

The roles of gender and age on perceived (in)equality in career opportunities in a Dutch non-profit service firm

“What are the roles of gender and age on the perceived (un)equal career opportunities in a non-profit service firm in the Netherlands?”.

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Preface

This master thesis forms the final step in order to obtain the Master of Science degree for the Business Administration – Strategic Human Resources Leadership program at Radboud University in Nijmegen. This study was conducted from January 2019 until June 2019. During this period, I had the privilege to write this thesis at a non-profit service firm in the Netherlands.

During my study, I learned a lot about research methods and the conduction of a study. The master thesis enabled me to finally conduct my own research in which I enjoyed the ability to apply knowledge to practice.

However, without the support of certain people academically and practically, I would not have been able to complete this master thesis. Therefore, I would like to thank some of them personally. First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Carolin Ossenkop for her valuable feedback and support throughout the process of writing this thesis. Furthermore, I would like to thank the organization in which I conducted the study, my supervisor at the organization and the respondents. Finally, I would like to thank my boyfriend, family and friends for their support during my master year.

I hope you enjoy reading my thesis!

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Abstract

Prior to this study, WXYZ (a non-profit service firm located in the Netherlands) conducted an employee satisfaction survey indicating perceived inequality in career opportunities amongst men and women of different ages employed at the organization. As it remained unclear to WXYZ how this finding could be explained, a call was made for qualitative in-depth research. Therefore, this study examined the roles of gender and age on the perceived (un)equal career opportunities at WXYZ. In order to study this phenomenon the following research question was composed: *“What are the roles of gender and age on the perceived (un)equal career opportunities in a non-profit service firm in the Netherlands?”*. To be able to provide an answer to this research question, qualitative research was conducted by 16 semi-structured interviews and a diversity policy document. The interview questions were based on academic literature regarding gender and age in organizations. After the data was collected, the interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed in order to draw a conclusion.

In academic literature, stereotypes regarding gender and age were found. As a consequence, women are confronted with a double blow of sexism and ageism. Moreover, a glass ceiling and grey ceiling were discussed and it was believed that men and younger employees are associated with hard skills and women and older employees are associated with soft skills. Furthermore, it was presumed that men have more and weak ties, whereas women have less and strong ties. For age, it remained unclear whether social capital was more advantageous for younger or older employees.

This study found that both gender and age fulfilled important roles regarding (un)equal career opportunities at WXYZ. Regarding gender and age, it was found that career opportunities were perceived as equal. However, findings indicated perceived inequality for men due to a priority policy for women, which means gender did play a role here. In addition, inequality in growth opportunities in comparison with colleagues, influenced by the supervisor and caused by internal vacancies were mentioned, in which gender and age played a role. Another finding of this study was the perception of respondents concerning their growth opportunities in general, which was described as a difficult, unclear and opaque process, and means gender and age did not explicitly fulfil a role here. However, since the respondents in general perceived the growth opportunities as similar, it can be stated that this uncertainty might have been an explaining factor, causing that respondents perceived career opportunities at WXYZ as unequal. Furthermore, concerning the hard and soft skills theory, it can be stated that it did not play a role regarding gender and age at WXYZ, since no differences were found regarding gender and

age in the perception of respondents regarding characteristics of successful employees, characteristics of employees who received promotion, and characteristics of employees at higher functions. Moreover, regarding the social capital theory, it can be concluded that gender and age did not fulfil a role in the network employees had at WXYZ. However, this study found that other personal factors and the supervisor contributed to unequal perceived career opportunities at WXYZ. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that gender and age fulfilled important roles concerning certain aspects of (un)equal perceived career opportunities at WXYZ. Therefore, recommendations as well as suggestions for further research were provided.

Key words: career opportunities | (in)equality | perception | gender | age

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1. Introduction

In the past few decades, the number of women in the workforce in the Netherlands has increased immensely (CBS, 2019). Currently, women make up for nearly half of the workforce across OECD countries (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development with 34 member countries) (Kunze & Miller, 2017), and many academics and practitioners claim that embracing gender diversity is the right way to do business now (Kravitz, 2003).

However, over the past years, differences in the career advancement of men and women were found in academic literature (McWhirter, 1997; Akpinar-Sposito, 2013; Ellemers, 2014). Javdani and McGee (2019) for example, found that women were less likely to be promoted and received fewer promotions than men. Furthermore, women received lower increases in wage in a year of promotion than men in similar functions. Besides this, research has shown that women are underrepresented in upper management (Hoobler, Lemmon, & Wayne, 2011). According to Heilman (2001), this imbalance is a consequence of gender biases in evaluations which in turn can result in a devaluation of women's performance and hinder their career progress. The number of women amongst business leaders remains underrepresented. In OECD countries, eight percent of employed men have managerial responsibilities whereas only four percent of employed women have managerial responsibilities (Kunze & Miller, 2017). In addition, it was found that at the higher levels of leadership women hold only five percent of CEO functions (Kunze & Miller, 2017). In the Netherlands however, the government has achieved its own target value with over 30 percent of female senior civil servants, and the number of women in top functions in businesses is increasing (Pouwels & Hendrikse, 2015). Besides discrimination based on gender, women also experience more age discrimination than men (Duncan & Loretto, 2004). When it comes to signs of aging such as wrinkles and grey hair, men are perceived as wise and experienced whereas women are seen as "old" (Chrisler, Barney, & Palatino, 2016). These findings are not solely recognized in academic literature but also by everyday media. Weekly, news articles about age discrimination resulting from stereotypes (Kerstema, 2019) and attempts to increase the number of women in top-management positions by means of quotas (ANP, 2018) show up.

This exploratory study focuses on the roles of gender and age on (un)equally perceived career opportunities in a non-profit service firm (WXYZ), located in the Netherlands. This non-profit service firm showed similar patterns to those found in academic literature, such as a low number of women in the top-management of the organization. Recently, the organization conducted an employee satisfaction survey and found that the overall perception of employees

on equal career opportunities was low. The proposition in the employee satisfaction survey was stated as follows: “Within the organization everyone has equal career opportunities”. It appeared that only 40 percent of the employees perceived career opportunities in the organization as equal, indicating that the majority of employees believed that there were no equal career opportunities for everyone. Furthermore, 30 percent of the employees were men, who were represented disproportionately in the higher functions of the organization. In academic literature, it is often stated that this phenomenon is caused by stereotypes and other obstacles in women’s career advancements, such as the glass ceiling, hard and soft skills, and social capital theory (Gustavsson & Hallin, 2014; Hoyt, 2010; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001). Additionally, in the employee satisfaction survey it appeared that especially older employees scored low on their perception of equal career opportunities in the organization. A difference could be identified in this perception between employees younger than 40 years old and employees older than 39 years old. Therefore, and because WXYZ called for more in-depth qualitative research towards the causes of these low scores on perceived career opportunities, this study aims to gain more knowledge and new insights regarding the roles of gender and age on (un)equal career opportunities in WXYZ, in order to provide the organization with advice on how to improve their diversity policy.

When doing so, this case study attempts to verify and extend existing knowledge with regards to inequality generating factors such as gender and age in organizations by applying existing theories in WXYZ, and by taking the perceptions and experiences of men and women of different ages about equal career opportunities into account. As a result, recommendations are provided in order to develop more suitable and appropriate policies and practices. The following research question was composed in order to study the above-mentioned phenomenon: *“What are the roles of gender and age on perceived (in)equality of career opportunities in a non-profit service firm in the Netherlands?”*.

In order to be able to answer this research question, the theoretical framework is explained first, followed by the methodology of this study. Hereafter, the analysis and results are discussed after which subsequently a concluding section is provided, combined with a discussion regarding the findings. Also, limitations and recommendations for further research have been provided.

2. Theoretical background

This section provides insights into the academic literature regarding the main topics of concern namely, gender, age, the intersectionality of gender and age, and on career and career opportunities. First, in subsection 2.1 these general concepts are explained. Hereafter, subsections 2.2 - 2.5 put the concepts into contrast with career and career opportunities as here they are linked to stereotyping, ceiling theory, hard and soft skills, and social capital theory which are often seen as sources of unequal career opportunities. In addition, a brief oversight of the literature discussed in this section has been provided. An overview of the theoretical framework can be found in Appendix A.

2.1. Concepts

In order to be able to answer the research question, first a clear understanding is required with regards to the main concepts. Attention in this subsection is devoted to explaining the elements which were most distinctive/important. This was done due to the findings of the employee satisfaction survey and additionally provided information by WXYZ indicated that differences in the perception of employees existed with regards to the perception of (un)equal career opportunities. These elements include, gender, age, the intersectionality amongst them, and career and career opportunities.

2.1.1. Gender

Two main theoretical approaches of literature on gender in organizations can be identified (Calás, Smircich, & Holvino, 2014). The first approach is a more naturalistic approach towards gender. It recognizes sex as biological characteristics of an individual which can be divided into male and female, and it recognizes gender as a social or cultural classification which is usually associated with an individuals' sex, namely masculinity and femininity. This masculinity and femininity are often perceived as stable characteristics or roles (Alsop, Fitzsimmons, Lennon, & Minsky, in Calás, Smircich, & Holvino, 2014). The second approach of gender in organizations de-naturalizes the common sense of gender. Instead of making binary assumptions of 'men' and 'women', it focusses on gender as a social institution which is socially achieved through gender relations. Instead of thinking about gender as a possession or attribute of an individual working in an organization, in the second approach gender is thus considered as an outcome or co-production of organizing processes (Calás, Smircich, & Holvino, 2014).

Pullen, Rhodes and Thanem (in Ljungholm, 2016) state that organizations are gender-blind. Hereby, it is meant that they are culturally and intrinsically masculine. They state that organizations are represented by men's and women's bodies, but corporeal dissimilarity is self-evident and leads to concealing of advantages and disadvantages for men and women. One of these disadvantages for women are lower wages than men, which is persistent and universal (Lips, 2013). Furthermore, gender is often seen as socially constructed and created instead of a self-evident category (Nentwich & Kelan, 2014). These gendered structures are entrenched in jobs and indicate that individuals require a certain gender identity in order to obey to these gendered structures. As a result, certain jobs are perceived as feminine and some as masculine to which men and women often try to enact. This might lead to difficulties for an individual and result into a perceived mismatch when for example men work in a feminine-perceived job (Nentwich & Kelan, 2014).

2.1.2. Age

Age can be defined in terms of chronological and subjective age. Chronological age refers to the factual number of years since a person's birth. Subjective age refers to self-perceived age. In other words, it refers to how old someone feels (Akkermans et al., 2016). Additionally, ageing refers to changes that occur in biological, psychological, and social and societal changes over time (De Lange et al., 2006). In academic literature, often a distinction is made between younger and older employees based on their chronological age (Ng & Feldman, 2008; Stein & Rocco, 2001). Ng and Feldman (2008) stated that older employees are employees who are 40+ years old. This cut-off between younger and older employees has been made because the active workforce is typically between 16 and 65 years old and a dichotomous cut-off of 40 years old seems hereby acceptable (Ng & Feldman, 2008).

Age is seen as a complex, cultural, and inescapable discourse, present in and across organizations, institutions, and societies (Thomas, Hardy, Cutcher, & Ainsworth, 2014). Although academically age is believed to be a core concern in comparison to other categories such as gender and ethnicity, the impact of age seems to be underestimated by organizations (Acker, 2006). It seems as if employees are assumed to be ageless, and the structures and practices are assumed to be age-neutral (Thomas, Hardy, Cutcher, & Ainsworth, 2014).

2.1.3. Intersectionality theory

In the 1970s, feminists and women of color argued that most feminist scholarship was about middle-class, educated, and white women. They argued for an inclusive view of women's function. As a result, in the 1980s an intersectionality perspective was increasingly included in studies (Shields, 2008). Intersectionality refers to: "how social and cultural categorizations such as gender, race, class, and sexuality, interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels, contributing to systematic social inequality" (Calás, Smircich, & Holvino, 2014, p. 25). It states that categories such as gender and age are not independent of each other but interrelated (Calás, Smircich, & Holvino, 2014).

2.1.4. Career and career opportunities

A career is defined by Baruch and Rosenstein (in Baruch, 2006, p. 126) as: "a process of development of the employee along a path of experience and jobs in one or more organizations". A career is seen as the possession of an employee, but it is largely planned and managed by the organization the employee works for. Careers are not fixed or permanent but may change over time. This is similar to perceived career opportunities in an organization, which is defined by Kraimer, Seibert, Wayne, Liden and Bravo (2011, p. 488) as: "employees' perceptions of the degree to which work assignments and job opportunities that match their career interests and goals are available within their current organization".

2.2. Stereotypes

In general, stereotypes are seen as important factors causing inequality. They can be defined as: "generalizations about groups that are applied to individual group members simply because they belong to that group" (Heilman, 2012, p. 114). Due to stereotypes' possible impact, their acknowledged roles in age discrimination (Kerstema, 2019), and because at WXYZ the higher positions are disproportionately fulfilled by men, this subsection sheds light on academic literature regarding stereotypes based on gender and age.

2.2.1. Stereotypes regarding gender

As mentioned in the introduction, women are underrepresented in upper management (Hoobler et al., 2011) which might be a consequence of gender stereotypes (Heilman, 2001). Gender stereotypes are defined as: "generalizations about the attributes of men and women" (Heilman, 2012, p. 114). These stereotypes can be descriptive and prescriptive, which means that they do

not only describe differences between the being of men and women, but also prescribe appropriate behavior and norms regarding to men and women. The descriptive component for example, represents that women are nurturing and soft-spoken, whereas the prescriptive component represents the belief that women should nurture and should be soft-spoken (Burgess & Borgida, 1999). Often, men are seen as independent, powerful, and decisive. In contrast, women are often seen as sympathetic, supportive, and friendly. Conceptions about men and women are not only different but they are also frequently seen as the opposite, which indicates that characteristics ‘belonging’ to one sex cannot belong to the other sex (Heilman, 2001).

One of the stereotypes that exists when someone applies for a high function in an organization is that it requires higher aggressiveness and toughness, which are seen as characteristics men possess (Heilman, Block, Martell, & Simon, 1989). Heilman, Block, Martell and Simon (1989) found that characteristics of successful managers are described as more similar to those of men than to those of women. Due to the fact that stereotypes are widely shared, automatically triggered, and have an impact, descriptive gender stereotypes are likely to influence one’s impressions about men and women (Heilman et al., 1989).

Another stereotype regarding gender is that paid work is deliberated as a masculine task whereas unpaid care-work is seen as women’s domain. Around the world women typically spend two to ten times more time on unpaid care-work than men. This inequality in caring responsibilities is linked to stereotypes on gender roles. It can be stated that the higher the inequality in the distribution of caring responsibilities between men and women is, the higher the gender gaps in labor force participation become (Ferrant, Pesando, & Nowacka, 2014). This can be linked to the net employment rate in the Netherlands. On average 63.2 percent of women, and 72.5 percent of men in the Netherlands are employed. These percentages however do not take the number of working hours of men and women into account. On average, in 2018 women worked fewer hours than men in the Netherlands namely, 26 hours per week, and men worked on average 36 hours per week (CBS, 2019). Gender inequality in unpaid work is seen as one of the links in the analysis of gender gaps in labor outcomes, such as labor force participation, payment and job quality (Ferrant, Pesando, & Nowacka, 2014).

2.2.2. Stereotypes regarding age

Organizations seem to underinvest in older employees which is in line with the seniority-principle. This principle states that in the first career phase employees’ productivity is higher than their wages. In the second career phase however, the wages seem to become higher than the productivity of employees. As a result, organizations do not provide training to, and do not

invest in older employees since they are perceived as expensive (Thurow, in Fleischmann, Koster, Schippers (2015)). In addition, organizations are unable to know everything about every employee. Prior experiences and general characteristics such as gender and age are therefore used in order to evaluate the productivity of employees. Since employers perceive older employees as less productive, less flexible, and less receptive to new technologies, they generally tend to underinvest in them (Fleischmann, Koster, Schippers, 2015).

Also, workforce policies tend to spare older employees by letting them retire earlier than the retirement age or give them extra days off (Van Dalen, Henkens, Schippers, 2010). The paradox of these policies is that these actions seem to limit the chances of older employees in the labor market (Euwals, De Mooij and Van Vuuren, in Van Dalen, et al., 2010). These stereotypes and policies influence organizational decision-making, resulting in organizations not investing in older employees, thereby limiting their careers and chances in the labor market.

