

Employers discriminate against applicants with non-English names, study suggests

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A new University of British Columbia study finds that job applicants with English names have a greater chance of getting interviews than those with Chinese, Indian or Pakistani names.

The study, which sent thousands of resumés to Canadian employers, found those with English names like Jill Wilson or John Martin received interview callbacks 40 per cent more often than identical resumes with names like Sana Khan or Lei Li.

The findings suggest that Canadians and immigrants with non-English names face discrimination by employers and help to explain why skilled immigrants arriving under Canada's point system - with university degrees and significant work experience - fare poorly in today's labour market.

"The findings suggest that a distinct foreign-sounding name may be a significant disadvantage on the job market - even if you are a second- or third-generation citizen," says UBC Economics Prof. Philip Oreopoulos, whose working paper was released today by *Metropolis BC*, part of an international immigration and diversity research network.

For the study, 6,000 mock resumés were constructed to represent recent immigrants and Canadians with and without non-English names. They were tailored to job requirements and sent to 2,000 online job postings from employers across 20 occupational categories in the Greater Toronto Area, Canada's largest and most multicultural city.

Each resumé listed a bachelor's degree and four to six years of experience, with name and domestic or foreign education and work experience randomly assigned.

"If employers are engaging in name-based discrimination, they may be contravening the Human Rights Act," says Oreopoulos, who adds that more research is needed to determine whether the behaviour is intentional. "They may also be missing out on hiring the best person for the job."

Another key finding is that employers appear to prefer Canadian work experience over Canadian education. For resúés with foreign names and education, callbacks nearly doubled with the addition of just one previous job in Canada.

"This suggests policies that prioritize Canadian experience or help new immigrants find initial domestic [work experience](#) might significantly increase their [employment](#) chances," he says.

Oreopoulos - who is affiliated with National Bureau of Economic Research and the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research - hopes the study's findings will help to improve current immigration and diversity practices.

More information: Download the study at:
riim.metropolis.net/research/working/index.html .

Source: University of British Columbia ([news](#) : [web](#))

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