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DISCUSSION PAPER SERIES

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ABSTRACT

So, Dear Applicant, Do You Mean Working from Home or Shirking from Home?*

Many applicants want a job with the possibility of telework. However, the literature is unclear on whether being explicit about this wish and the reason for it leads to negative consequences on hiring intentions. In this paper we therefore investigate how expressing a desire for telework, for work-life balance and for productivity in particular, impacts the probability of receiving an interview and what it signals to recruiters. To this end, we set up a state-of-the-art vignette experiment in which recruiters evaluate fictitious applicants for different jobs. As a result of this experimental set-up, the answers to our research questions can be interpreted causally, and external validity benefits from the heterogeneity of the jobs. We find that if the desire for work-life balance is the stated motivation, the preference is punished more severely than if the motivation is productivity. Compared to applicants who do not mention a preference for telework, recruiters are 5.1 percentage points less inclined to invite applicants who pronounce this desire for work-life balance to an interview and 2.1 percentage points less inclined to invite applicants for whom the motivation is productivity. Lastly, mentioning a telework preference for work-life balance has a clear negative effect on anticipated achievement striving, commitment, and availability.

JEL Classification: M51, M54, J22, J32, J63, J81
Keywords: telework, interview probability, factorial survey experiment

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1. Introduction

Telework is booming due to the COVID-19 epidemic (Moens et al., 2021; Mohammadi et al., 2022). There are different reasons that telework, i.e., flexibility on where to perform work, is important for employees and applicants. According to Thompson et al. (2022), productivity is an important motive for telework. For some employees, performing work at home allows for more concentrated working without distractions, and the lack of commute creates extra hours to perform additional work (Thompson et al., 2022). Thompson et al. (2022) also establish work-life balance as another important motive for telework. Telework can ease the combination of professional responsibilities and tending to family and nonwork demands (Thompson et al., 2022). Also Moens et al. (2022) show that expectations of improved work-life balance and productivity are important factors in the attractiveness of telework to employees.

Although many applicants wish for a job with telework possibility for these two valid reasons, it is unclear to what extent they should be explicit about this wish and the reasons for it in the application process. On the one hand, being as honest as possible is important for a good person–organisation fit (Verquer et al., 2003). On the other hand, expressing one's desire for telework preference to improve work-life balance or productivity might have negative consequences on the probability of being invited to an interview.

The rationale behind the latter is grounded in signalling theory, which explains how recruiters use applicants' observable behaviours to make attributions about characteristics that are hard to observe (Spence, 1973; Bourdeau et al., 2019; Golden & Eddleston, 2020). Recruiters could interpret the pronounced preference for telework as a signal (which is often labelled as 'flexibility stigma') for deviation from the 'ideal worker values' and the 'work devotion scheme' (Acker, 1990; Williams et al., 2013; Bourdeau et al., 2019; Chung, 2020; Golden & Eddleston, 2020). More concretely, the ideal worker is the most desirable worker who is totally committed to, and always available for, his or her work (Acker, 1990). Next, the work-devotion scheme places working hard at one's job at the centre of one's life (Williams et al., 2013; Bourdeau et al., 2019). When a preference for telework is expressed, especially when motivated by a desire for work-life balance, recruiters might perceive the applicant more negatively with regard to: (i) anticipated achievement striving, (ii)

anticipated commitment, (iii) anticipated availability, or (iv) anticipated competence (in line with the framework of Heilman and Okimoto (2008) and Vinkenburg et al. (2012); see Section 2.3). However, motivating the preference for telework with productivity reasons, when perceived as genuine by the recruiter, has the potential to counterbalance some of these negative perceptions, as it actively emphasises values related to the ideal worker and work devotion.

Notwithstanding these established theoretical arguments, a clear gap exists in the literature with regard to empirical research on the effect of expressing a preference for telework (including whether the preference is due to work-life balance or productivity reasons) on interview probability. In the next two paragraphs we discuss related research and the reasons that the research gap remains, despite these studies.

First, there exists empirical evidence on negative outcomes such as wage penalties, lower performance evaluations or fewer promotions following the *use* of telework policies (Bourdeau et al., 2019). In the same strand of research, Leslie et al. (2012) discovered that managers interpret employees' use of flexible working practices as a signal of high organisational commitment when making productivity attributions and as a signal of low organisational commitment when making personal life attributions. It is clear that the research focus of these studies differs from ours as these studies (i) investigate the actual use of telework and (ii) investigate another setting (i.e., the manager-subordinate setting compared to a solicitation setting).[1]

Second, the experiment of Proost and Verhaest (2018) is worth mentioning here. The authors found that mentioning work-life balance in one's CV leads to less favourable recruitment outcomes. Although this study is partly related to our research topic, its focus is not on telework, and therefore we do not know from this study whether pronouncing a preference for telework (for work-life balance or productivity reasons) has negative consequences on the probability of gaining an interview.

In this study, we therefore contribute to this literature by estimating the effects of pronouncing a preference for teleworking (1 or 2 days a week) on interview probability, in

[1] In the manager-subordinate setting, the manager and the subordinate already have a relationship with each other and the manager already formed an idea on whether the subordinate is conscientious and trustworthy, which all appear to be important factors in predicting telework allowance (Beham et al., 2015; Kaplan et al., 2018).

particular for when two of the main reasons for the wish to telework are given, i.e., for work-life balance and for productivity reasons. In addition, we also acquire insight into what a preference for telework for work-life balance and for productivity reasons signals to recruiters (by investigating an extensive list of perceptions following the framework of Heilman and Okimoto (2008) and Vinkenburg et al. (2012); see Section 2.3). To this end, we set up a state-of-the-art vignette experiment in which recruiters evaluate (i) fictitious applicants without a preference for telework, (ii) fictitious applicants with a preference for telework for productivity reasons, and (iii) fictitious applicants with a preference for telework for work-life balance, for several different jobs. As a result of the experimental set-up, the answers to our research questions can be interpreted causally. More concretely, we answer the following research questions.

RQ1a. What is the impact of mentioning a desire for teleworking (1 or 2 days a week) for productivity reasons on the likelihood of being invited to a job interview as a job applicant in an early phase of the recruitment process?

RQ1b. What is the impact of mentioning a desire for teleworking (1 or 2 days a week) for work-life balance on the likelihood of being invited to a job interview as a job applicant in an early phase of the recruitment process?

RQ2a. What does mentioning a desire for teleworking (1 or 2 days a week) motivated by productivity reasons signal to recruiters as a job applicant in an early phase of the recruitment process?

RQ2b. What does mentioning a desire for teleworking (1 or 2 days a week) motivated by work-life balance signal to recruiters as a job applicant in an early phase of the recruitment process?

Compared to the previously mentioned experiment of Proost and Verhaest (2018), our experimental research design holds several advantages. First, whereas Proost and Verhaest (2018) only investigate one potential mediator (i.e., work ethic), we explore an extensive list of possible perceptions as mediators (see Section 2.3). Second, in our experiment, job characteristics can be analysed as moderators, as is done at the end of Section 3.1. Third, the heterogeneity of the employed jobs increases the external validity of our experiment. The latter two advantages are the result of employing clearly delineated different jobs, compared to the experiment of Proost and Verhaest (2018) in which the recruiters were

asked to consider the application for an open vacancy in their organisation for which an economic profile was searched. The details of our experimental set-up are discussed in the next section.

2. Experimental set-up

2.1 Data collection

Survey responses were collected from a sample of the population of individuals with experience in evaluating job applicants in Flanders, the northern Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. This was completed in the period between 15 May and 15 June 2022 via the online platform Qualtrics. We sent our factorial survey to the email addresses of recruiters who submitted vacancies similar to the jobs employed in the experiment (see Section 2.2) on Belgium's largest job site, i.e., the Public Employment Agency of Flanders (PEAF) (Delbeke, 2019). The invitation was sent out to 2088 unique email addresses. To increase the response rate, a reminder was sent one week after the initial invitation, and we organised a raffle with prizes having a total value of 500 euro. We attained a sample of 266 recruiters.

Our participants were on average 38 years old; 77.8% of the participants was female; 86.1% of the sample was highly educated (at a minimum level of bachelor). Our sample was comparable in gender distribution to HR professionals at working age according to the European Social Survey (ESS) but was slightly younger (the ESS average is 45 years old) and more educated (70.4% enjoyed tertiary education in the ESS sample).[2] Our participants were qualified for the experimental task: on average they spent 46.0% of their time evaluating applicants, and 87.2% had at least one year of experience in evaluating applicants.

The online survey contained three major parts: the pre-experimental part, the

[2] In line with Sterkens et al. (2021), we consulted data from the 2020 wave of ESS to compare our sample distribution of recruiters to the European HR professionals in terms of age, gender and education level. Survey respondents were selected according to the ISCO-08 occupation codes of 1212 (Human resource managers), 2423 (Personnel and careers professionals), 3333 (Employment agents and contractors) and 4416 (Personnel clerks).

experiment and the post-experimental part.[3] In Section 2.2 the pre- and post-experimental parts, both including questions on recruiter characteristics, are discussed. The core of the online survey, i.e., the experiment, is explained in Section 2.3.

