, work more often in lower-status jobs, and have a lower income than people without a migration background (Thijssen et al., 2020). Various experiments have shown ethnic discrimination in the hiring process in Dutch organisations (Ramos et al., 2021; Thijssen et al., 2020; Thijssen et al., 2021a; 2021b). Not only when looking for work, but also in the workplace these groups more often experience discrimination. The Netherlands Institute for Social Research found that people with a non-western migration background experience discrimination in the workplace significantly more often than people without a migration background. Especially people with a Moroccan background (57%) and people with a Turkish background (59%) felt discriminated against at work (Andriessen et al., 2020).

Experiments like those of Thijssen et al. (2020; 2021) and Di Stasio et al. (2021) study objective discrimination, showing how certain groups have less chances in the Dutch labour market. Many other studies focus on subjective discrimination, like publications from the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (Andriessen et al., 2014; 2020) or Statistics Netherlands (CBS, 2023). The focus is then on people's experiences. Sometimes, people

perceive discrimination when it did not happen. For certain outcomes, whether it actually took place is not what is relevant. Perceptions of discrimination can have effects on a potential victim's (mental) health for example, regardless of whether this person was or was not discriminated against (Small & Pager, 2020; Yassine et al., 2023). Being the target of prejudice and discrimination can lead to lower self-esteem (Major et al., 2007). Also, it can lead to anxiety, psychological stress, depression, and lower feelings of overall well-being (Andriessen et al., 2014; Paradies et al., 2015; Schmitt et al., 2014). These are negative consequences for the individual experiencing discrimination, but when many individuals experience these consequences, it can also turn into a societal problem (Busfield, 2018; George et al., 2015; Herrman & Jané-Llopis, 2005). Moreover, the more people experience discrimination in different areas, among which the workplace, the more they will withdraw from society and have less trust in institutions such as the government, judges and the police. This is a societal problem, since institutional trust is seen as the glue holding a democratic constitutional state together (Andriessen et al., 2020).

Furthermore, minority employees repeatedly experiencing discrimination in the labour market are less likely to be satisfied with their job or be committed to the organisation they work for (Ensher et al., 2001; Lippens et al., 2022). Where high job satisfaction leads to more productivity and work engagement, low job satisfaction leads to decreased morale and productivity (Lee et al., 2021). The perception of unfairness in the workplace can lead to emotional suffering and exhaustion, which can in turn lead to more absenteeism, work alienation and alcohol abuse (Howard & Cordes, 2010). These are not only negative consequences for the individual perceiving discrimination, but also for the employer. A diverse workforce can have multiple benefits. Different perspectives can lead to the ability to offer a broader range of products and represent a larger variety of clients, and can thus bring economic benefits, but a diverse workforce also indicates social justice and equal opportunities. These benefits do not materialise, or less, when discrimination takes place in the workplace (Ellemers & Rink, 2016).

Besides experiencing discrimination, witnessing discrimination of others in the workplace can also lead to a lower job satisfaction and less wellbeing (Nielsen et al., 2024). Also, discrimination within organisations can negatively influence the work effort of employees being advantaged by it too, causing them to believe less strongly that work will impact their chances of reward (Heiserman & Simpson, 2023). Dutch law requires employers to care for good working conditions for their employees and to prevent or limit undesirable behaviour from happening (Peereboom & Horsten, 2015).

All this shows the importance of finding out more about discrimination in the workplace, the effects of it, and which factors play a role, so that better policy can be developed to tackle this problem. The first question this study seeks to answer is “To what extent do employees in the Netherlands experience discrimination in the workplace?”

This research will not only look into ethnic discrimination and its effect on job satisfaction, but also into different factors that are of possible influence on this perceived discrimination. Literature shows that the relationship between integration and perceived discrimination is complex (Diehl et al., 2021; Schaeffer & Kas, 2023). Where classical immigration theories suggest that integration will lead to a stronger sense of belonging and positive attitudes toward natives and the host society, some research shows a reverse effect. This phenomenon is called the ‘integration paradox’ (Verkuyten, 2016). Current study will add more knowledge and empirical evidence to this complex field of study. Literature is often about the relationship between perceived discrimination and host society disengagement (Verkuyten, 2016). This research will add to this by focusing on discrimination in the workplace and including the effect of perceived discrimination on job satisfaction. Moreover, the effect of gender will also be analysed since gender-specific difficulties may add another layer of complexity to the issue of perceived discrimination (Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Kofman et al., 2009).

The other questions this study seeks to answer are “To what extent does having a non-western migration background influence job satisfaction for employees, and to what extent is this effect mediated by perceived discrimination?”, “To what extent is this effect different for first- and second-generation immigrants?”, and “To what extent is the effect of a non-western migration background on perceived discrimination moderated by education level and gender?”

This will be researched among employees of the municipality of Amsterdam, one of the biggest municipalities in the Netherlands. By studying employees of one organisation, in all layers of that organisation, this study uses a unique dataset. The workplace and organisational policies are the same for all employees in this study. This enables us to for example study differences between people in higher and lower salary scales within the same organisation. This research will give better insights into the relationship between job satisfaction and perceived discrimination in the workplace among people with a non-western migration background in the Netherlands, and factors influencing this.

In addition to adding scientific knowledge, the results of this research are useful for the Dutch government and policymakers trying to address the bigger problem of ethnic

discrimination, and also for specific organisations trying to decrease perceived discrimination and increase job satisfaction among their employees. The last question this study will answer is “What can Dutch organisations do to improve the job satisfaction of employees with a non-western migration background, when looking at the effect of perceived workplace discrimination?”

Theory

Ethnic discrimination

Like mentioned in the introduction, people with a non-western ethnicity are more often discriminated against in the Netherlands than people with other ethnicities (Andriessen et al., 2020). Different theories explain this behaviour. An important notion in explaining ethnic discrimination is that of homophily, the tendency for individuals to be attracted to others with similar characteristics (Schaffer, 2003). This can be about attitudes or beliefs, but also demographic characteristics. A related concept is that of ingroup favouritism, a preference for relations and contact with individuals from the same social group (Thijssen et al., 2022).

Models of taste based discrimination focus on these, economically irrelevant, contact preferences. In the setting of the workplace, employers, colleagues and customers can experience these preferences toward people from their own group, and a distaste from interacting with people from outside their group. Individual prejudice toward people from other groups can be related to these preferences. This taste based discrimination has been shown in studies where for example individuals were willing to give up some amount of wage to avoid working together with colleagues of a different ethnicity or where discrimination was reduced when a financial penalty for discriminatory behaviour was introduced (Lippens et al., 2022).

Theories that explain the underlying mechanisms of this taste-based discrimination are social identity theory and social categorisation theory (Lippens et al., 2022; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). These are based on the assumption that individuals define themselves as a member of different types of groups using different characteristics like demographics or values. They categorise themselves and others similar to them as the ingroup, and people dissimilar to them as an outgroup. These social categorisations help the individual to order the social environment and make social comparisons (Schaffer, 2003; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). According to these theories, individuals want to have and keep high self-esteem, and it is thus important that their social identity is a positive one. They therefore have a tendency to make comparisons between groups that positively improve their own ingroups. This is done by differentiating themselves from the characteristics of outgroups, and this can be the basis for

stereotypes and polarisation (Lippens et al., 2022; Schaffer, 2003; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). As a result of these mechanisms, employees often connect and form friendships with others who are (demographically) similar to them, and minority employees are often excluded from social networks and more often feel discriminated against. Employees demographically different from their supervisor often perceive less support and trust, which could also lead to more perceived discrimination (Avery et al., 2008). Small & Pager (2020) emphasise that discrimination does not have to be conscious and intentional, but can also come from implicit biases.

Where ethnic homophily and social categorisation theories predict ethnic discrimination towards ethnic outgroups, there are also theories predicting differences in behaviour towards different ethnic outgroups. According to ethnic hierarchy theory a hierarchy of ethnic groups exists, in which the position of a minority group depends on its socioeconomic status and its cultural difference from the majority group. Groups that deviate most from the majority in these aspects will be stereotyped most negatively and be most discriminated against and socially excluded (Thijssen et al., 2021b). An example is Muslims in western countries, who stand out because of their different culture and more conservative ideas. In much of these countries very negative sentiments exist around Muslims (Thijssen et al., 2022). The same could count for non-western minorities more broadly, who differ more from western majorities than western minorities do.

