

Do you like my beard?

The influence of applicant's beard length
in German and Dutch recruiting processes

Master Thesis

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Abstract

Background: Different beard lengths and styles have regularly cycled in and out of fashion in the last centuries. Lately, especially long beards experienced a comeback in society, but does this also apply for the work environment? Previous research concerning facial hair focused mainly on the attractiveness of beards to women under different circumstances. Little research addressed the actual reaction of recruiters when faced with a bearded applicant.

Aim: The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of applicant's beard length on human resources personnel's perception of the applicant during the recruiting process for customer service related jobs in Germany and the Netherlands.

Method: A quantitative field experiment with a 4 (clean shaven, short beard, medium beard, full beard) x 2 (Germany, Netherlands) experimental design was used. A total of 496 recruiters located in all parts of the Netherlands and Germany received an email in their native language including a short motivational letter, several questions concerning general information about the company and a photograph of the applicant. Every condition was represented by two variants of photographs which resulted in a total of eight photographs for the four conditions. Every recruiter received only one randomly assigned photograph from the total pool of eight photographs.

Results: The findings of this study indicate that the amount of facial hair had an influence on the response of the recruiters. Overall, recruiters responded more positively to the extreme conditions of facial hair (clean-shaven and long beard) than to both conditions that lay in-between (short beard and medium beard). Applicants with a medium beard received the most negative responses from both male and female recruiters and German recruiters provided more general information than their Dutch colleagues. These findings imply that the amount of facial hair has an influence on the recruiting process in Germany and the Netherlands.

Conclusion: Long beards seemed to have the opposite effect than expected and were rated more positively than shorter beards. This could indicate that long beards have found their way into the corporate world as an expression of individualism.

Keywords

applicant, beard length, facial hair, recruitment process, gender, culture

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1 Introduction

Since the dawn of time, growing a beard has been a visual sign of manhood which separated the boys from the men and it is still one of the most visible male secondary sexual traits (Dixon & Rantala, 2016). In early human history, having a beard had many direct and indirect purposes. For example, it could protect the skin from the impact of different elements and it also functioned as a tool for intimidation against other male competitors by giving the impression of a stronger jaw line (Harsh, 2012). In ancient civilizations beards were a sign of honor and were only cut off as punishment for misconduct (Harsh, 2012).

In the last centuries, beards have regularly cycled in and out of fashion depending on the social norms in the times (van der Land & Muntinga, 2014). Beardedness increased when the potential marriage pool contained more men than women because it offered a competitive advantage against the other male contenders by enhancing physical attractiveness and mate value (Barber, 2001). When a certain beard-peak was reached, clean-shaven faces became more popular in contrast to their fellow bearded men. In today's world, nearly half of the male population wears facial hair in some kind of way (Harsh, 2012). Facial hair gives men the opportunity to express themselves and to accessorize in ways they might not be able to otherwise. It can be seen as a statement about who they are and how they want to be perceived by others (Hellmer, Stenson & Jylhä, 2018).

One area which has not received much research is how beards affect human resources personnel. Recruiters have to gather information from different sources to determine which applicant is the best suited for the available position. Ideally the only characteristic that should be taken into account by the recruiter "are those that directly affect the applicant's ability to perform the duties required by the available position" (Shannon & Stark, 2003). The reality however differs. Recruiters are confronted with none work-related factors and information such as demeanor, personal appearance or grooming habits (Shannon & Stark, 2003) that have nothing to do with the applicant's qualification but can still have a major impact on the decision making to hire or reject an applicant. If the recruiter "has any previously acquired dispositions to evaluate certain characteristics with a positive or negative bias, these acquired dispositions, or attitudes, could influence the interviewer's overall evaluation of the applicant" (Shannon & Stark, 2003). So physical appearance and grooming habits are factors that play an important role in the hiring process. These factors can affect people's impressions about another's attractiveness, personality, social status, and even competence, intelligence, and moral character (Knapp, Hall & Horgan, 2013; Satrapa et al., 1992). According to Andersen (1999) stereotyping others based on their looks and physical appearance is an inevitable

human process to judge an unknown person before more information becomes available. These first impressions can change, as soon as more information becomes available through personal contact, but especially a negative first impression may stick around for quite some time.

When it comes to beards, Reed and Blunk (1990) reported, that job applicants with facial hair were consistently perceived by recruiters as being more social, physically attractive, competent and as having a more positive personality and composure, compared to their clean-shaven contenders. An explanation for these findings is the negative frequency-dependence principle. According to Janif, Brooks and Dixon (2014) this principle can be described as an advantage of rare traits. In the case of facial hair this means, that the more beards there are in society, the less attractive they become and vice versa. The results indicated that beards and clean-shaven faces become more appealing to both men and women when they are rare.

When applying for a job the presence or absence of a beard might make a crucial difference, especially when certain facial hair styles are rare. Growing a beard or shaving the facial hair off could have two possible effects. On the one hand, an outstanding appearance might be an advantage and lead to a positive judgement which can separate an applicant from the rest of his competitors which can ultimately result in a better chance of being hired. On the other hand, an outstanding appearance might be a disadvantage when it stands in contrast to the desired norms and values, which might lead to a negative impression and resultant worse chances of being hired. Therefore the research question for this study is to find out, if the amount of applicant facial hair has an influence on the recruiting process for customer service related jobs

2 Theoretical Framework

The following section presents the theoretical framework for this research. It is divided into three paragraphs which cover the most important aspects for this study. First the general effects of facial hair are discussed followed by the influence of gender differences on the perception of facial hair and lastly, cultural differences.

2.1 Effects of facial hair

Facial hair can radically alter the way a man looks, whether it is a little stubble or a full beard. Research has shown that the presence of beards enhance ratings of age, dominance and social status (Neave & Shields 2008; Dixson & Vasey 2012). Other positive attributes associated with bearded men are self-confidence, courage, sincerity, generosity and industriousness (Kenny & Fletcher, 1973; Pellegrini, 1973; Hellström & Tekle, 1994). Facial hair as a sign of masculinity is further positively associated with male physical strength (Fink, Neave & Seydel, 2007), adulthood (Thornhill & Gangestad, 2006) and strong immunity and health (Phalane, Tribe, Steel, Cholo & Coetzee, 2017). Zahavi and Zahavi (1997) add another positive trait of bearded men from an evolutionary point of view. According to their handicap principle, a man with a beard signals strong confidence about his own fitness and competitive ability, because other male rivals could easily grab the beard during a fight which could be a disadvantage (Zahavi & Zahavi, 1997). Thus having a full beard, despite its possible disadvantage, indicates that the man is confident enough to overcome every obstacle he encounters.

Nevertheless there are also some negative perceptions about bearded men. One of these is that bearded men tend to be seen as more aggressive and very masculine (Neave and Shields, 2008) compared to their clean-shaven counterparts (Dixson & Vasey 2012).

2.2 Gender differences on the perception of facial hair

The gender of a person is more than their biological sex, it is a multidimensional construct which is defined by gender schemas, gender-roles, stereotypes, attitudes and values (Bem, 1993; Korabik, 1999). According to Butler (1988) gender is not a stable identity. Rather a person's identity develops over time by repetition of acts which are continuously renewed, revised and consolidated. This identity also determines how people interact (Deaux & Major, 1987) and which social roles they take in society (Eagly, 1987).

These definitions are also present in the workplace. There are still certain prevailing gender stereotypes that are characterized by a number of attributes. The male stereotype is

mainly defined through agency, which includes achievement orientation, taking charge, autonomy and rationality (Heilman, 2012). The female stereotype is mainly defined through communality, which includes concern for others, affiliative tendency's, deference and emotional sensitivity (Heilman, 2012). Because these stereotypes still exist in organizations, it can be presumed that they might affect recruiters in their process of hiring new employees.

When it comes to attractiveness of bearded men and how men and women perceive them, the results of scientific studies are very equivocal. In one study by Neave and Shields (2008), women preferred light stubble, whereas in another study, heavy stubble was preferred (Dixson & Brooks, 2013). In yet a third study, clean-shaven, light stubble and heavy stubble were equally preferred over full beards (Dixson, Tam & Awasthy, 2012). According to Valentova, Varella, Bártová, Štěrbová and Dixson (2017), men tend to prefer a self-similar amount of facial hair which is to say that bearded men might have the tendency to rate other bearded men as more attractive. The same applies to other amounts of facial hair or the absence of it. In general men tend to prefer more masculine traits, especially beards (Muscarella, 2002).

Many factors such as personal experience, preference, attitude and context contribute to the perception of facial hair so that there is no general answer to the question determining which length of facial hair is the most attractive. Based on these references it can be assumed that gender plays an important part in how bearded men are perceived and therefore it is addressed in this research.