2.2 Pre- and post-experimental surveys

The pre-experimental part included an introduction, an informed consent question and some questions on the experience of the participant with evaluating applicants. The latter served two goals: (i) to ascertain that participants belonged to our population (see Section 2.1) and (ii) to decide for which job a participant would evaluate applicants. More concretely, we asked for the years of experience in evaluating applicants and the percentage of working time that they evaluate applicants. When no working time was dedicated to evaluating applicants, individuals were excluded from participation. Both variables were taken into account as control variables in the analyses in Section 3. In addition, we asked for which of the eight following jobs participants most recently recruited: (i) payroll and timekeeping clerk, (ii) first-line supervisor of retail sales workers, (iii) shipping, receiving, and inventory clerk, (iv) first-line supervisor of housekeeping and janitorial workers, (v) credit analyst, (vi) public relations specialist, (vii) industrial production manager, and (viii) meeting, convention, and event planner. In the experiment, participants had to evaluate applicants for the selected job. If they did not have a recent experience with any of these eight jobs, one of these eight vacancies was randomly assigned. The latter was only the case for 26.3% of the sample. In Section 3, we employ this variable in a robustness check by replicating our main analyses solely on the group of participants that has real experience with recruiting for the job in the vacancy.

As stated in the introduction, we used different jobs to increase the external validity, which is a strength of our research design compared to other experimental studies (e.g., Proost & Verhaest, 2018). The selection of our eight jobs was based on three underlying job characteristics that are potential moderators in the relationship between expressing a preference for telework and interview probability. More specifically, we took 'required level of social interaction' and 'required level of physical activities' into account because these

[3] We performed a pilot test with 10 participants to evaluate the clarity, credibility, and duration of the survey, which resulted in fine-tuning some of the details before launching the survey.

two variables determine the level of teleworkability of a job according to Sostero et al. (2020). These authors argue that a high level of social interaction has the potential to make telework more difficult though it does not exclude it, while a high level of physical activities is an impediment to working from home, and therefore we did not select jobs that require a high level of physical activities for our experiment. In addition, we took 'required educational level' into account because, in the manager-subordinate context, there is empirical evidence that the likelihood of a more positive answer to an employee's request of utilising work-life policies increases with higher educational levels (den Dulk & de Ruijter, 2008; Peters et al., 2010). To select specific jobs for our experiment differing in these three characteristics, we used O*Net OnLine.[4] This exercise resulted in the (2 × 2 × 2) matrix in Appendix Table A1. To ascertain how our participants evaluated the jobs with regard to these three characteristics and to employ this in the analyses in Section 3, we asked our participants to evaluate the job based on required level of education, required level of social interaction and on required level of physical activities in the post-experimental survey.

In addition to these evaluations of job characteristics, the post-experimental survey gave us information on the age of the participant and on whether the participant was female, higher educated or a parent. In addition, the post-experimental survey contained questions on the importance the participant attaches to telework possibility and whether their employer attaches importance to telework possibility (with the options of *not important at all*, *not important*, *important* or *very important*) as we know that in a manager-subordinate setting these variables play a moderating role in managers' responses to employees' requests for telework (Beham et al., 2015). All the questions from the post-experimental survey mentioned above were added as control variables in the analyses in Section 3. Finally, we ended the post-experimental survey by including the shortened Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Reynolds, 1982) to ascertain how sensitive each participant was to social desirable answering.[5] In Section 3, we employed this variable in a robustness check by replicating our main analyses solely on the group of participants with a lower-than-average

[4] O*Net OnLine is an application supported by the U.S. Department of Labor that contains information on more than 900 occupations.

[5] The shortened Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Reynolds, 1982) consists of 13 items expressing behaviours that are either socially sanctioned or approved (e.g., 'I am always prepared to admit it when I made a mistake'). Participants answered with 'right' or 'wrong'. Participants' total social desirability scores were calculated by summing up and standardising item scores. Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency: $\alpha = .563$.

social desirability tendency.

2.3 Vignette design

Between the pre- and post-experimental surveys outlined in Section 2.2 was the core of the online survey, i.e., the factorial survey experiment or vignette experiment. A vignette experiment can be described as an experimental set-up in a survey that holds therefore the best of both worlds: both valid causal inferences of the vignette factors (internal validity) and generalisation to the population that was sampled (external validity) (Auspurg & Hinz, 2014). Although participants knew that they were part of an experiment and that the job offers were hypothetical, external validity was increased by only including participants who were qualified for the experimental task and by making the experiment as realistic as possible (Hainmueller et al., 2015). The latter was strengthened by employing several different jobs in our experiment and thereby increasing the share of participants that had real life experience with the vacancy. Factorial survey experiments are frequently used to study hiring decisions (Van Belle et al., 2019; Sterkens et al., 2021, Van Borm et al., 2021) and are also frequently used in the context of flexibility stigma (den Dulk & de Ruijter, 2008; Peters et al., 2010; Beham et al., 2015; Fernandez-Lozano et al., 2020).

Participants were asked to imagine they were helping in the second phase of the recruiting process to fill a full-time position for one of the eight aforementioned jobs (see Section 2.2) by judging five vignettes, each containing a different hypothetical job applicant. Participants received the description of the job (based on the O*Net OnLine description; see Section 2.2) as well as information about the applicants (the latter was visualised in tabular design). They were told that the information about the applicants was collected and summarised by another colleague who had already performed a screening of the resumes and had one prior contact with the five applicants by phone (i.e., the first phase of the recruiting process). It was also explicitly mentioned that this colleague ensured that the applicants were adequately educated to perform the job. More concretely, participants had to share hiring advice regarding each applicant by indicating the probability of their advising (i) to invite the applicant for the second phase of the solicitation procedure (interview probability) and (ii) to hire them (hiring probability). Both of these outcome variables were measured on an 11-point response scale from 0 (completely disagree) to 10 (completely

agree). As hiring probability is a 'distal hiring outcome', we only used it in robustness analysis (see Section 3). Our main outcome variable of interest, in light of RQ1a and RQ1b, was interview probability, as it is a 'proximal hiring outcome'.

The five job applicants differed, in accordance with the guidelines of Auspurg and Hinz (2014), regarding eight variables (the vignette factors) which varied randomly over two or three categories (the vignette levels). Due to this random assignment, these variables did not correlate with unobserved factors, and therefore a causal interpretation of the effects of the vignette factors on participants' judgements was possible (Auspurg & Hinz, 2014; Van Belle et al., 2019). The vignette factors and levels used in our experiment can be found in Table 1 and are discussed below.

<Table 1 about here>

The most important vignette factor was 'Preference for 1 or 2 days telework', as we wanted to investigate its impact on the likelihood of being invited to a job interview (RQ1a and RQ1b) and what it signalled to recruiters (RQ2a and RQ2b). It was comprised of three levels: (i) preference for 1 or 2 days of telework for productivity reasons, (ii) preference for 1 or 2 days of telework for work-life balance, or (iii) nothing was mentioned.

The next vignette factor we included was 'Preferred temporal flexibility'. This was taken into account since Thompson et al. (2015) and Schmoll and Süß (2019) advised to make a clear distinction between location flexibility and temporal flexibility. Indeed, in contrast with location flexibility which is central to definitions of telework, temporal flexibility is not inherently linked to telework because those who telework may or may not have control over when they work (Allen et al., 2015). The impact on interview probability and the signals of pronouncing a preference for telework (and thus the answers to RQ1a, RQ1b, RQ2a and RQ2b) might differ when a preference for telework was combined with a preference for fixed or flexible working hours. This vignette factor was also comprised of three levels: (i) preference for fixed working hours, (ii) preference for flexible working hours, or (iii) nothing was mentioned. The factors 'Preference for 1 or 2 days telework' and 'Preferred temporal flexibility' were shown to the participant in one row labelled 'Extra information' to avoid

attracting too much attention to it and giving away the research topic too easily.[6]

The other vignette factors were included for the following reasons: (i) to mimic real-life hiring decisions as closely as possible, (ii) to cover up the main goal of the research, and (iii) to investigate whether recruiters reacted differently when a preference for telework was revealed by these vignette factors. The applicant characteristics of gender, age, residence, relevant working experience and extracurricular activities constitute personal information that is typically revealed during the selection procedure (Van Belle et al., 2019; Sterkens et al., 2021; Van Borm et al., 2021). We included these as vignette factors, but instead of mentioning the residence, we mentioned the one-way commuting distance (e.g., Van Borm et al., 2021). We also added 'Number of children' as a vignette factor because parenthood might also play a role in the participants' response, as Chung (2020) showed that mothers are more likely to suffer from a 'flexibility stigma'.

The $2 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3$ levels of the vignette factors resulted in 4,374 possible combinations (the vignette universe). A full factorial design, in which all possible vignettes were represented to single participants, was therefore not possible. Typically, researchers then select a sample out of this universe using D-efficient randomisation following the Kuhfeld (2010) algorithm as detailed in Auspurg and Hinz (2014). A D-efficient design contains those selections of vignettes leading to the most precise parameter estimates. Using this algorithm, we sampled 250 vignettes out of the vignette universe (allowing for all two-way interactions to be identified).[7] In the next step, the selected vignettes were grouped into 50 decks by randomly allocating five vignettes to one deck (Auspurg & Hinz, 2014). Those decks were subsequently randomly allocated to the participants. Since there were 266 participants in our experiment (see Section 2.1) and each participant evaluated five vignettes (see Section 2.3), each vignette was evaluated about five times. The total number of observations in our analyses amounted therefore to 1,330.

