

# Race and gender may not affect employer interest in resumes

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In 2004, research found that resumes submitted by people with distinctly sounding African-American names were less likely to get callbacks regarding the job. Now, new research from the University of Missouri finds no evidence of employer preferences for applicants from a particular race or gender at the initial stage of the hiring process. In re-visiting the question of how job applicants' race and gender affect employer interest in their resumes, Cory Koedel, an associate professor of economics and public policy in the MU College of Arts and Science and Truman School of Public Affairs, analyzed employer response rates to resumes that were assigned randomly selected names.

"A key difference in this research is the inclusion of Hispanic applicants," Koedel said. "To the best of our knowledge this study is the first to use a resume audit design to study labor market outcomes for Hispanic applicants in comparison to black and white applicants. This study also updates past research on resume response rates with newer data. Our data collection occurred between 2013 and 2014."

Researchers sent 9,000 fictitious resumes to employers, using last names that were likely to be interpreted as coming from black, Hispanic or white applicants. For African-American applicants the researchers used the surnames Washington and Jefferson. According to data from the U.S. Census, 90 and 75 percent of individuals with these surnames are African-American, respectively. Similarly, the researchers used the surnames Hernandez and Garcia, and Anderson and Thompson, for Hispanic and white applicants, respectively. These surnames also are strong indicators of race/ethnicity. The researchers used first names to convey gender in the study.

"The [labor market](#) is constantly evolving," Koedel said. "To best understand why race and gender based gaps exist in the market, we need to

understand at what point the gaps occur. Our analysis reveals little evidence to suggest that employers discriminate by race or [gender](#) in responding to resumes."

Rajeev Darolia, assistant professor in the Truman School of Public Affairs, co-authored the study with Koedel and other colleagues. "Race and Gender Effects on Employer Interest in Job Applicants: New Evidence from a Resume Field Experiment" was published in *Applied Economics Letters*.

Provided by University of Missouri-Columbia

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