

Gender-neutral hiring of junior scholars

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Job-ads often include the clause:

“Our institution values equality. If scores are equal among the top two candidates, the institution is committed to hiring a woman”

This policy requires a fair assessment of candidates’ skills to promote equality without efficiency loss. Can external evaluators provide unbiased assessments? Is the evaluation affected by the presence of such clauses?

Our hypotheses

H1: External evaluators reproduce existing gender biases in their assessment of candidates.

H2: Gender bias is larger when institutions enact affirmative action policies favoring underrepresented candidates.

H3: This gender bias is lower for applications signaling academic excellence, and in female dominated fields.

Experimental design

Participants evaluate 2 sets of 3 candidates each

Outcomes:

(1) Competence, (2) Invitation (y/n), (3) Ranking

Treatments:

- Hiring commitment (HC) of institution (lack vs strong, between subjects only)
- Gender composition and quality of CV

Candidates:

Candidates are presented using short bios
Each bio describes 2 candidates (1 man & 1 woman)
7 bios: 1-3 very high achievements, 4-7 lower.

Gender is conveyed through
-- Randomly assigned Polish names
-- Gender markers (nouns, pronouns, verbs)

Sample

Online survey among academics from Poland
1023 participants → 6156 evaluations

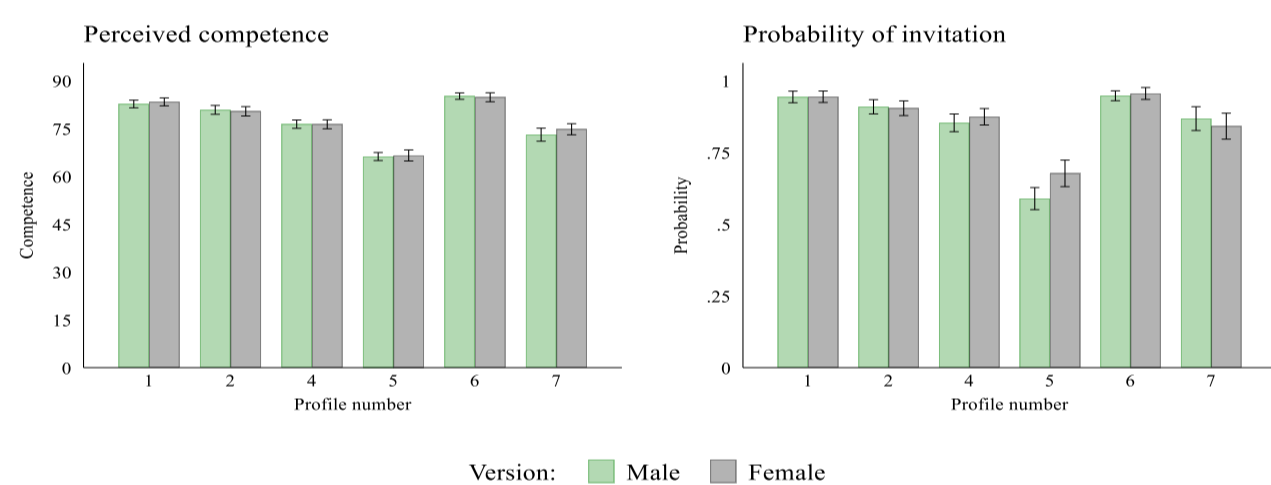
Who joined the experiment?