In addition to interview and hiring probability, participants had to evaluate each applicant on a list of twelve signals in light of RQ2a and RQ2b. These twelve signals fell into four main categories: (i) anticipated achievement striving, (ii) anticipated commitment, (iii)

[6] This row 'Extra information' contained 'None' (once) when both 'Preference for 1 or 2 days telework' and 'Preferred temporal flexibility' had the level 'Not mentioned'.

[7] This resulted in a D-efficiency of 96.104 (with 100 being the maximum value in case of a full factorial design which shows that any losses of estimation precision by not employing the full factorial design were negligible).

anticipated availability, and (iv) anticipated competence.[8] As a structure for our signals, we used the frameworks of Heilman and Okimoto (2008) and Vinkenburg et al. (2012).[9] The implementation of this framework in our experiment is shown in Appendix Table A2, together with the accompanying statements, and is elucidated in the next paragraph.

The first category, i.e., 'anticipated achievement striving', was based on Heilman and Okimoto (2008). It consisted of three items: 'be eager to advance', 'apply for further promotions in the future' and 'have high career aspirations'. In the second category, i.e., 'anticipated commitment', Heilman and Okimoto (2008) also discerned three main dimensions: 'be very committed to the company', 'be willing to make sacrifices for the job' and 'make work a top priority'. Therefore, as in Vinkenburg et al. (2012), these three items were averaged into a reliable 'anticipated commitment' scale in our study. In the third category 'anticipated availability', the first two items were identical as well to Vinkenburg et al. (2012) (i.e., 'the applicant will be able to work a substantial amount' and 'the applicant will have a low number of sick/personal days'); however we did not include the original item 'the applicant will not be late for work or leave early' because this was not suitable in our context of telework preference. Instead we replaced this item with 'being available to work whenever needed'. The last category that Heilman and Okimoto (2008) and Vinkenburg et al. (2012) included is 'anticipated competence' and consists of general concepts such as competence, productivity and effectiveness. To avoid too much overlap with our hiring outcomes (i.e., interview and hiring probability), we chose in our experiment to investigate more specific competencies. 'Anticipated competence' is really at the core of hiring decisions: according to most of the employer screening theories (i.e., human capital theory, signaling theory, social capital, statistical discrimination), employers select workers based on anticipated competence; hence, employers are human capital maximisers who base personnel decisions on perceptions of productivity (Rivera, 2020). Employing the general, overarching concept 'anticipated competence' of Heilman and Okimoto (2008) and Vinkenburg et al. (2012) in our experiment would have entailed too much overlap with the hiring outcomes and would therefore not serve our goal of explaining how mentioning a

[8] Cronbach's alphas for internal consistency of anticipated achievement striving, anticipated commitment, anticipated availability, and anticipated competence: $\alpha = .942$, $\alpha = 0.895$, $\alpha = 0.888$, and $\alpha = 0.929$.

[9] These studies investigated, via experiments, the bias in employment decisions of applicants with children, which is also a group that might signal a deviation from the ideal worker norm and work devotion scheme and thereby provided us with a solid structure for possible signals in this regard.

preference for telework impacts hiring decisions. In our context it was therefore more relevant to investigate more specific competencies. Consequently, we operationalised 'anticipated competence' by the three items 'social skills', 'self-reliance' and 'productive use of time'. First, we took 'social skills' into account since Bailey and Kurland (2002) state that employees would opt for telework to avoid social interaction and because social skills are of high value in the labour market (Deming, 2017). Next, as the ideal worker norm and work devotion scheme also have been linked to work ethic in the literature, we included 'self-reliance' and 'productive use of time', as these two competencies are dimensions of work ethic (Van Ness et al., 2010; Meriac et al., 2013).

In the analyses (see Section 3.2.), we first investigated the effect of pronouncing a preference for telework on each of the aforementioned signals separately. Next, we study the signals clustered on group level by exploring (i) anticipated achievement striving, (ii) anticipated commitment, (iii) anticipated availability, and (iv) anticipated competence as signals. These analyses provided us with an answer to RQ2a and RQ2b. We concluded the analyses with a multiple mediation model to investigate whether these clusters of signals mediated the relationship between pronouncing a preference for telework and interview probability.

3. Results

3.1 Effect of revealing a preference for telework on interview probability

We start this subsection by examining the impact of mentioning a preference for telework due to productivity (RQ1a) or work-life balance reasons (RQ1b) on the likelihood of being invited to a job interview. Next, we perform some additional analyses to investigate the robustness of our findings. At the end of this subsection, we briefly explore potential moderators in this relationship.

The answers to RQ1a and RQ1b can be found in Table 2, where we present the results of linear regression analyses, with interview probability as the dependent variable, the applicant characteristics discussed in Section 2.3 as independent variables and, from model

(2) onward, the subjective job and recruiter characteristics discussed in Section 2.2 as control variables. Standard errors are corrected for the clustering of the observations at the participant level. As expected given the experimental manipulation of the applications characteristics, the coefficients of the multivariate regression analyses in model (1) and model (2) hardly differ because of the experimental design. Therefore, we discuss the coefficients of the analyses with control variables in the remainder of this article, if not specified otherwise.

<Table 2 about here>

With regard to RQ1a, we find that applicants who pronounce a preference for 1 or 2 days telework for productivity reasons score 0.208 (p = .094) units lower on the interview scale (ranging from 0 to 10) compared to applicants who do not mention a preference for telework. The magnitude of this penalty is comparable to, for example, the reward of mentioning volunteering in an early stage of the recruitment process (β = .259, p = .029). It is noteworthy that this result for pronouncing telework for productivity reasons is significant only at the 10% significance level. With regard to the preference for telework because of work-life balance (RQ1b), the difference is larger, with applicants scoring 0.514 (p = .000) units lower on the interview scale, i.e., 5.1 percentage points (pp), compared to applicants who do not mention a preference for telework. That the consequence of mentioning a preference for telework for work-life balance is more severe than mentioning a preference for telework for productivity reasons seems to indicate that recruiters believe the motives for telework given by the applicant.

As robustness checks, we conduct three extra analyses (as announced in Sections 2.2 and 2.3). First, we conduct similar multivariate regression analyses as in Table 2, but with hiring probability as the outcome variable. The results can be found in Appendix Table A3. We find similar results as the results of the benchmark analyses in Table 2 for both mentioning a preference for telework for productivity (β = −.206, p = .087) as well as for work-life balance reasons (β = −.517, p = .000). Second, we repeat our multivariate regression analyses from Table 2, using only the subsample of recruiters who have experience with the evaluated job. The results (presented in Appendix Table A4) are consistent, although this group of recruiters seems to penalise somewhat more severely, especially when the preference for telework is motivated by productivity reasons. Compared

to applicants who do not mention a preference for telework, a lower interview probability of respectively 3.3 pp (p = .021) and 5.5 pp (p = .002) is attributed to applicants who mention a preference for telework for productivity and work-life balance reasons. Third, we also repeat our multivariate regression analyses from Table 2, but with a subsample of recruiters who have a lower-than-average social desirability tendency. The results can be found in Appendix Table A5. The results for pronouncing a preference for telework both for productivity reasons (β = −.275, p = .085) and for work-life balance (β = −.598, p = .002) are in line with the results of the benchmark analyses in Table 2, although again somewhat more outspoken.

The results of the exploratory moderation analyses are presented in Appendix Table A6. We regress interview probability on applicant, job and recruiter characteristics as well as on interactions between pronouncing a preference for telework (for both productivity reasons and for work-life balance) and (i) the other applicant characteristics (model [1]), (ii) job characteristics (model [2]), (iii) recruiter characteristics (model [3]), and (iv) all these characteristics combined (model [4]). We emphasise that the coefficient estimates of the interaction with the recruiter characteristics cannot be given a causal interpretation, due to the lack of experimental manipulation of these characteristics.

We observe five significant interaction terms in model [4], among which four are related to telework for productivity reasons. We find that the effect of mentioning a desire for telework for productivity reasons on interview probability is more negative when the applicant has 1 to 5 years of relevant working experience (β = −1.068, p = .005), when the recruiter is a parent (β = −.536, p = .047), when the recruiter does not attach personal importance to telework possibility (β = .571, p = .050), and when the recruiter anticipates that the job requires a higher level of physical activities (β = −.085, p = .077). With regard to pronouncing a preference for telework for work-life balance, we only observe a significant interaction term at the 10% level: the effect of indicating a desire for telework for this reason on interview probability is less negative when the recruiter is older (β = .029, p = .097). We do not find that the other applicant, job or recruiter characteristics play a moderating role.