2.3 Cultural differences on the perception of facial hair

The definition of culture can be divided into two major aspects. The first one is visible characteristics such as country boundaries or skin color (House, Wright & Aditya, 1997) which can result in the categorization of people into social groups such as country or nationality (Ayman & Korabik, 2010). The second aspect refers to more invisible characteristics such as values and personalities. Both of these aspects taken together can lead to the assumption, "that people who look alike, have similar languages, or live within the same geographic boundaries will have similar cultural values" (Ayman & Korabik, 2010). In today's global world however this is not always the case. Connerley and Pedersen (2005) extend this definition by including demographic characteristics (physical gender), status characteristics (economic and educational variables) and affiliation. Therefore, if people differ from one another on one or more of these mentioned characteristics they experience the world in a different way (Connerley & Pedersen, 2005).

The perception of an individual's face and appearance, including facial hair, is uniquely related to certain social regulations including culture, religion and education (Thesing, 2016). Wearing a beard in a cultural environment where they are very common might have a different effect than in cultures where facial hair is not popular. According to Featherstone (2010) other significant factors such as clothing, aesthetics and personal taste also play an important role in a modern consumer culture. The way an individual behaves and presents his face and physical appearance to the outside world can be seen as an indicator of having either accepted or rejected the values of a certain culture and society. Maguire and Pitceathly (2002) state that individual faces, which includes the amount of facial hair, and personal style have a certain market value in modern society where appearance has a major influence on how people are perceived by others. How certain physical characteristics are interpreted and judged strongly depends on the country's culture and societal norms and values (Thesing, 2016). These cultural and ethnic values are learned socially the same way as gender-role beliefs mentioned in the previous paragraph.

To verify the findings from cultural literature, two European countries were selected that share a geographical border and are expected to differ in terms of cultural norms and values. According to Linthout (2008) the cultural differences between Germany and the Netherlands are bigger than between almost any other neighboring country in the EU and thus offered a promising context for this research. Besides the fact that Germany and the Netherlands share a border and have a similar language, there are quite some differences between these two countries in terms of work culture and business etiquette (LegalKnowledgePortal, 2013) which might influence the recruiting process of new employees. These differences can manifest themselves in different perceptions, attitudes and behavior (Thesing, 2006) which are further described in the paragraphs below.

Germans are especially known for their appreciation for rules, structures and regulations including top-down hierarchies (Thesing, 2006). Displaying a big beard could be perceived as a sign of dominance (Dixson & Vasey 2012) which could influence existing power structures and might be perceived in a negative way. German employees are especially task and status-orientated and follow a strict time schedule when it comes to getting things done in the workplace. Among colleagues, a formal tone is very common which includes the use of (academic) titles (LegalKnowledgePortal, 2013). Furthermore, work and personal life are strictly separated. Lastly, physical appearance and appropriate clothing plays a major role in the German business world where a beard might be perceived as inappropriate, depending on the work context.

Dutch business culture differs to the German one described above on various points. In the workplace, Dutch companies take a much calmer, less demanding and more personal approach than their German neighbors (LegalKnowledgePortal, 2013). The communication is more informal with less hierarchical structures and employees are encouraged to give their opinion during the process of decision making and they are treated more equally despite their rank or position within the organization. The Dutch perspective focuses more on personality of their employees than their physical appearance (LegalKnowledgePortal, 2013). Having a beard as an expression of a man's individual personality could lead to a more positive perception of the employee.

In sum, the effects of facial hair and how it is perceived by others strongly depend on demographic characteristics, experience, preference, attitude and context. Because the influence of gender and its underlying stereotypes is still quite equivocal when it comes to the perception of facial hair, this study aims to contribute to the existing body of research on this topic. When it comes to the field of recruiting processes in the work environment, cultural differences between countries could have a big influence and strongly affect the outcome of how future applicants are perceived and treated. All these factors taken together served as the basis for this study and its implementation and execution is described in the following section.

3 Method*

The following section presents the methodological approach for this research. It is divided into four paragraphs which will explain the organization and execution of the study. First the design of the research is presented followed by a description of the participants and the underlying procedure. The last paragraph describes the analyses of the obtained data.

3.1 Research Design

This quantitative field experiment makes use of a 4 (clean shaven, short beard, medium beard, full beard) x 2 (Germany, Netherlands) experimental design. Every email, that was sent to the recruiters and managers in the customer service sector, included three attachments: a short motivation letter (Appendix G & H) without any detailed information concerning former work experience; a picture of one of the four conditions (Appendix K & L); some general questions about the job such as the working schedule, its flexibility and the expected knowledge of different languages. In order to prevent name discrimination all applicants had the same name within their country. The recruiters in Germany received an email from an applicant called Stephan Meyer and in the Netherlands they received an email from an applicant called Stephan Mulder. These names are a combination of some of the most common first and last names based on the two different countries. The pictures for the four different conditions are presented in Figure 1-4.

3.2 Instruments

This research included different kind of stimuli both visual (8 pictures in 4 conditions) and written (3 general questions in the email). Furthermore a code book was used to label the variables for this study in order to analyze them. These two instruments are presented in the following paragraphs.

*The research method was developed in close cooperation with Michalelis (2018) who used the identical procedure and approach to investigate the influence of the degree of tattooing within the recruiting process for customer service related jobs.

3.2.1 Stimuli

The pictures of the short beard condition in Figure 2 were the starting point for the stimulus material for this study. In order to guarantee consistency in the faces, the decision was made to alter the length of the facial hair on the pictures via Photoshop. To prevent bias in the response of the recruiters, the stimulus material consisted of two variants of faces with diverging colors of facial hair (Figure 1-4). However, the results showed no significant difference in the response to the different faces so this variable was not considered into further analysis.



Figure 1: Condition 1 – clean-shaven

Figure 2: Condition 2 – short beard



Figure 3: Condition 3 – medium beard

Figure 4: Condition 4 – full beard

The three general questions that the recruiters were asked to answer in the email were:

1. Is the advertised vacancy a full-time or a part-time job? How flexible are the working hours?

2. Is the customer services available 365 days a year, including public holidays and weekends?

3. Which languages are spoken inside your company?

3.2.2 Code book

The code book (Appendix A) consisted of thirteen variables based on a previous conducted pretest. The structure of the code book resulted from the order the variables were visible to the researcher by looking at the returned emails. The first two variables described the demographics of the recruiters, thus their nationality and gender, followed by the stimulus materials they were exposed to (which variant of the faces discussed in the previous paragraph). The next three variables referred to the time the recruiters took to respond, the number of words they used and if there was an automatically generated response that the company or the recruiter received the email. The following four variables were related to the general appearance of the email including the tone of voice, salutation as well as the language and text extendedness. The two remaining variables, job information and extras, referred to the actual content of the email. How many questions were answered by the recruiters and did they provide some additional information to the applicant that they did not ask for? The last included variable was the overall subjective impression of the email.

3.3 Participants

A total of 496 recruiters and human resources managers in the customer service sector located in all parts of the Netherlands and Germany received the request for general information about the advertised available job. This sector was chosen, because no direct contact with clients is required for this employment. Figure 5 shows the overall response rate of this study. 313 of the contacted recruiters and managers replied to the provided questions which results in a response rate of 63.11%. The frequencies of gender and nationality of the recruiters can be found in Table 3. No further demographic data about the recruiters and human resource managers were available.