Lastly, group threat theory states that members of the majority group will discriminate against ethnic minorities when they feel threatened by them. This threat can arise from conflicts about economic goods like jobs, but also from conflicts about cultural values and customs. The economic threat could apply to all minority groups, but the cultural threat only applies to minority groups with different cultural beliefs, for example those with different beliefs about homosexuality or gender equality (Ramos et al., 2021). Helbling and Traunmüller (2020) for example find that negative attitudes toward Muslim immigrants are partly caused by the fact that they are seen as a threat to western liberal values, secularism and democracy. Flores (2015) and Diehl et al. (2020) argue that as immigrants become more familiar with the culture of the majority, they will be discriminated against less. However, they also argue, this will not happen or happen less for those visibly distinct from the majority. Lundström (2017) argues that non-white immigrants cannot liberate themselves from being part of the migration discourse in western countries like white immigrants can. People who are visibly 'different' keep struggling within the discourse of 'belonging' and 'not belonging'.

Following this overview of theories, in this study, employees least similar to the native Dutch employees are expected to perceive significantly more discrimination in the workplace than others. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Employees with a non-western migration background experience more discrimination in the workplace than employees with no migration background.

Job satisfaction

Like discussed in the introduction, perceiving discrimination in the workplace can lead to many different negative effects for the victim. One of them is lower job satisfaction (Ensher et al., 2001; Lippens et al., 2022). Indyastuti (2019) proposes that an important explanation for this negative effect on job satisfaction is satisfaction of basic psychological needs. These needs are the need of autonomy, competence and relatedness and they are universal, fundamental needs. In the workplace, satisfaction of these needs is found to be related to a higher job satisfaction. Perceiving discrimination has a negative effect on the feeling of autonomy, competence and relatedness, and would thus lead to lower job satisfaction. In their study, they find this mediating effect of basic psychological needs for autonomy and relatedness, but not for competence.

Other research has found that the experience of racial discrimination leads to feelings of less control of one's life, which may lead to lower levels of job satisfaction (Valentine et al., 1999). Moreover, studies have shown that lower levels of self-esteem are related to lower levels of job satisfaction (Kuster et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2021). Employees with high self-esteem are likely to perform better in their careers and are more likely to earn promotion. This, in turn, is positively related to job satisfaction. On the other hand, employees with low self-esteem are more likely to choose a task that is below their competency level to avoid failure and criticism (Lee et al., 2021). Like mentioned in the introduction, perceiving discrimination may lead to lower levels of self-esteem, and following the literature, this would lead to lower levels of job satisfaction. Following these findings, the following hypothesis was drawn:

Hypothesis 2: The more discrimination employees perceive in the workplace, the less satisfied they are with their job.

Combining the first two hypotheses, the mediation hypothesis that follows is:

Hypothesis 3: Employees with a non-western migration background are less satisfied with their job than employees with no migration background, through higher levels of perceived discrimination.

Integration Paradox

One of the explanations for discrimination of people with a non-western migration background is that their culture is so different from that of the native Dutch (Ramos et al., 2021; Thijssen et al., 2021b). Following this, the more immigrants acculturate, the more they become familiar with local culture and language, the less they would be expected to experience discrimination (Flores, 2015).

During the 1960s, a theory often referred to as ‘conflict theory’ predicted that the more immigrants acculturated into host societies, the more they would become aware of their disadvantage and discrimination, and would thus perceive discrimination. Following this and related theories, Flores (2015) predicts and finds that as acculturation of immigrants in Spain increases, immigrants report less cultural discrimination, but those who are visibly distinct increasingly report racial discrimination. Visibly distinct immigrants that are highly assimilated could realise that they still face rejection despite them sharing many cultural attributes with natives. This could cause them to understand this rejection or differential treatment as being based on their race.

The ‘integration paradox’ describes the phenomenon that the better immigrants integrate, the more emotionally distant they become from the host society. The main mechanism behind this is perceived discrimination. Better integrated immigrants report more instead of fewer experiences of discrimination (Diehl et al., 2021; Verkuyten, 2016), especially those visibly distinct from the majority (Flores, 2015). Two important factors influencing perceived discrimination of non-western immigrants can explain this phenomenon. The first is exposure; better integrated immigrants have more contact with majority members (potential discriminators) and are thus at higher risk of experiencing discrimination (Diehl et al., 2021; Schaeffer & Kas, 2023). Also they more often use the local media and are thus more exposed to the negative discourse surrounding immigrants (De Vroome et al., 2014; Schaeffer & Kas, 2023). The second factor is attributional processes, under which different mechanisms fall. Firstly, immigrants who know the language are better able to understand their surroundings and thus to recognise and perceive discrimination. They are more aware of and sensitive to it. Secondly, better integrated immigrants identify and compare themselves more with the majority than with disadvantaged minorities, which causes them to be more demanding of equal treatment (Diehl et al., 2021; Schaeffer & Kas, 2023).

Migration generation

Generational status is one of the most important indicators of integration (Schaeffer & Kas, 2023). All these factors and mechanisms should thus apply to second-generation immigrants when compared to first-generation immigrants, having more contact with majority

members, being more aware of and sensitive to discrimination, and being more demanding of equal treatment (Diehl et al., 2021; Schaeffer & Kas, 2023).

In line with the integration paradox, Banerjee (2008) expects and finds that immigrants who have been in Canada for longer periods of time are more likely to experience discrimination than new immigrants. She explains this by stating that new immigrants have low expectations since their comparison group is likely people in their home country or other new immigrants. They may therefore be less aware of their rights in the host country and less likely to perceive discrimination. As they integrate more, the comparison group will shift more to the majority group and they will become more aware of their rights. If these immigrants find they are still disadvantaged after many years, they will be likely to attribute this to discrimination. Following this literature, the fourth hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 4: Among employees with a non-western migration background, second-generation immigrants report lower levels of job satisfaction, through higher levels of perceived discrimination in the workplace.

Level of education

The factors mentioned above, exposure and attributional processes, do not only apply to second-generation immigrants compared to first-generation, but also to higher educated immigrants compared to lower educated, who are often better integrated in multiple domains. They have more contact with the majority, are more aware of and sensitive to discrimination, and more demanding of equal treatment (Diehl et al., 2021; Verkuyten, 2016). Higher education implies higher cognitive sophistication, which is related to awareness of processes in society, and higher educated can, in contrast to the lower educated, claim that their lack of success is caused by a lack of opportunities and discrimination, instead of a lack of efforts and skills. Education provides immigrants with tools to critically challenge discrimination and policies causing group disadvantages (De Vroome et al., 2014; Verkuyten, 2016). Moreover, Diehl and colleagues (2021) name another mechanism that could apply to higher educated immigrants. Attributing a negative event to discrimination can be a way of coping that is not threatening to the self-esteem. Higher status aspiration can lead to greater motives for this coping, and thus to perceiving events more often as discrimination.

Banerjee (2008) also expects and finds higher educated immigrants in Canada to perceive more (workplace) discrimination. They likely compare their situations to the majority and have higher expectations for success. If they find that they are being treated unequally or have less chances, they may interpret this as discrimination. Following this theory, the fifth hypothesis for this study is:

Hypothesis 5: The effect of a non-western migration background on perceived discrimination will be more pronounced for higher educated employees than for lower educated employees.