2.2.3. Stereotypes regarding the intersectionality of gender and age

As mentioned above, there are stereotypes regarding gender and age. However, these categories also intersect with each other. Zanoni (2011) for example, found that ageing has negative effects especially for female employees and suggested that ageing has a stronger effect on older women than on older men in organizations. This indicates that the social construction of age has gendered effects (Zanoni, 2011; Ainsworth, 2002). Tretheweg (2001) states that women are confronted with a double blow of sexism and ageism. At the beginning of women's careers, their appearance is subject to gendered ageism and this amount increases while women get older (Jyrinen & McKie, 2012). When women are young, they pose a 'threat' to an organization because they may get children and therefore be absent from work for a longer period of time. Having a family or the possibility of creating a family threatens the careers of women, since women in the Netherlands often take care of their family (Jyrinen & McKie, 2012, CBS, 2016). Furthermore, when women become older (as early as they reach their 40s), they are perceived as emotional, unattractive and too old. Important factors which are part of gendered processes are the looks and embodiment of women, which are seldomly mentioned in recruitment and promotion processes (Jyrinen & McKie, 2012).

2.3. Ceiling theory

Due to the fact that career opportunities in WXYZ were perceived as unequal by a majority of men and women of different ages, the question arises whether ceiling theory can be seen as an

explanatory factor. In order to study whether this is the case it is first important to gain a better understanding of the concept of ceiling theory. Therefore, the glass ceiling theory is explained first in the upcoming section, followed by the grey ceiling theory.

2.3.1. The glass ceiling theory

According to Townsend (1997), the term ‘glass ceiling’ was created by two Wall Street Journal reporters in 1986 who described it as: “the invisible but impenetrable barrier between women and the executive suite” (p. 4). According to academic literature there are many factors hindering the advancement of women in management functions (Litzky & Greenhouse, 2007; Matthews, Monk-Turner and Sumter, 2010; Hamel, 2009). At the individual level Litzky and Greenhaus (2007) found that women desired a promotion into a management function less than men. This was caused by a smaller scope of congruence women perceived between their personality traits and management functions, and is partly due to the less favorable anticipation for career progress women perceive compared to men (Litzky & Greenhaus, 2007). Furthermore, Matthews, Monk-Turner and Sumter (2010) stated that women thought they could not do their job as well as men, and that women would face problems in balancing work and home responsibilities. At the organizational level, Matthews et al. (2010) found that women working in corrections, for example as a judge, believed that men in their field were perceived to be more capable. Furthermore, insufficient HR policies and practices supporting women are also contributing factors to the hindrance of the advancement of women in managerial functions (Hamel, 2009).

Another study found that organizations with a female chief executive officer, which actively recruit women, are positively related to the percentage of women in management positions in the organization (Ng & Sears, 2017). Internationalization of the organization and foreign organizational ownership however, are negatively related to the percentage of women in management positions in the organization. This indicates that although the organization is actively occupied with efforts and investments in the hiring of women for management positions, they are limited in their possibilities by the external environment (Ng & Sears, 2017).

2.3.2. Grey ceiling theory

Beside a ceiling regarding gender there is also a ceiling when it comes to age. It was found that older employees are treated different than younger employees, in a negative manner. If employees are older than their managers, they seem to experience negative consequences

regarding promotability, managerial potential, and development due to their age (Shore, Cleveland, & Goldberg, 2003). This indicates that older employees are confronted with a 'grey ceiling' resulting in their careers to plateau, abilities to become obsolescent, and assumptions to be made such as older employees being too old and inflexible to learn new skills. Organizations prefer to hire younger employees than to train older employees (Sennett, in Thomas et al., 2014).

2.4. Hard and soft skills

A person's set of skills in general can be categorized into two types namely, hard and soft skills. As the two types are typically associated with one's gender and/or age, they seem to create expectations possibly affecting one's career path. Since higher functions are generally associated with masculine traits (Heilman, Block, Martell, & Simon, 1989), and at WXYZ the positions are mainly fulfilled by men, hard and soft skills might fulfil an explaining role in the unequal perceived career opportunities. Therefore, this subsection provides insights into hard and soft skills regarding gender and age.

2.4.1. Hard and soft skills regarding gender

Hard and soft skills are seen as opposites in which hard skills are associated with masculinity and soft skills with femininity. Traditionally, hard skills enjoy the highest status whereas soft skills carry the lowest status. This leads to hard skills being perceived as dominant skills while soft skills are perceived to be subordinate, resulting in the upholding of the dichotomy and contributing to segregation and hierarchy (Gustavsson & Hallin, 2014). The distinction between hard and soft skills with regards to gender is also visible in occupations. Hard skills (which are perceived as belonging to men) are for example associated with the analysis of big data such as programming and/or statistical analysis (Hong, 2016). Therefore, in human resources an occupation in big data is often encountered as an opportunity to change the workforce composition, explicitly regarding gender (Hong, 2016).

2.4.2. Hard and soft skills regarding age

The terms 'hard' and 'soft' skills are also applicable to age. One of the stereotypes in organizations regarding age considers the productivity and skills of younger and older employees. Van Dalen, Henkens and Schippers (2010) made a distinction between hard and soft skills regarding age. Hard skills include skills such as the willingness to learn new

technological skills, the willingness to learn in general, flexibility, and physical and mental capacity. Often, these skills are associated with younger employees. Soft skills refer to skills such as reliability, social skills, and commitment to the organization, which are often associated with older employees. In evaluations regarding productivity, hard skills weigh heavier than soft skills (Van Dalen, Henkens, & Schippers, 2010).

2.5. Social capital theory

According to Lin (2017), social capital can be defined as: “resources embedded in a social structure which are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions” (p. 35). The social capital theory regarding gender and age is explained in the following subsection.

2.5.1. Social capital regarding gender

Although men and women enter an organization with identical levels of human capital, their career success is strongly affected by their social capital (Timberlake, 2005). Barr (in Timberlake, 2005) stated that women do not have similar access to social networks as men. Yet, these social networks are assumed to be most important in order to gain successful power. Even if women gain access to such networks, social networks are not as effective for women as for men (Barr, in Timberlake, 2005). Granovetter (1973) found that having weak ties in a diverse network provides individuals with greater benefits than fewer strong ties and closer contacts. Weak ties refer to social relationships which require little investment in contrast to strong ties, which are associated with close friends and family (Granovetter, 1973). According to Timberlake (2005) this finding disadvantages women as they generally seem to have stronger ties and closer contacts, while men in general seem to have weaker ties and a larger network. It puts women in a disadvantageous position regarding their career in comparison to men (Timberlake, 2005).

Since career success and therefore also career opportunities are often determined by social capital, and men naturally seem to enjoy a favorable position because of this, social capital can be seen as an explanatory element as to why higher positions at WXYZ are mainly fulfilled by men.

2.5.2. Social capital regarding age

Besides being related to gender, social capital also applies to age. Peterson and Spiker (2005) recognized a positive contribution of older employees to organizations due to their high levels

of psychological, intellectual, emotional, and social capital. It is stated that older employees have a wider network as they have traveled more, and have experienced more social situations over the years than younger employees (Peterson & Spiker, 2005). However, one can argue that with the rise of social media these days, younger employees may start to benefit from greater networks. One of the social applications these days is LinkedIn which focuses on professional information and encourages users to construct a CV and establish connections. It was found that strong, as well as weak ties on LinkedIn contributed to informational benefits (Skeels & Grudin, 2009). Furthermore, Utz (2016) indicated that individuals characterized as higher educated, young, and/or male, report higher informational benefits from social media use.

Based on the above-mentioned findings regarding social capital and age, it remains unclear whether social capital is more advantageous for younger or older employees. By including this possibly inequality explaining element, this thesis verifies its role and contributes to existing literature by studying this phenomenon more in-depth, seeking to provide an insight into men's and women's social capital and its relevance for career opportunities at a service firm in the Netherlands.

2.6. Summary

This section provided insights into existing literature with regards to gender, age, their intersectionality in organizations, and career and career opportunities, after which they were linked to the following possible causes of unequal perceived career opportunities at WXYZ: stereotypes, ceiling theory, hard and soft skills, and social capital theory. First, general literature regarding the main concepts was discussed. Subsequently, stereotypes with regards to these concepts were provided. In addition, the glass and grey ceiling theories for gender and age were explained as the invisible but impenetrable barrier between the executive suite and women and older employees. Hereafter, hard and soft skills were discussed. Hard skills are generally seen as skills which men and younger employees possess while soft skills are generally associated with skills women and older employees possess. Hard skills are perceived as the dominant skills whereas soft skills are perceived as subordinate skills. Finally, social capital theory was discussed. In general, men are believed to have many weak ties in a diverse network and women are believed to have fewer strong ties in closer groups. It is believed that having weaker ties in a larger network provides greater benefits. When it comes to social capital and age, it remains unclear whether differences exist between the social capital of younger and older employees.

In short, women and older employees in particular are put in a disadvantageous position in comparison to men.

3. Methodology

This section is structured as follows: it starts with a description of the research design, followed by a description of the data collection and data analysis. Subsequently, the internal validity, external validity, reliability, and epistemology and ontology are discussed. Finally, the section is concluded by research ethics.

3.1. Research design

The aim of this study was to examine the roles of gender and age on the perception of (un)equal career opportunities in a non-profit service firm in the Netherlands. In order to gain a better understanding, discover underlying meanings and patterns of relationships, and gain more insights into ‘how’ and ‘why’ employees have certain perceptions and/or experiences, qualitative research seemed to be the most suitable approach to conduct this study (Babbie, 2017). This, because qualitative research offers the possibility to study the attitudes of respondents more in-depth and in their natural context (Boeije, 2005).

In order to answer the research question appropriately, data that reflects the experiences of respondents was required. Therefore, this study made use of exploratory semi-structured interviews. The aim of a semi-structured interview is to gather data that reflects the experiences of the respondent. Hereby, themes and questions are known and composed in advance of the interview. Yet, the questions and their order may vary during the interview depending on the flow (Anderson, 2013). Besides solely semi-structured interviews, use was also made of the existing diversity policy in order to gain a better understanding of the intended diversity policy. This existing diversity policy was interwoven with the HR-strategy of WXYZ.

The design of this study can be described as exploratory. The aim of an exploratory research is to gain new insights into new and/or current situations and issues to find out what is happening, which is in line with the aim of this thesis (Anderson, 2013; Robson, 2002). In addition, the design of this study can be described as inductive since the data was not tested with a specific model or theory but it was placed within relevant data. In the inductive way of conducting a study, research data is more important than existing literature (Boeije, 2005). Since the aim of this study was to gain more and new insights, the inductive way of conducting research was most suitable. This research can therefore be described as an exploratory inductive research.

3.2. Data collection

The data for this study was collected with the help of semi-structured interviews conducted in a non-profit service firm located in the Netherlands. Due to confidentiality agreements with the organization, the disclosed descriptive information regarding the organization is limited. Therefore, the organization is called WXYZ. Employees in the organization could be described as 70 percent female - 30 percent male, and most of the employees were between 35 and 45 years old. In addition, in the highest salary scales of the organization 80 percent of the positions were fulfilled by men whereas the remaining 20 percent of the positions were fulfilled by women (Appendix B). Access to the organization was gained with the help of the supervisor of this study.

The organization consisted of three departments differentiated by area of expertise, yet fulfilling similar roles and practices. Here, differences in employees' perception of equal career opportunities were found through an employee satisfaction survey. The average score on equal career opportunities in the employee satisfaction survey was 41 percent. In total, 12 interviews were held with employees of department B of the organization and four interviews were held with HR employees. Department B was chosen because it had the lowest score on employees' perception of equal career opportunities, namely 28 percent, and it was the largest department in the organization. Departments A and C had scores of 50 and 35 percent, respectively.

The sampling methods used in this study were quota sampling and purpose sampling. For the 12 interviews with employees, quota sampling was used, and for the interviews with four HR employees purpose sampling was used. Quota sampling means that a number of quotas were defined based on a number of criteria (Vennix, 2011). In this case, gender (men/women) and chronological age (younger/older) were the used criteria. The cut-off between younger and older employees was set at the age of 40 (Ng & Feldman, 2008). Hence, the interviews were conducted with three men younger than 40 years old, three men older than 39 years old, three women younger than 40 years old, and three women older than 39 years old. In addition, the four interviews held with HR employees were with the HR advisor of department B, the head of the HR department, the HR policy and projects coordinator, and the diversity project manager of the personnel policy. The interviews with the HR employees were held in order to gain insights into their intentions, own perceptions, and experiences of (un)equal career opportunities in the organization, and in order to gain a clear understanding of the intentions of the implemented diversity policy. The method used for the interviews with the HR employees was purpose sampling. This involves the including of people whose experience and perspectives are important for a study (Anderson, 2013). All interviews took place in person

and in the natural environment of the employees, which means that the interviews were held at the organizations' office. All interviews were conducted in a separate room out of sight of colleagues or other potential disturbances. According to Boeije (2005), when interviewing employees in their natural context, the data will be most valid. Additionally, the interviews were held in Dutch, since all respondents were proficient in this language.

Besides this, the current diversity policy of WXYZ was used in order to gain a better understanding of the intended policy of the organization.

3.3. Data analysis

In order to find out what roles gender and age fulfil in the perception of (un)equal career opportunities in WXYZ, the following sensitizing concepts influencing gender, age and their intersectionality were used: stereotypes, ceiling theory, hard and soft skills, and social capital theory (Appendix C). Based on the research design and the theoretical framework interview questions were composed (Appendix D). Subsequently, the interviews were conducted and with the approval of the interviewees, the interviews were recorded. The advantage of recording an interview is that the researcher is able to focus on the processes of questioning and listening instead of being distracted by other practices, such as taking notes (Anderson, 2013). Hereafter, the transcripts were coded inductively, which means that the data was analyzed without theory playing a role (Boeije, 2014). The findings of the interviews are presented in the results section.

With the help of the data analysis program Atlas.ti, the data was coded inductively. Inductive coding consists of three phases, namely open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Boeije, 2014). First, the data was openly coded, which means that the researcher explored the data and divided it into fragments. The relevant fragments were compared with each other and labelled. Once labelled, the codes were reused in other instances and new codes were constructed and appointed in cases where formerly created codes seemed to be insufficient. Open coding enabled the researcher to explore the field and to get to know the material thoroughly. Additionally, it made the data manageable and it promoted thematization because the researcher explained the data in elements and named it (Boeije, 2014). Secondly, the data was coded axially. Axial coding forms a bridge between open coding and selective coding, in which categories relevant for the study were defined. Furthermore, its aim was to examine how the categories distinguished themselves from each other and examined how they were interrelated (Boeije, 2014). In this second round of coding, codes were reassigned when

necessary in order to further specify their explicit content. Thirdly, in the selective coding phase, the accent was on the integration of the findings by making connections between the categories, which were described in the axial coding phase (Boeije, 2014). The coding process went from broad to specific and eventually two overarching themes were found in the data of the HR employees, namely diversity at the organization, and growth and equal career opportunities. Furthermore, seven overarching themes were found in the respondents' data, namely ambition, growth opportunities, equal career opportunities, network, perception characteristics of employees, explanation employee satisfaction survey, and recommendations of respondents.

3.4. Internal validity, external validity and reliability

Internal validity considers the question whether the researcher measured what he/she aimed to measure (Boeije, 2014). In order to increase the validity of the study anonymity was guaranteed for the respondent and the answers they provided. The aim hereof was the prevention of socially correct answers. Since open questions were asked during the interview, it was possible to ask for explanations of both parties. This ensured that questions and answers were understood correctly, which led to an increased validity (Anderson, 2013).

External validity is the degree to which results and conclusions of a study also apply to people, situations, and/or organizations which were not included in the study (Boeije, 2014). The external validity was limited because the study included only one organization. However, since multiple interviews were conducted the study's generalizability increased.

Reliability considers the question whether the same results will be found when the study replicated (Boeije, 2014). In this study, standardization was partly present since the data was gathered with the help of semi-structured interviews. The same questions were asked in the same order, increasing the reliability of the study. Besides this, the research process has been explained, also increasing the reliability of the findings.

3.5. Epistemology and ontology

Epistemology is the science of knowing (Babbie, 2017), in which a positivist and an interpretivist approach exists. The term positivist is often used for researchers who work within the traditions and assumptions of an objectivist perspective, and the term interpretivist is often used for researchers who are most comfortable with a socially constructed world-view (Anderson, 2013). In the interpretivist approach, understanding is more important than

explaining. Perceptions are influenced by the social context of individuals and it consists of interpretations, reasoning and feelings, making it subjective (Anderson, 2013). Since the focus of this study was on the experiences and perceptions of employees, the interpretivist approach is more suitable than the positivist approach.