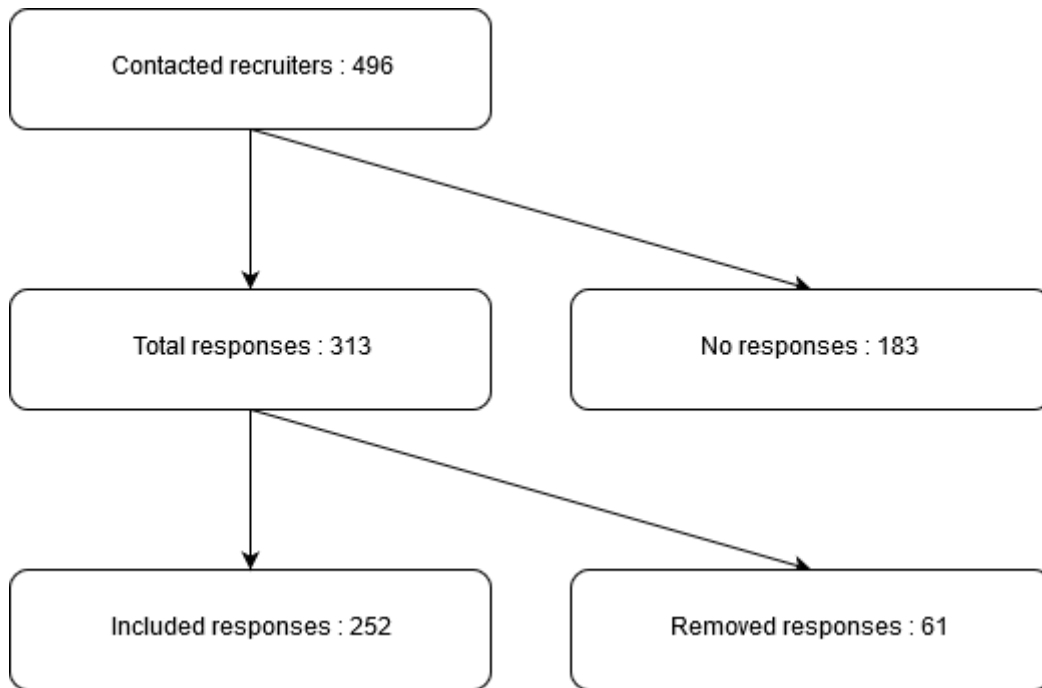


Figure 5: Flow diagram of the overall response rate

3.4 Procedure

A pretest was conducted contacting 10 German and 10 Dutch recruiters to find out which possible reactions could be expected from the request made. After that, 496 recruiters (248 German, 248 Dutch) received an email asking them for general information about the advertised job. The contact details were obtained through multiple online sites that offer job vacancies in different categories and countries. All the materials that were provided in this email were mentioned in the previous paragraph. The emails were sent in the middle of October 2017 and every response within two weeks was included in this research.

To ensure ethical correctness, an information mail (Appendix I & J) was sent at the end of this timeframe to all participating recruiters to inform them that they participated in a scientific research. They were ensured that their data were treated anonymously, received information about the goals of the research and based on this knowledge, the participants had the chance to withdraw their participation from the research by responding to the mail. A total of 61 recruiters withdrew their participation and were removed from the research which led to the final amount of 252 recruiters.

3.5 Analysis

Based on the conducted pretest, a code book was made to analyze the responses of the recruiters that participated in this study. The code book can be found in Appendix A. The literature review has shown that the two independent variables, nationality and gender, can act as predictors of acceptance. All remaining variables were tested against those two to determine if nationality or gender of the recruiters had a significant effect on all other dependent variables. Because the sample size of this exploratory research was limited the decision was made to include marginal significant results with an α of .1 to identify trends that would have been ignored by conventional levels of significance (Hawkins, Blanchard, Baldwin & Fawcett, 2008; Stacey & Biblarz, 2001; Warner, 2012).

The variables considered as most relevant for this research were duration of response, tone of voice, salutation, language and text extendedness, job information and extra information. Most of the variables were defined through two values except tone of voice and extra information. In order to measure the latter two concepts correctly, all containing six values were added up to form a total score for each variable which had a range from 0 to 6. These total scores were used in the analysis to find out the coherence towards the independent variables, nationality and gender, of the recruiters. The measures used in this analysis were chi-square tests for independence, univariate ANOVAs, independent-sample T-tests and Pearson correlation coefficient. The results of the tests are presented in the following section.

4 Results

In this section, the results of the statistical analyses are described. The following variables are discussed in the sequent order: duration of response, number of words, tone of voice, salutation, language and text extendedness, job information, extra information and at the end other findings. The frequencies per variables and underlying values based on the amount of facial hair used in this research namely no beard condition, short beard condition, medium beard condition and long beard condition can be found in Appendix B. The nationality and gender specific frequencies of the respondents can be found in Appendix C until F.

Pearson correlation coefficients for the three quantitative variables of this research are presented in Table 1. The results of this correlation analysis indicate that all three variables are positively correlated with one another. That means, the more positive the tone of voice the more extra information where provided by the recruiters and the more words they used in their responded emails.

Table 1: Correlation table tone of voice witch extra information and number of words

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2
1 Tone of voice	1.63	1.19		
2 Extra information	1.18	0.81	.41	
3 Number of words	77.60	46.06	.45	.45

4.1 Duration of response

To determine if there was an effect of the amount of facial hair on the duration of response, a crosstab analyses was conducted. The results show, that there is a marginal statistical significant link between conditions and duration of response, $\chi^2(3) = 6.81, p = .08$. A closer look on the results with a post hoc test (see Table 2) revealed, that applicants with no beards received an answer more quickly ($M = 1.30$) while applicants with medium beards had to wait the longest for an response ($M = 1.51$). This indicates that the amount of facial hair had an influence on the duration of response.

Table 2: Post hoc test for duration of response

Condition	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3
1 No beard	1.30	0.46			
2 Short beard	1.36	0.48	.06		
3 Medium beard	1.51	0.50	.21	.16	
4 Long beard	1.39	0.49	.09	.04	.12

4.1.1 Interaction with Nationality

To find out if there was an interaction effect of the amount of facial hair and the nationality of the recruiters on the duration of response, this variable was added to the analysis. The results of the German subpopulation showed no statistical significant link between conditions and duration of response, $\chi^2(3) = 4.19, p = .24$ nor did the results of the Dutch subpopulation, $\chi^2(3) = 5.76, p = .12$. This indicates that the nationality of the recruiters had no influence on the duration of response.

4.1.2 Interaction with Gender

To find out if there was an interaction effect of the amount of facial hair and the gender of the recruiters on the duration of response, this variable was added to the analysis. The results of the Female subpopulation showed no statistical significant link between conditions and duration of response, $\chi^2(3) = 1.33, p = .72$. The results of the Male subpopulation however showed a statistical significant link between conditions and duration of response, $\chi^2(3) = 9.04, p = .03$. A closer look on the results with frequencies test (see Table 3) revealed, that male recruiters usually responded within two day in three of the four conditions: no beard (75%), short beard (60.9%) and long beard (58.8%). Though in the medium beard condition they only answered 27.8% within two days. This indicates that the gender of the recruiters had an influence on the duration of response.

Table 3: Frequency table for duration of response in interaction with gender

Condition	Total				Male				Female			
	Up to 2 days		More than 2 days		Up to 2 days		More than 2 days		Up to 2 days		More than 2 days	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
No beard	58	76.3	18	23.7	15	75.0	5	25.0	28	68.3	13	31.7
Short beard	43	64.2	24	35.8	14	60.9	9	39.1	29	65.9	15	34.1
Medium beard	29	48.3	31	51.7	5	27.8	13	72.2	24	57.1	18	42.9
Long beard	27	60.0	18	40.0	10	58.8	7	41.2	17	60.7	11	39.3

4.2 Number of words

To determine if there was an effect of the amount of facial hair on the number of words, a univariate ANOVA was conducted. The results show, that there is no statistical significant link between conditions and number of words, $F(3, 248) = 0.16, p = .92$. This indicates that the amount of facial hair had no influence on the number of words the recruiters used to respond to the received emails.

4.2.1 Interaction with Nationality

To find out if there was an interaction effect of the amount of facial hair and the nationality of the recruiters on the number of words, this variable was added to the analysis (see Table 4). The results show, that there is no statistical significant link between conditions and nationality related to the number of words, $F(3, 244) = 0.84, p = .47$. This indicates that the nationality of the recruiters had no influence on the number of words the recruiters used to respond to the received emails.

Table 4: Univariate ANOVA for interaction with nationality

	<i>F</i>	dfs	<i>p</i>
Condition	0.23	3, 244	.87
Nationality	0.23	1, 244	.63
Interaction	0.84	3, 244	.47

4.2.2 Interaction with Gender

To find out if there was an interaction effect of the amount of facial hair and the gender of the recruiters on the number of words, this variable was added to the analysis (see Table 5). The results show, that there is a marginal statistical significant link between conditions and gender related to the number of words, $F(6, 240) = 1.85, p = .09$. A closer look on the results with a post hoc test (see Table 6) revealed, that in three of the four beard conditions (no beard, medium beard, long beard) male recruiters used significantly more words than their female colleagues (see Table 7), aside from the short beard condition. The short beard condition received the least amount of words from male recruiters. Their female colleagues responded with significantly less amount of words in the no beard condition. This indicates that the gender of the recruiters had an influence on the number of words the recruiters used to respond to the received emails.

Table 5: Univariate ANOVA for interaction with gender

	<i>F</i>	dfs	<i>p</i>
Condition	0.81	3, 240	.49
Gender	0.59	2, 240	.56
Interaction	1.85	6, 240	.09

Table 6: Post hoc test for number of words in interaction with gender (Male)

Condition	Male			1	2	3
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
1 No beard	87.65	42.39				
2 Short beard	70.74	38.58	6.61			
3 Medium beard	79.11	38.88	2.36	4.25		
4 Long beard	88.06	50.56	3.84	2.77	1.48	

Table 7: Post hoc test for number of words in interaction with gender (Female)

Condition	Female			1	2	3
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
1 No beard	66.10	40.23				
2 Short beard	85.07	58.04	5.48			
3 Medium beard	73.02	45.16	2.18	3.30		
4 Long beard	79.36	35.62	3.61	1.87	1.43	

4.3 Tone of voice

To determine if there was an effect of the amount of facial hair on the tone of voice, a univariate ANOVA was conducted. The results show, that there is no statistical significant link between conditions and tone of voice, $F(3, 248) = 0.32, p = .81$. This indicates that the amount of facial hair had no influence on the tone of voice the recruiters used to respond to the received emails.