When we link these results to the existing research findings previously mentioned, some of these results are expected, while some are rather surprising. As the 'required level of physical activities' determines the level of the teleworkability of a job according to Sostero

et al. (2020) (see Section 2.2), its moderating role in the relationship between a preference for telework for productivity reasons and interview probability is not surprising. We do not find additional evidence that parents suffer more from a 'flexibility stigma' as did Chung (2020), for example. On the contrary, parents seem to penalise applicants who express a preference for telework for productivity reasons even more than non-parents. In addition, we did not find a significant interaction for 'required educational level', whereas in the manager-subordinate context, there is empirical evidence that the likelihood of a more positive answer to an employee's request of utilising work-life policies increases with higher educational levels (den Dulk & de Ruijter, 2008; Peters et al., 2010) (see Section 2.2).

3.2 The signals of revealing a preference for telework

In this subsection we first investigate what indicating a preference for telework for productivity reasons (RQ2a) and for work-life balance (RQ2b) in an early phase of the recruitment process signals to recruiters by employing as the baseline the framework from Heilman and Okimoto (2008) and Vinkenburg et al. (2012), as discussed in Section 2.3. We first analyse the signals individually and next clustered on group level. To conclude this subsection, we explore the role of these signals as potential mediators in the relationship between pronouncing a preference for telework for productivity or work-life balance reasons and interview probability.

The answers to RQ2a and RQ2b can be found in Table 3 (individual signals) and Appendix Table A7 (clustered on group level). In line with model (2) of Table 2, these tables contain the estimation results of the regression of the signals on the applicant characteristics as well as on the job and recruiter characteristics as controls.

We find that expressing a preference for telework for productivity reasons only has a negative effect on the item of anticipated commitment to the company ($\beta = -.195$, $p = .023$). We do not find an impact of a desire for telework in view of better productivity on any of the other items.

Pronouncing a preference for telework for work-life balance acts as a signal of lower commitment to recruiters ($\beta = -.302$, $p = .001$), as well as a signal of less willingness to make sacrifices for the job ($\beta = -.408$, $p = .000$) and of work not being a top priority ($\beta = -.485$, p

= .000). That is, we find negative effects with respect to all items of the cluster 'anticipated commitment'. In addition, we see that a desire for telework in view of a better work-life balance has a negative effect on all items of the cluster 'anticipated achievement striving': on anticipation of eagerness to advance (β = −.220, p = .017), on applying for further promotions in the future (β = −.375, p = .000), and on having high career aspirations (β = −.298, p = .002). Finally, we find a negative effect on all items of anticipated availability: on perceptions of ability to work a substantial amount (β = −.476, p = .000), on having a low number of sick/personal days (β = −.300, p = .001), and on availability to work whenever needed (β = −.382, p = .000). We do not observe that pronouncing a preference for telework for work-life balance has a significant impact on any of the items of anticipated competence.

<Table 3 about here>

Unsurprisingly, when analysing these signals on cluster level, we see a significant effect of pronouncing a preference for telework due to work-life balance reasons on anticipated achievement striving (β = −.297, p = .000), anticipated commitment (β = −.399, p = .000), and anticipated availability (β = −.386, p = .000), but not on anticipated competence (p = .267). When analysed on cluster level, pronouncing a preference for telework for productivity reasons does not convey significantly negative signals to employers.

If taken into account by recruiters when making hiring decisions, these signals help explain how pronouncing a preference for telework impacts interview probability. To test the investigated signals' potential as mediators we therefore also need the *b*-paths displayed in Figure 1, in which we employ a multiple mediation model in line with Hayes (2013) (with the signals on cluster level). The total effect of pronouncing a preference for telework (for both productivity reasons and work-life balance) on interview probability is calculated in Section 3.1. This total association (path *c*) can be decomposed into indirect associations via the mediating signals (paths $a \times b$) and a remaining 'direct' association of revealing a preference for telework (path *c'*) (Hayes, 2013). To investigate the mediating role of the signals, we are interested in the paths $a \times b$ (with the *a*-paths representing the effect of pronouncing a preference for telework for a specific reason on the perceptions calculated in the previous paragraphs). We want to stress that the *b*-paths (in contrast to the *a*-paths and the *c'*-paths), and as a consequence the mediation analysis, should be seen as associations rather than as causal effects since the signals are not experimentally controlled

and therefore could correlate with unobserved factors (Van Belle et al., 2019).

<Figure 1 about here>

With regard to announcing a preference for teleworking to improve work-life balance, almost half of the total effect (c = −.514, p = .000) can be explained by the mediation of the investigated signals, and 53.7% remains in the direct effect (c' = −.276, p = .030). We find a significant indirect association for anticipated achievement (a_1b_1 = −0.073, p = .032) and for anticipated availability (a_3b_3 = −0.098, p = .022). This means that the anticipated achievement striving and especially the anticipated availability indeed partly explain the effect of pronouncing a preference for teleworking for work-life balance on interview probability in our research sample. No significant indirect association is found for anticipated commitment, which can be explained by the fact that recruiters do not emphasise anticipated commitment in making hiring decisions as much compared to anticipated achievement striving and anticipated availability, for example (which can be seen in the *b*-paths in Figure 1). With regard to announcing a preference for teleworking for productivity reasons, no significant indirect associations were found.

4. Conclusion

Especially since the COVID-19 epidemic, many applicants are interested in opportunities to telework. The question is whether expressing this wish in the application process, and the reason for it, has negative consequences on hiring intentions. In this paper, we therefore investigated the impact of pronouncing a preference for teleworking (1 or 2 days a week) for work-life balance and for productivity reasons, which are two of the main reasons for the wish to telework, on the likelihood of being invited to a job interview. Furthermore, we also examined what pronouncing a preference for telework for work-life balance and for productivity reasons in an early phase of the recruitment process signalled to recruiters by utilising a validated framework of signals. To this end, we set up a state-of-the-art vignette experiment in which recruiters evaluated (i) fictitious applicants without a preference for telework, (ii) fictitious applicants with a preference for telework for productivity reasons, and (iii) fictitious applicants with a preference for telework for work-life balance, for several

different jobs. The external validity of our experiment benefits from the heterogeneity of the jobs. Due to the experimental set-up, we were able to causally interpret the answers to our research questions.

We found that applicants who pronounce a preference for telework for productivity reasons scored 0.208 units lower on the interview scale (ranging from 0 to 10) and applicants who pronounce a preference for telework for work-life balance reasons scored 0.514 units lower on the interview scale, i.e. 5.1 percentage points (pp), compared to applicants who do not mention a preference for telework. The recruiters in our experiment penalised applicants who pronounce a preference for telework even if the applicants explained this preference by an explicit wish to be productive. Although such a reason would be expected to please recruiters, it did not seem to fully compensate. These findings were confirmed by several robustness analyses, as we find similar results when (i) employing hiring probability as the outcome variable instead of interview probability, (ii) employing only the subsample of recruiters that have experience with the evaluated job, and (iii) employing only the subsample of recruiters that have a lower-than-average social desirability tendency. We also found that mentioning a desire for telework to improve work-life balance had a clear significant negative effect on anticipated achievement striving, anticipated commitment, and anticipated availability, while we only found some indication that mentioning a desire for telework due to productivity reasons had the potential to lower anticipated commitment. We can conclude that motivating the desire for telework by work-life balance was punished more severely than motivating the desire by productivity.

The value that these findings contribute to the literature is clear. First, this research added to the literature on the career consequences of telework. Researchers had already shown negative outcomes following the use of telework policies, such as wage penalties, lower performance evaluations or fewer promotions, and now we have found that expressing a wish for telework in the recruitment process also impacted interview probability as well as the reason this was the case. Second, there was empirical evidence that mentioning work-life balance on one's CV leads to less favourable recruitment outcomes. Our research results aligned with this finding, as a desire for teleworking due to work-life balance also had negative consequences on hiring intentions.

In practical terms, we would not recommend applicants to express their wish to telework

in the early stages of the recruitment process, especially when this wish is for work-life balance reasons. We believe it is important that companies indicate in advance if they are open to telework. In this way, applicants do not have to express this wish explicitly and do not have to choose between increasing the chances of a better person-organisation fit or potentially decreasing the chances of getting invited for an interview.

