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Economix

Explaining the Science of Everyday Life

January 20, 2010, 10:02 am

Interviews for Joan, but Not for John

By [CATHERINE RAMPPELL](#)



Alan Markfield/Night & Day Pictures Actresses in the movie “Waitress.”

Men may be discriminated against in hiring for female-dominated jobs, a [new working paper](#) from Australia finds.

Alison L. Booth and Andrew Leigh, both of Australian National University, sent out applications for several thousand jobs in 2007, when the labor market was tight and unemployment was low. The jobs were all in four female-dominated professions: waiting on tables, data entry, customer service and sales.

The researchers created four sets of identical résumés, some with women’s names at the top and others with men’s names, and submitted them through a major job-finding site. The résumés with women’s names received many more responses, the authors write:

The typical female applicant received a callback 32 percent of the time, while the typical male candidate received a callback 25 percent of the time. Consequently, an average male candidate would have had to submit 28 percent more applications in order to receive the same number of callbacks.

The gender differences in callback rates varied depending on the job. For table-service and data-entry jobs — which across the Australian economy are 80 and 85 percent female-held positions, respectively — the gap between women’s and men’s callback rates was very large. The differences were smaller for customer service and sales positions, which are 68 and 69 percent female-held jobs, and appeared to be statistically insignificant.

What accounts for this discrimination? The authors write that their results may reflect gendered expectations of candidates:

If certain jobs are perceived as more appropriate for women, male applicants may be (implicitly or explicitly) evaluated less favorably because they do not fit society's prescriptions about what is appropriate for men.

Previous studies have found a pro-female bias in secretary applications in the [United States \(in the 1970s\)](#) and [Britain \(in the 2000s\)](#).

Perhaps the best-known economic experiment of this type, however, involved sending out identical résumés, some with stereotypically black-sounding names and others with stereotypically white-sounding names (Jamal versus Greg, for example). In that [study](#), conducted by Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan, the white candidates were more likely to get callbacks.

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[Alison L. Booth](#), [Andrew Leigh](#), [discrimination](#), [women in the workforce](#)

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And now, jobs for the girls

Ben Schneiders

January 25, 2010 - 12:00AM

SOMETIMES it helps to be a Jennifer or a Lisa in the workplace rather than a Martin or an Andrew.

While women are paid considerably less than men and suffer discrimination, in some jobs it appears it is easier to get in the door if you are a woman.

A study by Australian National University economists Alison Booth and Andrew Leigh found "substantial discrimination" against males in jobs that women dominate.

The economists sent thousands of job applications to four female-dominated occupations.

For applications with male names the average call-back rate was 25 per cent - for candidates with female names the call-back rate was, on average, 32 per cent.

"Consequently an average male candidate would have had to submit 28 per cent more applications to receive the same number of call-backs," the paper said.

Professor Leigh said it appeared managers and employers were responding to a "societal stereotype" against men doing certain jobs.

The level of bias was found only in jobs where the workforce was 80 per cent or more female - in this case "data entry" jobs at workplaces such as an airline, bank and charity and "wait staff" positions at places such as cafes and hotels.

In sales, where nearly 70 per cent of the workforce is female, there was no significant bias, the paper found.

Professor Leigh said it did not seem to matter whether the employer or human resources manager was male or female in not calling back a candidate. Rather the stereotype seemed to persist no matter their gender.

He said it was likely the stereotype would cut the other way for a female bricklayer or female engineer.

This story was found at: <http://www.theage.com.au/national/and-now-jobs-for-the-girls-20100124-msl6.html>