4.3.1 Interaction with Nationality

To find out if there was an interaction effect of the amount of facial hair and the nationality of the recruiters on the tone of voice, this variable was added to the analysis (see Table 8). The results show, that there is no statistical significant link between conditions and nationality related to the tone of voice, $F(3, 244) = 0.67, p = .70$. This indicates that the nationality of the recruiters had no influence on the tone of voice the recruiters used to respond to the received emails.

Table 8: Univariate ANOVA for interaction with nationality

	<i>F</i>	dfs	<i>p</i>
Condition	0.29	3, 244	.84
Nationality	2.19	1, 244	.14
Interaction	0.67	3, 244	.70

4.3.2 Interaction with Gender

To find out if there was an interaction effect of the amount of facial hair and the gender of the recruiters on the tone of voice, this variable was added to the analysis (see Table 9). The results show, that there is no statistical significant link between conditions and gender related to the tone of voice, $F(6, 240) = 1.16$, $p = .33$. This indicates that the gender of the recruiters had no influence on the tone of voice the recruiters used to respond to the received emails.

Table 9: Univariate ANOVA for interaction with gender

	<i>F</i>	dfs	<i>p</i>
Condition	1.07	3, 240	.36
Gender	0.31	2, 240	.74
Interaction	1.16	6, 240	.33

4.4 Salutation

To determine if there was an effect of the amount of facial hair on the salutation, a crosstab analyses was conducted. The results show, that there is no statistical significant link between conditions and salutation, $\chi^2(3) = 1.52$, $p = .68$. This indicates that the amount of facial hair had no influence on the salutation the recruiters used to respond to the received emails.

4.4.1 Interaction with Nationality

To find out if there was an interaction effect of the amount of facial hair and the nationality of the recruiters on the salutation, this variable was added to the analysis. The results of the German subpopulation showed no statistical significant link between conditions and salutation, $\chi^2(3) = 1.45$, $p = .70$ nor did the results of the Dutch subpopulation, $\chi^2(3) = 1.55$, $p = .67$. This indicates that the nationality of the recruiters had no influence on the salutation used to respond to the received emails.

4.4.2 Interaction with Gender

To find out if there was an interaction effect of the amount of facial hair and the gender of the recruiters on the salutation, this variable was added to the analysis. The results of the Male subpopulation showed no statistical significant link between conditions and salutation, $\chi^2 (3) = 1.23, p = .75$ nor did the results of the Female subpopulation, $\chi^2 (3) = 1.00, p = .80$. This indicates that the gender of the recruiters had no influence on the salutation used to respond to the received emails.

4.5 Language & text extendedness

To determine if there was an effect of the amount of facial hair on the language and text extendedness, a crosstab analyses was conducted. The results show, that there is neither a statistical significant link between conditions and language, $\chi^2 (3) = 4.36, p = .23$ nor between conditions and text extendedness, $\chi^2 (3) = 2.11, p = .55$. This indicates that the amount of facial hair had no influence on the language and text extendedness the recruiters used to respond to the received emails.

4.5.1 Interaction with Nationality

To find out if there was an interaction effect of the amount of facial hair and the nationality of the recruiters on the language and text extendedness, this variable was added to the analysis (see Table 10). The results of the German subpopulation showed no statistical significant link between conditions and language, $\chi^2 (3) = 4.05, p = .26$ nor did the results of the Dutch subpopulation, $\chi^2 (3) = 5.02, p = .17$. This indicates that the nationality of the recruiters had no influence on the language the recruiters used to respond to the received emails. The results of the German subpopulation also showed no significant statistical significant link between conditions and text extendedness, $\chi^2 (3) = 1.78, p = .62$ nor did the results of the Dutch subpopulation, $\chi^2 (3) = 1.56, p = .67$. This indicates that the nationality of the recruiters had no influence on the text extendedness the recruiters used to respond to the received emails.

Table 10: Chi Square Test for the variable language & text extendedness in interaction with nationality

Variable	Total			German			Dutch		
	χ^2	df	<i>p</i>	χ^2	df	<i>p</i>	χ^2	df	<i>p</i>
Language	4.36	3	.23	4.05	3	.26	5.02	3	.17
Text extendedness	2.11	3	.55	1.78	3	.62	1.56	3	.67

4.5.2 Interaction with Gender

To find out if there was an interaction effect of the amount of facial hair and the gender of the recruiters on the language and text extendedness, this variable was added to the analysis (see Table 11). The results of the Male subpopulation showed no statistical significant link between conditions and language, $\chi^2(3) = 0.72, p = .97$ nor did the results of the Female subpopulation, $\chi^2(3) = 4.28, p = .23$. This indicates that the gender of the recruiters had no influence on the language the recruiters used to respond to the received emails. The results of the Male subpopulation also showed no significant statistical significant link between conditions and text extendedness, $\chi^2(3) = 0.94, p = .82$ nor did the results of the Female subpopulation, $\chi^2(3) = 3.64, p = .30$. This indicates that the gender of the recruiters had no influence on the text extendedness the recruiters used to respond to the received emails.

Table 11: Chi Square Test for the variable language & test extendedness in interaction with gender

Variable	Total			Male			Female		
	χ^2	df	<i>p</i>	χ^2	df	<i>p</i>	χ^2	df	<i>p</i>
Language	4.36	3	.23	0.72	3	.97	4.28	3	.23
Text extendedness	2.11	3	.55	0,94	3	.82	3.64	3	.30

4.6 Job information

To determine if there was an effect of the amount of facial hair on the job information, a crosstab analyses was conducted. The results show, that there is no statistical significant link between conditions and job information, $\chi^2(3) = 3.90, p = .69$. This indicates that the amount of facial hair had no influence on the job information the recruiters used to respond to the received emails.

4.6.1 Interaction with Nationality

To find out if there was an interaction effect of the amount of facial hair and the nationality of the recruiters on the job information, this variable was added to the analysis (see Table 12). The results of the Dutch subpopulation showed no statistical significant link between conditions and job information, $\chi^2(3) = 6.85, p = .36$ but the results of the German subpopulation were marginal significant, $\chi^2(3) = 11.71, p = .07$. A closer look on the results with a post hoc test (see Table 13) revealed, that in two of the four beard conditions (no beard, short beard) German recruiters gave statistical significant more job information than their Dutch colleagues (see Table 14). In the other two conditions (medium beard, long beard) it

was the other way around which means that the Dutch recruiters gave statistical significant more job information than their German colleagues. The medium beard condition received the least amount of job information from German recruiters. Their Dutch colleagues gave the least amount of job information to the short beard condition. This indicates that the nationality of the recruiters had an influence on the job information used to respond to the received emails.

Table 12: Univariate ANOVA for interaction with nationality

	<i>F</i>	dfs	<i>p</i>
Condition	2.68	3, 244	.29
Nationality	0.47	1, 244	.64
Interaction	5.40	3, 244	.06

Table 13: Post hoc test for job information in interaction with nationality (German)

Condition	German		1	2	3
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
1 No beard	1.71	1.47			
2 Short beard	1.97	1.38	.22		
3 Medium beard	0.88	1.36	.26	.48	
4 Long beard	1.45	1.47	.05	.17	.31

Table 14: Post hoc test for job information in interaction with nationality (Dutch)

Condition	Dutch		1	2	3
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
1 No beard	1.21	1.47			
2 Short beard	1.38	1.52	.17		
3 Medium beard	1.51	1.46	.27	.44	
4 Long beard	1.55	1.49	.03	.13	.30

4.6.2 Interaction with Gender

To find out if there was an interaction effect of the amount of facial hair and the gender of the recruiters on the job information, this variable was added to the analysis. The results of the Male subpopulation showed no statistical significant link between conditions and job information, $\chi^2(3) = 7.34$, $p = .29$ nor did the results of the Female subpopulation, $\chi^2(3) = 6.97$, $p = .32$. This indicates that the gender of the recruiters had no influence on the job information used to respond to the received emails.

4.7 Extra information

To determine if there was an effect of the amount of facial hair on the extra information, a univariate ANOVA was conducted. The results show, that there is a statistical significant link between conditions and extra information, $F(3, 248) = 3.09, p = .03$. A closer look on the results with a post hoc test (see Table 15) revealed, that short beards received the most extra information of all conditions ($M = 1.33$) and medium beards received the least ($M = 0.94$). This indicates that the amount of facial hair had influence on the extra information the recruiters used to respond to the received emails.