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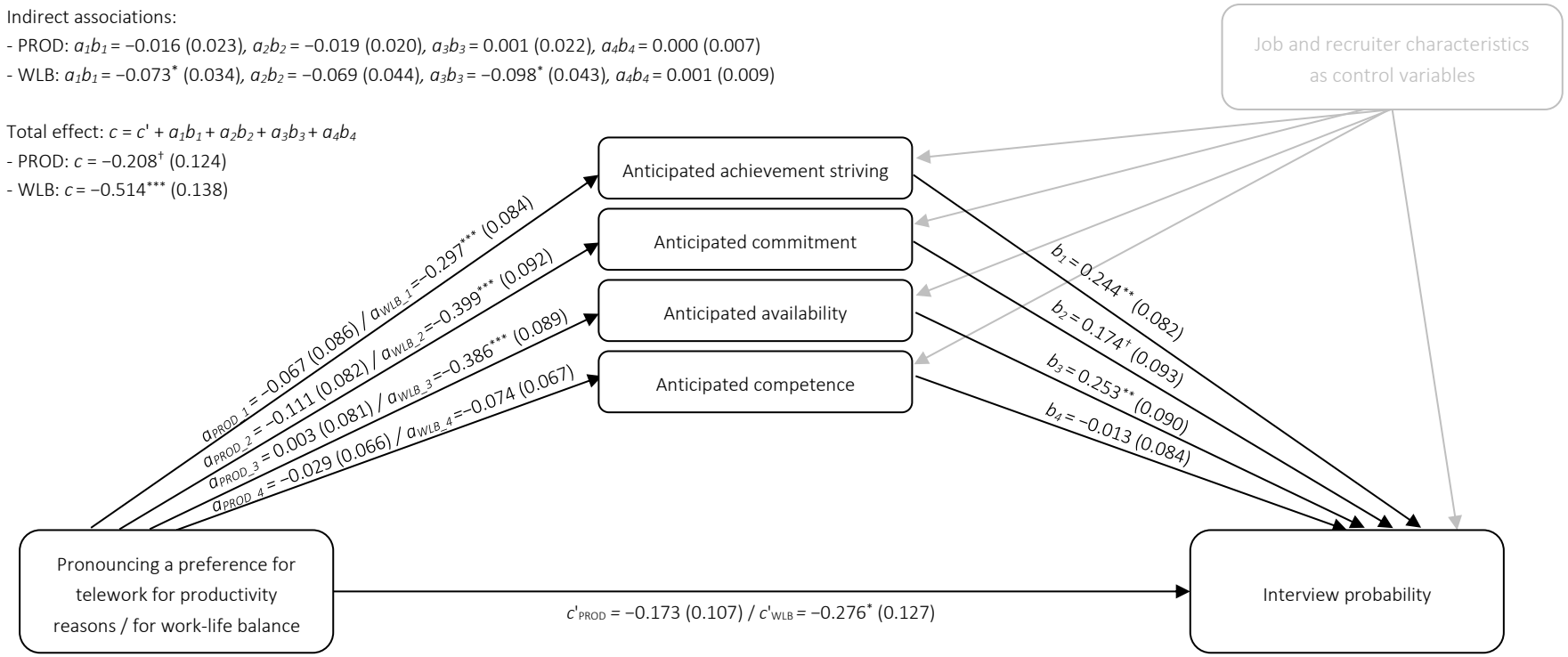
Figure 1. Multiple mediation model outlined in Section 3.2



Note. The following abbreviations are used: WLB (work-life balance), and PROD (productivity). The presented statistics are coefficient estimates with standard errors in parentheses for the mediation model discussed in Section 3.2. *c* stands for the total effect, *c'* for the direct association, and a_ib_i for the indirect associations of pronouncing a preference for telework for productivity or work-life balance reasons on interview probability, passing through the mediators. Standard errors are corrected for the clustering of the observations at the participant level. Intercepts are not presented. The confidence intervals for the mediation effects are based on 10,000 bootstrap samples. *** (**) ((*)) (((†))) indicate significance at the 0.1% (1%) ((5%)) (((10%))) significance level.

Table 1. Vignette factors and levels

Vignette factors	Vignette levels
Gender	{Male, female}
Age	{28 ± 1 year, 38 ± 1 year, 48 ± 1 year}
Number of children	{None, 1 child, 2 children}
One-way commuting distance	{Less than 20 km, between 20 and 40 km commute, more than 40 km commute}
Relevant working experience	{Less than 1 year, between 1 and 5 years of experience, more than 5 years of experience}
Extracurricular activities	{None, volunteering, sports}
Preferred temporal flexibility	{Not mentioned, preference for fixed working hours, preference for flexible working hours}
Preference for 1 or 2 days telework	{Not mentioned, telework preference for work-life balance, telework preference for productivity reasons}

Table 2. Multivariate regression analyses with the interview scale as the outcome variable

	(1)	(2)
A. APPLICANT CHARACTERISTICS		
Female	−0.093 (0,081)	−0.085 (0.081)
Age (c.)	−0.016* (0,006)	−0.017** (0.006)
Number of children (ref. = None)		
1 child	−0.195† (0,103)	−0.179† (0.101)
2 children	−0.223† (0,121)	−0.215† (0.120)
One-way commuting distance (ref. = Less than 20 km)		
Between 20 and 40 km commute	−0.260* (0,112)	−0.271* (0.112)
More than 40 km commute	−0.798*** (0,140)	−0.823*** (0.139)
Relevant working experience (ref. = Less than 1 year)		
Between 1 and 5 years of experience	0.968*** (0,142)	0.964*** (0.143)
More than 5 years of experience	1.434*** (0,138)	1.445*** (0.139)
Extracurricular activities (ref. = None)		
Volunteering	0.263* (0,117)	0.259* (0.118)
Sports	0.155 (0,123)	0.169 (0.124)
Preferred temporal flexibility (ref. = Not mentioned)		
Preference for fixed working hours	−0.111 (0,141)	−0.112 (0.142)
Preference for flexible working hours	0.008 (0,118)	0.008 (0.119)
Preference for 1 or 2 days telework (ref. = Not mentioned)		
Telework preference for work-life balance	−0.519*** (0,140)	−0.514*** (0.138)
Telework preference for productivity reasons	−0.204 (0,124)	−0.208† (0.124)
B. JOB CHARACTERISTICS		
Required educational level (c.)		0.066 (0.055)
Required level of social interaction (c.)		0.087 (0.063)
Required level of physical activities (c.)		−0.040 (0.043)
C. RECRUITER CHARACTERISTICS		
Female		0.234 (0.315)
Age (c.)		−0.009 (0.014)

Parent			−0.353 (0.254)
Tertiary education			0.388 (0.350)
High telework importance – Participant			0.360 (0.295)
High telework importance – Organisation			0.048 (0.242)
Percentage of time evaluating applicants (c.)			0.007 (0.004)
Years of experience evaluating applicants (ref. = Less than 1 year)			
Between 1 and 5 years of experience			−0.044 (0.310)
More than 5 years of experience			0.017 (0.312)
R^2 (adjusted R^2)	0.104 (0.094)		0.146 (0.129)
Observations		1,330	

Note. The following abbreviations are used: c. (continuous variable) and ref. (reference). The presented statistics are coefficient estimates with standard errors in parentheses for the linear regression analyses discussed in Section 3.1. Standard errors are corrected for the clustering of the observations at the participant level. Intercepts are not presented. *** (**) ((*)) (((†))) indicates significance at the 0.1% (1%) ((5%)) (((10%))) significance level.

Table 3. Multivariate regression analyses with the signals as outcome variables

	Anticipated achievement striving			Anticipated commitment			Anticipated availability			Anticipated competence		
	EAG	PROM	ASP	COMM	SACR	PRIOR	ALOT	DAYS	AVAIL	SOC	SREL	PRODUC
A. APPLICANT CHARACTERISTICS												
Female	−0.050 (0.066)	−0.249** (0.075)	−0.162* (0.075)	−0.040 (0.065)	−0.139† (0.075)	−0.240** (0.072)	−0.305*** (0.077)	−0.213** (0.076)	−0.323*** (0.082)	0.169** (0.065)	0.145* (0.064)	0.158* (0.063)
Age (c.)	−0.021*** (0.005)	−0.038*** (0.005)	−0.033*** (0.005)	−0.006 (0.004)	−0.008 (0.005)	−0.006 (0.005)	−0.008 (0.005)	0.009* (0.004)	−0.001 (0.005)	−0.001 (0.004)	0.004 (0.005)	−0.003 (0.004)
Number of children (ref. = None)												
1 child	−0.231** (0.083)	−0.263** (0.086)	−0.344*** (0.087)	−0.104 (0.086)	−0.601*** (0.102)	−0.621*** (0.100)	−0.672*** (0.098)	−0.543*** (0.093)	−0.541*** (0.102)	0.158* (0.078)	0.010 (0.084)	−0.032 (0.080)
2 children	−0.336*** (0.079)	−0.510*** (0.084)	−0.541*** (0.085)	−0.307*** (0.084)	−0.774*** (0.092)	−0.850*** (0.104)	−0.855*** (0.105)	−0.683*** (0.101)	−0.660*** (0.107)	0.162* (0.074)	−0.038 (0.079)	−0.010 (0.076)
One-way commuting distance (ref. = Less than 20 km)												
Between 20 and 40 km commute	−0.170* (0.084)	−0.041 (0.087)	−0.030 (0.091)	−0.127 (0.084)	−0.089 (0.090)	−0.100 (0.100)	−0.074 (0.100)	−0.078 (0.092)	−0.023 (0.106)	−0.073 (0.076)	−0.097 (0.081)	−0.108 (0.079)
More than 40 km commute	0.009 (0.092)	0.063 (0.089)	0.161 (0.100)	0.000 (0.087)	0.100 (0.098)	0.141 (0.101)	0.068 (0.099)	−0.001 (0.091)	0.006 (0.102)	−0.101 (0.076)	0.075 (0.082)	0.008 (0.079)
Relevant working experience (ref. = Less than 1 year)												
Between 1 and 5 years of experience	0.297** (0.094)	0.233* (0.094)	0.333** (0.101)	0.313** (0.095)	0.248* (0.103)	0.341** (0.102)	0.369*** (0.102)	0.162† (0.087)	0.299** (0.095)	0.209* (0.081)	0.252** (0.091)	0.273** (0.083)
More than 5 years of experience	0.429*** (0.094)	0.420*** (0.099)	0.439*** (0.099)	0.513*** (0.095)	0.476*** (0.096)	0.555*** (0.103)	0.412*** (0.100)	0.347*** (0.093)	0.453*** (0.103)	0.224* (0.086)	0.473*** (0.093)	0.389*** (0.084)
Extracurricular activities (ref. = None)												
Volunteering	0.138† (0.083)	−0.024 (0.087)	−0.003 (0.092)	0.267** (0.082)	0.132 (0.096)	0.129 (0.097)	0.165 (0.100)	0.099 (0.095)	0.146 (0.102)	0.542*** (0.084)	0.275** (0.087)	0.208* (0.082)
Sports	0.099	0.054	0.124	0.133	0.140	0.194†	0.284**	0.203*	0.267**	0.418***	0.275**	0.129