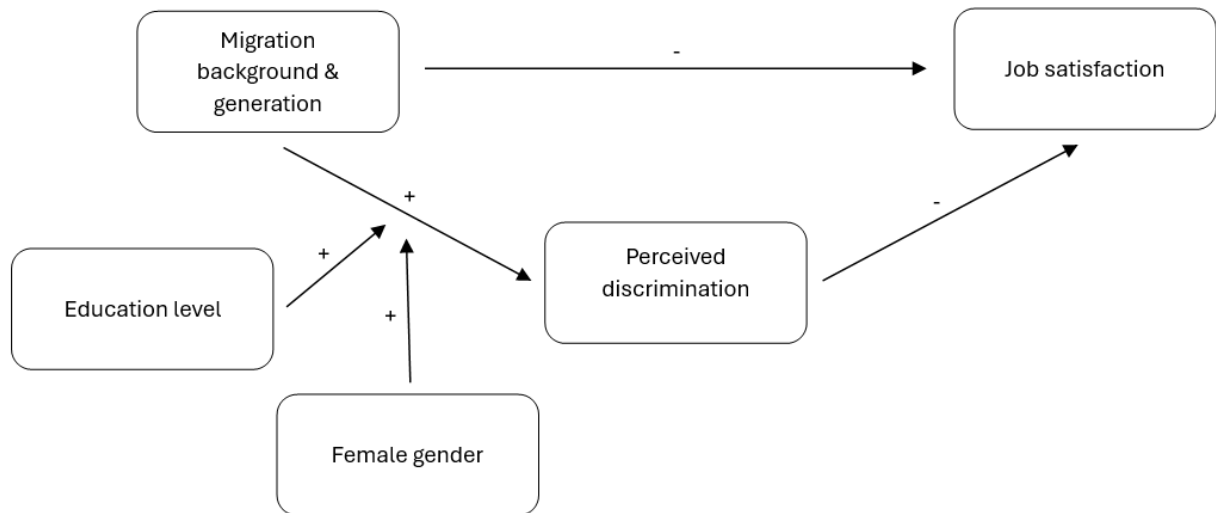
Gender

In the labour market, female immigrants do not only face the same difficulties as male immigrants, such as lack of language skills or human capital, but also gender-specific difficulties such as lower appreciation of their capital. Migrant and ethnic minority women face different forms of unequal opportunities that may reinforce and interact with each other (Kofman et al., 2009). Literature on the ‘double jeopardy hypothesis’ states that women of an ethnic minority face double discrimination since their ethnic- and gender-based discrimination add up. The multiplicative version of this hypothesis predicts that gender and ethnicity are not independent and additive categories, but that the disadvantages of both gender and ethnicity multiply each other, making the effect of belonging to both groups even greater than just adding up the separate effects. It predicts an interaction effect between gender and ethnicity on discrimination. Following this hypothesis, minority women should be more vulnerable to ethnic discrimination than minority men (Berdahl & Moore, 2006).

Other literature suggesting a difference between minority men and women in perceived discrimination is about vigilance (Himmelstein et al., 2015; Kaiser & Major, 2006; Pichardo et al., 2021). Vigilance is a coping mechanism, in response to experienced discrimination, continuously monitoring one’s surroundings and anticipating discrimination (Himmelstein et al., 2015). Having experienced discrimination in the past can activate discrimination-related thoughts and cause individuals to be more likely to interpret ambiguous situations as discrimination (Major & Kaiser, 2006).

Following these lines of reasoning, it is very plausible that having a non-western migration background will not have the same effect on perceived discrimination for men as for women. It is expected that this effect will be stronger for women than for men. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 6: The effect of a non-western migration background on perceived discrimination will be more pronounced for female than for male employees.

Figure 1*Graphical Representation of the Conditional Process Analysis*

Methods

Sample

Data for this research were collected through a survey by researchers from the Verwey-Jonker Institute. The target group was employees of the municipality of Amsterdam, including interns, trainees, temporary workers, freelancers or people with a flexible contract. They were recruited via the municipality, and could fill in the survey online via a link they received in their email or via a QR-code they could scan from posters and flyers at location. At fourteen locations of the municipality, there was the possibility to fill in the survey physically, with pollsters from an external research organisation.

At the time of data collection, there were 22.685 employees working at the municipality. 10597 of them started the survey, and 6897 completed it. This is a response rate of approximately 30%. Since respondents had the opportunity to not answer certain questions, there were relatively many missing values. For this study, all respondents with missing scores on one or more of the variables included in the analysis, were excluded from the final sample. The final sample consisted of 6141 respondents working for the municipality. 3467 of them were women (56,5%), 2571 were men (41,9%), 40 were non-binary (0,6%), and 63 answered to be 'something else' (1,0%). 1,3% was aged between 16 and 24 years old, 15,7% was aged 25-35, 22,9% was aged 35-44, 27,5% was aged 45-54, 29,5% was aged 55-64, and 3,2% was aged 65 or older. 4540 respondents were native Dutch (73,9%), 363 had a western migration background (5,9%), and 1238 had a non-western migration background (20,2%). Of those

with a migration background (26,1%), 842 were first-generation immigrants (13,7% of the total sample), and 759 were second-generation immigrants (12,4% of the total sample).

Ethics

The Ethics Committee of the VU Amsterdam reviewed the study by Verwey-Jonker. Ethical approval for this study was granted by the Ethics Review Board of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences at the University of Utrecht. At the beginning of the survey, respondents were shown an information letter about the goal and topic of the study, the fact that the survey was totally anonymous, the fact that they could skip questions or drop out of the study at any moment, and whom to contact in case of questions or concerns. They were asked to express their informed consent before they could continue with the survey.

Instruments & Operationalisation

The survey used for data collection was constructed with Survalyzer. For the analysis, SPSS Statistics was used.

Independent variable

Migration background and migration generation were operationalised by a new variable computed out of the questions about where the respondents themselves and their parents were born. The categorisation was based on the terminology of Statistics Netherlands (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2022; n.d.a; n.d.b; n.d.c). Respondents who answered that they themselves and both their parents were born in the Netherlands were coded as native Dutch. Those who answered to be born outside of the Netherlands were coded as first-generation immigrants, and those who answered to be born in the Netherlands and answered that one or both of their parents were born in another country were coded as second-generation immigrants. Respondents who answered that they and/or one or both of their parents were born in Turkey, Morocco, Surinam, the Dutch Caribbean, or another African country were coded as non-western. Respondents who answered that they and/or one or both of their parents were born in Indonesia or another European country than the Netherlands were coded as western, unless they or one or both parents were born in a non-western country. Respondents with a migration background in Asia and America/Oceania were left out of this categorisation, since the Statistics Netherlands categorisation could not be followed for these areas. According to Statistics Netherlands, a Japanese background is western, whereas the rest of Asia is non-western. This distinction could not be made since the answer option was 'Asia', without asking about specific countries. The same problem occurred for a background in America or Oceania, where people from Middle or South America would be non-western, and people from North America and Oceania would be western.

Mediator

Perceived discrimination was operationalised by a new variable computed out of the question whether they had ever felt discriminated against during work in the last 12 months and the follow-up question people received when they answered yes asking them how often they had felt discriminated against in the last 12 months. Respondents who answered to have not experienced discrimination or that they were not sure if it was discrimination were coded with value '0'. For the respondents who answered 'yes' to the first question, the answers to the second questions were coded as follows: 'one or two times' was coded with value '1', 'sometimes' with value '2', 'often' with value '3', and 'all the time' with value '4'. Perceived discrimination was thus operationalised by a 5-point scale, ranging from zero (never), to four (all the time).

Moderators

Since the survey did not ask for respondents' education level, salary scale was used as a proxy. This was operationalised by asking respondents what their salary scale was. The answer possibilities were scale 1 to 16, 17 and higher, and 'I don't know'. The last answer option was coded as missing. Based on information provided by the municipality, salary is a fair proxy for educational level; scale 1 to 4 require primary education, scale 5 and 6 pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO), scale 7 and 8 secondary vocational education (MBO), scale 9 to 11 higher professional education (HBO), and scale 12 and higher require university education (WO).

For gender, the variable 'woman' was computed from the question "What fits best with how you see yourself and how you feel?" Respondents who answered 'woman' were coded '1'. Respondents who reported 'man', 'neither man or woman', 'both man and woman', or 'something else' were coded '0'. This means that non-binary people were also included in the 'non-female' category. This was not in line with the theory, which was about the difference between men and women. However, since the number of respondents that answered something else than 'man' or 'woman' was very small, the decision was made to keep these respondents included in the variable and not exclude them from the sample.

Dependent variable

Job satisfaction was operationalised by a single item 'I am satisfied with my job at the municipality', as research suggests this is an acceptable and accurate way of measuring job satisfaction (Wanous et al., 1997). An example of a former study using this single item measure is that of Rogelberg et al. (2006). In current study, it was a 7-scale item ranging from 0 'totally disagree' to 7 'totally agree'.

Control variable

Besides ethnicity and gender, age is the most common characteristic associated with reported discrimination (Ayalon, 2014), also when looking specifically at the Netherlands (Andriessen et al., 2014). Specifically in the labour market or at the workplace, older people experience more discrimination. This can for example entail unequal access to employment, training or promotion (Andriessen et al., 2014; Kroon et al., 2019). Since age can thus influence the level of perceived discrimination, it could be of significant influence on the outcomes of this study, particularly if there are significant differences in age between the different categories of the independent variable. Therefore, age was included in the analysis as a control variable.