Table 15: Post hoc test for extra information

Condition	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3
1 No beard	1.33	0.95			
2 Short beard	1.27	0.78	.06		
3 Medium beard	0.94	0.69	.39	.33	
4 Long beard	1.18	0.77	.16	.06	.26

4.7.1 Interaction with Nationality

To find out if there was an interaction effect of the amount of facial hair and the nationality of the recruiters on the extra information, this variable was added to the analysis (see Table 16). The results show, that there is no statistical significant link between conditions and nationality related to the extra information, $F(3, 244) = 1.93, p = .13$. The main effect from nationality on extra information was well significant, $F(1,244) = 11.03, p < .01$. A closer look on the results with a post hoc test (see Table 17) revealed, that in three of the four beard conditions (no beard, short beard, medium beard) German recruiters gave statistical significant more extra information than their Dutch colleagues (see Table 18), except in the long beard condition. The medium beard condition received the least amount of extra information from both nationalities. This indicates that the nationality of the recruiters had an influence on the extra information the recruiters used to respond to the received emails.

Table 16: Univariate ANOVA for interaction with nationality

	<i>F</i>	dfs	<i>p</i>
Condition	3.30	3, 244	.02
Nationality	11.03	1, 244	.00
Interaction	1.93	3, 244	.13

Table 17: Post hoc test for extra information in interaction with nationality (German)

Condition	German		1	2	3
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
1 No beard	1.53	1.11			
2 Short beard	1.61	0.80	.01		
3 Medium beard	1.12	0.65	.37	.36	
4 Long beard	1.14	0.77	.15	.16	.23

Table 18: Post hoc test for extra information in interaction with nationality (Dutch)

Condition	Dutch		1	2	3
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
1 No beard	1.10	0.67			
2 Short beard	1.00	0.65	.06		
3 Medium beard	0.77	0.69	.39	.33	
4 Long beard	1.21	0.77	.16	.09	.24

4.7.2 Interaction with Gender

To find out if there was an interaction effect of the amount of facial hair and the gender of the recruiters on the extra information, this variable was added to the analysis (see Table 19). The results show, that there is no statistical significant link between conditions and gender related to the extra information, $F(6, 240) = 1.64, p = .15$. This indicates that the gender of the recruiters had no influence on the extra information the recruiters used to respond to the received emails.

Table 19: Univariate ANOVA for interaction with gender

	<i>F</i>	dfs	<i>p</i>
Condition	4.37	3, 240	.01
Gender	0.51	2, 240	.60
Interaction	1.64	6, 240	.15

4.8 Other findings

These tests were inspired by the correlation analysis presented in table 2. Number of words seemed to have a positive relationship with other variables and that was the reason to broaden the focus to find out, if number of words had a relationship with other variables that were not obvious from the beginning.

4.8.1 Relationship between number of words and subjective impression

An independent-sample T-tests was conducted to determine if there were differences in the number of words used in the response emails on whether they were perceived as more positive or negative. The results show that there was a significant difference in the scores for negative impression ($M = 52.54$; $SD = 28.36$) and positive impressions ($M = 104.74$; $SD = 46.25$); $t(250) = 10.89$, $p = .00$. The results suggest that emails with a higher number of words were perceived as more positive than emails with fewer words.

4.8.2 Relationship between number of words and language & extendedness

Another independent-sample T-tests was conducted to determine if there were differences in the number of words used in the response emails on whether they were perceived as more personalized or standardized. The results show that there was a significant difference in the scores for personalized emails ($M = 98.39$; $SD = 55.26$) and standardized emails ($M = 62.26$; $SD = 29.88$); $t(250) = 6.67$, $p = .00$. The results suggest that emails with a higher number of words were more personalized than emails with fewer words.

5 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the social acceptance of the amount of facial hair within recruitment and selection processes in Germany and the Netherlands. The study focused mainly on recruitment processes within the customer service sector whereby no direct client contact is involved. Furthermore, the study focused on the differences between the nationality and the gender of the recruiters. The following paragraphs will discuss the main findings linked to existing literature, give practical implications of the results, show limitations of this study and give suggestions for future research. The chapter is completed with an overall conclusion of the performed study.

5.1 Main Findings

Based on the results, little evidence was found that the length of a beard had much impact on the reactions of the contacted recruiters. Still several significant findings were identified which were predominantly negative towards the medium beard condition. Therefore it can be presumed that applicants in the extreme conditions such as long beards were more likely to stick out of the mass of applicants that were clean-shaven or had less amount of facial hair. These findings are in line with the negative frequency-dependence principle (Janif et al., 2014) which describes the advantage of rare traits and in this case stipulates that the more beards there are in society, the less attractive they become and vice versa.

The first finding is a difference in the time of response depending on gender. In the medium beard condition, male recruiters generally answered more emails after two days or even later compared to the other three conditions where they reacted often within two days. These results are not completely in line with the research of Valentova et al. (2017) who discovered, that men tend to prefer the same amount of facial hair that they have themselves. It could be argued that none of the male recruiters had a medium beard themselves and therefore chose to answer the emails that matched their own amount of facial hair first. A different explanation might be that male recruiters perceived the display of a beard as a signal of dominance and aggression (Neave & Shields 2008; Dixson & Vasey 2012) which lead to resistance by the recruiter and a delayed response. A third explanation could be that based on the negative frequency-dependence principle (Janif et al, 2014), it can be presumed that medium beards are too common in the world of applicants today so that they receive less attention than other amounts of facial hair. Female recruiters showed no significant difference in their duration of response which stays in contrast to previous research (Janif, et al., 2014; Neave & Shields 2008; Dixson & Brooks, 2013; Dixson et al., 2013). In these studies, women

preferred a certain facial hair type over another. In this research, women showed no significant preference for a specific type of facial hair based on the time it took them to respond to the initial email.

The second finding is that male recruiters used more words than their female colleagues regarding applicants with no beards, medium beards or long beards. Men with short beards received the lowest number of words from male recruiters while female recruiters used the lowest number of words for applicants with no beard. These findings are in contrast to the gender stereotyping literature (Heilman, 2012). According to the literature it would be expected, that women would show more concern for others, in this case the applicants, which would ultimately result in more words. However, this was not the case in this research. Stereotypes also could have influenced the judgement of the female recruiters unconsciously (Banaji & Hardin, 1996). Based on the research by Banaji and Hardin it could be presumed, that female recruiters used less words to respond applicants when they already judged him and used more words when their judgement was not completed. Another explanation for these findings might be the equivocal literature on attractiveness of facial hair (Neave & Shields, 2008; Dixson & Brooks, 2013). In this study, female recruiters used the lowest number of words for applicants with no beard so it could be presumed, that they were more attracted to other types of facial hair and therefore used more words to respond to their emails.

The third finding of this research is that German recruiters gave more job information to applicants with no beards or short beards than their Dutch colleagues. For medium and long beards it was the converse. Beards with a medium length received the least amount of job information from German recruiters whereas Dutch recruiters gave the least amount of job information to applicants with short beards. These findings are supported by cultural difference literature. According to LegalKnowledgePortal (2013) Germans pay much more attention to the physical appearance which would explain why medium and long beards received less job information than applicants with no or short beards. Dutch employees in contrast focus more on the personality which could be the reason, that the recruiters gave more job information to applicants with medium or long beards as a statement of their individuality.

The fourth finding is that the medium beard condition received the least extra information from the recruiters in contrast to clean-shaven applicants which received the most. On the one hand, these findings are in line with previous research by De Souza, Baião and Otta (2003) who concluded that personnel managers preferred clean shaven men over bearded men as potential employees which might result in the willingness to provide more

extra information than asked for. On the other hand, these findings are in contrast with previous research by van der Land & Muntinga (2014) who revealed that bearded applicants were perceived as more experienced and were more likely to be invited for a job interview. In the context of this study this would imply bearded applicants should receive more extra information from the recruiters which was not the case.

The last finding of this research was that German recruiters gave more extra information than their Dutch colleagues except in the long beard condition. Again medium bearded applicants received the least amount of extra information from both nationalities. These findings are in contrast with LegalKnowledgePortal (2013). Based on the cultural difference literature it would have been expected, that German recruiters would provide less extra information because the email was quite superficial and showed less personality and more physical appearance of the applicant where German recruiters pay special attention to. The results of this research indicate that the amount of applicant's facial hair did not influence the willingness to provide extra information to the applicants as previously expected. Dutch recruiters gave the most extra information to applicants with long beards which could be an indication that a long beard was seen as a visual sign of a strong individuality and personality and therefore rated more positive by the Dutch recruiters than by their German colleagues.