	(0.085)	(0.089)	(0.089)	(0.087)	(0.091)	(0.102)	(0.097)	(0.087)	(0.102)	(0.086)	(0.084)	(0.079)
Preferred temporal flexibility (ref. = Not mentioned)												
Preference for fixed working hours	−0.027	−0.117	−0.135	−0.102	−0.205*	−0.079	−0.264*	−0.033	−0.249*	0.005	0.012	0.055
	(0.090)	(0.096)	(0.090)	(0.092)	(0.099)	(0.105)	(0.106)	(0.091)	(0.106)	(0.074)	(0.077)	(0.075)
Preference for flexible working hours	0.014	0.004	0.018	0.004	−0.115	−0.045	0.015	−0.006	0.030	0.026	−0.066	0.013
	(0.084)	(0.093)	(0.087)	(0.081)	(0.099)	(0.097)	(0.097)	(0.095)	(0.104)	(0.079)	(0.082)	(0.082)
Preference for 1 or 2 days telework (ref. = Not mentioned)												
Telework preference for work-life balance	−0.220*	−0.375***	−0.298**	−0.302**	−0.408***	−0.485***	−0.476***	−0.300**	−0.382***	−0.024	−0.092	−0.105
	(0.091)	(0.093)	(0.094)	(0.092)	(0.107)	(0.108)	(0.104)	(0.092)	(0.104)	(0.077)	(0.078)	(0.075)
Telework preference for productivity reasons	−0.101	−0.044	−0.056	−0.195*	−0.137	0.000	0.000	−0.052	0.061	−0.060	−0.048	0.023
	(0.093)	(0.093)	(0.100)	(0.085)	(0.094)	(0.100)	(0.098)	(0.087)	(0.093)	(0.074)	(0.082)	(0.077)
B. JOB CHARACTERISTICS												
Included (Yes/No)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C. RECRUITER CHARACTERISTICS												
Included (Yes/No)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2 (adjusted R^2)	0.146	0.175	0.178	0.126	0.135	0.163	0.163	0.123	0.127	0.130	0.109	0.117
	(0.129)	(0.158)	(0.161)	(0.109)	(0.118)	(0.146)	(0.146)	(0.106)	(0.110)	(0.112)	(0.092)	(0.099)
Observations	1,330											

Note. The following abbreviations are used: EAG (be eager to advance), PROM (apply for promotions in the future), ASP (have high career aspirations), COMM (be very committed to the company), SACR (be willing to make sacrifices for the job), PRIOR (prioritise work), ALOT (able to work a substantial amount), DAYS (low number of sick/personal days), AVAIL (being available to work whenever needed), SOC (social skills), SREL (self-reliance), PRODUC (productive use of time), c. (continuous variable), and ref. (reference). The presented statistics are coefficient estimates with standard errors in parentheses for the linear regression analyses discussed in Section 3.2. Standard errors are corrected for the clustering of the observations at the participant level. Intercepts are not presented. *** (**) ((*)) (((†))) indicates significance at the 0.1% (1%) ((5%)) (((10%))) significance level.

Appendix A: Additional tables

Table A1. Jobs and corresponding job characteristics used in the experiment

Job	Req. education level	Req. level of social interaction	Req. level of physical activities
Payroll and timekeeping clerk	Low	Low	Low
First-line supervisor of retail sales workers	Low	High	Low
Shipping, receiving, and inventory clerk	Low	Low	Average
First-line supervisor of housekeeping and janitorial workers	Low	High	Average
Credit analyst	High	Low	Low
Public relations specialist	High	High	Low
Industrial production manager	High	Low	Average
Meeting, convention, and event planner	High	High	Average

Note. The following abbreviations are used: req. (required). As explained in Section 2.2 regarding the pre- and post-experimental surveys, jobs were selected and categorised based on data provided by O*Net. Jobs with 'Required educational level' 'Low' in this table were selected from 'Job zone 2' and jobs with 'Required educational level' 'High' were selected from 'Job zone 4'. The qualification into 'High' and 'Low' level of 'Required social interaction' is based on the average of five O*Net variables ('selling or influencing others', 'training and teaching others', 'assisting and caring for others', 'performing for or working directly with the public', 'coordinate the work and tasks of others'): when 'Required social interaction' is classified as 'Low', the average is lower than 45 and when 'Required social interaction' is classified as 'High', the average is higher than 55. For 'Required level of physical activities', the O*Net variable 'performing general physical activities' was employed (classified as 'Low' when lower than 40 and as 'Average' when between 45 and 60).

Table A2. Signals and accompanying statement

Signal	Statement
A. ANTICIPATED ACHIEVEMENT STRIVING	
Be eager to advance	Applicants with such a profile are usually eager to advance.
Apply for further promotions in the future	Applicants with such a profile will usually still actively apply for further promotions in the future.
Have high career aspirations	Applicants with such a profile usually have high career aspirations.
B. ANTICIPATED COMMITMENT	
Be very committed to the company	Applicants with such a profile are usually very committed to the company.
Be willing to make sacrifices for the job	Applicants with such a profile are usually willing to make sacrifices for their job.
Make work a top priority	Applicants with such a profile usually make work a top priority.
C. ANTICIPATED AVAILABILITY	
The applicant will be able to work a substantial amount	Applicants with such a profile will usually be able to work a substantial amount.
The applicant will have a low number of sick/personal days	Applicants with such a profile usually take few days off from work (for personal days and/or sick days).
Being available to work whenever needed	Applicants with such a profile are usually available to work whenever needed.
D. ANTICIPATED COMPETENCE	
Social skills	Applicants with such a profile usually possess good social skills.
Self-reliance	Applicants with such a profile are usually self-reliant.
Productive use of time	Applicants with such a profile usually make productive use of their time.

Note. As explained in Section 2.3, these job perceptions are based on Heilman and Okimoto (2008) and Vinkenburg et al. (2012). The participants were asked to evaluate the fictitious applicant using these statements on an agree scale from 0 to 10 (0 represents 'completely disagree' and 10 represents 'completely agree').

Table A3. Multivariate regression analyses with hiring probability as the outcome variable

	(1)	(2)
A. APPLICANT CHARACTERISTICS		
Female	−0.023 (0.079)	−0.011 (0.079)
Age (c.)	−0.015* (0.006)	−0.016** (0.006)
Number of children (ref. = None)		
1 child	−0.272* (0.110)	−0.262* (0.109)
2 children	−0.304* (0.119)	−0.303* (0.119)
One-way commuting distance (ref. = Less than 20 km)		
Between 20 and 40 km commute	−0.285** (0.108)	−0.292** (0.108)
More than 40 km commute	−0.635*** (0.138)	−0.661*** (0.138)
Relevant working experience (ref. = Less than 1 year)		
Between 1 and 5 years of experience	0.928*** (0.142)	0.920*** (0.140)
More than 5 years of experience	1.465*** (0.142)	1.475*** (0.142)
Extracurricular activities (ref. = None)		
Volunteering	0.305** (0.113)	0.300** (0.112)
Sports	0.184 (0.119)	0.192 (0.122)
Preferred temporal flexibility (ref. = Not mentioned)		
Preference for fixed working hours	−0.077 (0.130)	−0.076 (0.130)
Preference for flexible working hours	−0.025 (0.117)	−0.020 (0.117)
Preference for 1 or 2 days telework (ref. = Not mentioned)		
Telework preference for work-life balance	−0.521*** (0.136)	−0.517*** (0.134)
Telework preference for productivity reasons	−0.208† (0.120)	−0.206† (0.120)
B. JOB CHARACTERISTICS		
Required educational level (c.)		0.127* (0.052)
Required level of social interaction (c.)		0.065 (0.060)
Required level of physical activities (c.)		0.018 (0.043)
C. RECRUITER CHARACTERISTICS		
Female		0.359 (0.273)
Age (c.)		−0.018 (0.012)

Parent			−0.207 (0.227)
Tertiary education			0.218 (0.333)
High telework importance – Participant			0.315 (0.272)
High telework importance – Organisation			0.301 (0.232)
Percentage of time evaluating applicants (c.)			0.002 (0.004)
Years of experience evaluating applicants (ref. = Less than 1 year)			
Between 1 and 5 years of experience			−0.090 (0.282)
More than 5 years of experience			−0.070 (0.295)
R^2 (adjusted R^2)	0.105 (0.096)		0.162 (0.145)
Observations		1,330	

Note. The following abbreviations are used: c. (continuous variable) and ref. (reference). The presented statistics are coefficient estimates with standard errors in parentheses for the linear regression analyses discussed in Section 3.1. Standard errors are corrected for the clustering of the observations at the participant level. Intercepts are not presented. *** (**) ((*)) (((†))) indicates significance at the 0.1% (1%) ((5%)) (((10%))) significance level.