Ontology is what we think the world is really like (Symon & Cassell, 2012). It concerns whether or not a phenomenon someone is interested in actually exists independent of our knowing. For ontology, realist and subjectivist assumptions can be made. Realist assumptions imply that something exists independent of our cognitive structures, and subjectivist assumptions indicate that something that is out there does not have an independent status and cannot be separated from our act of knowing. Since in this study reality was seen as dependent from the researcher and this study sought to understand human behavior and reasons that govern certain behavior, the subjectivist assumptions were taken into account.

3.6. Research ethics

Research ethics is about the obedience to a code of conduct regarding the rights of the respondents of the study or those affected by it (Wells, in Anderson, 2013). All ethical rules of research including voluntary participation, no harm to the respondents, and confidentiality were taken into account. Voluntary participation means that no one should be forced to participate in the study and that the intentions of the study should be clear to the respondent (Babbie, 2017). In this study, respondents were selected with the help of quota sampling and HR employee-respondents were selected with the help of purpose sampling. However, even though respondents were chosen, they could indicate whether they wanted to participate in the study. Furthermore, no harm to respondents means that research never should injure the respondents, regardless of whether they volunteered for the study or not. The clearest norm concerns the revealing of information that could embarrass respondents (Babbie, 2017). In this study, respondents were encouraged to express their opinion but they were able to decide for themselves whether they wanted to tell everything or not. In support hereto the study guaranteed confidentiality to the respondent and the researcher signed a confidentiality agreement with the organization. The names of the respondents were only visible for the researcher and it was prevented that others could link a given response to a respondent.

As a researcher, you can find yourself facing ethical dilemmas (Babbie, 2017). An example hereof considers a researcher's willingness to reveal findings as specific as possible while being limited by the signing of a confidentiality agreement. This means that the researcher

is not allowed to reveal the names of respondents and that it is not allowed to possibly link respondents to certain responses although it would increase the reliability of the findings. Furthermore, if the researcher finds important/disturbing information, the organization might want to take action and wants to know which respondent said certain things. Due to the above-mentioned ethical reasons, the researcher is not allowed to reveal the identity of the respondent and finds him/herself in an intermediate function with conflicting interests.

4. Results

This section provides insights into the results of this study. Since the HR-strategy and the HR employees reflected what the organization wanted to create, and because the respondents were the actual people who experienced interventions and policies of the organization, the results of the document analysis and the interviews with the HR employees are explained first. Hereafter the results of the interviews with the respondents are discussed. The results of the HR employees are represented by means of two overarching themes, namely: (1) Diversity at the organization and (2) Growth and equal career opportunities. The results of the respondents are presented according to seven overarching themes, namely (1) Ambition, (2) Growth opportunities, (3) Equal career opportunities (4) Network, (5) Perception characteristics of employees, (6) Explanation employee satisfaction survey, and (7) Recommendations. Differences in perceptions regarding the roles of gender and age are mentioned if relevant. In addition, Appendix E provides an overview of the respondents including gender and age, Appendix F shows the data display to which each quote in the upcoming subsections refers and Appendix G gives an overview of the used codes in the result section. The quote is a translated version of the Dutch original which can be found in the data display.

4.1. Results document and HR employees

In this subsection, the diversity policy document is discussed first. The information in this subsection is retrieved from the policy document itself. Second, the results of the interviews with the HR employees are explained.

4.1.1 Diversity policy document

The diversity policy document was interwoven with the HR-strategy of the organization. Its goal for the years 2019 and 2020 was to broaden the concept of diversity (which was mainly focused on gender) by including elements such as ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation. In the field of diversity, the organization composed the following diversity goals in their current policy: supervisors focus on the tasks, needs, talents and development of individual employees, and connect them with team- and organizational goals and diversity. Besides that, attention will be devoted to unconscious (gender)biases and presuppositions when selecting a group of employees. Also, the organization will continue its activities for a balanced male-female composition at the top of the organization. Hereby, it focuses on activities with regards to gender diversity in functions upward of scale 11, the undertaking of activities for recognizing

and dealing with unconscious prejudices (implicit bias), and the devotion of attention to a balanced male-female composition in functions characterized by relatively large current female proportions. Currently, the organization composes a policy specifically focused on diversity. This policy focuses on language and communication (use of gender-neutral words and images), the provision of training in order to minimize implicit biases in recruitment and selection, establishment of alertness with regards to a safe organizational culture, the importance of team diversity, and the registering to become a member of ‘Workplace Pride’ (a non-profit foundation dedicated to the improvement of the lives of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people at workplaces all over the world). Besides this, a project group has been formed which focuses on diversity.

In short, the policy was interwoven with the organization’s HR-strategy. Also, a policy specifically focused on diversity is being composed. Hereof, several elements were already in place and some were to be implemented later.

4.1.2 Diversity at the organization

The HR employees mentioned that diversity has always been important in this organization. It became topical when the organization signed the ‘Charter Talent to the Top’ declaration which is a declaration of intent and focuses on employers from the public and private sectors aiming to advance gender diversity in the organization. Besides that, during the transition of the organization, the organization took the diversity aspect into account, which resulted in having more women at higher functions:

“One searches well for suitable women here. There is an eye for it. For example, with the transition some women have reached higher functions” (HR employee).

In addition, HR employees explained that WXYZ chose to broaden the diversity concept and signed the ‘Charter Diversity’ declaration approximately two years ago, in order to advance diversity and inclusion in the organization. Furthermore, one HR employee mentioned that the organization wants to approach diversity from the positive side and wants to guarantee inclusion. This means that the organization wanted to be open for differences between people, ensured that everyone felt home and included diversity in its most broad sense, namely: gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, skills, so on all visible and invisible surfaces. Besides that, recently the organization became a member of ‘Workplace Pride’ and in addition, a project group focused on diversity was set up, and an LGBTI event was organized:

“We have started this now. We have become a member of Workplace Pride, we have had the first networking meeting and soon there will be another one and that is going to run.” (HR employee).

Moreover, it was mentioned that the organization paid attention to language in their job vacancies and tried to pay attention to unconscious processes. During the organization’s transition, a preference policy was applied favoring women in equal suitability scenarios for certain top functions. Currently, the organization formulates a policy specifically focused on diversity for the upcoming years and focuses on diversity in its broadest sense.

Overall, it can be stated that the organization first focused on gender diversity. Later, they started to focus on diversity in its broadest sense. Furthermore, it appeared that the organization wanted to approach diversity from the positive side, and tried to provide inclusion. In addition, WXYZ focused on including LGBTI employees, paid attention to unconscious processes, used a preference policy for women during the transition of WXYZ occasionally, and applied this policy at certain top functions.

4.1.3. Growth and equal career opportunities

The HR employees mentioned that the organization did not explicitly have growth opportunities for employees and that employees’ dissatisfaction regarding growth opportunities was known by HR employees. Although the organization did have a document in which their functions were explained (this document was called a ‘function house’), one of the HR employees explained that this document was quite static and not linked to a career path. Possibilities outside of the employees’ current function were not included in the ‘function house’:

“It is a ‘function house’, is static and it is not linked to a career path.” (HR employee).

Even though no career path was present at WXYZ, all HR employees mentioned a generous budget for development opportunities the organization provided, such as an Academy with training programs, the opportunity to work at another department or do other kind of work for three to six months, and training in skills employees desired to develop, for example effective communication. Furthermore, HR employees mentioned that not everyone could be a senior employee at the organization. In addition, one HR employee mentioned a speculated, possible difference regarding the support of supervisors in combination with employees who did not express their wishes properly. The HR employee stated that this combination might lead to poorly conducted conversations, and in turn might arise inequality between colleagues:

“If managers do not anticipate the ambitions, wishes, qualities and skills of employees and employees are not proactive like hey I want more left or right, then I think you get

confusion. If those conversations are not well conducted with each other and the expectations are not clear, then you may get inequality.” (HR employee).

Moreover, HR employees explained that both the supervisor and the employee should take initiative for employees’ growth opportunities. However, if employees did not express their wishes clearly, it might be hard for supervisors to fulfill these wishes. Furthermore, one HR employee stated that equal career opportunities regarding diversity are present in formal policies, but paying attention to unconscious processes is always important. In addition, HR employees mentioned that WXYZ was a balanced organization regarding age, in which no distinction was made between the age of (new) employees. Gender was mentioned as a specific point of attention in recruitment and selection processes, regarding implicit bias(es) the organization tried to be aware of.

Besides that, when the results of the employee satisfaction survey came in, the organization was aware of the fact that their workforce expected growth opportunities within WXYZ. Currently, one of the HR employees stated it is an undecided issue whether the organization wants to be an organization in which there is enough renewal in the workforce or an organization in which there are growth opportunities. At the moment, the organization composes their new policy for the coming years and this issue will be discussed:

“It is a current issue, but content wise it is also good for an organization if there is sufficient renewal in the workforce. Then career lines sometimes just stop abruptly and you should look further outside the organization so that new people can work here. A difficult decision.” (HR employee).

In addition, regarding higher functions, one of the HR employees mentioned that the number of working hours did not necessarily play a role in order to attain a certain function, but at higher functions it seemed that relatively little employees worked part-time. An implicit expectation pattern was mentioned, which means that if someone had a higher function, he/she had to work at least four days a week.

In conclusion, HR employees were aware of the uncertainty amongst employees about growth opportunities and the fact that functions were not linked to a career path. According to the HR employees, when composing the new strategy of the organization, this issue was to be discussed. In addition, the organization provided a lot of development opportunities for their employees and mentioned that not every employee could become a senior in his/her function. Besides this, one HR employee mentioned a speculated difference in the way supervisors support their employees and stated that both have to take initiative in order to let employees

grow. Finally, one of the HR employees indicated an implicit expectation pattern at higher functions to work at least four days per week.

4.2 Results respondents

In this subsection, the results of the respondents are explained with the help of seven overarching themes, namely: (1) Ambition, (2) Growth opportunities, (3) Equal career opportunities (4) Network, (5) Perception characteristics of employees, (6) Explanation employee satisfaction survey, and (7) Recommendations.

4.2.1. Ambition

All respondents mentioned their ambitions, but the focus of their ambition differed. Respondents older than 39 years old indicated to have ambitions to do their work as well as possible in their current function. In addition, three respondents older than 39 years old explained their age as an explaining factor for their ambition, mentioned they wanted to leave their work behind as well as possible, and as soon as they would reach the retirement age, and transfer the work as well as possible to other colleagues when reaching the retirement age:

“I am going to work for a few more years so I just have to think about what I still want, what I still can do and then I have to say that within the limits of my work and age, I think it is great to do what I am doing now.” (Woman 2, older than 39 years old).

This quote shows how age can play a role in an employees’ ambition. Besides that, respondents younger than 40 years old mentioned the ambition to continue to grow and learn in their current function, and execute new tasks. Furthermore, two respondents, one man and one woman both younger than 40 years old, explained they indicated a desire for a next step in their career:

“A career is important to me. I have to perceive the next step in my career”. (Man 10, younger than 40 years old).

Moreover, two respondents, a woman older than 39 years old and a man younger than 40 years old, indicated their desire to delve more into the content of their work:

“I would like to deepen a little more substantive, policy-related into the work and do less things that are already established in certain procedures.” (Woman 3, older than 39 years).

This quote indicates two respondents had ambitions for tasks lacking in their current function. Another ambition which was mentioned by a woman younger than 40 years old and a man older than 39 years old, was that they wanted to be useful for society, and a man younger than 40

years old and a man older than 39 years old mentioned their desire to have spare time. Moreover, five male respondents mentioned their ambition in combination with salary. Two of these respondents (of different age groups) mentioned they desired to grow in salary and three of these respondents (two older than 39 years old and one younger than 40 years old) explained they wanted to earn a good basis for living.

In conclusion, respondents older than 39 years old indicated to have ambitions to do their work as well as possible. Some of these respondents mentioned their age as an explaining factor here for. The ambition of respondents younger than 40 years old seemed to be focused on growing in their current positions. Interestingly and in contrast with employees older than 39 years old, some of them indicated a desire for a next step in their career. Furthermore, regarding gender, only male respondents mentioned their ambitions in combination with salary, indicating that men seem to link their ambition directly with salary. It can thus be stated that regarding ambition at WXYZ, gender and age indeed fulfilled significant roles.

4.2.2. Growth opportunities

This subsection is divided into three parts, namely (1) growth opportunities in general, (2) the influence of a supervisor on growth opportunities, and (3) the influence of the organization on growth opportunities.

4.2.2.1 Growth opportunities in general

All respondents perceived the growth opportunities at WXYZ as follows: unclear, difficult, little explicit, taking a long time, no fixed route, no room to grow, not always easy and flexible, difficult to estimate, opaque, and a long-winded process:

“When I look at my prospect, I honestly find it difficult to estimate. Next steps are not very transparent for me. It does not have to be transparent, but it is difficult to estimate when or with which tasks I should classify in order to take the next step. And the next step thereafter. So that is not very clear. It is not a beaten path I think, and I think that employees themselves also have to play a very active role in order to get that. No, it is not very clear.” (Man 10, younger than 40 years old).

This quote shows the perception of a respondent who stated that career paths were unclear and employees had to play a very active role in their career in order to reach the next step. However, one of the respondents mentioned that career paths were clear (from junior to mediator to senior), but when it came to the career path outside a current function, it was unclear:

“What the possible steps are. I mean the job description .. I understand that you can go from junior to medior to senior, but that does not tell me everything about where your career can go to.” (Woman 6, younger than 40 years old).

This quote indicates that employees’ career paths were clear but possible functions outside the current function, but within the organization, were unclear. In addition, five respondents (one woman older than 39 years old, and two men and two women younger than 40 years old) mentioned that if an employee desired to grow, he/she had to show initiative:

“It is not that the organization does not want to offer you possibilities, but if you don't do anything with it or do not open your mouth, you will not get there. Then you might want it on the inside, but then you really have to open your mouth.” (Woman 4, younger than 40 years old).

However, one of the respondents was told by her supervisor that she was not allowed to take initiative for her growth opportunities. Respondents (one man and one woman) mentioned that the organization offered a lot of trainings and that development opportunities were present within their current function. However, respondents (four men and one woman) mentioned that if an employee wanted to grow in function, it was sometimes not possible at his/her own department or function, due to a lack of place and/or budget:

“So within your function you can grow and you can continue to grow, but then you have to apply for something else and you will become something else. If you do something for a while and you do it well, then taking the next step is difficult.” (Man 11, younger than 40 years old).

This quote indicates that it is possible to grow within the current function, but if someone desired to grow in job level, he/she had to apply for another function. Furthermore, three respondents (one man older than 39 years old, two men and one woman younger than 40 years old) explained that employees had to perform tasks above their current function level for a long time before being promoted to the next function level:

“The fact that I really had to fight to become a medior while I actually did that work for already three years, I think ... So growing function is very difficult” (Man 11, younger than 40 years old).

This quote indicates that it was hard to grow in function and that some employees carried out tasks above their current function level for a long time, before being promoted to the next level.

In conclusion, all respondents perceive the growth opportunities within WXYZ as an opaque, difficult process in which it was sometimes necessary, due to a lack of budget and/or place at an employees’ own department, to apply at another department/function in the

organization. However, two respondents mentioned the development opportunities in employees' current function by trainings the organization offered. Moreover, one of the respondents mentioned that possible steps in current functions were clear, but the career path outside the current function was unclear. Besides that, respondents mentioned that employees had to fulfil tasks above their current function level and it took a long time before they received promotion. In this subsection, gender and age did not play a clear role concerning growth opportunities in general.

4.2.2.2. The influence of a supervisor on growth opportunities

When it comes to the influence of supervisors on the growth opportunities of employees, it was surprising that all gender-age groups, except men older than 39 years old, mentioned their growth opportunities in combination with their supervisor. Furthermore, overall it can be stated that respondents were satisfied with, and feel supported by their supervisor. Respondents appreciated the stimulation in general they receive from their supervisor stimulated, the provided flexibility in working hours and working at home, and respondents had the feeling that their supervisor listened to their wishes:

“My supervisor, I really think it is a really good supervisor. My supervisor also has faith in me. I can perform my tasks independently and I always give a lot of feedback about what I have done. I notice that my supervisor finds it particularly pleasant and I am fully supported by my supervisor”. (Woman 1, older than 39 years old).