5.2 Practical implications

It can be concluded that having a beard could make a positive difference when applying for a job as long as it is well groomed and not too common. If a male applicant wants to grow a long beard, he should consider not applying for a new job in the transition time of a medium length beard to ensure that he does not disappear in the crowd of medium length facial hair currently on the job market. According to Middlemiss (2018) in today's work environment there are still certain contractual guidelines for dress code and physical appearance which also apply for facial hair. Moreover, the context of the job could have a major impact on the expectations of personnel's appearance such as in the financial section wherein having a long beard might cause difficulties for a male employee because of the predominant norms and prejudices. The results show that long facial hair seems to be more accepted in today's work environment than previously expected but different contexts especially in a more conservative direction might reveal existing stereotypes connected with long facial hair such as unkempt or unsavory. Challenging these stereotypes and educating others about the individuality of having facial hair might help to reduce these stereotypes but only if people are willing to hear them which might not be the case in a professional work environment.

5.3 Limitations

A limitation in this study was the limited knowledge about the demographics of the recruiters. There was no information available about their age, educational level or ethnicity. These factors might influence the way they react to different amounts of facial hair based on cultural background (beards are embraced or frowned upon) or generational affiliation (older generations might have a different attitude towards beards than their younger colleagues). To cope with these unknown variables in the best way possible under the given circumstances, the contacted recruiters were randomly assigned to the conditions to minimize possible biases. There was also no information available about their previous experiences with bearded applicants which might have an influence on their reactions. If recruiters have experienced negative situations with applicants with beards in the past, they might be biased and project their experiences on all future candidates. Another aspect that is unknown is if the recruiters consciously paid attention to the displayed picture of the applicant. They might have focused only on the presented questions because it was not a real application and so the visual aspect was not as important.

As mentioned in the main findings the ratio from men (78) to women (174) was quite uneven in this research which could not be predicted beforehand. This distribution might have influenced the outcomes of this research, because female reactions were predominant, which ultimately results in a limitation. Future research therefore should focus on a context with more decision making male recruiters to compare and verify the results of this study.

Another limitation is the source of the contacted recruiters. It is unknown to which extent the contacted recruiters were involved in the process because one half of the recruiters were employed internally for a certain company but the other half were hired externally via recruitment companies. Furthermore there was no information available about how many recruiters were involved within the recruitment processes of each company. Depending on the size and the structure of the company, the amount of employees for the human resources department might differ as well as their approaches. Additional research is required, to broaden the knowledge about the effects of contextual issues, such as organizational culture and size of the company, on the recruitment processes beforehand.

5.4 Future Research

In this study, only the field of customer services was considered and investigated, because it involves no direct client contact. So there is likely a range restriction in the type of job but expectations might differ within other job dimensions. Future research is needed to focus on

other job dimensions such as leadership positions to ensure that important factors such as degree of creativity or independence are taken into account when making a choice for or against an applicant. Depending on the types of dimensions and job settings for more creative or artistic functions, future research might reveal different perceptions associated with beards.

Another interesting field for future research is the previous job-related experience of the applicant. In this study no CV was available for the recruiters because it was not an actual application for an advertised job. The reactions and perceptions of the recruiters facing applicants with different amounts of facial hair might change as soon as they have proof of relevant job experience or a college degree. To find out, if perceptions and rejections are based on the visual appearance and not on insufficient experience of the applicant, future research needs to include different levels of work experience and graduation degrees. It would be useful to conduct some semi-structured interviews beforehand to identify how job applicants experience recruitment processes to enhance the quality of the future research materials.

In this study the potential applicants already displayed a certain amount of facial hair to the recruiters. But what if employees grow beards later in the recruitment process or once they are hired: would it affect the performance appraisal or opportunities for promotion? Future research should investigate this process and the influence of facial hair on its outcome.

6 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate if the amount of applicant facial hair had an influence on the recruiting process for customer service related jobs in Germany and the Netherlands, focusing on differences in gender and culture of the contacted recruiters. The results indicate that both the gender and the nationality of the recruiters seemed to have an effect on how the recruiters reacted to different amounts of facial hair. Male and female recruiters reacted differently to various lengths of facial hair but the most negative seemed to be a beard of medium length. In general, German recruiters provided more information to the applicants than their Dutch colleagues. Especially clean-shaven and short bearded applicants were preferred by German recruiters, whereas Dutch recruiters gave the most information to possible future employees with long beards. The effects of the amount of facial hair were quite inconsistent in the existing literature depending on the context and the subject. It was expected, that if the beard length increases the more negative the reactions of the recruiters would be but that was not the case. A large amount of facial hair seemed to have the opposite effect and was rated more positively than for example applicants with medium beards. These findings are interesting because this is good news for all future employees that decide to embrace their masculinity by displaying their facial hair. It could be a sign that big beards have found their way into the corporate world by rejecting the predominant norms from decades ago. To verify the outcomes of this study future research should focus on different work contexts, preferably with a larger amount of male decision makers as they were underrepresented in this study. Previous work experience and more detailed information about the demographics of the decision makers should also be considered for future research because they might influence the perception and attitudes towards bearded applicants. This study has practical value for the domain of work environment because it shows that preexisting stereotypes and prejudices seem to be reduced and that decision makers and managers should consider judging future employees on their personality and their qualifications in place of their physical appearance.

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Appendix

Appendix A Code book

Variable	Definition	Values
1 Nationality	Nationality of the recruiter.	German Dutch
2 Gender	Gender of the recruiter.	Male Female
3 Face	The stimulus material the recruiters where exposed to.	Dark hair Ginger hair
4 Automatic response	An automatic generated response from the recruiter or company that confirmed that they received the email.	Yes No
5 Duration of response	The time it took for the recruiters to respond to the send email.	Up to 2 days > than 2 days
6 Number of words	Total amount of words	Amount of words
7 Tone of voice	How the written language used by the recruiter comes through in their mails. It's rather about the way the recruiters used the communication within the replies, not about the content.	Kind (eg. is happy about your mail) Open Inviting (eg. gives you a warm feeling about the company) Rude (seems uninterested to hear more from you) Touchy (Short sentences, gives you the feeling of a force response) Denying (eg. tell you right away that they are not interested)
8 Salutation	The way the recruiter addresses the applicant throughout the mail.	Formal: Geachte / Sehr geehrte(r) U / uw , Sie, Ihnen Informal: Beste / Hoi / Hallo / Goedemiddag du / dich , je / jouw
9 Language	The amount of effort the recruiters took to respond to the specific mail.	Personalized answers Standardized answer
10 Text extendedness	The extensiveness of the mail concerning structure.	Static answer Fluent answer
11 Job information	To what extend the recruiter answers the questions provided in the mail.	0 questions answered All questions answered
12 Extras	The amount of extra information additionally provided by the recruiters.	Send CV Job already taken Provide more information via telephone Provides additional information about job Questions about vacancy reference Information
13 Subjective impression	The overall subjective impression of the mail based on the variables mentioned before.	Positive Negative

Appendix B General Frequencies Table

Variable	<i>p</i>	Values	No beard condition		Short beard condition		Medium beard condition		Long beard condition	
			n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1 Nationality	.62	German	34	54.0	31	44.3	33	48.5	22	43.1
		Dutch	29	46.0	39	55.7	35	51.5	29	56.9
2 Gender	.37	Male	20	31.7	23	32.9	18	26.5	17	33.3
		Female	41	65.1	44	62.9	42	61.8	28	54.9
3 Face	.66	Dark hair	33	52.4	37	52.9	31	45.6	29	56.9
		Ginger hair	30	47.6	33	47.1	37	54.4	22	43.1
4 Automatic response	.53	Yes	12	19.0	9	12.9	7	10.3	7	13.7
		No	51	81.0	61	87.1	61	89.7	44	86.3
5 Duration of response	.00	up to 2 days	44	69.8	45	64.3	33	48.5	31	60.8
		> than 2 days	19	30.2	25	35.7	35	51.5	20	39.2
6 Number of words	.56	Amount of words	4710	24.1	5617	28.7	5232	26.8	3997	20.4
7 Tone of voice	.00	Kind	45	71.4	55	78.6	56	82.4	40	78.4
		Open	59	93.7	68	97.1	68	100.0	46	90.2
		Inviting	18	28.6	16	22.9	7	10.3	6	11.8
		Rude	2	3.2	2	2.9	0	0.0	4	7.8
		Touchy	19	30.2	16	22.9	16	23.5	10	19.6
		Denying	0	0.0	1	1.4	2	2.9	1	2.0
8 Salutation	.68	Formal	30	47.6	26	37.1	29	42.6	21	41.2
		Informal	33	52.4	44	62.9	39	57.4	30	58.8
9 Language	.23	Personalized	28	44.4	24	34.3	28	41.2	26	51.0
		Standardized	35	55.6	46	65.7	40	58.8	24	47.1
10 Text extendedness	.55	Static	49	77.8	55	78.6	49	72.1	34	66.7
		Fluent	14	22.2	15	21.4	19	27.9	16	31.4
11 Job information	.69	0 questions answered	31	49.2	30	42.9	39	57.4	24	47.1
		all questions answered	29	46.0	37	52.9	25	36.8	25	49.0
12 Extras	.16	Send CV	25	39.7	26	37.1	12	17.6	14	27.5
		Job already taken	5	7.9	17	24.3	11	16.2	7	13.7
		Information via phone	14	22.2	8	11.4	7	10.3	11	21.6
		Additional inf. about job	18	28.6	21	30.0	10	14.7	12	23.5
		Vacancy reference	15	23.8	5	7.1	16	23.5	14	27.5
		Information	7	11.1	12	17.1	8	11.8	2	3.9
13 Subjective impression	.61	Positive	32	50.8	36	51.4	28	41.2	25	49.0
		Negative	31	49.2	34	48.6	40	58.8	26	51.0

Note. Chi Square analysis identified the frequencies in all 4 conditions. The values from tone of voice and extras were added up to form a total score ranging from 0-6, because more than one value was possible in each mail.