Table A4. Multivariate regression analyses with interview probability as the outcome variable using a restricted sample of participants with experience in the evaluated job

	(1)	(2)
A. APPLICANT CHARACTERISTICS		
Female	−0.127 (0.093)	−0.121 (0.094)
Age (c.)	−0.023** (0.007)	−0.024** (0.007)
Number of children (ref. = None)		
1 child	−0.097 (0.122)	−0.072 (0.119)
2 children	−0.177 (0.148)	−0.163 (0.148)
One-way commuting distance (ref. = Less than 20 km)		
Between 20 and 40 km commute	−0.251† (0.136)	−0.274* (0.136)
More than 40 km commute	−0.795*** (0.168)	−0.799*** (0.165)
Relevant working experience (ref. = Less than 1 year)		
Between 1 and 5 years of experience	1.028*** (0.163)	1.042*** (0.164)
More than 5 years of experience	1.499*** (0.166)	1.508*** (0.166)
Extracurricular activities (ref. = None)		
Volunteering	0.135 (0.131)	0.141 (0.131)
Sports	0.088 (0.143)	0.114 (0.143)
Preferred temporal flexibility (ref. = Not mentioned)		
Preference for fixed working hours	−0.031 (0.163)	−0.048 (0.161)
Preference for flexible working hours	0.057 (0.135)	0.051 (0.136)
Preference for 1 or 2 days telework (ref. = Not mentioned)		
Telework preference for work-life balance	−0.551** (0.175)	−0.546** (0.173)
Telework preference for productivity reasons	−0.338* (0.142)	−0.330* (0.142)
B. JOB CHARACTERISTICS		
Required educational level (c.)		0.061 (0.060)
Required level of social interaction (c.)		0.189* (0.075)
Required level of physical activities (c.)		−0.064 (0.048)
C. RECRUITER CHARACTERISTICS		
Female		0.316 (0.345)

Age (c.)			−0.002 (0.016)
Parent			−0.591† (0.312)
Tertiary education			0.899* (0.409)
High telework importance – Participant			0.255 (0.326)
High telework importance – Organisation			−0.060 (0.272)
Percentage of time evaluating applicants (c.)			0.011* (0.005)
Years of experience evaluating applicants (ref. = Less than 1 year)			
Between 1 and 5 years of experience			−0.233 (0.325)
More than 5 years of experience			−0.153 (0.312)
R^2 (adjusted R^2)	0.112 (0.099)		0.184 (0.162)
Observations		980	

Note. The following abbreviations are used: c. (continuous variable) and ref. (reference). The presented statistics are coefficient estimates with standard errors in parentheses for the linear regression analyses discussed in Section 3.1. Standard errors are corrected for the clustering of the observations at the participant level. Intercepts are not presented. *** (**) ((*)) (((†))) indicates significance at the 0.1% (1%) ((5%)) (((10%))) significance level.

Table A5. Multivariate regression analyses with interview probability as the outcome variable using a restricted sample of participants with a lower-than-average social desirability tendency

	(1)	(2)
A. APPLICANT CHARACTERISTICS		
Female	−0.041 (0.111)	−0.043 (0.112)
Age (c.)	−0.023** (0.008)	−0.025** (0.008)
Number of children (ref. = None)		
1 child	−0.143 (0.136)	−0.165 (0.131)
2 children	0.005 (0.163)	0.021 (0.163)
One-way commuting distance (ref. = Less than 20 km)		
Between 20 and 40 km commute	−0.324* (0.160)	−0.358* (0.159)
More than 40 km commute	−0.839*** (0.198)	−0.870*** (0.194)
Relevant working experience (ref. = Less than 1 year)		
Between 1 and 5 years of experience	1.094*** (0.197)	1.061*** (0.197)
More than 5 years of experience	1.524*** (0.184)	1.552*** (0.183)
Extracurricular activities (ref. = None)		
Volunteering	0.112 (0.165)	0.080 (0.166)
Sports	0.112 (0.171)	0.122 (0.169)
Preferred temporal flexibility (ref. = Not mentioned)		
Preference for fixed working hours	−0.202 (0.192)	−0.181 (0.189)
Preference for flexible working hours	−0.009 (0.158)	−0.019 (0.153)
Preference for 1 or 2 days telework (ref. = Not mentioned)		
Telework preference for work-life balance	−0.601** (0.201)	−0.598** (0.193)
Telework preference for productivity reasons	−0.250 (0.161)	−0.275† (0.159)
B. JOB CHARACTERISTICS		
Required educational level (c.)		0.141† (0.084)
Required level of social interaction (c.)		0.163 (0.100)
Required level of physical activities (c.)		−0.028 (0.057)
C. RECRUITER CHARACTERISTICS		
Female		0.246 (0.437)

Age (c.)			0.002 (0.019)
Parent			−0.895* (0.358)
Tertiary education			1.309** (0.449)
High telework importance – Participant			0.153 (0.392)
High telework importance – Organisation			0.380 (0.348)
Percentage of time evaluating applicants (c.)			0.006 (0.006)
Years of experience evaluating applicants (ref. = Less than 1 year)			
Between 1 and 5 years of experience			−0.048 (0.451)
More than 5 years of experience			−0.169 (0.447)
R^2 (adjusted R^2)	0.108 (0.092)		0.195 (0.168)
Observations		805	

Note. Only participants with a socially desirable answering tendency below the sample mean (.398) are included in these analyses. The following abbreviations are used: c. (continuous variable) and ref. (reference). The presented statistics are coefficient estimates with standard errors in parentheses for the linear regression analyses discussed in Section 3.1. Standard errors are corrected for the clustering of the observations at the participant level. Intercepts are not presented. *** (**) ((*)) (((†))) indicates significance at the 0.1% (1%) ((5%)) (((10%))) significance level.

Table A6. Multivariate regression analyses with interview probability as outcome variable – Moderation analyses

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
A. APPLICANT CHARACTERISTICS				
Female	−0.175 (0.190)	−0.073 (0.082)	−0.096 (0.085)	−0.147 (0.194)
Age (c.)	−0.015 (0.011)	−0.016** (0.006)	−0.016** (0.006)	−0.015 (0.011)
Number of children (ref. = None)				
1 child	−0.101 (0.230)	−0.206* (0.101)	−0.236* (0.100)	−0.208 (0.226)
2 children	−0.116 (0.237)	−0.214† (0.119)	−0.253* (0.123)	−0.162 (0.237)
One-way commuting distance (ref. = Less than 20 km)				
Between 20 and 40 km commute	−0.446* (0.207)	−0.274* (0.111)	−0.256* (0.110)	−0.452* (0.208)
More than 40 km commute	−0.911*** (0.216)	−0.829*** (0.137)	−0.793*** (0.141)	−0.889*** (0.218)
Relevant working experience (ref. = Less than 1 year)				
Between 1 and 5 years of experience	1.325*** (0.254)	0.975*** (0.142)	0.972*** (0.143)	1.378*** (0.254)
More than 5 years of experience	1.637*** (0.223)	1.468*** (0.137)	1.455*** (0.136)	1.708*** (0.220)
Extracurricular activities (ref. = None)				
Volunteering	−0.015 (0.224)	0.257* (0.118)	0.277* (0.117)	−0.005 (0.226)
Sports	0.200 (0.245)	0.164 (0.124)	0.154 (0.124)	0.199 (0.244)
Preferred temporal flexibility (ref. = Not mentioned)				
Preference for fixed working hours	−0.394 (0.251)	−0.116 (0.141)	−0.114 (0.139)	−0.394 (0.248)
Preference for flexible working hours	0.008 (0.212)	0.006 (0.121)	−0.006 (0.118)	−0.004 (0.212)
Preference for 1 or 2 days telework (ref. = Not mentioned)				
Telework preference for work-life balance	−1.607† (0.878)	0.228 (0.501)	−2.220* (0.974)	−2.070 (1.292)
Telework preference for productivity reasons	0.950 (0.870)	0.942† (0.538)	−0.932 (0.774)	1.450 (1.214)
Telework preference for PROD × Female	0.152 (0.296)			0.104 (0.300)
Telework preference for WLB × Female	0.209 (0.324)			0.206 (0.335)
Telework preference for PROD × Age (c.)	−0.025 (0.018)			−0.024 (0.018)
Telework preference for WLB × Age (c.)	0.017 (0.017)			0.017 (0.016)
Telework preference for PROD × 1 child	−0.214 (0.353)			−0.145 (0.352)
Telework preference for PROD × 2 children	−0.326 (0.340)			−0.275 (0.341)
Telework preference for WLB × 1 child	0.007 (0.404)			0.012 (0.406)