30% female academics, 69% experience in recruitment,
70% tenured or higher

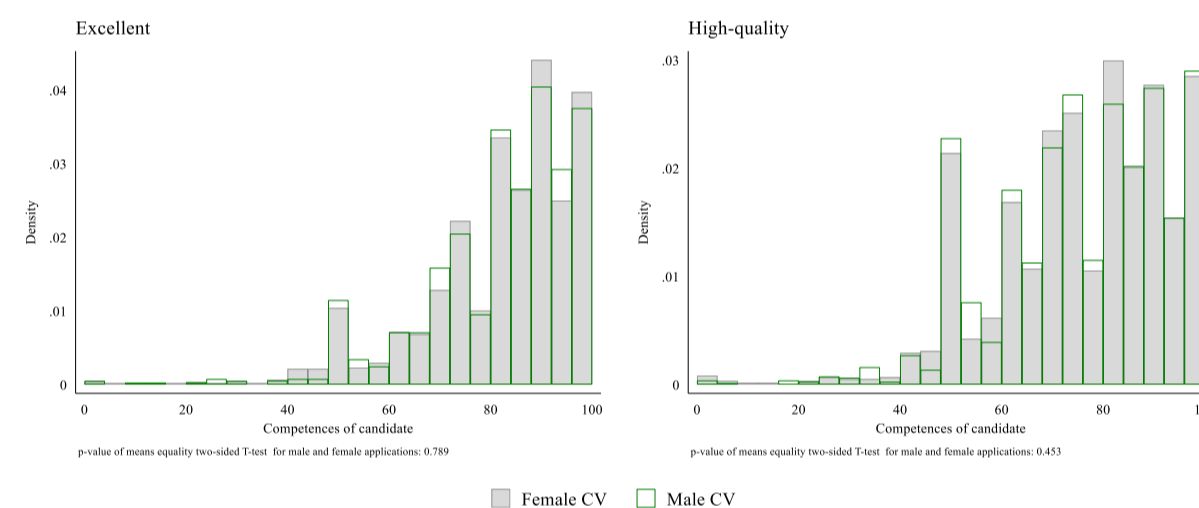
Findings

H1: External evaluators produce unbiased revisions of candidates

* Averages are identical across resume versions

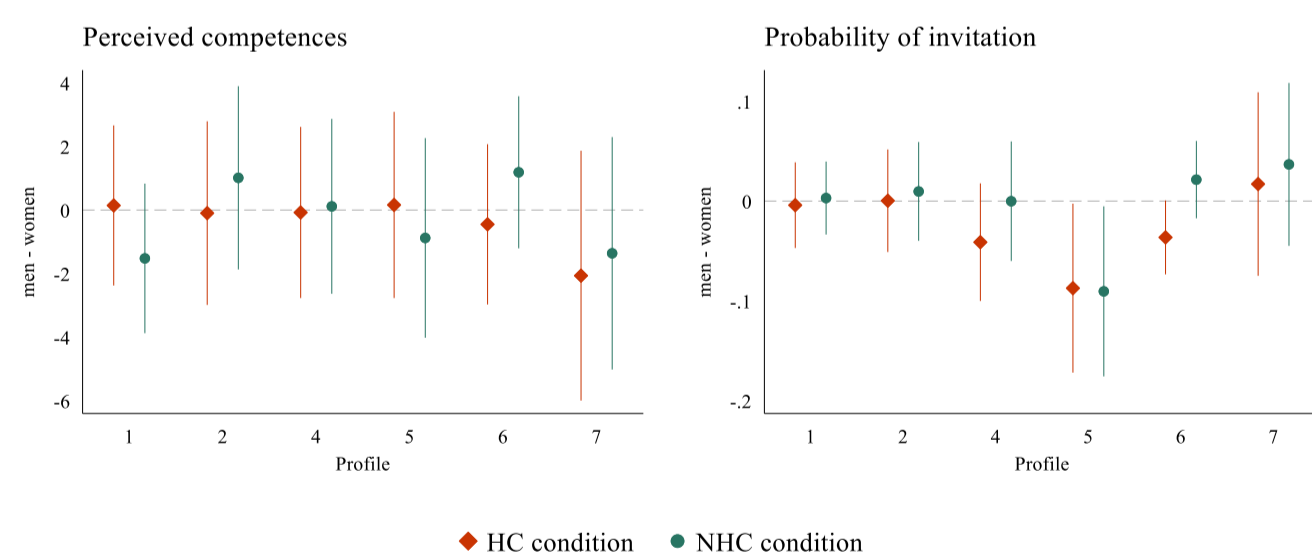


* The distribution of assessments is the same across versions

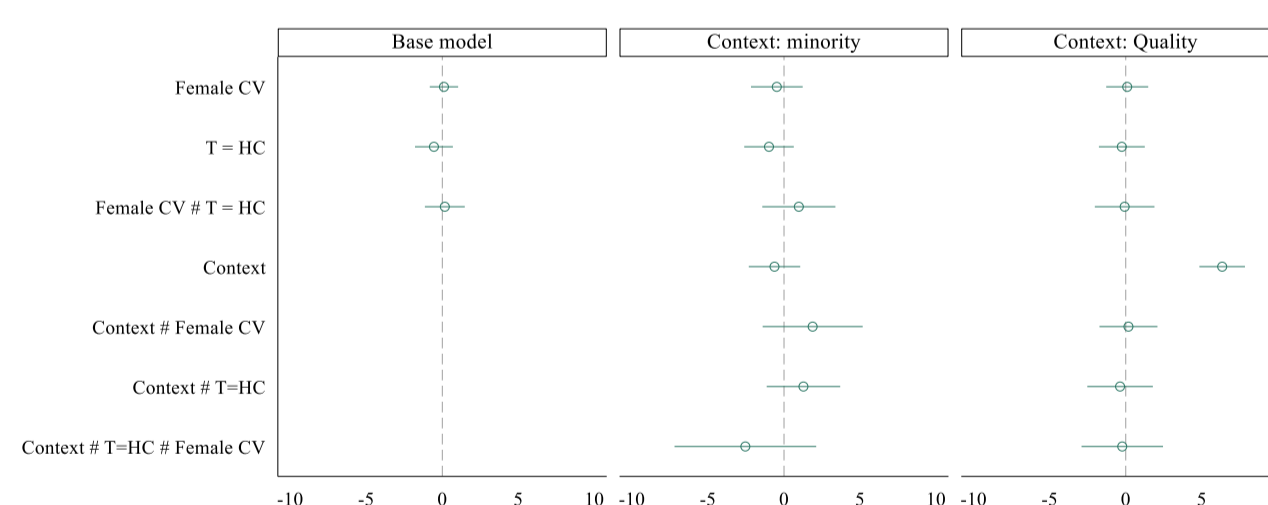


H2 & H3: Hiring clauses and contextual factors did not impact evaluations

* Gender gaps across institutional messages



* Regression results



Results robust to...

- Excluding potentially inattentive respondents
 - * who had too fast or too slow answers.
 - * who provided contradicting evaluations.
 - * who gave same score (100) to all bios
- Heterogeneity across respondents based on personal characteristics
 - * each gender had a slight preference for same gender
 - * some female preference in medical and natural sciences
- Alternative estimation methods (FE, FD, Tobit)
- Excluding outlier evaluators / scores
 - * outliers were overall rare, but somehow more frequent for women

Conclusion and next steps

External experts provided unbiased assessment of job market candidates.

Evaluators did not rely on hiring clauses when assessing candidates .

Implementation requires more research on

- Information design: how to produce comparable bios
- Reference points / benchmarks for each expert