Analysis

To answer this study's research questions, a conditional process analysis was conducted. This analysis is also called a moderated mediation analysis, since it is a mediation analysis in which one or multiple effects are moderated (Hayes, 2022). This analysis thus makes it possible to analyse the mediation hypotheses, about migration background and generation having an effect on job satisfaction through perceived discrimination, and the moderation hypotheses, about the effects of migration background and generation on perceived discrimination being stronger for female employees and employees with a higher salary scale, in one model. Adding these moderators would not be possible in a regular mediation analysis. The mediation part of the analysis showed, with relative direct, indirect and total effects, whether employees with a non-western migration background reported significantly lower levels of job satisfaction and whether this effect was mediated by higher levels of perceived discrimination. Also it showed whether, when looking at employees with a non-western migration background, second-generation immigrants reported lower levels of job satisfaction and whether this effect was mediated by higher levels of perceived discrimination. The moderation part of the analysis showed, with interaction effects, whether in this mediation model the effect of migration background and generation on perceived discrimination was more pronounced for employees with a higher salary and female employees.

Assumptions for regression were checked and only the assumption of normality was violated. Because of the large size of the sample and because of the use of bootstrap intervals in the conditional process analysis, this violation was not problematic for the analysis (Hayes, 2022).

Results

Descriptives

After filtering out the missing values on all variables used for the analysis, the final sample consisted of 6141 respondents. The overall mean scores of perceived discrimination ($M = .30$) were very low. The mean scores of job satisfaction ($M = 5.84$) were quite high. One-Sample T-Tests showed that both means were significantly different from the midpoint of the scales ($p < .001$). The mean reported salary scale, which ranged from scale 1 to scale 17 or higher, was 10.12.

One-Way ANOVA

A one-way ANOVA with post-hoc test (Bonferroni) showed the mean scores for perceived discrimination and job satisfaction per category of migration background and generation (table 1). For perceived discrimination, the means were significantly different across the five groups, $F(4, 6136) = 109.86, p < .001$. The mean score for first-generation non-western immigrants ($M = .73$) was significantly higher than the means of native Dutch ($M = .19$) and of first- ($M = .29$) and second-generation ($M = .32$) western immigrants ($p < .001$). The mean score for second generation non-western immigrants ($M = .68$) was also significantly higher than the means of native Dutch and of first- and second-generation western immigrants ($p < .001$). This means that respondents with a non-western migration background, both first- and second-generation, reported significantly higher levels of perceived discrimination in the workplace than the respondents of the other three groups. However, mean scores of .73 and .68 on a scale from 0 to 4 still do not indicate very high levels of perceived discrimination. The means of first- ($M = .73$) and second-generation ($M = .68$) non-western immigrants did not differ significantly from each other. The means of native employees and employees with a first- or second-generation western background all did not differ significantly from each other.

For job satisfaction, the means were also significantly different across the groups, $F(4, 6136) = 20.79, p < .001$. The mean score of first- ($M = 5.53$) and second-generation ($M = 5.61$) non-western immigrants were significantly lower than the mean of native Dutch ($M = 5.92$) ($p < .001$). This means that respondents with a non-western migration background, from both generations, reported significantly lower levels of job satisfaction than native Dutch respondents. However, mean scores of 5.53 and 5.61 on a 7-point scale still do not indicate very low levels of job satisfaction. The means of first- ($M = 5.53$) and second-generation ($M = 5.61$) non-western immigrants did not differ significantly from first- ($M = 5.75$) and second-generation ($M = 5.72$) western immigrants and from each other. The means of first- and

second-generation western immigrants were also not significantly different from the means of natives and from each other.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics per Category

		M(SD)
Perceived discrimination	Native Dutch	.19 (.64)
	1 st -generation western	.29 (.72)
	2 nd -generation western	.32 (.83)
	1 st -generation non-western	.73 (1.17)
	2 nd -generation non-western	.68 (1.11)
Job satisfaction	Native Dutch	5.92 (1.13)
	1 st -generation western	5.75 (1.25)
	2 nd -generation western	5.72 (1.44)
	1 st -generation non-western	5.53 (1.53)
	2 nd -generation non-western	5.61 (1.35)

Correlation

The correlation (Pearson) between perceived discrimination and job satisfaction (-.336) is negative and significant ($p < .001$). This correlation is in the expected direction, meaning that the higher the level of perceived discrimination, the lower the level of reported job satisfaction is.

Conditional Process Analysis

A conditional process analysis was conducted with a multicategorical antecedent (migration background and generation), using PROCESS v4.2 by Andrew Hayes (Hayes, 2022). The categories were dummy coded. This coding entails that all categories were compared with a reference category. The first analysis, with native Dutch as reference category, showed the differences between employees with a first-generation non-western migration background and those without a migration background (this effect is called 'X1' in table 2 and 3) and that between employees with a second-generation non-western migration background and those without a migration background (this effect is called 'X2' in tables 2 and 3). The analysis was run again with first-generation non-western migration background as the reference category, to see if there were significant differences between employees with a

first- and second-generation non-western migration background (this effect is called 'X3' in tables 3 and 4).

Differences between non-western immigrants and native Dutch in perceived discrimination and job satisfaction

The analysis of the relative total effects of migration background and generation on job satisfaction when comparing the groups to the native Dutch respondents showed that respondents with a first-generation non-western migration background reported significantly lower levels of job satisfaction than native Dutch respondents, $b = -.10$, $p = .036$. This was in line with the expectations. There was no significant difference in job satisfaction between respondents with a second-generation non-western migration background and native Dutch respondents, $b = -.09$, $p = .109$. This was not in line with the expectations.

The analysis of the effect of migration generation and background on perceived discrimination (the mediator) showed that there was no significant difference in perceived discrimination between respondents with a first-generation non-western migration background and those without a migration background, $b = .21$, $p = .102$. The effect of a second-generation non-western migration background was positive and significant, $b = .37$, $p = .025$. This means that this group reported significantly more perceived discrimination than native Dutch respondents. The first hypothesis, the expectation that employees with a non-western migration background would experience more discrimination than native Dutch employees, was thus partly confirmed, since it was only confirmed for second-generation immigrants.

The effect of perceived discrimination on job satisfaction was found to be negative and significant, $b = -.50$, $p < .001$. The second hypothesis, the expectation that the more discrimination employees would perceive, the less satisfied they would be with their job, was thus confirmed.

The analysis of the direct effect (the effect that remains of the total effect after accounting for the mediation) of migration generation and background on job satisfaction showed that respondents with first-generation non-western immigrants reported significantly lower levels of job satisfaction than native Dutch respondents, $b = -.10$, $p = .036$. This means that for this group, a direct effect on job satisfaction remained that did not work through perceived discrimination. The relative direct effect of a second-generation non-western migration background on job satisfaction was not significant, $b = -.09$, $p = .106$.

The last effects that are needed to draw conclusions about mediation are the indirect effects of migration generation and background on job satisfaction. These are the effects that

work through the mediator. The analysis showed a negative significant relative indirect effect of a first-generation non-western migration background compared to no migration background for all values of the moderators. Since the direct effect was also significant, the effect of a first-generation non-western migration background was partially mediated by perceived discrimination. The relative indirect effect of a second-generation non-western migration background compared to no migration background was also negative and significant for all values of the moderators. The effect of a second-generation non-western migration background was thus fully mediated by perceived discrimination, as the direct effect was not significant. The third hypothesis, the expectation that employees with a non-western migration background would report lower levels of job satisfaction, through higher levels of perceived discrimination, was thus confirmed. The effect was mediated by perceived discrimination for both generations, but for first-generation immigrants an unexpected direct effect on job satisfaction remained.

In regard to the covariate (age), the analysis showed that this did not significantly influence the effects on job satisfaction and perceived discrimination.