This quote shows that the respondent was satisfied with her supervisor and felt supported. However, although a respondent mentioned that she was satisfied with her supervisor, her supervisor had little insight in the growth opportunities. Moreover, another respondent mentioned that her supervisor did not listen to her needs and wishes and someone else stated his supervisor was not clear regarding ways to grow in function. These two respondents (one man and one woman younger than 40 years old) felt they had to take the initiative for their growth opportunities, since their supervisor did not show initiative for them at all. One respondent was okay with this, whereas the other respondent desired to receive more initiative from her supervisor for her growth opportunities: Therefore, it can be stated that two respondents felt a lack of support by their supervisor:

“There you really have to ... When I think back to my performance appraisals that I had with my supervisor, then I consciously put into my plans that I want to walk a senior path. If I do not do that, it will not be discussed either”. (Man 10, younger than 40 years old).

This quote shows that if an employee did not take initiative during a performance appraisal, growth opportunities were not discussed. Furthermore, one of the two respondents mentioned she did not have faith in her supervisor, was told that it was not allowed to grow in function outside of performance appraisals, was told that in order to grow she was not allowed to show initiative, and almost got into a fight with her supervisor because she took the initiative:

“Last year I had a performance appraisal in which I indicated that I wanted to grow in function and then I almost got into a fight with my supervisor. My supervisor thought that I was not allowed to address that. The initiative was not allowed to come from me and I would hear it from her if I could grow in function.” (Woman 5, younger than 40 years old).

Although most respondents were satisfied with their supervisor and had the feeling that they were heard by their supervisor, the two quotes above show that two respondents were not satisfied with their supervisor. In addition, one of the respondents mentioned that she often asked to grow, but her former supervisors referred to tasks she did not control yet. However, these tasks were no requirements for the subsequent function level:

“In the past I have often asked to grow, but there have always been references to things that you do not yet have or can do. For example, you cannot do certain tasks yet, but if you look at the job description, it is not even a requirement. That is then held up so that you cannot continue to grow” (Woman 4, younger than 40 years old).

This quote shows that one of the respondents received reasons why she could not grow in function according to her former supervisor, while those reasons were no requirements for the subsequent function level.

In general, it can be stated that most respondents, except men older than 39 years old who did not mention growth opportunities in combination with their supervisor, felt satisfied and supported by their supervisor. However, two respondents felt a lack of support and wanted to receive more clarity from their supervisor. Although two other respondents were satisfied with their supervisor, they mentioned their supervisor had little insight in growth opportunities, and one respondent mentioned she received reasons regarding the impossibility to grow in function, while these reasons were no requirements in the subsequent function level.

4.2.2.3. The influence of the organization on growth opportunities

What came forward when asking respondents about the influence of the organization on growth opportunities was that four respondents (two men and one woman older than 39 years old and one man younger than 40 years old) experienced a high workload. The respondents mentioned

they preferred to have a good work-life balance but were afraid that the higher the function level is, the higher the workload:

“Maybe the higher, the farther I get here, the worse it gets. Can I handle that?” (Man 8, older than 39 years old).

In addition, they explained they did not have enough time to develop themselves and participate in trainings, due to this high workload. Besides that, three respondents (one man and two women older than 39 years old) said they experienced the organization as log and not dynamic. Regarding creativity, one of these respondents mentioned that an employee had to do a lot of effort before he/she gets anything done in this organization. The organization had undergone a transition and everything had to be standardized, which had, according to these three respondents good sides, but it often did not work efficiently:

“Everything has to be the same way for a lot of people. That has good sides. It is fair in a certain way, but it does not always work for the same group of people so I think you should make a certain distinction as this one works for that group but it does not work for that group.” (Woman 3, older than 39 years old).

Moreover, two respondents (men younger than 40 years old) mentioned that WXYZ thought along with employees about challenges and growth, and one respondent (woman older than 39 years old) experienced the flexible working hours at WXYZ as pleasant.

Overall, it can be stated that four respondents, of which three older than 39 years old, experienced a high workload in WXYZ, which impeded their growth opportunities. Besides that, the organization was described by three respondents older than 39 years old as log, not dynamic and due to the standardization the organization did not always work efficiently. Here, it can be stated age did play a role on the influence of the organization on growth opportunities. Furthermore, two men younger than 40 years old experienced that the organization thought along with employees and one respondent (woman older than 39 years old) experienced the flexible working hours as pleasant.

4.2.3. Equal career opportunities

This subsection is divided into three subsections, namely (1) equality regarding gender, age, ethnicity and religion, (2) equality in comparison with colleagues, inequality caused by the supervisor and internal vacancies, and (3) other.

4.2.3.1 Equality career opportunities – Gender, age, ethnicity and religion

According to all respondents of the four different gender-age groups, in general it can be stated there were equal career opportunities regarding gender, age, ethnicity and religion in WXYZ:

“In any case, I have had that argument more often, that there is looked at the entire pool of people sitting at the same level and how much room they have to allow people to grow. In that regard, I have the idea that every effort is being made to keep those opportunities equal.” (Woman 5, younger than 40 years old).

This quote shows an overall perception of equal career opportunities based on gender, age, ethnicity and religion. It can be stated that respondents perceived that these personal factors did not cause inequality in WXYZ. Especially regarding age, two respondents (one man and one woman older than 39 years old) mentioned that the organization was even ahead of other organizations and sometimes, in order to create a balance in employees’ average age, an older employee was explicitly hired:

“I do think that this organization is at the forefront when it comes to diversity in age. I was surprised about that. When I applied, I was in my 50s and it was not a single issue. Someone around 50 years old has now been hired at my department and another person around 50 years old has recently been hired in another apartment.” (Woman 2, younger than 40 years old).

Moreover, three respondents (one woman older than 39 years old and two women younger than 40 years old) mentioned the link between age and experience:

“Uhm .. I really feel like I'm being treated the same way as my male colleague or someone who is non-white. I think that religion is thought along with, like when you participate with the Ramadan now. And even more ... Age yes, I always find that difficult because when someone comes in who is 10 years older, he or she also has more experience, so I think it makes sense that someone will end up in a senior function sooner because they are then also senior.” (Woman 6, younger than 40 years old).

This quote indicates that growth opportunities were dependent of experience instead of age. Although all respondents mentioned equal career opportunities regarding gender, age, ethnicity and religion were present within WXYZ, two respondents (two men of different age groups) mentioned they felt that equality for women led to inequality for men:

“The diversity principle states: more women, there must be more women, more women. I also saw that during the last transition. I see women want more equality for women and that is why there is inequality for men.” (Man 7, older than 39 years old).

In addition, one of the two respondents explained that men and women were different, and steering on equal career opportunities did not mean that there had to be equal outcomes:

“The point is that for me men and women are different. At some point you have to make sure they get the same opportunities but that does not mean they achieve the same if they get the same opportunities. If you are going to prepossess the same goals, I do not think you always get the best people in the right places.” (Man 11, younger than 40 years old).

These two quotes indicate that two respondents felt gender inequality at WXYZ, due to a priority policy for women. Besides that, regarding gender, an explanation was given by a female respondent younger than 40 years old about the amount of men at certain functions in WXYZ:

“Because I see that ... at least with my colleagues, that many female employees work a little less, work fewer hours and male colleagues work a little more hours so then I also understand that you have to work full-time for certain functions, for example, and that happens for men earlier than for women. So that certain functions are more with male colleagues than with women.” (Woman 6, younger than 40 years old).

According to the respondent, on average women work less hours than men in WXYZ which could, according to the respondent, be an explaining factor for the large amount of men at certain (higher) functions. However, the number of working hours did not play a role in at WXYZ in order to receive a promotion, according to another female respondent younger than 40 years old. Another respondent (a man older than 39 years old), stated that in order to reach something, someone had to practice a lot. However, since a lot of women in the Netherlands work part-time they were, according to the respondent, not able to practice a lot, which was given as an explaining factor for the fulfilment of certain (higher) functions by men:

“And if you opt for part-time functions, then you choose to become less skilled. So if you are wondering why women are less represented, that could be a factor.” (Man 7, older than 39 years old).

This quote shows the perception of a respondent who stated that due to women working part-time and as a consequence becoming less skilled, women were less represented at certain (higher) functions than men.

In general, respondents mentioned there were equal career opportunities regarding gender, age, ethnicity and religion in this organization, and two respondents older than 39 years old mentioned the organization was seen as ahead of other organization regarding age. However, regarding gender two male respondents mentioned inequality for men caused by a priority policy for women. Besides that, a woman younger than 40 years old mentioned that

women work less hours than men, which was given as an explaining factor for the large amount of men at certain (higher) functions. As already mentioned, this was also stated by a male respondent older than 39 years old who stated that women choose to work part-time, which ensured that they became less skilled, and in turn caused that some (higher) functions were fulfilled by men. However, another female respondent younger than 40 years old stated the amount of working hours did not play a role in order to receive a promotion at WXYZ.

4.2.3.2. Equal career opportunities – in comparison with colleagues and caused by the supervisor and internal vacancies

In general, two factors causing inequality were often mentioned, namely inequality in comparison with colleagues and inequality caused by the supervisor and internal vacancies. Regarding the first factor, few respondents of all gender-age categories, except men older than 39 years old, referred to experiences in which they felt inequality in comparison with colleagues. One experience is:

“Despite the fact that my wish to continue growing was very explicit, I was told very clearly that it was not possible and at the same time it turned out to be possible because someone else did grow. There must be a reason that she could grow at an unannounced moment and following non-rules, but I don't know them.” (Woman 5, younger than 40 years old).

Another experience is:

“The colleague I was just talking about came to work here one year after me. This colleague also deserved to become a senior, but I became it after two and a half years and he/she after one and a half years. So then something is not right...”. (Man 12, younger than 40 years old).

These quotes show that respondents felt inequality in comparison with colleagues. The respondents wondered why colleagues, with whom they started around the same time, grew or grew faster than the respondent. Here for, no explanation was provided by the organization and/or supervisor. Other factors causing inequality in comparison with colleagues were colleagues who did the same kind of work but one of the two was promoted to higher scale. Another factor with regards to inequality in comparison with colleagues, was inequality between colleagues of different functions in the organization:

“That is also a bit bounded to a function. At the secretariat it is very important that everyone agrees with each other about what they are doing, while it is a bit easier for policy staff.” (Woman 2, older than 39 years old).

This quote indicates that a respondent felt inequality between functions in the organization. Moreover, the second factor causing inequality for respondents was inequality caused by supervisors and internal vacancies. One respondent of every gender-age group mentioned that when someone was closer with a supervisor, more visible, puts him/herself in the spotlight and worked in the favor of the people who divided the jobs, he/she had more chance to receive a promotion, which was perceived as inequality in comparison with colleagues due to the supervisor. Furthermore, a respondent stated there was a difference in the effort supervisors make in order to help their employees grow in function:

“For me, that is because I feel that my supervisor is not very committed to my interests and then has to compete with team leaders who are committed to the interests of their employees, so whether they offer more opportunities or push them up further.” (Woman 5, younger than 40 years old).

This quote shows that a respondent felt inequality regarding her supervisor, since supervisors of colleagues made more effort for their employees’ growth opportunities in comparison with her own supervisor. Furthermore, two respondents (two men of the different age-groups) experienced inequality due to internal vacancies which were, according to them, sometimes not published on the internal website of WXYZ:

“I also think that a number of functions are divided on the basis of we know you and we would like to have you. In my experience, you do not get to see all available functions. Especially those functions that nobody wants to do are often published on the website and the nice jobs are often already fulfilled. It does not necessarily mean that .. yes it is also possible that someone is alert and he/she declared this to his/her supervisor, then it is logical that that person is asked for the job.” (Man 11, younger than 40 years old).

Another example is:

“Then it is said no this is not the case, we will first advertise internally and only then it may go outside and then we will continue with a protocol. That is sometimes strange because how is it possible that the entire procedure has to be followed and then sometimes you suddenly see a function fulfilled without that procedure.” (Man 7, older than 39 years old).

These two examples show perceived inequality by two respondents caused by internal vacancies. These internal vacancies were sometimes not, according to protocol, published on the internal website, but were suddenly fulfilled, in which supervisors might play a role.

In general, two factors causing inequality came clearly forward when referring to inequality at the work floor, namely inequality in comparison with colleagues and inequality caused by the supervisor and internal vacancies. In short, respondents of all gender-age groups, except men older than 39 years old, felt inequality in comparison with colleagues. This indicates that gender and age did play a role regarding equal career opportunities in comparison with colleagues. In addition, one respondent of every gender-age group felt inequality since some colleagues were closer to supervisors, more visible, put themselves more in the spotlight, worked in the favor of the people who divided the jobs and due to a perceived difference in effort between supervisors respondents felt inequality. Moreover, some internal vacancies were, according to two male respondents, not published on the internal website but were suddenly divided. This indicates that gender played a role in the perception of employees regarding equal career opportunities and internal vacancies.

4.2.3.3. Equal career opportunities - Other

Another mentioned factor that caused inequality, according to four respondents (of which two men and one woman older than 39 years old, and one man younger than 40 years old) was that the input of employees, such as personality, effort background, knowledge, experience, interests and curriculum vitae's of employees were not equal, which made it, according to them, hard to determine if equal career opportunities were present:

“I think that in principle everyone has an equal chance, but resumes are not the same and neither is the personality.” (Man 7, older than 39 years old).

In conclusion, the factor input of employees was mentioned by four respondents, in which it was unclear whether gender and/or age fulfilled a role.

4.2.4. Network

All respondents described their network as a network with a lot of, mostly internal, contacts, in which they had loose and sporadically contact. Furthermore, it was mentioned that someone's network was depended of someone's background, history, previous jobs and current function. In certain functions it was required to have more internal contact and at other functions it was required to have more external contact. Also, when respondents compared their network with

direct colleagues' network, they mentioned that they had quite the same network. When comparing their network with indirect colleagues, they mentioned differences were caused by functions. Moreover, some colleagues had more temporary, intensive contact with external people when for example organizing an event:

"I think it doesn't differ that much. Direct colleagues all have the same type of network as me. If you organize events then you also have good external contacts" (Man 9, older than 39 years old).

Another example:

"With some you have intensive contact and with peaks and with others you have less intensive contact. For example, I now organize an event for a program and I have established a nice contact with the director of the place we organize the event." (Woman 1, older than 39 years old).

Furthermore, two female respondents of the different age groups mentioned their network did, in the past, contribute to their career whereas other respondents (one woman and two men younger than 40 years old and two men older than 39 years old) mentioned their network did not contribute to their career:

"Not, except that having a broad network and demonstrating that you know many people is important in your function, but the network itself that you have has no further influence on any promotions in my career in the sense of someone I know, like my boss, would say well that person is a good employee and you have to pay him more. No, I don't see that. You really have to do it yourself." (Man 10, younger than 40 years old).

This quote shows a male respondent explained that his network did not contribute to his career and his perception was that, in this organization, you really had to do it yourself.

It can be concluded that all respondents of the four gender-age groups had quite the same network, but differences were caused by respondents' background, history, previous jobs and function. Furthermore, differences in perceptions were mentioned regarding whether someone's network contributed to one's career.

4.2.5. Characteristics of successful employees, characteristics of employees getting a promotion and characteristics of employees on higher functions.

In general, respondents of all gender-age groups described a successful employee as a person with characteristics which could be present in all functions, such as listening to others, having a heart for the business, ensuring others can trust you, stimulate others, being passionate, having knowledge about certain processes, taking responsibility, having collegiality, being open-

mindful, having empathy, having insight into possibilities, being loyal and ambitious and being able to collaborate with colleagues. Some characteristics were more important in certain functions than others. In addition, one male and one female respondent younger than 40 years old mentioned there was no model employee and someone could be successful in every function:

“Everyone has their own qualities and I don't think there is a model employee or anything like that. I think everyone with their own qualities can make an important contribution to an organization. As long as that is clear, you are a good employee who does his or her job well and does his or her work based on his or her own qualities. Then you are a good employee.” (Man 10, younger than 40 years old).

Besides that, respondents described the following things an employee has to do or characteristics he/she must possess in order to receive a promotion: having knowledge, doing additional tasks, having a broad network, eager to learn and being visible. In general, respondents stated that if someone did not have these characteristics, he/she remained in the current function, which was fine according to the respondents:

“If you do your job nicely and you don't need any further growth, then you basically... ofcourse showing initiative and work hard is good, but I think that if you do not have the need for a promotion or further growth you do not always have to go that extra mile.” (Woman 4, younger than 40 years old).

