

Are Employers Happy to Hire Happy Candidates? Happiness and Employability Sources

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Abstract:

The literature demonstrates that while employee happiness has been shown to influence labor productivity, sales, and profits directly, including a happiness statement in an applicant's CV results in increased callback only for men. This paper explores gender-based discrimination through the lens of message design in impression management research, labor market practices, and happiness science. Employing a two-stage field experiment, this study probes the labor market's receptivity to the attribution of happiness responsibility in applicants. CVs with two happiness statements - corporate and personal - were dispatched to 634 job postings in economics, finance, and budgeting. Results from the within-subjects stage indicate that including the corporate happiness responsibility statement significantly elevated the number of callbacks for both genders. Conversely, the between-subjects stage revealed that personal happiness responsibility statements significantly boosted callback rates exclusively for males. These findings are consistent for three business objective factors: company type, location, and years of required experience. Moreover, the results have practical implications for both job seekers and employers in various industries.