


Leadership Excellence and Gender in Organizations

White-collar hiring-practices: Gender-based discrimination based on gendered attributes in job advertisements

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White-collar Hiring-Practices: Gender-based Discrimination Based on Gendered Attributes in Job Advertisements

Abstract

Most research using field experiments that investigate discrimination during early hiring processes finds little to no discrimination against women in entry-level, mid-status white-collar jobs. In fact, some studies show that women may actually be advantaged. However, nearly all of this work focuses on disparate treatment occurring at the occupational/job title level. Using data derived from comparative correspondence audits of 1,522 jobs (N=3,044 résumés) and content coded analyses of over 1,522 job-postings, this article analyzes variations in early hiring practices by white-collar occupational categories and then, importantly, extends analysis to gendered attributes emphasized in job advertisements. Consistent with prior research I find no discrimination against female applicants at the occupational category level; however, challenging previous work, I find discrimination against female applicants based on the gendered attributes emphasized in the job ads. Specifically, I find that employers favor male applicants in two (finance and administrative support) of the four white-collar jobs tested when employers emphasize the necessity of masculine attributes to succeed in these jobs. This research highlights the necessity of creative methodologies to capture more covert forms of discrimination that may be particularly present in white-collar settings. I conclude by discussing how this form of discrimination potentially contributes to job-segregation processes and broader gender inequality.