Table 2*Conditional process analysis with natives as the reference category*

Outcome	Perceived discrimination		Job satisfaction (total)		Job satisfaction (direct)	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	.482***	.065	6.105***	.054		
1 st -generation non-western migration background (X1)	.210	.128	-.104*	.050	-.1047*	.050
2 nd -generation non-western migration background (X2)	.372*	.166	-.086	.053	-.086	.053
Perceived discrimination			-.504***	.019		
Salary scale	-.031***	.005				
Female gender	-.003	.023				
Age	.006	.009	-.025	.013		
X1 x salary scale	.038**	.013				
X2 x salary scale	.035*	.016				
X1 x female gender	-.094	.066				
X2 x female gender	-.333***	.073				
R ²	.077		.115			
F	34.259***		132.613***			

Note. Two-sided * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 3*Conditional indirect effects on job satisfaction through perceived discrimination*

	Female with low salary (-1 SD)		Non-female with low salary (-1 SD)		Female with high salary (+1 SD)		Non-female with high salary (+1 SD)	
	B(SE)	95% CI	B(SE)	95% CI	B(SE)	95% CI	B(SE)	95% CI
1 st -generation non-western migration background (X1)	-.211(.034)	[-.279, -.148]	-.258(.043)	[-.346, -.175]	-.298(.046)	[-.393, -.212]	-.350(.053)	[-.451, -.246]
2 nd -generation non-western migration background (X2)	-.158(.033)	[-.223, -.095]	-.326(.057)	[-.442, -.220]	-.237(.047)	[-.333, -.146]	-.405(.062)	[-.532, -.288]
2 nd -generation non-western migration background (X3)	.053(.043)	[-.032, .139]	-.068(.066)	[-.206, .062]	.061(.061)	[-.055, .178]	-.060(.076)	[-.216, .084]

Note. Significant indirect effect if the 95% CI does not include zero

Differences between first- and second-generation non-western immigrants

When comparing the groups to the respondents with a first-generation non-western migration background, the analysis of the relative total effects showed that there was no significant difference in reported level of job satisfaction between respondents with a first- and second-generation non-western migration background, $b = .02$, $p = .794$. This was not in line with the expectations.

The analysis of the effects on perceived discrimination showed that there was no significant difference in perceived discrimination between respondents with a first- and second-generation non-western migration background, $b = .16$, $p = .405$.

When comparing these two groups, the direct effect of a second-generation non-western migration background on job satisfaction was also not significant, $b = .02$, $p = .794$. This means that also when accounting for the mediator, there is no significant difference in reported level of job satisfaction between respondents with a first- and second-generation non-western migration background.

The relative indirect effect of a second-generation non-western migration background compared to first-generation was not significant, for no values of the moderators. For this effect, no mediation of perceived discrimination thus occurred. The fourth hypothesis, the expectation that among employees with a non-western migration background, second-generation immigrants would report lower levels of job satisfaction through higher levels of perceived discrimination, was thus not confirmed.

In regard to the covariate (age), the analysis showed that this did not significantly influence the effects on job satisfaction and perceived discrimination.

Table 4*Conditional process analysis with first-generation non-western as the reference category*

Outcome	Perceived discrimination		Job satisfaction (total)		Job satisfaction (direct)	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	.692***	.121	6.001***	.071		
2 nd -generation non-western migration background (X3)	.162	.194	.018	.068	.018	.068
Perceived discrimination			-.504***	.019		
Salary scale	.008	.012				
Female gender	-.097	.062				
Age	.006	.009	-.025	.013		
X3 x salary scale	-.004	.019				
X3 x female gender	-.240**	.093				
R ²	.077		.115			
F	34.259***		132.613***			

Note. Two-sided * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Moderation by salary and gender

When looking at the effects of a first- and second-generation non-western migration background on perceived discrimination compared to no migration background, the analysis showed that the effect of a first-generation non-western migration background on perceived discrimination was significantly moderated by salary scale, with a positive interaction effect, $b = .04$, $p = .004$. Having a first-generation non-western migration background thus had a stronger effect for those with a higher salary. The effect of a second-generation non-western migration background on perceived discrimination was also significantly moderated by salary scale, with a positive interaction effect, $b = .03$, $p = .031$. Having a second-generation non-western migration background thus had a stronger effect on perceived discrimination for those with a higher salary as well. The fifth hypothesis, the expectation that the effect of a non-western migration background would be more pronounced for higher educated employees, was thus fully confirmed, for both generations, with salary scale as a proxy for level of education.

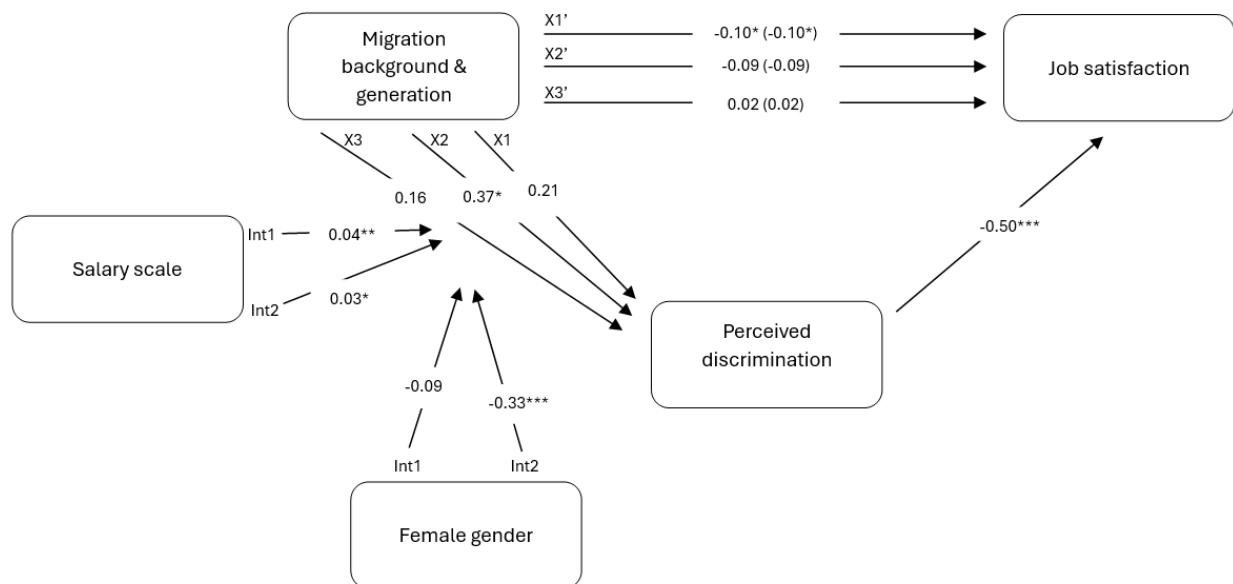
The effect of a first-generation non-western migration background on perceived discrimination was not significantly moderated by gender, $b = -.09$, $p = .155$, which means that the effect was not stronger or weaker for women than for men. The effect of a second-

generation non-western migration background on perceived discrimination was significantly moderated by gender, $b = -.33, p < .001$. The negative interaction effect means that having a second-generation non-western migration background had a weaker effect on perceived discrimination for female respondents, which is the opposite of the expected moderation. The sixth hypothesis, the expectation that the effect of a non-western migration background would be more pronounced for female employees, was thus rejected.

Conclusion

First-generation non-western immigrants reported lower levels of job satisfaction than respondents without a migration background did. This effect was partially explained by higher levels of perceived discrimination, but a direct effect also remained. Second-generation non-western immigrants also reported lower levels of job satisfaction than respondents without a migration background, which was fully explained by higher levels of perceived discrimination. Overall, employees with a non-western background thus were less satisfied with their job than native Dutch employees. For those born in the Netherlands, this was fully explained by perceiving more discrimination. For those born outside of the Netherlands, there is also something else causing less job satisfaction. There were no differences found between first- and second-generation non-western immigrants, neither in job satisfaction nor in perceived discrimination.

The effect of having a non-western migration background on perceived discrimination, leading to higher levels of perceived discrimination compared to no migration background, was found to be stronger for employees with a higher salary. Gender did not influence the effect of a first-generation non-western migration background on perceived discrimination, but did influence the effect of a second-generation non-western migration background. The effect of this background and generation leading to higher levels of perceived discrimination than natives was weaker for female employees.

