The Impact of Pronoun Use on Job Qualification and Hiring

Kerrin Silcox, Psychology :
Advisor: Professor Mary E. Ignagni & Michael T. Vale

Introduction

Research indicates that marginalized groups members like LGBTQIA+ and women face discrimination in relation to the pronouns they use on job applications. This is due to women being traditionally stereotyped to not be good leaders and LGBTQIA+ individuals are stereotyped be weak and mentally ill.

Pronoun use has an influence on whether these individuals will be considered at all for the position or given an assistant's position over a leadership position.

In modern times, disclosing one's pronouns is becoming more prevalent thus it is important to ensure those in hiring positions do not discriminate against these individuals'

Objective

The study aims to analyze the effects of gender identity prejudice in the workplace environment. In addition, it works to investigate the effects of pronoun use on attaining different workplace positions.

Hypotheses

Leadership roles will be given to those whose gender identity aligns with their biological sex while assistant roles will be given to those whose gender identity does not align with their biological sex.

Pronoun use will cause individuals who use a pronoun aligned with their biological sex to be hired at a higher rate compared to those who use a pronoun unaligned with their biological sex.

Participants

Psychology participant pool – College age students within a Freshman 110 psychology course.
They will be provided a cover story to conceal the true objective of the study to eliminate bias.

Measures

Measures will include:
- Transphobic Attitudes
- Gender Beliefs
- Likelihood to Desirably Respond
- Interpersonal Victimhood

The Short Version of the Genderism and Transphobia Scale (Carrera-Fernandez et al., 2014; Hill & Willoughby, 2005)

This scale consists of 32 items divided into two subscales (Transphobia/ Genderism). These subscales evaluate the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral components of transphobia. Responses are on a Likert scale ranging from one 1-7 which the low being lower transphobic attitudes and high being higher transphobic attitudes.
Example Statements:
- Children should play with toys appropriate to their own sex
- I have behaved violently toward a woman because she was too masculine

The Short Version of the Gender Beliefs Scale (Brown & Gladstone, 2012)

This scale consists of 10 items measured on a 7-point scale where 1 means strongly agree and 7 means strongly disagree. As a result, scores range from 10 to 70 with a higher score showing more feminist beliefs. The purpose of this scale is to evaluate gender role ideology.
Example Statements:
- It is disrespectful to swear in the presence of a lady
- It is ridiculous for a woman to run a train and for a man to sew clothes
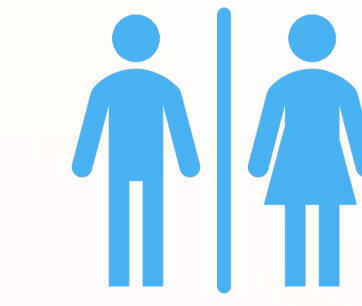
The Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR; Hart et al., 2015)

This scale consists of 40 items and the subtests of self-deceptive positivity and impression management. This scale evaluates if responses are truthful. Responses are given on a 7-point scale and one point is added for each extreme response (6 or 7) while negatively rated items are reversed. Thus, scores range from 0- 20 and the scoring is balanced
Example Statements:
- My first impressions of people usually turn out to be right
- It would be hard for me to break any of my bad habits

The Tendency for Interpersonal Victimhood Moral Elitism and Lack of Empathy Subscales (Gabay et al., 2020).

This scale of 29 items is ranked on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree. This scale evaluates one's need for recognition, moral elitism, lack of empathy, and cognition.
Example Statements:
- People often take advantage of my kindness
- I give others much more than I receive from them

Demographic Survey

A demographic survey will be constructed for this study
Example Questions:
- What is your age?
- What gender do you most identify with?

Results

*Data collection will begin in Fall 2023.