The (Perceived) Cost of Being Female: An Experimental Investigation of Strategic Responses to Discrimination

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Abstract:

Many fields like economics have an underrepresentation of women. This is not an issue if women simply have different preferences than men; however, it is a concern if women are selecting out of certain careers because they expect to be discriminated against. In this study, we determine whether women can accurately predict how much discrimination they will face when applying to stereotypically male jobs. We designed an experiment where we recruited individuals from an online job platform, Amazon Mechanical Turk, to act as workers and employers. Workers sent their resumes to employers who were looking to hire someone for a male-oriented task. However, before the resumes were sent to the employers, workers had the opportunity to pay to remove their gender from their resume and make the hiring process gender-blind. We find that women were more interested in removing gender than men, but they were underestimating how much discrimination they would face from employers in this experiment.