In addition, few respondents of all gender-age groups, except women younger than 40 years old, mentioned that a policy officer had the highest chance of receiving a promotion, due to the fact that he/she had a certain educational level. Besides that, few respondents of all gender-age groups mentioned the visibility of an employee as a factor which influenced the chance to receive a promotion, and one female respondent younger than 40 years old mentioned that employees who worked fulltime had the highest chance to receive a promotion.

Respondents described characteristics of employees on higher functions as follows: possessing knowledge of the field and of humans, leading and taking charge, having a helicopter view, knowing what is going on inside and outside WXYZ, and being an example for employees:

“I think it is very important that they have a helicopter view and that employees at higher functions perceive the activities of their part of the department. Also, knowing where tricky businesses and talents of employees are. Furthermore, knowledge of people is especially in those types of functions important in order to put your team together. But you also need guts in order to make decisions, even if it goes against

something. If it is good for the team, you need to have the guts to do it” (Woman 4, younger than 40 years old).

This quote shows the perception of a respondent that employees at higher functions need to possess a helicopter view, knowledge of people and having the guts to make decisions.

In conclusion, respondents of all gender-age groups described characteristics that could be applicable for all kinds of functions. When not having these characteristics, respondents mentioned an employee remained in the current function. Moreover, according to the respondents, a policy officer had the highest chance to receive a promotion and having knowledge was mentioned as a characteristic of a successful employee, a characteristic of an employee who received a promotion, and of an employee at a higher function. In this subsection, when describing characteristics of successful employees, characteristics in order to receive a promotion and characteristics of employees at higher functions, no difference was made between the four different gender-age groups since these perceptions overlapped, which indicates gender and age did not play a role.

4.2.6. Explanation employee satisfaction survey

Department B scored 28 percent on the proposition concerning equal career opportunities, namely: “Within the organization everyone has equal career opportunities”. Few respondents of all gender-age groups gave multiple explaining factors for this perceived inequality, namely that there was no place to grow in function within employees’ own team or department, uncertainty about steps and career paths, uncertainty about the way decisions were made in the organization, and the perception that some supervisors did make an effort to provide their employees with growth opportunities, while other supervisors did not or made less effort. Another explanation was the perception that if someone desired to grow in certain functions, he/she needed a certain educational level, which some employees did not have. A last explaining factor was that if employees compared themselves with colleagues, they did not understand why colleagues, who did approximately the same work, had a higher function level. The respondent explained that either his/her function was too low or a colleagues’ function was too high. Moreover, two respondents (a man younger than 40 years old and a woman older than 39 years old) clarified their speculated explanation in combination with gender. One respondent mentioned that, especially at higher functions, inequality could be experienced by employees caused by a priority policy for women. Respondents perceived it as unfair if the organization focused on equal outcomes of people when hiring someone instead of equal possibilities, while the pool of people regarding gender was 50-50. It means that although 50 percent of the

applicants were men and 50 percent of the applicants were women, a woman was chosen for the function. The respondents indicated that when you steer on career outcome of different people, you do not get the best people at the right places:

“Especially when it comes to top functions, I think that a lot of people... It seems there is chosen for women, while the group was divided 50-50, and that there has been sent on outcome.” (Man 11, older than 39 years old).

Besides that, another speculated explanation in combination with gender was given:

“If you look at women, then maybe it is... Women are less likely due to busy schedules to combine the family with work, which means they drop something faster. For example, spending more time on their families if it is also unevenly distributed at home. I can imagine that, but I do not know if that is the case here.” (Woman 3, older than 39 years old).

This quote shows that it might be possible, according to the respondent, that if the situation at home was unevenly distributed for women, the chance that women were able to combine family with work was smaller and as a consequence, they dropped their work faster.

In conclusion, multiple, speculated and different explanations for the low score on equal career opportunities on the employee satisfaction survey were given by respondents. Moreover, two explanations in combination with gender were given by two respondents of a different gender-age group, namely that it was seen as unfair if explicitly a woman was chosen while the group of people was divided 50-50. The second explanation for the low score on the employee satisfaction survey was that women were less likely to combine family with work due to busy schedules, which was seen as inequality in career opportunities.

4.2.7. Recommendations of employees

The clearest advice that came forward was: be clearer. The majority of the respondents of all gender-age groups mentioned the opaque and difficult process and desired to improve this:

“Well, a clear structure about how you can become a senior and can take steps. What do you have to measure up to and what kind of agreements.” (Man 12, younger than 40 years old).

Even if there were no rules regarding growth opportunities (in comparison with colleagues), the respondents wanted to hear that there were no rules. The respondents recommend the organization to be more open about the way someone can receive a promotion, about what choices were based on and if someone did not receive a promotion, WXYZ could be more open by giving the employee feedback, so he/she could improve certain skills:

“For example the person who did grow in function has more affinity or more talents, that is fair to say. I can't do anything with: yes, but maybe. No, tell me how it works. If I know what's wrong, then I can do something about it. If I am told that I need more completion and depth in my work, fine, but tell me what that is. Where should I look for that? Because at the moment I do not have that or do not have that enough, otherwise it would not be said. Where can I look for that? Help me with that.” (Woman 4, younger than 40 years old).

Besides that, one female respondent younger than 40 years old desired more support from her supervisor and conduct conversations with her supervisor about her development, goals, and about how and when to achieve these goals. Moreover, multiple respondents (one woman and one man older than 39 years old and two men younger than 40 years old) mentioned they wanted to be stimulated by their supervisor, HR employees and employees on higher functions regarding growth opportunities. An example:

“It would be great if a HR employee would say: hey look at that function or go talk or something” (Woman 2, older than 39 years old).

Another example:

It would be nice if... Ofcourse you have different layers of supervisors, but if a higher person would take a look like; hey there I see opportunities for someone or oh hey he studied that, let's see. (Man 12, younger than 40 years old).

These quotes show multiple respondents desired to receive more stimulation HR employees and employees at higher functions.

It can be concluded that the majority of the respondents of all gender-age groups recommended the organization and/or supervisor to provide more clarity, openness and support regarding growth opportunities. In addition, one female respondent desired to have more support from her supervisor and multiple respondents mentioned they wanted to receive more stimulation for their growth opportunities from their supervisor, HR employees and employees at higher functions. In these explanations, gender and age did not play a role.

4.3. Relatedness data

This section provided insights in the (diversity) policy document, the perception of HR employees, and the perception of the respondents of the different age-groups. Based on the analysis of the HR strategy document it can be concluded that WXYZ had a policy in place in which diversity was included. Currently, a policy specifically focused on diversity is being

composed. Hereof, some parts, such as being a member of 'Workplace Pride' and setting up a project group focused on diversity, were already in place. It can be concluded that the organization's former focus was solely on gender diversity, and that its current focus is aimed at diversity in its broadest sense. This was confirmed by the HR employees. Based on the findings it can be stated that the policy was perceived as intended by almost all respondents regarding gender, age, ethnicity and religion. However, two male respondents indicated a perception of inequality for men due to a preference policy for women, indicating that the gender aspect of the diversity policy was not fully perceived as intended.

5. Conclusion and discussion

This section provides insights into the results of the study and elaborates on the findings in the context of the research question. First, the key findings are mentioned. Subsequently, the findings are discussed, followed by managerial recommendations, and limitations and recommendations for further research.

5.1. Conclusion

In this study, the roles of gender and age on the perception of (un)equal career opportunities in a non-profit service firm (WXYZ) located in the Netherlands were examined. Therefore, the research question was: *“What are the roles of gender and age on the perceived (un)equal career opportunities in a non-profit service firm in the Netherlands?”*.

Academic literature indicated that stereotypes regarding gender and age exist, resulting in the confrontation of women with a double blow of sexism and ageism. Moreover, glass and grey ceiling theories were believed to form a possible invisible but impenetrable barrier between women and older employees, and the executive suite. Furthermore, it was believed that men and younger employees were associated with hard skills, and women and older employees were associated with soft skills. Hereof, hard skills were seen as dominant skills and soft skills were seen as subordinate skills. Finally, when it comes to social capital theory, it was believed that men in general had more, but weaker ties than women, who were believed to have fewer but stronger ties. The masculine counterpart of the two scenarios was believed to be more beneficial than the feminine counterpart in the generation of career opportunities, naturally generating a disadvantageous position for women. When it comes to age, current literature seemed to be inconclusive with regards to a beneficial/advantageous position for younger or older employees.

Based on the results, it can be concluded that gender and age seemed to play significant roles concerning certain aspects regarding (un)equal career opportunities. Regarding ambition, it can be concluded gender and age fulfilled important roles, but ambition is not directly related to career opportunities. Concerning gender, age, ethnicity and religion, it can be indicated that equal career opportunities were perceived as intended by the respondents. However, two male respondents of the different age groups mentioned inequality for men due to a priority policy for women, which means gender did play a role here. In addition, inequality in growth opportunities in comparison with colleagues, influenced by the supervisor and caused by internal vacancies were mentioned. Here, only men older than 39 years old did not mention

inequality in comparison with colleagues, every gender-age group mentioned the influence of the supervisor on growth opportunities, and two male respondents mentioned inequality due to internal vacancies. Therefore, it can be stated gender and age did play a role regarding the perspective on equal career opportunities at WXYZ.

Another finding was the perception of respondents concerning their growth opportunities. All respondents, regardless of gender and age, perceived it as a difficult, unclear and opaque process, which means gender and age did not fulfil roles here. It can be concluded that this uncertainty might have been one of the aspects which caused that respondents perceived career opportunities at WXYZ as unequal.

Concerning characteristics of successful employees, characteristics of employees who received promotion and employees at higher functions, characteristics were mentioned which could be applicable for all kinds of functions, and were mentioned by respondents of all gender-age groups. No relation was found between certain characteristics in relation to career opportunities regarding gender and age. Therefore, it can be concluded that it seemed that the hard and soft skills theory did not play a role at WXYZ.

Based on the findings related to a network, it can be concluded that gender and age did not fulfil a role in the network employees have at WXYZ. Only differences in network due to background, history, previous jobs and function were mentioned. As mentioned earlier, also the influence of the supervisor played a role on perceived unequal career opportunities. This indicates that although gender and age did not play a role, other personal factors and the supervisor played a role contributing to perceived unequal career opportunities at WXYZ. Moreover, the social capital theory regarding gender and age could not be confirmed at WXYZ.

Furthermore, explanations for the low score on equal career opportunities on the employee satisfaction survey were given by respondents. In these explanations, gender played a role in two explanations. Therefore, it can be concluded gender played a role in the perception of employees on the low score on equal career opportunities at the employee satisfaction survey.

Based on all these findings, it can be concluded that gender and age fulfilled roles concerning certain aspects regarding (un)equal career opportunities at WXYZ.

5.2. Discussion

With the help of a qualitative and inductive analysis, two overarching themes in the data of the HR employees were found and seven overarching themes were found in the respondents' data. In this subsection, the results will be discussed.

In this study a difference in ambition was found between the different gender and age groups. A stereotype regarding gender, which was mentioned in the theoretical framework was that working for money was deliberated as a masculine task and unpaid care work was seen as women's domain (Ferrant, Pesando, & Nowacka, 2014). In this study, it was found that only men linked their ambition with salary, and one respondent mentioned that if care responsibilities at home are unevenly distributed, career opportunities for men and women could be perceived as unequal. These results show that the unequal sharing of caring responsibilities might be linked to the confirmation of stereotypes on gender roles, and therefore seem to confirm the current academic literature. Furthermore, this study found that older respondents have the ambition to be more focused on doing their current job as well as possible and younger respondents are focused on growing in their current job, of which few of these younger respondents mentioned they desired a next step in their career. This finding is in line with Kooij, Bal and Kanfer (2014), who found that older employees have lower growth work motives than younger employees.

Furthermore, in general it appeared that respondents experienced their growth opportunities and career path as unclear. The perception on growth opportunities was also influenced by the supervisor and the organization. It was found by Coetzee and Stoltz (2015) that career adaptability, especially career concern (providing future career possibilities), significantly explained an employees' level of satisfaction with their experiences of career opportunities, work-life balance, training and development opportunities. This indicates that if WXYZ provides employees with future career possibilities, employees will have a higher satisfaction with their experiences regarding career opportunities, work-life balance, training and development opportunities, which will in turn benefit the organization.

Besides that, João (2010, in Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015) found that the need for career growth and opportunities for advancement of employees are significant factors that prevent professionally qualified employees from leaving the organization. This suggests that if WXYZ provides employees with career growth and opportunities for advancement, it might prevent employees from leaving the organization. Furthermore, Wang, Weng, McElroy, Ashkanasy and Lievens (2014) found a positive link between career growth and voice behavior. Voice behavior is the employees' expression of concerns, opinions, ideas and suggestions about work-related issues and has a positive impact on organizational or unit functioning. This indicates that when WXYZ has clear growth opportunities, it can in turn stimulate employees' voice behavior, and as a consequence it can be beneficial for organizational and unit functioning. Furthermore, it was found by Waseem (2010) that a better relationship between employee and supervisor

contributes to higher levels of employees' perception on organizational support. This shows that WXYZ can benefit from better relationships between supervisors and employees. In addition, in academic literature it was found that development support positively relates to job performance, but only when the perceived career opportunities within the organization are high (Kraimer, Seibert, Wayne, Liden, & Bravo, 2011). This indicates that although WXYZ provides their employees with a lot of training possibilities, there will be no relationship between development support and job performance, if the perceived career opportunities are low. This means that if WXYZ has clear career opportunities in place and these opportunities are perceived as high, both (perceived career opportunities and development support) are positively related to job performance, which benefits WXYZ.

In addition, two respondents argued that certain functions are fulfilled by men due to women working less hours than men. Moreover, one of the respondents mentioned a possible perceived inequality in career opportunities due to women having more responsibilities at home, which makes it harder to combine their family and work. As a consequence, women have to drop something faster and spend more time on their families. Besides that, one of the HR employees mentioned an implicit expectation pattern at higher functions, which stated that when someone has a higher function, he/she has to work at least four days a week. These findings can be linked to the theoretical framework, in which stereotypes regarding gender are explained. It stated that since women have more sharing responsibilities, which is caused by stereotypes regarding gender roles, women are more likely to work part-time than men in order to fulfil their responsibilities at home (Ferrant, Pesando, & Nowacka, 2014). Therefore, the result of this study is line with the finding of Ferrant, Pesando and Nowacka (2014), who states that gender inequality in unpaid work is seen as one of the links in the analysis of gender gaps in labor outcomes. It was assumed that the glass ceiling and grey ceiling theory would play a role in this study, since it is a known phenomenon in academic literature which describes there is an invisible but impenetrable barrier between women and older employees and the executive suite. However, this study found a link between part-time work and the implicit expectation pattern at higher functions to work at least four days a week. Since a few respondents mentioned that a lot of women work part-time at WXYZ, this might be an explaining factor for the crooked proportions at WXYZ in the total gender composition and the gender composition at higher functions. Therefore, this study cannot conclude if a glass or grey ceiling is present, but concludes that the amount of working hours of employees and the implicit expectation pattern at higher functions is related to one another and might be an aspect that plays a role in the glass-and/or grey ceiling theory.

Moreover, in this study, it came forward that two respondents perceived a preference policy for women causing inequality for men. Since a preference policy for women in organizations is recently new, not much has been written about men's and women's reactions to this policy. Therefore, future research could focus on the perception of men as well as women on the preference policy for women.

In addition, respondents mentioned characteristics of successful employees, characteristics of employees who were promoted and characteristics of employees at higher functions. Gender and age did not seem to play a role in the mentioned characteristics, and the characteristics could be applicable to everybody. This indicates that this study found that the theory mentioned in the theoretical framework, which focuses on hard and soft skills in relation to gender and age, is not applicable to all organizations.