Appendix C German Frequencies Table

Variable	<i>p</i>	Values	No beard condition		Short beard condition		Medium beard condition		Long beard condition	
			n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1 Gender	.82	Male	8	23.5	11	35.5	12	36.4	6	27.3
		Female	25	73.5	20	64.5	20	64.5	15	68.2
2 Face	.27	Dark hair	16	47.1	17	54.8	14	42.4	15	68.2
		Ginger hair	18	52.9	14	45.2	19	57.6	7	31.8
3 Automatic response	.75	Yes	10	29.4	8	25.8	6	18.2	5	22.7
		No	24	70.6	23	74.2	27	81.8	17	77.3
4 Duration of response	.02	up to 2 days	23	67.6	24	77.4	18	54.5	16	72.7
		> than 2 days	11	32.4	7	22.6	15	45.5	6	27.3
5 Number of words	.73	Amount of words	2669	28.1	2731	28.8	2378	25.1	1708	18.0
5 Tone of voice	.09	Kind	27	79.4	24	77.4	27	81.8	18	81.8
		Open	31	91.2	30	96.8	33	100.0	21	95.5
		Inviting	14	41.2	8	25.8	4	12.1	3	13.6
		Rude	1	2.9	1	3.2	0	0.0	1	4.5
		Touchy	9	26.5	7	22.6	6	18.2	4	18.2
		Denying	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	6.1	0	0.0
6 Salutation	.70	Formal	26	76.5	23	74.2	27	81.8	19	86.4
		Informal	8	23.5	8	25.8	6	18.2	3	13.6
7 Language	.26	Personalized	17	50.0	9	29.0	10	30.3	9	40.9
		Standardized	17	50.0	22	71.0	23	69.7	13	59.1
8 Text extendedness	.62	Static	27	79.4	27	87.1	27	81.8	16	72.7
		Fluent	7	20.6	4	12.9	6	18.2	6	27.3
9 Job information	.07	0 questions answered	14	41.2	9	29.0	23	69.7	10	45.5
		all questions answered	18	52.9	19	61.3	9	27.3	10	45.5
10 Extras	.33	Send CV	12	35.3	16	51.6	5	15.2	6	27.3
		Job already taken	2	5.9	5	16.1	6	18.2	4	18.2
		Information via phone	9	26.5	4	12.9	4	12.1	5	22.7
		Additional inf. about job	14	41.2	13	41.9	6	18.2	6	27.2
		Vacancy reference	8	23.5	4	12.9	8	24.2	2	9.1
		Information	7	20.6	8	25.8	8	24.2	2	9.1
11 Subjective impression	.07	Positive	20	58.8	18	58.1	10	30.3	10	45.5
		Negative	14	41.2	13	41.9	23	69.7	12	54.5

Note. Chi Square analysis identified the frequencies in all 4 conditions. The values from tone of voice and extras where added up to form a total score ranging from 0-6, because more than one value was possible in each mail.

Appendix D Dutch Frequencies Table

Variable	<i>p</i>	Values	No beard condition		Short beard condition		Medium beard condition		Long beard condition	
			n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1 Gender	.14	Male	12	41.4	12	30.8	6	17.1	11	37.9
		Female	16	55.2	24	61.5	22	62.9	13	44.8
2 Face	.84	Dark hair	17	58.6	20	51.3	17	48.6	14	48.3
		Ginger hair	12	41.4	19	48.7	18	51.4	15	51.7
3 Automatic response	.72	Yes	2	6.9	1	2.6	1	2.9	2	6.9
		No	27	93.1	38	97.4	34	97.1	27	93.1
4 Duration of response	.00	up to 2 days	21	72.4	21	53.8	15	42.9	15	51.7
		> than 2 days	8	27.6	18	46.2	20	57.1	14	48.3
5 Number of words	.41	Amount of words	2041	20.3	2886	28.7	2854	28.3	2289	22.7
5 Tone of voice	.13	Kind	18	62.1	31	79.5	29	82.9	22	75.9
		Open	28	96.6	38	97.4	35	100.0	25	86.2
		Inviting	4	13.8	8	20.5	3	8.6	3	10.3
		Rude	1	3.4	1	2.6	0	0.0	3	10.3
		Touchy	10	34.5	9	23.1	10	28.6	6	20.7
		Denying	0	0.0	1	2.6	0	0.0	1	3.4
6 Salutation	.67	Formal	4	13.8	3	7.7	2	5.7	2	6.9
		Informal	25	86.2	36	92.3	33	94.3	27	93.1
7 Language	.17	Personalized	11	37.9	15	38.5	18	51.4	18	62.1
		Standardized	18	62.1	24	61.5	17	48.6	11	37.9
8 Text extendedness	.67	Static	22	75.9	28	71.8	22	62.9	19	65.5
		Fluent	7	24.1	11	28.2	13	37.1	10	34.5
9 Job information	.34	0 questions answered	17	58.6	21	53.8	16	45.7	14	48.3
		all questions answered	11	37.9	18	46.2	16	45.7	15	51.7
10 Extras	.13	Send CV	13	44.8	10	25.6	7	20.0	8	27.6
		Job already taken	3	10.3	12	30.8	5	14.3	3	10.3
		Information via phone	5	17.2	4	10.3	3	8.6	6	20.7
		Additional inf. about job	4	13.8	8	20.5	4	11.4	6	20.7
		Vacancy reference	7	24.1	1	2.6	8	22.9	12	41.4
		Information	0	0.0	4	10.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
11 Subjective impression	.83	Positive	12	41.4	18	46.2	18	51.4	15	51.7
		Negative	17	58.6	21	53.8	17	48.6	14	48.3

Note. Chi Square analysis identified the frequencies in all 4 conditions. The values from tone of voice and extras where added up to form a total score ranging from 0-6, because more than one value was possible in each mail.

Appendix E Male Frequencies Table

Variable	<i>p</i>	Values	No beard condition		Short beard condition		Medium beard condition		Long beard condition	
			n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1 Nationality	.25	German	8	40.0	11	47.8	12	66.7	6	35.3
		Dutch	12	60.0	12	52.2	6	33.3	11	64.7
2 Face	.91	Dark hair	10	50.0	12	52.2	9	50.0	7	41.2
		Ginger hair	10	50.0	11	47.8	9	50.0	10	58.8
3 Automatic response	.35	Yes	17	85.0	20	87.0	17	94.4	17	100.0
		No	3	15.0	3	13.0	1	5.6	0	0.0
4 Duration of response	.03	up to 2 days	15	75.0	14	60.9	5	27.8	10	58.8
		> than 2 days	5	25.0	9	39.1	13	72.2	7	41.2
5 Number of words	.53	Amount of words	1753	27.8	1627	25.8	1424	22.6	1497	23.8
6 Tone of voice	.46	Kind	16	80.0	18	78.3	16	88.9	12	70.6
		Open	18	90.0	21	91.3	18	100.0	14	82.4
		Inviting	6	30.0	6	26.1	2	11.1	2	11.8
		Rude	1	5.0	2	8.7	0	0.0	3	17.6
		Touchy	5	25.0	5	21.7	3	16.7	5	29.4
		Denying	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
7 Salutation	.75	Formal	9	45.0	9	39.1	10	55.6	7	41.2
		Informal	11	55.0	14	60.9	8	44.4	10	58.8
8 Language	.97	Personalized	10	50.0	11	47.8	8	44.4	9	52.9
		Standardized	10	50.0	12	52.2	10	55.6	8	47.1
9 Text extendedness	.82	Static	16	80.0	17	73.9	12	66.7	13	76.5
		Fluent	4	20.0	6	26.1	6	33.3	4	25.6
10 Job information	.29	0 questions answered	5	25.0	12	52.2	11	61.1	7	41.2
		all questions answered	13	65.0	10	43.5	6	33.3	10	58.8
11 Extras	.56	Send CV	11	55.0	11	47.8	0	0.0	8	47.1
		Job already taken	0	0.0	5	21.7	3	16.7	1	5.9
		Information via phone	5	25.0	3	13.0	2	11.1	2	11.8
		Additional inf. about job	5	25.0	6	26.1	6	33.3	4	23.5
		Vacancy reference	4	20.0	2	8.7	3	16.7	7	41.2
		Information	2	10.0	3	13.0	4	22.2	2	11.8
12 Subjective impression	.06	Positive	15	75.0	9	39.1	7	38.9	10	58.8
		Negative	5	25.0	14	60.9	11	61.1	7	41.2

Note. Chi Square analysis identified the frequencies in all 4 conditions. The values from tone of voice and extras were added up to form a total score ranging from 0-6, because more than one value was possible in each mail.

