

Diversity and Unconscious Bias In the Hiring Process – Selected References

Bertrand, Marianne and Sendhil Mullainathan, “Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field experiment on labor market discrimination,” *American Economic Review* 94.4 (2004): 991-1013.

Studies race in the labor market by sending fictitious resumes to help-wanted ads in Boston and Chicago newspapers. To manipulate perceived race, resumes are randomly assigned African-American or White-sounding names. White names receive 50 percent more callbacks for interviews. Callbacks are also more responsive to resume quality for White names than for African-American ones. The racial gap is uniform across occupation, industry, and employer size. Concludes that differential treatment by race still appears to be prominent in the U.S. labor market.

Goldin, C., & Rouse, C. “Orchestrating impartiality: The impact of ‘blind’ auditions on female musicians.” *American Economic Review*, 90 (2000): 715-741.

A study of leading symphony orchestras that implemented “blind” auditions, whereby candidates played their instruments behind a screen that masked their identity, found that blind auditions accounted for an increase in the percentage of orchestra musicians who were female. In fact, the screen increased— by 50 percent – the probability that a woman would be advanced through certain preliminary audition rounds, and increased by several-fold the likelihood that a woman would be selected for the final audition round.

Moss-Racusin, C. et al., “Science faculty’s subtle gender biases favor male students,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)* 109.41 (2012): 16474-16479.

In a randomized double-blind study (n = 127), science faculty from research intensive universities rated the application materials of a student – who was randomly assigned either a male or female name – for a laboratory manager position. Faculty participants rated the male applicant as significantly more competent and hireable than the (identical) female applicant. These participants also selected a higher starting salary and offered more career mentoring to the male applicant. Female and male faculty were equally likely to exhibit bias against the female student.

Nicklin, J.M. and Roch, S.G. “Biases Influencing Recommendation Letter Contents: Physical Attractiveness and Gender.” *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 38 (2008): 3053-3074.

This study investigated two types of letters of recommendation – those that inflated a candidate’s skills and abilities, and those that did not – and examined whether gender and physical appearance influence readers’ perceptions of such letters. The study found that applicants with inflated letters of recommendation, regardless of gender, were more likely to be hired and were predicted (by selection committees) to become more successful, even when readers recognized that the inflated letter contained exaggerations. Additionally, when search committees received a non-inflated letter for a gender-neutral job (i.e. a position not strongly linked to particular genders), attractive women were predicted to be most successful, as compared to male or marginally attractive female counterparts.

Pager, D. & Western, B. "Identifying discrimination at work: The use of field experiments." *Journal of Social Issues*, 68(2) (2012): 221-237.

Two field experiments used in-person "test" applicants to study racial and ethnic discrimination in the low-wage labor markets of Milwaukee and New York City. Test applicants were not only assigned fictitious resumes that indicated identical educational attainment, work experience, and neighborhood of residence, but also passed through a training program designed to ensure uniform behavior in job interviews. Test applicants from the two studies visited nearly 700 employers in the two cities. White applicants received positive responses – either a callback or a job offer – at roughly twice the rate of equally qualified Black applicants.

Steinpreis, R., K. Anders and D. Ritzke, "The Impact of Gender on the Review of the Curricula Vitae of Job Applicants and Tenure Candidates: A National Empirical Study," *Sex Roles: a Journal of Research* 41.7-8 (1999): 509-528.

In a national study, 238 academic psychologists (118 male, 120 female) evaluated a resume randomly assigned a male or a female name. Both male and female participants gave the male applicant better evaluations for teaching, research, and service experience and were more likely to hire the male than the female applicant.

Trix, F. and C. Psenka, "Exploring the color of glass: letters of recommendation for female and male medical faculty," *Discourse and Society* 14.2 (2003): 191-220.

This study examines over 300 letters of recommendation for medical faculty at a large American medical school, and finds that letters written for female applicants differ systematically from those written for male applicants in the extremes of length, the percentages lacking in basic features, the percentages with "doubt raisers," and the frequency of mention of status terms.