Furthermore, the network the respondents described is not in line with the described academic literature regarding weak and strong ties. This study only found a difference in network regarding someone's background, history, previous jobs and current function, whereas earlier literature describes that men have loose and a lot of contacts and women have less contact which are more intensive (Timberlake, 2005). In this study, no differences in network regarding gender and age were found. Therefore, it can be concluded that this study found that the social capital theory regarding gender and age is not applicable to all organizations. However, in this study a link was found between the influence of the supervisor of an employee and his/her growth opportunities and the influence of the supervisor on the perception of (in)equality of growth opportunities. Lin (2017) states that social ties may influence supervisors, who play a critical role regarding decisions of hiring and promotion. Especially social ties with strategic locations and positions, such as a supervisor, carry more power in organizational decision making, which means that "putting in a word" for an employee carries a certain weight in the decision-making process regarding an employee (Lin, 2017). Therefore, it can be stated that although this study found no difference in the network of respondents regarding gender and age, the supervisor, who also belongs to a network of an employee, seemed to have influence on the growth opportunities of employees and thus a difference regarding network of respondents seemed to be present at WXYZ.

In conclusion, this study extends current literature by indicating that inequality in organizations does not necessarily reside in personal factors such as gender and age, but that other factors exist generating inequality on the work floor. As the respondents stated, these inequalities were caused by uncertainty about growth opportunities, the difference in effort and initiative supervisors take and the influence of the organization. This study contributes to

current literature by finding perceptions of respondents about the preference policy for women, which have not yet been studied. Besides that, this study contributes to current literature by stating that the hard and soft skills theory and the social capital theory regarding gender and age are not applicable to all organizations. However, the social capital theory regarding the role of supervisors, did play a role.

5.3. Managerial recommendations

The results showed that WXYZ already had a diversity policy in place, which was interwoven with their HR-strategy. However, it appeared employees still perceived inequality. Therefore, some recommendations for the organization are given.

What clearly came forward was the uncertainty about growth opportunities of employees. This uncertainty of growth opportunities made it unclear how growth opportunities of respondents and colleagues were arranged, which led to a perception of inequality. Also, the differences in effort and initiative of supervisors was perceived as unequal. Therefore, it is recommended to create a clear structure of growth opportunities and set a clear career path per function. This career path should include all possibilities employees have within the organization. By creating a clear structure of growth opportunities and a career path per function, employees know what their chances are in the organization and inequality between colleagues may diminish.

Besides that, it is recommended to inform supervisors regarding ways in order to help their employees to grow. It is recommended to standardize this information for every supervisor in the organization, inform supervisors about occasions such as how, how much, for what and when to take initiative for employees, and inform supervisors who (supervisor and/or employee) is allowed to take initiative for growth opportunities.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the organization and supervisors organize transparent processes, for example in a situation in which multiple employees applied for a function. Even though an employee was not chosen for a certain function, he/she may receive arguments of the organization and/or supervisor, which explain on what the decision was based on. This might diminish uncertainty for employees, diminishes a perception of inequality and provides the employee with valuable feedback in order to grow.

Although the respondents mentioned that personal factors, such as gender and age, did not play a role in their perception on equal career opportunities, two respondents mentioned inequality for men due to a preference policy for women. Therefore, it is recommended to

organize transparent recruitment and selection processes, clearly indicate to candidates and employees for what candidate the organization is looking for, and clearly explain and argue why the organization applies a preference policy for women.

In addition, few respondents mentioned that certain (higher) functions were fulfilled by men due to women working part-time, and an implicit expectation pattern at higher functions to work at least four days a week was mentioned. In the theoretical framework and by a respondent, it was argued that this was caused by unevenly distributed caring responsibilities at home, which made it harder for women to combine their family and work. Since the home and work situation probably have an influence on each other, WXYZ can influence the situation. WXYZ already provided flexibility in working hours and working at home, but it is recommended that WXYZ continues to offer this possibility. Moreover, it is recommended that WXYZ arranges a beneficial settlement with day care centers in order to offer families the possibility to bring their child to a day care, easy and inexpensively.

Since the diversity policy was interwoven in the HR-strategy, the last recommendation considers the attention given to diversity in the current HR-strategy of the organization. The diversity policy which is now being composed is explicitly focused on diversity, which is a good thing. However, in the current policy, some action points were formulated vaguely, such as: “attention is given to unconscious (gender)biases and presuppositions”. It is recommended that the next policy and its action points will be formulated explicitly. Explicit plans will be amplified such as the who, what, where, how, when, and why.

5.4. Limitations and recommendations for further research

Although this study provided some insights, limitations that might have had an impact on the quality of this study were present. The first limitation concerns the external validity of the study. Since the data was conducted in only one department of one organization, it remains unclear whether the results are generalizable to other departments and organizations. A suggestion for future research is to include multiple departments, multiple organizations and/or specific functions, which also affects the second limitation.

The second limitation concerns the different groups this study focused on. The groups were based on gender and age, but no distinction was made regarding functions of employees. Since the results did not explicitly concern gender and age, but growth opportunities in the organization, and since there are different growth opportunities per function, future research should take into account the function of employees.

The third limitation is the data collection method and concerns the internal and external validity of the study. It is assumed that different data collection methods can show different elements of a subject, which can lead to a more complete picture of the subject (Boeije, 2014). The data is collected with the help of 16 interviews and one (diversity) policy document. When using multiple data collection methods, it could have led to more objective and different insights. In order to improve the internal and external validity of the study, future research could focus on including other data collection methods, for instance observations. This is also intertwined with limited time. Time constraints prevented the researcher from collecting both qualitative and quantitative data, which made triangulation not possible. Future research should implement quantitative methodologies to confirm and reinforce the outcomes of the qualitative measures.

The fourth limitations concerns the language of the data collection. The interviews were held in Dutch, since employees were advanced in this language, and the thesis is written in English. Possibly emotions and expressions were not always translated as intended. A suggestion for future research is to conduct the data and write the thesis in the same language.

A fifth limitation is the possibility of socially desirable answers of respondents. Since equal career opportunities might be a sensitive subject, it might have been hard for respondents to express their perceptions and experiences about their growth opportunities, supervisor and possible dissatisfaction. Although the respondents were ensured they remained anonymous, they could still have the tendency to give socially desirable answers (Anderson, 2013). This could have been prevented more by set up this anonymity in a contract, per respondent.

Finally, the last limitations concerns the inter-rater reliability. In order to ensure that the results of the study are more reliable, multiple researchers can code the data and discuss why they gave a quotation a certain code (Boeije, 2014). In this study, the data was coded by only one researcher which does not benefit the reliability. Future research could focus on ensuring that multiple researchers code the data and discuss it with each other.

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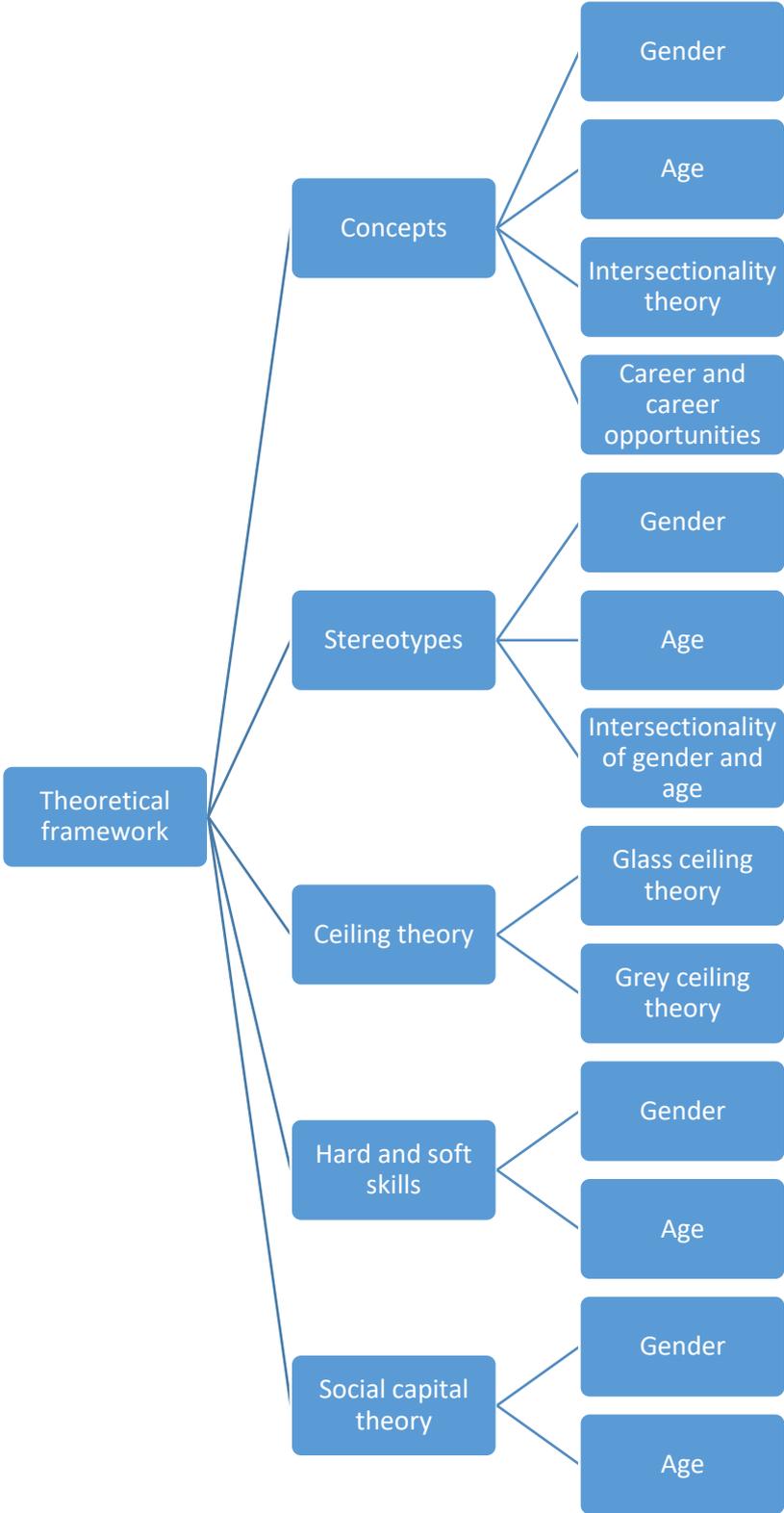
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Appendix A: Overview theoretical framework



Appendix B: Gender composition higher functions

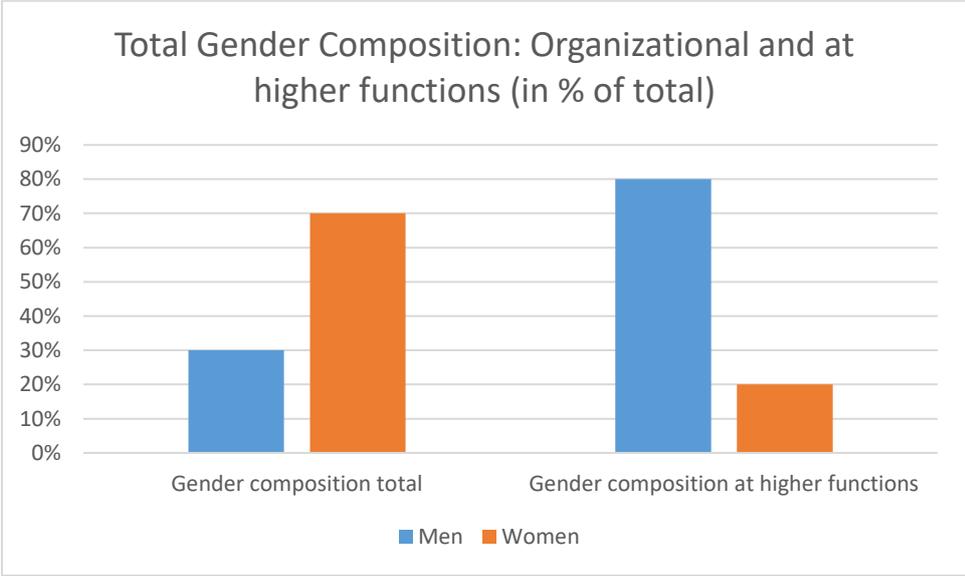


Figure 1. Percentual gender composition in organization and at higher functions.

Appendix C: Sensitizing concepts

Sensitizing concept	Definition
Stereotypes	Generalizations about groups that are applied to individual group members simply because they belong to that group.
Gender stereotypes	Generalizations about the attributes of men and women.
Glass ceiling	The invisible but impenetrable barrier between women and the executive suite.
Grey ceiling	Barrier for older employees, in which their careers plateau, abilities become obsolescent, and assumptions are made such as that older employees are too old and inflexible to learn new skills.
Hard and soft skills	Hard qualities are associated with masculinity and soft qualities with femininity. Traditionally, these hard qualities enjoy the highest status and the soft qualities are perceived as the lowest status.
Social capital theory	Resources embedded in a social structure which are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions. Men's and women's career success will also be determined by social capital. It was found that women do not have the same access to social networks as men have, which is most important to gain successful power. Deriving from the above findings about social capital and gender, it is not yet clear if age plays a role and thus if there is a difference in the social capital of younger and older employees.

Appendix D: Interview questions

In this appendix, the interview questions for employees and the interview questions for HR employees will be given. First, the English version of the questions is given and secondly the Dutch version of the questions is given.

Interview questions employees

English

Introduction:

My name is Odette Creemers. I study Business Administration at Radboud University in Nijmegen. For my graduation thesis, I study career opportunities, as experienced by employees, within this organization. As a result of the MOZ, I do this research with the goal to further investigate the results of the MOZ. I will interview 15 employees. The interviews will be made anonymous, for which I have signed a confidentiality agreement with the organization. I also have a recording device with me so that I can listen to the interview afterwards. May I use this? I will treat the recording and the information obtained from it confidentially.

It is important to remember that there is no right answer; it is really about your experiences and ideas. The interview will be structured as follows. First of all, a general question will be asked and then I will ask questions about your career, promotions, higher functions, your network and a number of additional questions.

Question number	Question
General question	
1.	What does your career look like so far within this organization?
Career	
2.	What does having a career mean to you?
3.	What ambitions do you have for your career?
4.	To what extent can you achieve these ambitions within this organization?
5.	How do you experience the possible steps you can take within this organization?
6.	Are there also things that the organization and / or your manager does that hinder your career?
7.	Are there other things that play a role in promoting or hindering your career?
Career opportunities	

8.	How would you describe a successful employee?
Promotion	
9.	What characteristics does someone need to make a promotion / career within this organization? -> Which factors play a role?
10.	What happens if someone does not have these characteristics?
11.	When you look at careers within this organization, who has the best chance of getting a promotion? And why?
12.	What are the characteristics of employees who have been degraded in function?
Higher functions	
13.	Could you give a description of the characteristics of employees in higher functions?
14.	If you look at the organization, what is the hierarchy like? Who is in the top, who is in the middle and who is in the other scales?
Network	
15.	How does your network contribute to your career?
16.	How does your network differ from your colleagues' network? (eg many / few contacts, loose / intensive contacts)
Diversity policy	
17.	The organization has established a diversity policy. How do you experience this?
Equal career opportunities	
18.	What is your perception of equal career opportunities in this organization?
19.	How do you experience your career opportunities in relation to the career opportunities of colleagues? In case of experience no inequality: That is interesting. The MOZ of the department scored low on the question about equal career opportunities. 28% thought that there were equal career opportunities and 72% did not. Do you have any idea how this can be explained?
Remaining questions	
20.	If you were allowed to give advice to the P&O department of the organization regarding (equal) career opportunities, what would you say?
21.	Are there things that we have not discussed, which you would like to discuss?

These were my questions. I would like to thank you for your time. Do you have any questions left?

Interview questions employees

Nederlands

Introductie:

Mijn naam is Odette Creemers. Ik studeer Business Administration aan de Radboud Universiteit in Nijmegen en voor mijn afstudeerscriptie doe ik onderzoek naar carrièrekansen binnen de organisatie zoals het door werknemers ervaren wordt. Dit onderzoek doe ik naar aanleiding van het MOZ en heeft als doel om de resultaten van het MOZ verder te onderzoeken. Voor het onderzoek ga ik 15 werknemers interviewen. De interviews zullen geanonimiseerd worden, hiervoor heb ik een geheimhoudingsverklaring getekend. Daarnaast heb ik een opnameapparaat bij zodat ik het interview achteraf terug kan luisteren. Zou ik dit mogen gebruiken? Ik zal vertrouwelijk omgaan met de opname en de daaruit opgedane informatie.

Het is belangrijk om te onthouden dat er geen goed antwoord is; het gaat echt om jouw ervaringen en ideeën.