Telework preference for WLB × 2 children	−0.003 (0.396)			−0.059 (0.400)
Telework preference for PROD × Between 20 and 40 kilometres commute	0.361 (0.330)			0.395 (0.335)
Telework preference for PROD × More than 40 kilometres commute	0.281 (0.331)			0.279 (0.340)
Telework preference for WLB × Between 20 and 40 kilometres commute	0.231 (0.360)			0.230 (0.361)
Telework preference for WLB × More than 40 kilometres commute	−0.006 (0.359)			−0.011 (0.365)
Telework preference for PROD × Between 1 and 5 years of experience	−1.010** (0.370)			−1.068** (0.373)
Telework preference for PROD × More than 5 years of experience	−0.389 (0.313)			−0.469 (0.315)
Telework preference for WLB × Between 1 and 5 years of experience	−0.159 (0.364)			−0.194 (0.366)
Telework preference for WLB × More than 5 years of experience	−0.268 (0.358)			−0.323 (0.363)
Telework preference for PROD × Volunteering	0.388 (0.329)			0.411 (0.329)
Telework preference for PROD × Sports	−0.045 (0.421)			−0.081 (0.427)
Telework preference for WLB × Volunteering	0.498 (0.417)			0.506 (0.424)
Telework preference for WLB × Sports	−0.004 (0.385)			0.010 (0.390)
Telework preference for PROD × Preference for fixed working hours	0.275 (0.350)			0.239 (0.352)
Telework preference for PROD × Preference for flexible working hours	−0.208 (0.372)			−0.268 (0.379)
Telework preference for WLB × Preference for fixed working hours	0.584 (0.403)			0.639 (0.404)
Telework preference for WLB × Preference for flexible working hours	0.164 (0.372)			0.225 (0.379)
B. JOB CHARACTERISTICS				
Required educational level (c.)	0.064 (0.055)	0.026 (0.062)	0.066 (0.055)	0.021 (0.062)
Required level of social interaction (c.)	0.088 (0.065)	0.169* (0.070)	0.086 (0.064)	0.169* (0.070)
Required level of physical activities (c.)	−0.040 (0.043)	0.024 (0.048)	−0.038 (0.044)	0.014 (0.047)
Telework preference for PROD × Required educational level (c.)		0.043 (0.059)		0.049 (0.059)
Telework preference for WLB × Required educational level (c.)		0.077 (0.062)		0.079 (0.065)
Telework preference for PROD × Required level of social interaction (c.)		−0.134† (0.075)		−0.125 (0.077)
Telework preference for WLB × Required level of social interaction (c.)		−0.114 (0.079)		−0.133 (0.084)
Telework preference for PROD × Required level of physical activities (c.)		−0.108* (0.048)		−0.085† (0.048)
Telework preference for WLB × Required level of physical activities (c.)		−0.089 (0.058)		−0.075 (0.058)
C. RECRUITER CHARACTERISTICS				
Female	0.242 (0.315)	0.244 (0.315)	0.162 (0.330)	0.232 (0.327)
Age (c.)	−0.008 (0.014)	−0.009 (0.014)	−0.023 (0.015)	−0.020 (0.015)

Parent	−0.342 (0.257)	−0.361 (0.254)	−0.020 (0.274)	−0.074 (0.275)
Tertiary education	0.364 (0.358)	0.377 (0.351)	0.059 (0.336)	0.003 (0.336)
High telework importance – Participant	0.359 (0.293)	0.348 (0.295)	0.062 (0.313)	0.154 (0.312)
High telework importance – Organisation	0.064 (0.242)	0.057 (0.242)	−0.066 (0.288)	−0.078 (0.284)
Percentage of time evaluating applicants (c.)	0.006 (0.004)	0.007 (0.005)	0.010* (0.005)	0.010* (0.005)
Years of experience evaluating applicants (ref. = Less than 1 year)				
Between 1 and 5 years of experience	−0.034 (0.311)	−0.054 (0.312)	−0.015 (0.330)	0.100 (0.321)
More than 5 years of experience	0.018 (0.310)	0.017 (0.315)	0.153 (0.346)	0.250 (0.336)
Telework preference for PROD × Female			−0.130 (0.393)	−0.226 (0.379)
Telework preference for WLB × Female			0.404 (0.422)	0.343 (0.417)
Telework preference for PROD × Age (c.)			0.013 (0.014)	0.011 (0.014)
Telework preference for WLB × Age (c.)			0.032† (0.017)	0.029† (0.018)
Telework preference for PROD × Parent			−0.639* (0.260)	−0.536* (0.268)
Telework preference for WLB × Parent			−0.397 (0.315)	−0.324 (0.325)
Telework preference for PROD × Tertiary education			0.399 (0.408)	0.481 (0.406)
Telework preference for WLB × Tertiary education			0.598 (0.470)	0.588 (0.491)
Telework preference for PROD × High telework importance – Participant			0.704* (0.289)	0.571* (0.291)
Telework preference for WLB × High telework importance – Participant			0.205 (0.326)	0.021 (0.329)
Telework preference for PROD × High telework importance – Organisation			0.019 (0.293)	0.072 (0.286)
Telework preference for WLB × High telework importance – Organisation			0.346 (0.339)	0.394 (0.337)
Telework preference for PROD × Percentage of time evaluating applicants (c.)			−0.006 (0.005)	−0.007 (0.005)
Telework preference for WLB × Percentage of time evaluating applicants (c.)			−0.003 (0.005)	−0.004 (0.005)
Telework preference for PROD × Between 1 and 5 years of experience			0.286 (0.401)	0.144 (0.399)
Telework preference for PROD × More than 5 years of experience			0.088 (0.390)	−0.092 (0.388)
Telework preference for WLB × Between 1 and 5 years of experience			−0.342 (0.488)	−0.552 (0.479)
Telework preference for WLB × More than 5 years of experience			−0.475 (0.520)	−0.587 (0.517)
R^2 (adjusted R^2)	0.162 (0.129)	0.153 (0.132)	0.158 (0.129)	0.179 (0.130)
Observations			1,330	

Note. The following abbreviations are used: c. (continuous variable), ref. (reference), WLB (work-life balance), and PROD (productivity). The presented statistics are coefficient estimates with standard errors in parentheses for the linear regression analyses discussed in Section 3.1. Standard errors are corrected for the clustering of the observations at the participant level. Intercepts are not presented. *** (**) ((*)) (((†))) indicates significance at the 0.1% (1%) ((5%)) (((10%))) significance level.

Table A7. Multivariate regression analyses with the signals clustered on group level as outcome variables

	Anticipated achievement striving	Anticipated commitment	Anticipated availability	Anticipated competence
A. APPLICANT CHARACTERISTICS				
Female	−0.154* (0.065)	−0.140* (0.062)	−0.280*** (0.069)	0.157** (0.055)
Age (c.)	−0.030*** (0.005)	−0.007 (0.004)	0.000 (0.004)	0.000 (0.004)
Number of children (ref. = None)				
1 child	−0.280*** (0.078)	−0.442*** (0.085)	−0.585*** (0.086)	0.045 (0.070)
2 children	−0.462*** (0.073)	−0.644*** (0.078)	−0.733*** (0.091)	0.038 (0.065)
One-way commuting distance (ref. = Less than 20 km)				
Between 20 and 40 km commute	−0.080 (0.079)	−0.105 (0.079)	−0.058 (0.086)	−0.092 (0.069)
More than 40 km commute	0.078 (0.085)	0.080 (0.082)	0.024 (0.085)	−0.006 (0.068)
Relevant working experience (ref. = Less than 1 year)				
Between 1 and 5 years of experience	0.288** (0.087)	0.301** (0.088)	0.277** (0.083)	0.245** (0.074)
More than 5 years of experience	0.429*** (0.089)	0.515*** (0.086)	0.404*** (0.085)	0.362*** (0.078)
Extracurricular activities (ref. = None)				
Volunteering	0.037 (0.078)	0.176* (0.080)	0.137 (0.087)	0.342*** (0.072)
Sports	0.092 (0.080)	0.156† (0.080)	0.251** (0.084)	0.274*** (0.072)
Preferred temporal flexibility (ref. = Not mentioned)				
Preference for fixed working hours	−0.093 (0.085)	−0.129 (0.086)	−0.182* (0.088)	0.024 (0.066)
Preference for flexible working hours	0.012 (0.080)	−0.052 (0.080)	0.013 (0.086)	−0.009 (0.071)
Preference for 1 or 2 days telework (ref. = Not mentioned)				
Telework preference for work-life balance	−0.297*** (0.084)	−0.399*** (0.092)	−0.386*** (0.089)	−0.074 (0.067)
Telework preference for productivity reasons	−0.067 (0.086)	−0.111 (0.082)	0.003 (0.081)	−0.029 (0.066)
B. JOB CHARACTERISTICS				
Included (Yes/No)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C. RECRUITER CHARACTERISTICS				
Included (Yes/No)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R^2 (adjusted R^2)	0.181 (0.165)	0.159 (0.143)	0.161 (0.144)	0.128 (0.111)
Observations	1,330			

Note. The following abbreviations are used: c. (continuous variable) and ref. (reference). The presented statistics are coefficient estimates with standard errors in parentheses for the linear regression analyses discussed in Section 3.2. Standard errors are corrected for the clustering of the observations at the participant level. Intercepts are not presented. *** (**) ((*)) (((†))) indicates significance at the 0.1% (1%) ((5%)) (((10%))) significance level.