

A Field Experiment on Ableism in the Labor Market Using a Subtle Cue of Disability

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Abstract

This study investigates bias against disabled individuals in the Swedish labor market, specifically in cleaner positions. Fictitious job applications were sent to 768 employers, with disability status and gender randomly assigned. Disability was subtly implied through participation in a labor market program for disabled individuals, minimizing perceived productivity differences. Results reveal that disabled applicants received fewer positive employer responses compared to non-disabled applicants. This discrepancy was more pronounced for disabled male applicants, suggesting a “double penalty” resulting from the intersection of gender and disability.

Keywords: correspondence testing, disabled, discrimination, employability, gender