Figure 2*Conditional Process Model***Discussion**

Dutch society, and thus also the Dutch labour market, is very ethnically diverse. People with a migration background, especially those with a non-western background, face discrimination most often, in general and in the workplace (Andriessen et al., 2020). Being the target of discrimination can have many negative consequences for the individual (Andriessen et al., 2014; Major et al., 2007; Paradies et al., 2015; Schmitt et al., 2014), but also for society (Andriessen et al., 2020; Busfield, 2018; George et al., 2015; Herrman & Jané-Llopis, 2005) and for the employer (Howard & Cordes, 2010; Lee et al., 2021).

Literature shows that the relationship between integration and perceived discrimination is complex (Diehl et al., 2021; Schaeffer & Kas, 2023). Better integrated immigrants, like higher educated or second-generation immigrants, might perceive more instead of less discrimination (Verkuyten, 2016). Moreover, gender seems to also influence perceptions of ethnic discrimination (Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Kofman et al., 2009). This research tried to add to the existing knowledge in this complex field of study by looking into workplace discrimination of non-western immigrants in a specific organisation and the influence of migration generation, level of education and gender, and by adding job satisfaction as an outcome.

Following social identity theory, social categorisation theory (Lippens et al., 2022; Schaffer, 2003; Tajfel & Turner, 2004), ethnic hierarchy theory (Thijssen et al., 2022), and

group threat theory (Ramos et al., 2021), employees with a non-western migration background were expected to perceive more discrimination in the workplace than native Dutch employees. This study found that only second-generation non-western immigrants reported more discrimination than natives. Those from a first-generation did not. This difference in findings between first- and second-generation could possibly (partially) be explained by literature on the integration paradox, suggesting that second-generation immigrants might perceive more discrimination because of more contact with natives and higher sensitivity and awareness of discriminatory behaviour (Diehl et al., 2021).

Based on the literature, higher levels of perceived discrimination were expected to lead to lower levels of job satisfaction (Indyastuti, 2019; Lee et al., 2021; Valentine et al., 1999). This expectation was confirmed in the analysis. The expected mediation of the effects of a non-western migration background on job satisfaction by perceived discrimination was found for both first- and second-generation immigrants. For second-generation immigrants the lower job satisfaction than natives fully followed the expected pathway through more perceived discrimination. For first-generation immigrants the lower job satisfaction was only partially explained by more perceived discrimination. Assumably, other factors also influence the lower job satisfaction of these immigrants compared to natives, like lower levels of language proficiency (Bloemen, 2014), or not working in jobs that they are qualified for. The latter especially happens when education was gained in another country (Donegani & McKay, 2021), and could thus more often be the case for first-generation immigrants. It could also be that their lower job satisfaction is explained by objective discrimination like unequal chances, but that they, in line with the integration paradox, perceive this less as discrimination than second-generation immigrants.

Following literature on the integration paradox (Diehl et al., 2021; Schaeffer & Kas, 2023), employees with a second-generation non-western migration background were expected to be less satisfied with their job through more perceived discrimination in the workplace than employees with a first-generation non-western migration background. These expected differences and the expected mediation were however not found. This could mean that some mechanisms from the literature do not apply to the employees of the municipality of Amsterdam. It might for example be that those from a second-generation do not have more contact with natives than first-generation immigrants. This is plausible since they all work in a Dutch municipality. Moreover, the argument that the second-generation is better able to understand their surroundings because of better language proficiency does not hold for this

sample. Since the survey was only available in Dutch, first-generation immigrants in the sample must have some knowledge of the Dutch language as well.

Also following the literature on the integration paradox (Banerjee, 2008; Diehl et al., 2021; Verkuyten, 2016), the effect of having a non-western migration background on perceived discrimination was expected to be stronger for higher educated employees. This expectation was confirmed, using salary scale as a proxy for education level. This implies that the mechanisms that might not have applied to second versus first-generation immigrants, did apply to higher versus lower educated employees with a non-western migration background. They might thus indeed have more contact with the majority, be more aware of and sensitive to discrimination, and be more demanding of equal treatment than lower educated non-western immigrants.

Lastly, literature on the double jeopardy hypothesis (Berdahl & Moore, 2006) and vigilance (Himmelstein et al., 2015; Kaiser & Major, 2006; Pichardo et al., 2021) led to the expectation that the effect of a non-western migration background on perceived discrimination would be stronger for female than for male employees. When comparing female gender to non-female, findings showed that there was no influence of gender on the effect of a first-generation non-western migration background. For second-generation, there was an effect of female gender, but in the other direction than expected. The effect on perceived discrimination was weaker for female employees. This could mean that the theory does not hold in this context. Another possible explanation is that women already perceive that much more discrimination in the workplace than men, that having a non-western background is less of an influence in causing even more perceived discrimination than it is for men. Since the measurement of perceived discrimination was not about ethnic discrimination *per se*, this could be an explanation. This however does not explain why this was the case for second-generation but not for first-generation immigrants.

Limitations

A first limitation is the representativeness of this study. While the dataset consisting of employees from all layers of one organisation certainly was a strength, it is also a weakness in that the generalisability to other organisations is not very good. In different organisations, with different policies, in different parts of the Netherlands, the outcomes could be different. The findings can however still be useful for better understanding of the issue, also for different kinds of organisations.

Furthermore, this study had some issues with the operationalisation of some constructs. As was already mentioned, the dummy variable for female gender compared women with

both men and non-binary. Although non-binary respondents were a very small portion of the sample, the operationalisation would have been more accurate if women would have online been compared to men. Another slightly problematic construct was migration background and generation. Firstly, respondents with a migration background in Asia, one of the Americas or Oceania were left out of the sample because these regions were not specified. Since some countries within these categories are western and other non-western (Netherlands (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2022; n.d.a; n.d.b), these respondents could in this study not be categorised. This might have had an influence on the outcomes. Secondly, although the categorisation of western and non-western is certainly of meaning and fits with the theory, it does not show the differences between non-western countries. It might be the case that the effects differ significantly between employees from different non-western countries. Lastly, this study did not look into possible differences in countries between first- and second-generation non-western immigrants. If for example the one group consisted mostly of people with a background in Muslim countries, and the other more of people from Christian countries, this could have influenced the outcomes of the groups and thus the comparison of first- and second-generation immigrants.

A last limitation to consider is the measurement of perceived discrimination. Respondents were not asked about ethnic discrimination explicitly, but about perceived discrimination in general. While the comparison of the ethnic groups is accurate, this measurement does allow for other factors to possibly explain findings on perceived discrimination. Furthermore, respondents had the option to answer 'I don't know if it was discrimination', and those who did were coded as having never experienced discrimination. This might have led to an under-estimation of perceived discrimination. Another factor possibly causing under-estimation is the fact that it is psychologically challenging to recognise discrimination against yourself or your ingroup (Crosby, 1984). Moreover, the way of measuring discrimination was now with an abstract question 'did you experience discrimination', instead of giving concrete examples of discriminatory behaviour is easier to recognise. This might have affected the answers, especially those of lower educated respondents.

Future research

Future research could thus look into possibilities of combining the study of perceptions with experiments or other ways to study objective discrimination. This would give a more complete understanding of the size of the problem of ethnic discrimination in the workplace, and also give more insights into how subjective and objective discrimination relate to each other.

With regard to the operationalisation of migration background, it would be interesting to collect a dataset large enough to be able to study the effects of a background in different non-western countries separately.

With regard to the generalisability, future research could replicate this study in different organisations and/or compare outcomes of different kinds of organisations. The more knowledge, the better organisations can tailor their policies to their own context.

The difference in job satisfaction between natives and immigrants in Western European countries has not been studied much yet (Piccitto & Avola, 2023). It would be valuable for future research to look into this and into other mechanisms than perceived discrimination in the workplace causing lower job satisfaction among people with a migration background, especially since this study found that for first-generation non-western immigrants a direct effect remained.

Lastly, the role of gender in this complex issue should be studied more. It would be good to not only measure perceived workplace discrimination in general, but also perceived ethnic and gender discrimination separately, to gain more insights into this. In these studies, attention could be given not only to the role of gender in perceiving ethnic discrimination, but also to the interplay between gender and other factors. For example like this study found that gender had a moderating effect for second-but not for first-generation non-western immigrants. What mechanisms cause this difference?

