

Gender-Targeted Job Ads in the Recruitment Process: Evidence from China

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Explicit requests for applicants of a specific gender are widely used in emerging-economy labor markets. The extent to which these requests affect the allocation of workers to jobs depends on two factors: how much workers *comply* with firms' requests in their application decisions, and how much firms *enforce* their own requests when they encounter gender-inappropriate applicants. Using internal data from a Chinese job board, we show that both compliance and enforcement are substantial, but compliance accounts for the vast majority of the gender segregation associated with employers' explicit gender requests. Using firm*occupation fixed effects for our compliance analysis and worker fixed effects for our enforcement analysis, we argue that both effects are causal, in the sense that (a) changing the gender label on an ad leads to large differences in the gender mix of applications that arrive, and (b) the same worker is much less likely to be called back when applying to a job requesting the other gender than when applying to an ad with no stated gender preference.