

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

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Abstract:

The sources of occupational gender segregation and wage gaps may be due to women applying less than men or women being discriminated against during the hiring process. I estimate how much discrimination job applicants expect to face by giving them the opportunity to include or exclude gender from their resumes in an online experiment. On average, men were willing to forfeit 9.4% of their earnings from being hired to use resumes that included gender while women were willing to forfeit 10.0% of their earnings to use resumes that excluded gender. However, workers did not earn significantly more when they included rather than excluded their gender. Therefore, both men and women overestimated the cost of being female in this study, suggesting that men (women) apply for stereotypically male jobs at higher (lower) rates than optimal.