Conclusion

The answer to the first research question of this study is that Dutch employees experience workplace discrimination to some extent, but not at very high levels. The answer to the question of the mediated effect of a non-western migration background on job satisfaction is that employees with a non-western migration background were less satisfied with their job than natives, and that this effect was mediated by perceived discrimination. The first-generation was less satisfied with their job, partly explained by more perceived discrimination. The second-generation was also less satisfied with their job, but fully explained by more perceived discrimination. The answer to the same question for second-generation non-western immigrants compared to first-generation is that there was no difference between these groups in job satisfaction or in perceived discrimination, and thus also no mediated effect. The answer to the questions of moderation are that the effect of both a first- and second-generation non-western migration background on perceived discrimination compared to no migration background was stronger for higher educated employees. The effect of a first-generation non-western migration background was not stronger or weaker for female

employees. For second-generation, the effect was weaker for female employees. Given the importance of the subject, more research should be done. Even the relatively low levels of perceived discrimination this study found give reason to do so, given the seriousness of the possible consequences for each individual perceiving discrimination.

Policy recommendations

One of the goals of this study was to answer the question “What can Dutch organisations do to improve the job satisfaction of employees with a non-western migration background, when looking at the effect of perceived discrimination in the workplace?” Ethnic discrimination of people with a non-western background in the workplace is part of a large societal problem of ethnic discrimination in general. Unfortunately, there is not a simple solution to this big problem, partly because ethnic discrimination seems to be human behaviour, helping individuals deal with the world surrounding them (Schaffer, 2003; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). By focusing on specific environments, small steps can be taken, influencing the perceptions and behaviour of individuals.

Organisational procedures and formalising these can counter discrimination to some extent since it eliminates some of the unconscious preferences people have (Lippens et al., 2022). When it comes to for example selecting, evaluating or promoting employees, formalised organisational procedures are thus recommended. But since changing peoples (unconscious) behaviour is difficult, another important organisational approach should be to improve reporting procedures for employees wanting to report experiences of discrimination. This way, the organisation gets a more complete picture of perceived discrimination in their workplace, and victimised employees feel heard and helped, which can already reduce the negative effects for them.

The more insight into the problem, the more concrete measures can be taken. Therefore, organisations should research experiences of discrimination in their workplace themselves and monitor the effects of measures that are taken by researching the experiences regularly.

This study showed that experiences definitely matter, independent of the intention of the perpetrator. For improving job satisfaction, this is thus an important thing to focus on. Organisations could give trainings and start internal campaigns to make employees aware of the difference between intention and experience and of the impact experiences can have, independent of the intention. At the same time, this research showed that perceived discrimination is not the only factor influencing job satisfaction. Maintaining good contact with employees, knowing what bothers them or affects their job satisfaction, is important to do something about it. Special moments could be created for this, in groups or one-on-one

with a manager. Moreover, this study also showed that perceptions do not say everything. If for example higher educated employees are more attentive to discrimination, this does not mean that they are treated less fair than lower educated employees.

This study showed that issue of perceived workplace discrimination is complex and that experiences can be affected by many different factors. The most important thing about organisational policies is thus that they should have attention for individuals and their different experiences and perceptions. This way, more and more organisations can hopefully reduce the problems of discrimination and low job satisfaction, getting closer and closer towards a society in which all individuals can feel happy and safe at work.

References

- Andriessen, I., Fernee, H., & Wittebrood, K. (2014). *Perceived discrimination in the Netherlands* (Report No. 5). The Netherlands Institute for Social Research. <https://repository.scp.nl/bitstream/handle/publications/573/Perceived%20discriminatio%20in%20the%20Netherlands.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>
- Andriessen, I., Hoegen Dijkhof, J., Van der Torre, A., Van den Berg, E., Pulles, I., Iedema, J., & De Voogd-Hamelink, M. (2020). *Ervaren discriminatie in Nederland II* (Report No. 5). Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau. <https://www.scp.nl/binaries/scp/documenten/publicaties/2020/04/02/ervaren-discriminatie-in-nederland-ii/Ervaren+discriminatie+in+Nederland+II.pdf>
- Avery, D. R., McKay, P. F., & Wilson, D. C. (2008). What Are the Odds? How Demographic Similarity Affects the Prevalence of Perceived Employment Discrimination. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(3), 235-249. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.2.235>
- Ayalon, L. (2014). Perceived Age, Gender, and Racial=Ethnic Discrimination in Europe: Results from the European Social Survey. *Educational Gerontology*, 40, 499-517. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03601277.2013.845490>
- Banerjee, R. (2008). An Examination of Factors Affecting Perception of Workplace Discrimination. *Journal of Labor Research*, 29, 380-401. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12122-008-9047-0>
- Berdahl, J. L., & Moore, C. (2006). Workplace Harassment: Double Jeopardy for Minority Women. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(2), 426 – 436. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.2.426>
- Bloemen, H. G. (2014). *Language Proficiency of Migrants: The Relation with Job Satisfaction and Skill Matching*. Tinbergen Institute Discussion Papers 14-148/V, Tinbergen Institute. <https://ideas.repec.org/p/tin/wpaper/20140148.html>
- Busfield, J. (2018). Mental Illness and Social Problems. In A. J. Treviño (Ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Social Problems* (pp. 23–42). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108550710.003>
- Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. (2022). *Integratie en Samenleven 2022*. <https://longreads.cbs.nl/integratie-en-samenleven-2022/inleiding/>
- Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. (n.d.a). *Wat is het verschil tussen een westerse en niet-westerse allochtoon?* Retrieved at February 8, 2024, from [https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/faq/specifiek/wat-is-het-verschil-tussen-een-westerse-en-niet-westerse-allochtoon-#:~:text=Westers%3A,Indonesi%C3%AB%20en%20Japan\)%20of%20Turkije.](https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/faq/specifiek/wat-is-het-verschil-tussen-een-westerse-en-niet-westerse-allochtoon-#:~:text=Westers%3A,Indonesi%C3%AB%20en%20Japan)%20of%20Turkije.)

- Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. (n.d.b). *Persoon met een niet-westerse migratieachtergrond*. Retrieved at February 8, 2024, from <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/onze-diensten/methoden/begrippen/persoon-met-een-niet-westerse-migratieachtergrond>
- Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. (n.d.c). *Migratieachtergrond*. Retrieved at February 8, 2024, from <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/onze-diensten/methoden/begrippen/migratieachtergrond>
- Crosby, F. (1984). The Denial of Personal Discrimination. *The American Behavioral Scientist*, 27(3), 371-386. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000276484027003008>
- De Vroome, T., Martinovic, B., Verkuyten, M. (2014). The Integration Paradox: Level of Education and Immigrants' Attitudes towards Natives and the Host Society. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 20(2), 166-175. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0034946>
- Di Stasio, V., Lancee, B., Veit, S., & Yemane, R. (2021). Muslim by default or religious discrimination? Results from a cross-national field experiment on hiring discrimination. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47(6), 1305-1326. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2019.1622826>
- Diehl, C., Liebau, E., & Mühlau, P. (2021). How Often Have You Felt Disadvantaged? Explaining Perceived Discrimination. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 73, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11577-021-00738-y>
- Donegani, C. P., & McKay, S. (2021). Lower job satisfaction among workers migrating within Europe: A gender paradox. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 42(3), 621-647. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831X18799905>
- Ellemers, N., & Rink, F. (2016). Diversity in work groups. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 11, 49–53. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2016.06.001>.
- Ensher, E. A., Grant-Vallone, E. J., & Donaldson, S. I. (2001). Effects of perceived discrimination on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and grievances. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 12(1), 53-72. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/1532-1096\(200101/02\)12:13.0.CO;2-G](http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/1532-1096(200101/02)12:13.0.CO;2-G)
- Flores, R. D. (2015). The Resurgence of Race in Spain: Perceptions of Discrimination Among Immigrants. *Social Forces*, 94(1), 237–269. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sov056>
- George, U., Thomson, M. S., Chaze, F., & Guruge, S. (2015). Immigrant Mental Health, A