Appendix F Female Frequencies Table

Variable	<i>p</i>	Values	No beard condition		Short beard condition		Medium beard condition		Long beard condition	
			n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1 Nationality	.49	German	25	61.0	20	45.5	20	47.6	15	53.6
		Dutch	16	39.0	24	54.4	22	52.4	13	46.4
2 Face	.14	Dark hair	22	53.7	24	54.5	18	42.9	20	71.4
		Ginger hair	19	46.3	20	45.5	24	57.1	8	28.6
3 Automatic response	.45	Yes	32	78.0	38	86.4	38	90.5	24	85.7
		No	9	22.0	6	13.6	4	9.5	4	14.3
4 Duration of response	.72	up to 2 days	28	68.3	29	65.9	24	57.1	17	60.7
		> than 2 days	13	31.7	15	34.1	18	42.9	11	39.3
5 Number of words	.36	Amount of words	2710	23.1	3743	31.9	3067	26.1	2222	18.9
6 Tone of voice	.09	Kind	27	65.9	35	79.5	34	81.0	25	89.3
		Open	39	95.1	44	100.0	42	100.0	27	96.4
		Inviting	11	26.8	11	22.7	4	9.5	4	14.3
		Rude	1	2.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
		Touchy	14	34.1	10	22.7	9	21.4	3	10.7
		Denying	0	0.0	1	2.3	2	4.8	1	3.6
7 Salutation	.80	Formal	20	48.8	17	38.6	17	40.5	12	42.9
		Informal	21	51.2	27	61.4	25	59.5	16	57.1
8 Language	.23	Personalized	17	41.5	13	29.5	18	42.9	15	53.6
		Standardized	24	58.5	31	70.5	24	57.1	13	46.4
9 Text extendedness	.30	Static	32	78.0	35	79.5	31	73.8	17	60.7
		Fluent	9	22.0	9	20.5	11	26.2	11	39.3
10 Job information	.32	0 questions answered	25	61.0	17	38.6	24	57.1	12	42.9
		all questions answered	15	36.6	25	56.8	15	35.7	14	50.0
11 Extras	.87	Send CV	13	31.7	15	34.1	11	26.2	6	21.4
		Job already taken	5	12.2	11	25.0	6	14.3	5	17.9
		Information via phone	8	19.5	5	11.4	4	9.5	9	32.1
		Additional inf. about job	12	29.3	14	31.8	4	9.5	7	25.0
		Vacancy reference	9	22.0	3	6.8	13	31.0	6	21.4
		Information	5	12.2	9	20.5	3	7.1	0	0.0
12 Subjective impression	.31	Positive	16	39.0	25	56.8	17	40.5	14	50.0
		Negative	25	61.0	19	43.2	25	59.5	14	50.0

Note. Chi Square analysis identified the frequencies in all 4 conditions. The values from tone of voice and extras were added up to form a total score ranging from 0-6, because more than one value was possible in each mail.

Appendix G Email German

Sehr geehrtes Team,

aufgrund persönlicher Veränderungen bin ich momentan auf der Suche nach einer neuen Herausforderung. Die von Ihnen ausgeschriebene Stelle als Customer Service Mitarbeiter auf einem Jobportal hat mich aufgrund des abwechslungsreichen Aufgabenbereiches sehr angesprochen.

In der Anlage erhalten Sie ein Dokument mit allgemeinen Daten und kurzen Fragen, die noch offengeblieben sind. Könnten Sie mir diese Fragen bitte noch beantworten?

Über eine Antwort Ihrerseits würde ich mich sehr freuen.

Vielen Dank im Voraus und einen schönen Tag!

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,
Stephan Meyer

Appendix H Email Dutch

Geachte Team,

Door persoonlijke omstandigheden ben ik op zoek naar een nieuwe uitdaging. Op een vacaturewebsite heb ik gezien dat jullie momenteel op zoek zijn naar een Customer service medewerker. De veelzijdigheid van deze functie spreekt mij erg aan.

In de bijlage kunt u een documentje met persoonlijke gegevens en openstaande vragen vinden. Zou u deze vragen voor mij kunnen beantwoorden?

Ik hoor graag van jullie.

Alvast bedankt en een hele fijne dag toegewenst!

Met vriendelijke groet,

Stephan Mulder

Appendix I Ethical clarification Email German

Sehr geehrtes XX-Team,

am (DATUM) haben Sie von mir eine Anfrage bezüglich einer offenstehenden Vakanz im Kundenservice erhalten. Hiermit möchte ich Sie informieren, dass diese Anfrage Teil der Untersuchung meiner Masterarbeit ist.

Das Ziel meiner Arbeit ist es zu untersuchen, ob Bartlänge/Sichtbarkeit von Tattoos Einfluss auf die soziale Akzeptanz in Bewerbungsprozessen in Unternehmen hat.

Selbstverständlich werden weder der Name des Betriebs noch des bearbeitenden Mitarbeiters innerhalb der Studie veröffentlicht. Alle Daten werden anonym behandelt. Hiermit möchten wir Ihnen die Möglichkeit geben, die Teilnahme an der Untersuchung zu verweigern. Des Weiteren besteht die Möglichkeit, Einsicht in die Resultate zu bekommen, sobald diese ausgewertet sind.

Ich möchte mich rechtherzlich für die investierte Zeit und Ihre Bemühungen bedanken.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Bruno (Stefan M.)

Appendix J Ethical clarification Email Dutch

Geachte XY-Team,

Op (datum) heeft u een verzoek van mij mogen ontvangen met betrekking tot een openstaande vacature binnen de customer service afdeling van uw bedrijf. Bij deze wil ik u informeren dat dit verzoek een onderdeel vormt van een onderzoek in het kader van mijn masterscriptie.

Het doel van mijn onderzoek is om inzicht te krijgen in de sociale acceptatie van baardlengtes / zichtbaarheid van tatoeages binnen sollicitatieprocessen bij bedrijven.

Uiteraard zullen alle gegevens anoniem verwerkt worden, dit betreft zowel de naam van uw bedrijf als de naam van de verantwoordelijke medewerker die de sollicitatie afneemt.


Hierbij willen wij u de mogelijkheid geven om uw deelname aan dit onderzoek te weigeren.


Bovendien kunt u, indien gewenst, inzicht krijgen in de resultaten van dit onderzoek, zodra deze geanalyseerd zijn en de informatie is verwerkt.

Ik wil u hartelijk danken voor uw geïnvesteerde tijd en moeite.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Bruno (Stephan M.)

<p style="text-align: center;">Persönliche Daten</p> <hr/> <div style="text-align: center;"></div> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Name: Stephan Meyer Geburtsdatum: 12.10.1988 Nationalität: Deutsch</p> <hr/>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Allgemeine Fragen</h2> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Handelt es sich um eine Stelle auf Teil- oder Vollzeit? Wie flexibel sind die Arbeitszeiten? 2. Ist der Kundenservice 365 Tage im Jahr, also auch an Wochenenden und Feiertagen geöffnet? 3. Welche Sprachen werden in Ihrem Unternehmen gesprochen?
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<p style="text-align: center;">Persoonlijke Gegevens</p> <hr/>  <hr/> <p>Naam: Stephan Mulder Geboortedatum: 12-10- 1987 Nationaliteit: Nederlands</p> <hr/>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Vragen</h2> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Gaat het hierbij om een fulltime-functie of zijn er ook mogelijkheden om parttime te werken? Hoe flexibel zijn de werktijden?2. Wordt er 365 dagen per jaar gewerkt, dus ook in het weekend en op feestdagen?3. Welke talen worden er binnen het bedrijf gesproken?
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