

# Selection and the Role of Personality

AEA-RCT Registry Trial #12473

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**Abstract:** We conduct a correspondence test in the shared housing market to determine the role of personality signaling images posted on fictitious social media profiles on selection decisions. Approximately 3,000 fictitious applications with a randomly assigned social media profile are sent to vacant room ads to determine the effect of personality information on callback rates. The profiles were created over the course of three years to credibly signal high (low) conscientiousness and high (low) agreeableness/low (high) neuroticism, respectively – reflecting the Big Five personality traits most pertinent to selection decisions in both shared housing markets and organizational settings. We conducted several randomized online pilot experiments to verify that the selected images posted on the profiles accurately represent the intended personality dimensions, while also ensuring the realism of the profiles. In addition, we can approximate whether landlords or roommates visit these profiles and exploit this information using statistics on profile visits and page impressions.

## Analysis Plan

The main research questions and hypothesis being tested in this study are:

RQ1: What role do personality traits, as displayed through social media profiles, play in the decision to call back an applicant?

H1: Applicants with social media profiles bearing traits associated with high conscientiousness (high agreeableness/low neuroticism) are more likely to receive callbacks compared to those with low conscientiousness (low agreeableness/high neuroticism).

RQ2: What is the impact of social media information on callback rates (as compared to no social media information)?

H2a: Applicants with social media information are more likely to receive callbacks if the applicant is perceived to be highly conscientious (highly agreeable/lowly neurotic) as compared to applicants without additional social media information (baseline condition), i.e., lacking the personality signal.

H2b: Callback rates are significantly lower for applicants who provide social media information when they are perceived as having low conscientiousness (low agreeableness/high neuroticism) compared to applicants who lack such information in their application (baseline condition), i.e., lacking the personality signal.

We intend to conduct the analysis to examine the main research questions/hypotheses on multiple levels: Initially, we will present the effect of the different treatment conditions on callback rates. Subsequently, we provide simple aggregate results of the number of callbacks and callback rates, categorized by the different conditions. Furthermore, we will conduct advanced regression analyses that focus on various factors such as profiles, advertisers, room and apartment characteristics, and

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social media variables. In addition, if possible, we might try to identify the personality traits of the advertisers through text analysis (or similar) and include these in the regression analyses as well. Further, we will test our results for potential heterogeneity across cities. In summary, our goal is to present results in both aggregate terms (validated with simple t- and/or rank-sum tests) and in more detailed terms, testing our hypothesis with probit regressions, to address our research questions and hypotheses.