Het interview zal als volgt zijn opgebouwd. Allereerst wordt er een algemene vraag gesteld en vervolgens zal ik vragen stellen over jouw carrière, promoties, hogere functies, jouw netwerk en een aantal aanvullende vragen.

Nummer	Vragen
Algemeen	
1.	Hoe ziet jouw carrière binnen de organisatie er tot nu toe uit? (<i>bv functie, werkzaamheden, verandering functie, hoelang gemiddeld gewerkt in elke functie</i>)
Carrière	
2.	Wat betekent het hebben van een carrière voor jou?
3.	Welke ambities heb je voor jouw carrière?
4.	In hoeverre kun je deze ambities waarmaken binnen deze organisatie? (zelf en steun organisatie d.m.v. bv training) --> Waarom wel/niet?
5.	Hoe ervaar je de mogelijke stappen die je binnen de organisatie kunt zetten? (<i>bv helderheid, communicatie, haalbaarheid, gelijkheid</i>)
6.	Zijn er ook dingen die de organisatie en/of jouw leidinggevende doet die jouw carrière belemmeren? --> Wat dan? --> Hoe ervaar je dit?
7.	Spelen er nog andere dingen een rol die jouw carrière bevorderen of juist belemmeren? --> Waarom wel/niet? Licht toe.
Carrièrekansen	
8.	Hoe zou je een succesvolle werknemer omschrijven? (karaktereigenschappen/uiterlijke kenmerken)
Promotie	
10.	Welke eigenschappen/skills moet iemand hebben om promotie/carrière te maken binnen deze organisatie? --> Welke

	factoren spelen hierin een rol? (<i>bv werkuren, relatie collega's en leidinggevende</i>)
11.	Wat gebeurt er als iemand niet over deze eigenschappen/skills beschikt?
12.	Wanneer je kijkt naar carrières binnen de organisatie, wie maken dan de meeste kans op promotie? --> Waarom denk je dat dat zo is?
13.	Wat betreft degradatie. Welke eigenschappen hebben werknemers die zijn gedegradeerd in functie?
Hogere functies	
14.	Zou je een omschrijving kunnen geven van de eigenschappen van werknemers op hogere functies?
	Als je kijkt naar de organisatie, hoe is het dan qua hiërarchie? Wie zit er in de top, wie zit er in het midden en wie in de andere schalen?
Netwerk	
15.	Hoe draagt jouw netwerk bij aan jouw carrière? (<i>bv positief, negatief, waarom wel/niet</i>)
16.	In welk opzicht verschilt jouw netwerk ten opzichte van het netwerk van je collega's? (<i>bv veel/weinig contacten, losse/intensieve contacten</i>)
Diversiteitsbeleid	
17.	De organisatie heeft een diversiteitsbeleid opgesteld. In hoeverre is dit zichtbaar voor jou? (<i>bv wat doen ze, ervaring</i>)
Gelijke carrièrekansen	
18.	Wat is jouw perceptie wat betreft gelijke carrièrekansen in deze organisatie?
19.	Hoe ervaar je jouw carrièrekansen ten opzichte van de carrièrekansen van collega's? Bij ervaring geen ongelijkheid: Dat is wel interessant. Uit het MOZ van de afdeling werd er laag gescoord op de vraag over gelijke carrièrekansen. 28% vond dat er wel gelijke carrièrekansen waren en 72% dus niet. Hoe kijk jij hier tegenaan? Heb je enig idee hoe dit kan worden verklaard?
Overig	
20.	Als je een advies zou mogen geven aan de afdeling P&O van de organisatie wat betreft (gelijke) carrièrekansen, wat zou je dan zeggen?
21.	Zijn er nog dingen waar we het niet over hebben gehad en die je wel graag wilt bespreken?

Dit waren mijn vragen. Heel erg bedankt voor je tijd. Heb je nog vragen?

Interview questions HR employees

English

Introduction:

My name is Odette Creemers. I study Business Administration at Radboud University in Nijmegen. For my graduation thesis, I study career opportunities, as experienced by employees, within this organization. As a result of the MOZ, I do this research with the goal to further investigate the results of the MOZ. I will interview 15 employees. The interviews will be made anonymous, for which I have signed a confidentiality agreement with the organization. I also have a recording device with me so that I can listen to the interview afterwards. May I use this? I will treat the recording and the information obtained from it confidentially.

It is important to remember that there is no right answer; it is really about your experiences and ideas. The interview will be structured as follows. First of all, a general question will be asked and then I will ask questions about your career, promotions, higher functions, your network and a number of additional questions.

Question number	Questions
General question	
1.	What does your career look like so far within this organization?
Diversity policy	
2.	What does diversity mean within the organization? (eg meaning, most important goals of diversity policy, how long has the organization been actively involved in this)
3.	How do you try to secure the important goals of the diversity policy?
4.	How could the policy be supplemented according to you?
5.	How do you see the link between the diversity policy and career opportunities?
6.	What is considered when it comes to promotions and/or relocations within the organization?
Satisfaction survey	
7.	The employee satisfaction survey showed that 41 percent of employees felt that there were equal career opportunities within the organization. This means that a majority think there are no equal career opportunities. How do you think this can be explained?
8.	There was a difference within the 3 departments with regard to their perception of equal career opportunities. Department B had a score of 28 percent, while the other departments had a score of 35 and 50 percent. Do you have any idea how the difference between the departments can be explained?
Equal career opportunities	
9.	What is your perception of equal career opportunities in this organization?

Remaining question	
10.	Are there things that we have not discussed and that you would like to discuss?

These were my questions. I would like to thank you for your time. Do you have any questions left?

Interview questions HR employees

Nederlands

Introductie:

Mijn naam is Odette Creemers. Ik studeer Business Administration aan de Radboud Universiteit in Nijmegen en voor mijn afstudeerscriptie doe ik onderzoek naar carrièrekansen binnen de organisatie zoals het door werknemers ervaren wordt. Dit onderzoek doe ik naar aanleiding van het MOZ en heeft als doel om de resultaten van het MOZ verder te onderzoeken en om eventueel op basis van de resultaten het diversiteitsbeleid van de organisatie aan te passen. Voor het onderzoek ga ik 15 werknemers interviewen. De interviews zullen geanonimiseerd worden. Daarnaast heb ik een opnameapparaat bij zodat ik het interview achteraf terug kan luisteren. Zou ik dit mogen gebruiken? Ik zal vertrouwelijk omgaan met de opname en de daaruit opgedane informatie.

Het is belangrijk om te onthouden dat er geen goed antwoord is; het gaat echt om jouw ervaringen en ideeën.

Het interview zal als volgt zijn opgebouwd. Allereest zullen er enkele algemene vragen worden gesteld en vervolgens zal ik vragen stellen over jouw carrière en gelijke carrièrekansen.

Nummers	Vragen
Algemeen	
1.	Hoe heeft jouw carrière binnen de organisatie er tot nu toe uitgezien? <i>(bv functie, werkzaamheden, verandering functie, hoelang gemiddeld gewerkt in elke functie)</i>
Diversiteitsbeleid	
2.	Wat betekent diversiteit binnen de organisatie? <i>(bv betekenis, belangrijkste speerpunten diversiteitsbeleid, hoelang al actief bezig met diversiteit binnen de organisatie?)</i>
3.	Hoe proberen jullie de belangrijke speerpunten vanuit het diversiteitsbeleid te waarborgen? <i>(bv. In werving en selectie)</i>
4.	Hoe zou het beleid eventueel aangevuld kunnen worden volgens jou?
5.	Hoe zie jij de link tussen het diversiteitsbeleid en carrièrekansen?

6.	Waar wordt naar gekeken wanneer het gaat over promoties en/of degradaties binnen de organisatie?
Tevredenheidsonderzoek	
7.	Uit het medewerkerstevredenheidsonderzoek bleek dat 41 procent van de werknemers vond dat er binnen de organisatie gelijke carrièrekansen zijn. Dit betekent dat een meerderheid vindt dat er geen gelijke carrièrekansen zijn. Hoe denk je dat dit kan worden verklaard?
8.	Er was een verschil binnen de 3 afdelingen wat betreft hun perceptie op gelijke carrièrekansen. Afdeling B had een score van 28 procent, terwijl de andere afdelingen een score van 35 en 50 procent hadden. Heb je enig idee hoe het verschil tussen afdelingen kan worden verklaard?
Gelijke carrièrekansen	
9.	Wat is jouw perceptie wat betreft gelijke carrièrekansen in deze organisatie?
Overig	
10.	Zijn er nog dingen waar we het niet over hebben gehad en die je wel graag wilt bespreken?

Dit waren mijn vragen. Heel erg bedankt voor je tijd. Heb je nog vragen?

Appendix E: Overview of respondents

Number	Gender	Age
1	Woman	39+
2	Woman	39+
3	Woman	39+
4	Woman	40-
5	Woman	40-
6	Woman	40-
7	Man	40+
8	Man	40+
9	Man	40+
10	Man	40-
11	Man	40-
12	Man	40-

Appendix F: Quotations in results section

This appendix shows a table in which the quotations of HR employees are given and a table in which the quotations of respondents of different gender-age groups are given.

Quotations HR employees

Headline	Dutch	English
Growth opportunities	Het is een functiehuis, is statisch en het is niet gekoppeld aan een loopbaan pad.	It is a 'function house', is static and it is not linked to a career path.
	Als leidinggevenden dan niet anticiperen op de ambities, wensen, kwaliteiten en vaardigheden van medewerkers en medewerkers niet pro-actief zijn van hey ik wil meer links of rechts, dan krijg je denk ik verwarring. Als die gesprekken niet goed worden gevoerd met elkaar en de verwachtingen niet helder zijn dan krijg je misschien ongelijkheid.	If managers do not anticipate the ambitions, wishes, qualities and skills of employees and employees are not proactive like hey I want more left or right, then I think you get confusion. If those conversations are not well conducted with each other and the expectations are not clear, then you may get inequality.
	Het is een actueel vraagstuk, maar inhoudelijk is het ook zo dat het goed is voor een organisatie als er voldoende vernieuwing zit in het personeelsbestand. Dan houden carrièrelijnen soms gewoon abrupt op en zou je buiten de organisatie verder moeten zoeken zodat er ook nieuwe mensen kunnen instromen. Een lastige afweging.	It is a current issue, but content wise it is also good for an organization if there is sufficient renewal in the workforce. Then career lines sometimes just stop abruptly and you should look further outside the organization so that new people can work here. A difficult decision.
Diversity policy	Men kijkt wel goed naar geschikte vrouwen. Er is wel oog voor, bijvoorbeeld met de transitie zijn wel wat vrouwen op hoge posities gekomen.	One searches well for suitable women here. There is an eye for it. For example, with the transition some women have reached high functions.

	Daar zijn we nu mee gestart. We zijn lid geworden van Workplace Pride, de eerste netwerkbijeenkomst hebben we gehad en binnenkort is er weer een en dat gaat lopen.	We have now started this. We have become a member of Workplace Pride, we have had the first networking meeting and soon there will be another one and that is going to run.
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Quotations respondents

Headline	Dutch	English
Ambition	Ik ga nog een aantal jaren werken dus ik moet wel gewoon bedenken van wat wil ik nog, wat kan ik nog en dan moet ik zeggen dan is dat binnen de grenzen van mijn werk en leeftijd vind ik het geweldig om te doen wat ik nu doe.	I am going to work for a few more years so I just have to think about what I still want, what I still can do and then I have to say that within the limits of my work and age, I think it is great to do what I am doing now. (Woman 2, older than 39 years old).
	Een carrière is belangrijk voor mij. Ik moet wel zien date r zicht is op een volgende stap.	A career is important to me. I have to perceive the next step in my career". (Man 10, younger than 40 years old).
	Ik zou graag wat meer inhoudelijk willen verdiepen, beleidsmatig, inhoudelijk en wat minder dingen uitvoeren die nu al in bepaalde procedures vaststaan.	I would like to deepen a little more substantive, policy-related into the work and do less things that are already established in certain procedures. (Woman 3, older than 39 years old).
Growth opportunities -general	Als ik nu kijk naar mijn vooruitzicht dan vind ik dat eerlijk gezegd lastig in te schatten. Voor mij volgende stappen hoe dat verder gaat is niet heel transparent. Het hoeft ook niet heel transparant te zijn, maar ja ik vind het wel moeilijk in te schatten wanneer of met welke taken ik zou classificeren voor een volgende stap. En de volgende stap daarna. Dus dat is niet heel duidelijk. Het is geen gebaand pad denk ik, en ik denk dat medewerkers daar zelf ook een hele actieve rol in moeten	When I look at my prospect, I honestly find it difficult to estimate. Next steps are not very transparent for me. It does not have to be transparent, but it is difficult to estimate when or with which tasks I should classify in order to take the next step. And the next step thereafter. So that is not very clear. It is not a beaten path I think, and I think that employees themselves also have to play a very active role in order to get hat. No, it is not very clear.

	spelen om dat te kunne krijgen. Nee, dat is niet heel duidelijk.	(Man 10, younger than 40 years old).
	Het is niet dat de organisatie jou de mogelijkheden niet wilt bieden, maar als jij er niks mee doet of je mond niet open doet, dan kom je er niet. Dan zou je het van binnen misschien wel willen, maar dan moet je toch echt je mond open doen.	It is not that the organization does not want to offer you possibilities, but if you don't do anything with it or don't open your mouth, you won't get there. Then you might want it on the inside, but then you really have to open your mouth. (Woman 4, younger than 40 years old)
	Dus in binnen je functie kun je groeien maar ja doorstromen kan ook maar dan is het solliciteren op iets anders en je wordt iets anders. als je iets een poosje doet en je doet het goed, dan om de volgende stap te maken is lastig	So within your function you can grow and you can continue to grow, but then you have to apply for something else and you will become something else. If you do something for a while and you do it well, then taking the next step is difficult. (Man 11, younger than 40 years old)
	Het feit dat ik echt heb moeten knokken om medior te worden terwijl ik dat werk eigenlijk al drie jaar deed, dat vind ik... Dus in je functie doorgroeien gaat heel moeilijk	The fact that I really had to fight to become a medior while I actually did that work for already three years, I think ... So growing function is very difficult (Man 11, younger than 40 years old)
	Wat nou de mogelijke stappen zijn. Ik bedoel de functienschrijving.. Ik snap wel dat je van junior naar medior naar senior kunt gaan, maar dat zegt wat mij betreft niet alles waar je carrière heen kan gaan.	What the possible steps are. I mean the job description .. I understand that you can go from junior to medior to senior, but that does not tell me everything about where your career can go to. (Woman 6, younger than 40 years old)
The influence of a supervisor on growth opportunities	Mijn leidinggevende, ik vind het echt een kei van een leidinggevende. Die heeft ook wel vertrouwen in mij. Ik kan mijn taken zelfstandig uitvoeren en geef altijd wel heel veel feedback van wat ik heb gedaan. Ik merk dat mijn leidinggevende dat bijzonder prettig vindt en ik word volledig gesteund door mijn leidinggevende.	My supervisor, I really think it is a really good supervisor. My supervisor also has faith in me. I can perform my tasks independently and I always give a lot of feedback about what I have done. I notice that my supervisor finds it particularly pleasant and I am fully supported by my

		supervisor (Woman 1, older than 39 years old)
	Ik heb in elk geval vorig jaar een functioneringsgesprek gehad waarbij ik aangaf dat ik door wilde stromen en toen kreeg ik bijna ruzie. Mijn leidinggevende vond dat ik dat niet mocht aankaarten. Het mocht niet vanuit mijn initiatief komen en ik zou het wel van haar horen als ik door mocht stromen.	Last year I had a performance appraisal in which I indicated that I wanted to grow in function and then I almost got into a fight with my supervisor. My supervisor thought that I was not allowed to address that. The initiative was not allowed to come from me and I would hear it from her if I could grow in function. (Woman 5, younger than 40 years old)
	Daar moet je echt zelf... Als ik terug denk aan mijn functioneringsgesprekken die ik met mijn leidinggevende heb gehad, dan zet ik er zelf heel bewust in, in mijn plannen, dat ik een seniorpad wil bewandelen. Als ik dat niet doe, komt het ook niet ter sprake. (Man, jonger dan 40 jaar).	There you really have to ... When I think back to my performance appraisals that I had with my supervisor, then I consciously put into my plans that I want to walk a senior path. If I don't do that, it won't be discussed either. (Man 10, younger than 40 years old).
	In het verleden heb ik vaker gevraagd om door te groeien maar er werd telkens verwezen naar dingen die je nog niet hebt of kunt. Bijvoorbeeld je kunt bepaalde taken nog niet, maar als je naar de functieomschrijving kijkt dan is het niet eens een vereiste. Dat wordt dan wel voorgehouden waardoor je niet kunt doorgroeien.	In the past I have often asked to grow, but there have always been references to things that you do not yet have or can do. For example, you cannot do certain tasks yet, but if you look at the job description, it is not even a requirement. That is then held up so that you cannot continue to grow. (Woman 4, younger than 40 years old)
The influence of the structure of the organization on growth opportunities	Misschien hoe hoger, hoe verder ik hier kom, hoe erger het nog wordt. Kan ik daarmee omgaan? (Man, 40+)	Maybe the higher, the farther I get here, the worse it gets. Can I handle that? (Man 8, older than 39 years old).
	Alles moet op dezelfde manier voor een heleboel mensen. Dat heeft goede kanten. Het is namelijk eerlijk op een bepaalde manier, maar het werkt niet altijd voor dezelfde groep mensen dus ik denk dat je wel dat je en bepaald onderscheid moet maken	Everything has to be the same way for a lot of people. That has good sides. It is fair in a certain way, but it does not always work for the same group of people so I think you should make a certain distinction as this one works