- Public Health Issue: Looking Back and Moving Forward. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 12, 13624-13648.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph121013624>
- Hayes, A. F. (2022). *Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis* (3rd ed.). Guilford Press.
- Heiserman, N., & Simpson, B. (2023). Discrimination reduces work effort of those who are disadvantaged and those who are advantaged by it. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 7, 1890-1898. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-023-01703-9>
- Helbling, M., & Traummüller, R. (2020). What is Islamophobia? Disentangling citizens' feelings toward ethnicity, religion and religiosity using a survey experiment. *British Journal of Political Science*, 50(3), 811-828.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123418000054>
- Herrman, H., & Jané-Llopis, E. (2005). Mental health promotion in public health. *Promotion & education, Suppl 2*, 42–69. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10253823050120020107>
- Himmelstein, M. S., Young, D. M., Sanchez, D. T., & Jackson, J. S. (2015). Vigilance in the discrimination-stress model for Black Americans. *Psychology & Health*, 30(3), 253-267. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08870446.2014.966104>
- Howard, L. W. & Cordes, C. L. (2010). Flight from Unfairness: Effects of Perceived Injustice on Emotional Exhaustion and Employee Withdrawal. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 25(3), 409-428. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S10869-010-9158-5>.
- Indyastuti, D. L. (2019). Does perceived discrimination affect job satisfaction among teachers and staff? *Jurnal Manajemen dan Pemasaran Jasa*, 12, 113-128.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.25105/jmpj.v12i1.3686>
- Kaiser, C. R., & Major, B. (2006). A Social Psychological Perspective on Perceiving and Reporting Discrimination. *Law & Social Inquiry*, 31(4), 801–830.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-4469.2006.00036.x>
- Kofman, E., Roosblad, J., & Keuzenkamp, K. (2009). Migrant and minority women, inequalities and discrimination in the labour market. In K. Kraal, J. Roosblad, & J. Wrench (Eds.), *Equal Opportunities and Ethnic Inequality in European Labour Markets* (pp. 47-68). Amsterdam University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.5117/9789089641267>
- Kroon, A. C., Trilling, D., Van Selm, M., & Vliegenthart, R. (2018). Biased media? How news content influences age discrimination claims. *European Journal of Ageing*, 16, 109-119. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10433-018-0465-4>

- Kuster, F., Orth, U. & Meier, L. L. (2013). High self-esteem prospectively predicts better work conditions and outcomes. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 4(6), 668–675. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550613479806>
- Lee, T., Lim, H. D. & Kim J. (2021). The effect of mentoring and self-esteem on job satisfaction: a comparative study between U.S.-born and foreign-born faculty. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 29(4), 412-429. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13611267.2021.1952395>
- Lippens, L., Baert, S., Ghekiere, A., Verhaeghe, P., & Derous, E. (2022) Is labour market discrimination against ethnic minorities better explained by taste or statistics? A systematic review of the empirical evidence. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 48(17), 4243-4276. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2022.2050191>
- Lundström, C. (2017). The white side of migration: reflections on race, citizenship and belonging in Sweden. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 7(2), 79-87. <https://doi.org/10.1515/njmr-2017-0014>
- Major, B., Kaiser, C. R., O'Brien, L. T., & McCoy, S. K. (2007). Perceived Discrimination as Worldview Threat or Worldview Confirmation: Implications for Self-Esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 92(6), 1068-1086. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.92.6.1068>
- Nielsen, M. B., Einarsen, S. V., Parveen, S., & Rosander, M. (2024). Witnessing workplace bullying –A systematic review and meta-analysis of individual health and well-being outcomes. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 75, 101908. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2023.101908>
- Netherlands Institute for Human Rights. (2021). *Netherlands Institute for Human Rights Report. To the 104th Session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) concerning the examination of the 22nd to 24th periodic reports of the Netherlands*. Netherlands Institute for Human Rights. <https://publicaties.mensenrechten.nl/file/577da4fd-9e19-ccad-fb17-99cb474799ea.pdf>
- Paradies, Y., Ben, J., Denson, N., Elias, A., Priest, N., Pieterse, A., Gupta, A., Kelaher, M., & Gee, G. (2015). Racism as a determinant of health: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *PloS one*, 10(9), e0138511. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0138511>
- Peereboom, K., & Horsten, F. (2015). *Handreiking Psychosociale arbeidsbelasting (PSA)*. VHP human performance. <https://www.ser.nl/-/media/ser/downloads/overige-publicaties/2015/handreiking-psa-tno-2015.pdf?la=nl&hash=1E329BED739795241BE80D48F2184EE9>

- Piccitto, G., & Avola, M. (2023). Migrant and Satisfied? The Ethnic Gap in Job Satisfaction in the Italian Labor Market. *Migration Letters*, 20(2), 137-146.
<https://doi.org/10.33182/ml.v20i2.2277>
- Pichardo, C. M., Molina, K. M., Rosas, C. E., Uriostegui, M., & Sanchez-Johnsen, L. (2021). Racial Discrimination and Depressive Symptoms among Latina/o College Students: The Role of Racism-Related Vigilance and Sleep. *Race and Social Problems*, 13, 86–101. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12552-020-09304-1>
- Ramos, M., Thijssen, L., & Coenders, M. (2021). Labour market discrimination against Moroccan minorities in the Netherlands and Spain: a cross-national and cross-regional comparison. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47(6), 1261-1284.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2019.1622824>
- Rogelberg, S. G., Leach, D. J., Warr, P. B., & Burnfield, J. L. (2006). "Not another meeting!" Are meeting time demands related to employee well-being? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(1), 86-96. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.1.83>
- Schaeffer, M., & Kas, J. (2023). The Integration Paradox: A Review and MetaAnalysis of the Complex Relationship Between Integration and Reports of Discrimination. *International Migration*, 0(0), 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01979183231170809>
- Schaffer, B. S. (2003). *Relational demography from a discrimination perspective: the moderating role of work group status* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Georgia].
https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/schaffer_bryan_s_200308_phd.pdf
- Schmitt, M. T., Branscombe, N. R., Postmes, T., & Garcia, A. (2014). The consequences of perceived discrimination for psychological well-being: a meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 140(4), 921. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035754>
- Small, M. L., & Pager, D. (2020). Sociological perspectives on racial discrimination. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 34(2), 49-67. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.34.2.49>
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (2004). The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour. In J. T. Jost & J. Sidanius. (Eds.), *Political Psychology* (pp. 276-293). Psychology Press.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203505984>
- Thijssen, L., Lancee, B., Veit, S., & Yemane, R. (2021a). Discrimination against Turkish minorities in Germany and the Netherlands: field experimental evidence on the effect of diagnostic information on labour market outcomes. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47(6), 1222-1239.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2019.1622793>
- Thijssen, L., Coenders, M., & Lancee, B. (2021b). Ethnic Discrimination in the Dutch Labor

- Market: Differences Between Ethnic Minority Groups and the Role of Personal Information About Job Applicants—Evidence from a Field Experiment. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 22, 1125–1150.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-020-00795-w>
- Thijssen, L., van Tubergen, F., Coenders, M., Hellpap, R., & Jak, S. (2022). Discrimination of Black and Muslim Minority Groups in Western Societies: Evidence From a Meta-Analysis of Field Experiments. *International Migration Review*, 56(3), 843-880.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/01979183211045044>
- Valentine, S., Silver L. & Twigg, N. (1999). Locus of control, job satisfaction, and job complexity: the role of perceived race discrimination. *Psychological Reports*, 84(3), 1267-1273. <https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1999.84.3c.1267>
- Verkuyten, M. (2016). The Integration Paradox: Empiric Evidence From4 the Netherlands. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 60(5-6), 583-596.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764216632838>
- Wanous, J. P., Reichers, A. E., & Hudy, M. J. (1997). Overall job satisfaction: how good are single-item measures? *Journal of applied Psychology*, 82(2), 247-252.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.82.2.247>
- Yassine, D., Yenga, M., Felten, H., & Does, S. (2023). *Ongelijkheid in welzijn: Een mixed-methode onderzoek naar de mentale gezondheid van Nederlandse jongeren met en zonder migratieachtergrond*. Verwey-Jonker Instituut. https://www.verwey-jonker.nl/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/322030_Ongelijkheid-in-welzijn.pdf

Appendix**Table 5**

Indices of Moderated Mediation

	Index of moderated mediation	
	B(SE)	95% CI
X1 > PD > JS by salary scale	-.019(.009)	[-.038, -.001]
X1 > PD > JS by female gender	.047(.049)	[-.049, .140]
X2 > PD > JS by salary scale	-.018(.012)	[-.041, .005]
X2 > PD > JS by female gender	.168(.056)	[.060, .282]
X3 > PD > JS by salary scale	.002(.014)	[-.026, .030]
X3 > PD > JS by female gender	.121(.073)	[-.020, .267]

Note. Significant index of moderated mediation if the 95% CI does not include zero.