	als in dit werkt wel voor die groep maar het werkt niet voor die groep.	for that group but it does not work for that group. (Woman 3, older than 39 years old)
Equal career opportunities	In ieder geval dat argument heb ik vaker gehad, dat er wordt gekeken naar de hele poule van mensen die op hetzelfde niveau zitten en er wordt gekeken hoeveel ruimte ze hebben om mensen door te laten stromen. Wat dat betreft heb ik het idee dat er zoveel mogelijk wordt geprobeerd om die kansen gelijk te houden.	In any case, I have had that argument more often, that there is looked at the entire pool of people sitting at the same level and how much room they have to allow people to grow. In that regard, I have the idea that every effort is being made to keep those opportunities equal. (Woman 5, younger than 40 years old)
	Ik vind wel dat deze organisatie voorop loopt wat betreft de diversiteit in leeftijd. Ik heb me daar over verbaasd. Toen ik solliciteerde was ik in de 50 en ik leeftijd was geen énkél issue. Op mijn afdeling is nu ook iemand van 50 aangenomen en op een andere afdeling is ook sinds kort iemand van 50 aangenomen.	I do think that this organization is at the forefront when it comes to diversity in age. I was surprised about that. When I applied, I was in my 50s and it was not a single issue. Someone around 50 years old has now been hired at my department and another person around 50 years old has recently been hired in another apartment.” (Woman 2, younger than 40 years old).
	Uhm.. Ik heb echt het gevoel dat ik gelijk wordt behandeld als mijn mannelijke collega of iemand die niet-blank is. Ik denk dat religie dat er wel meegeacht wordt, zoals als je nu de Ramadan doet. En nog meer... Leeftijd ja dat vind ik altijd lastig want als iemand binnen komt die 10 jaar ouder is dan heeft diegene ook meer ervaring dus dat vind ik ook ergens alweer logisch dat iemand dan eerder in de senior functie terecht komt want diegene is dan ook senior.	Uhm .. I really feel like I'm being treated the same way as my male colleague or someone who is non-white. I think that religion is thought along with, like when you participate with the Ramadan now. And even more ... Age yes, I always find that difficult because when someone comes in who is 10 years older, he or she also has more experience, so I think it makes sense that someone will end up in a senior function sooner because they are then also senior. (Woman 6, younger than 40 years old)
	Het diversiteitsprincipe zegt meer vrouwen, er moeten meer vrouwen, meer vrouwen. Bij de laatste transitie heb ik dat ook	The diversity principle states: more women, there must be more women, more women. I also saw that during the last

	gezien. Vanuit vrouw zie ik dat ze meer gelijkheid willen voor vrouwen en daardoor is er een ongelijkheid voor mannen.	transition. I see women want more equality for women and that is why there is inequality for men. (Man 7, older than 39 years old)
	Het gaat erom dat man en vrouw zijn wat mij betreft gewoon verschillend. Op een gegeven moment moet je ervoor zorgen dat ze dezelfde mogelijkheden krijgen maar dat betekent niet dat ze hetzelfde bereiken als ze dezelfde mogelijkheden krijgen. Als je gaat sturen op hetzelfde bereiken dan denk ik dat je niet altijd de beste mensen krijgt op de juiste plekken.	The point is that for me men and women are different. At some point you have to make sure they get the same opportunities but that does not mean they achieve the same if they get the same opportunities. If you are going to prepossess the same goals, I do not think you always get the best people in the right places. (Man 11, younger than 40 years old)
	omdat ik zie dat... in ieder geval bij mijn collega's, dat veel vrouwelijke medewerkers wat minder werken, minder uren maken en mannelijke wat meer uren dus dan snap ik ook dat je voor bepaalde functies fulltime moet werken bijvoorbeeld en dat dan bij mannen eerder gebeurt dan bij vrouwen. Dus dat bepaalde functies eerder bij de mannelijke collega's liggen dan bij de vrouwen.	Because I see that ... at least with my colleagues, that many female employees work a little less, work fewer hours and male colleagues work a little more hours so then I also understand that you have to work full-time for certain functions, for example, and that happens for men earlier than for women. So that certain functions are more with male colleagues than with women. (Woman 6, younger than 40 years old)
	En als je kiest voor part-time functies, dan kies je ervoor om je minder te bekwamen. Als je je gaat je afvragen waarom vrouwen minder vertegenwoordigd zijn, dan zou dat een factor kunnen zijn.	And if you opt for part-time functions, then you choose to become less skilled. So if you are wondering why women are less represented, that could be a factor. (Man 7, older than 39 years old).
Equal career opportunities - in comparison with colleagues and caused by the supervisor and internal vacancies	Ondanks dat mijn wens om door te groeien zeer expliciet was, werd mij heel duidelijk verteld dat het niet kon en het tegelijkertijd wel bleek te kunnen omdat zij wel doorstroomde. er zal vast een reden zijn dat zij wel door kon stromen op een niet-aangekondigd moment en	Despite the fact that my wish to continue growing was very explicit, I was told very clearly that it was not possible and at the same time it turned out to be possible because someone else did grow. There must be a reason that she could grow at an

	<p>volgende niet-regels maar die ken ik niet.</p>	<p>unannounced moment and following non-rules, but I don't know them. (Woman 5, younger than 40 years old)</p>
	<p>De collega waar ik het net over had, kwam één jaar na mij werken hier. Hij verdiende het ook om senior te worden, maar ik werd het na twee en een half jaar en hij na anderhalf jaar. Dus dan klopt er toch iets niet.</p>	<p>The colleague I was just talking about came to work here one year after me. He also deserved to become a senior, but I became it after two and a half years and he after one and a half years. So then something is not right... (Man 12, younger than 40 years old)</p>
	<p>Dat is ook een beetje functie gebonden. Op een secretariaat is het wel heel belangrijk dat je met elkaar afspreekt waar we mee bezig zijn en wat we aan het doen zijn, terwijl het voor beleidsmedewerkers wat makkelijker is.</p>	<p>That is also a bit bounded to a function. At the secretariat it is very important that everyone agrees with each other about what they are doing, while it is a bit easier for policy staff. (Woman, older than 39 years old).</p>
	<p>Ik denk ook wel dat er een aantal dingen, functies, worden gedeeld op basis van we kennen jou en we willen jou graag hebben. Dat is mijn ervaring dat je niet alle functies te zien krijgt, vooral die wat niemand wilt doen die komen veel op de website en de leuke klusjes zijn vaak al belegd. Dat betekent niet per sé dat.. ja het kan ook zijn dat je daar alert op bent en je geeft dat aan bij je leidinggevende dan is het wel logisch dat je daarvoor wordt gevraagd.</p>	<p>I also think that a number of functions are divided on the basis of we know you and we would like to have you. In my experience, you do not get to see all available functions. Especially those functions that nobody wants to do are often published on the website and the nice jobs are often already fulfilled. It does not necessarily mean that .. yes it is also possible that someone is alert and he/she declared this to his/her supervisor, then it is logical that that person is asked for the job (Man 11, younger than 40 years old)</p>
	<p>Dan wordt gezegd nee zo gaat dat heit niet, we gaan eerst intern adverteren en dan pas mag het naar buiten en dan pas met een protocol verder. Dat is dan wel soms vreemd want hoe kan het dan dat die hele procedure gevolgd moet worden en dan soms zie je opeens een functie vervuld zonder die procedure.</p>	<p>Then it is said no this is not the case, we will first advertise internally and only then it may go outside and then we will continue with a protocol. That is sometimes strange because how is it possible that the entire procedure has to be followed and then sometimes you</p>

		suddenly see a function fulfilled without that procedure. (Man 7, older than 39 years old)
	Voor mezelf is dat omdat ik het idee heb dat mijn teamleider zich niet heel erg inzet voor mijn belang en dan moet opboksen tegen teamleiders die zich wel inzetten voor de belangen van hun medewerkers, dus of die meer kansen geven of verder omhoog duwen.	For me, that is because I feel that my supervisor is not very committed to my interests and then has to compete with team leaders who are committed to the interests of their employees, so whether they offer more opportunities or push them up further. (Woman 5, younger than 40 years old)
Equal career opportunities - Other	Ik denk dat iedereen in principe een gelijke kans heeft maar die cv's zijn niet gelijk en de persoonlijkheid ook niet.	I think that in principle everyone has an equal chance, but resumes are not the same and neither is the personality. (Man 7, older than 39 years old)
Network	Het heeft toch wel een beetje met het werk te maken. Sommigen hier hebben heel veel met de buitenwereld te maken en ik houd me vooral bezig met de processen en beoordelen. Dan heb je ook wel met de buitenwereld te maken maar minder.	It has a bit to do with the work. Some here have a lot to do with the outside world and I am mainly concerned with processes and assessing. Then you also have to deal with the outside world, but less. (Man 9, older than 39 years old)
	Met sommigen heb je intensief contact en met pieken en met sommigen minder intensief. Bijvoorbeeld, ik organiseer nu een evenement voor een programma en ik heb een leuk contact opgebouwd met de directeur waar we het evenement organiseren.	With some you have intensive contact and with peaks and with others you have less intensive contact. For example, I now organize an event for a program and I have established a nice contact with the director of the place we organize the event. (Woman 1, older than 39 years old).
	Niet, behalve dat het hebben van een breed netwerk en aantonen dat je veel mensen kent belangrijk is in je functie, maar het netwerk zelf dat je hebt heeft verder geen invloed op eventuele bevorderingen in mijn carrière in de zin van iemand die ik ken zoals mijn baas niet zou zeggen nou die	Not, except that having a broad network and demonstrating that you know many people is important in your function, but the network itself that you have has no further influence on any promotions in my career in the sense of someone I

	<p>persoon is een goede werknemer en die moet je meer betalen. Nee, dat zie ik niet voor me. Je moet het echt zelf doen.</p>	<p>know, like my boss, would say well that person is a good employee and you have to pay him more. No, I don't see that. You really have to do it yourself. (Man 10, younger than 40 years old)</p>
<p>Characteristics successful employees</p>	<p>Iedereen heeft zijn eigen kwaliteiten en ik denk niet dat er een model werknemer is of iets dergelijks. Ik denk dat iedereen met zijn eigen kwaliteiten een belangrijke bijdrage kan leveren aan een organisatie. Zolang dat duidelijk is ben je een goede werknemer die goed zijn werk doet en vanuit zijn eigen kwaliteiten zijn werkzaamheden doet. Dan ben je een goede werknemer.</p>	<p>Everyone has their own qualities and I don't think there is a model employee or anything like that. I think everyone with their own qualities can make an important contribution to an organization. As long as that is clear, you are a good employee who does his or her job well and does his or her work based on his or her own qualities. Then you are a good employee. (Man 10, younger than 40 years old)</p>
	<p>Als jij lekker je werk doet en je hebt voor de rest geen behoefte aan doorgroei, dan hoef je in principe... tuurlijk initiatief tonen en hard werken is goed maar ik dat als jij niet de behoefte hebt aan een promotie of aan doorgroei dan hoef je niet altijd dat tandje extra te zetten.</p>	<p>If you do your job nicely and you don't need any further growth, then you basically... ofcourse showing initiative and work hard is good, but I think that if you do not have the need for a promotion or further growth you do not always have to go that extra mile. (Woman 4, younger than 40 years old)</p>
	<p>Ik denk dat het heel belangrijk is dat ze een helikopter-view hebben en zien wat de afdeling of hun deel van de afdeling doet, waar de haken en ogen zitten maar ook waar de talenten liggen. Mensenkennis, zeker in dat soort functies is dat enorm belangrijk om je team in elkaar te zetten maar ook om het lef te hebben om beslissingen te nemen, ook al gaat dat gigantisch tegen iets in. Als het goed is voor het team, moet je het lef hebben om dat te kunnen doen.</p>	<p>I think it is very important that they have a helicopter view and that employees at higher functions perceive the activities of their part of the department. Also, knowing where tricky businesses and talents of employees are. Furthermore, knowledge of people is especially in those types of functions important in order to put your team together. But you also need guts in order to make decisions, even if it goes against something. If it is good for the team, you need</p>

		to have the guts to do it. (Woman, younger than 40 years old).
Explanation employee satisfaction survey	Ik denk ook dat heel veel mensen, zeker als het gaat om de top functies, dat er een keuze lijkt te zijn geweest voor vrouwen terwijl de poule 50-50 verdeeld was en dat daarop uitkomst is gestuurd.	Especially when it comes to top functions, I think that a lot of people... It seems there is chosen for women, while the group was divided 50-50, and that there has been sent on outcome. (Man 11, older than 39 years old).
	Als je kijkt naar vrouwen dan is het misschien... Vrouwen krijgen minder de kans door drukke schema's om het gezin met werk te combineren en daardoor laten ze misschien sneller iets vallen. Meer tijd aan hun gezin besteden als het thuis ook ongelijk verdeeld is bijvoorbeeld. Daar kan ik me wel iets bij voorstellen, maar ik weet niet of dat hier het geval is hoor.	If you look at women, then maybe it is... Women are less likely due to busy schedules to combine the family with work, which means they drop something faster. For example, spending more time on their families if it is also unevenly distributed at home. I can imagine that, but I do not know if that is the case here. (Woman 3, older than 39 years old).
Recommendations	Nou ja, duidelijke structuur over hoe je senior kunt worden en stappen maken. Waar moet je aan voldoen en wat voor afspraken.	Well, a clear structure about how you can become a senior and can take steps. What do you have to measure up to and what kind of agreements. (Man 12, younger than 40 years old)
	Zo van of de persoon die is doorgegroeid heeft meer affiniteit of meer talenten, dat is wel zo eerlijk om te zeggen. Ik kan niks met: ja maar, misschien. Nee, vertel mij hoe het zit. Als ik weet hoet zit, dan kan ik er iets mee. Als mij wordt gezegd dat ik meer invulling en verdieping moet hebben in mijn werk, prima, maar zeg mij wat dat dan is. Waar moet ik dat dan zoeken? Want op dit moment heb ik dat dus niet of niet genoeg, anders zou het niet gezegd worden. Waar kan ik dat dan zoeken? Help mij daarbij.	For example the person who did grow in function has more affinity or more talents, that is fair to say. I can't do anything with: yes, but maybe. No, tell me how it works. If I know what's wrong, then I can do something about it. If I am told that I need more completion and depth in my work, fine, but tell me what that is. Where should I look for that? Because at the moment I do not have that or do not have that enough, otherwise it would not be said. Where can I look for that? Help me with that.

		(Woman 4, younger than 40 years old)
	Het zou fantastisch zijn als een P&O medewerker zou zeggen van joh kijk eens naar die functie of ga eens praten ofzo.	It would be great if a HR employee would say: hey look at that function or go talk or something. (Woman 2, older than 39 years old)
	Op zich zou het fijn zijn als.. ja je hebt natuurlijk verschillende lagen van leidinggevenden maar als een hoger iemand eens zou kijken van hey daar zie ik voor iemand kansen of oh hey hij heeft dat gestudeerd, laat ik eens gaan kijken.	It would be nice if... Ofcourse you have different layers of supervisors, but if a higher person would take a look like; hey there I see opportunities for someone or oh hey he studied that, let's see. (Man 12, younger than 40 years old).

Appendix G: Overview codes in results section

