

The impact of religious identity on hiring outcomes

AEA RCT Registry

Variables

Manipulated variables

The experimental design systematically varies five dimensions:

1. Gender (2 levels): male; female. Operationalisation through names and by explicitly mentioning this in the candidate profile.
2. Visual signal religion (3 levels): not present; present x2. Operationalisation through profile pictures:
 - Christianity: women, wearing a cross pendant; men, wearing a cross pendant.
 - Islam: women, hijab; men, beard.

For each category (combination of gender, religion, visual signal of religion), there are several photos available that have undergone pre-testing (see separate pre-registration for this). The specific photo assigned to each vignette will be randomly allocated, while ensuring that each person presented in the pictures is only presented once per block.

3. Ethnic background (3 levels): minority; majority x2. Operationalisation through names:
 - Minority: the specific ethnicity depends on the dimension of religion. For Christianity, these are Polish names, and for Islam, Turkish names.
 - Majority: Belgian names. The specific names are those from the dataset by Martiniello and Verhaeghe (2022), and we include scores for perceived religiosity and perceived social class as control variables in all regressions in which the names are used, to isolate the effect of the name on religiosity and social class.
4. Extracurricular activities (3 levels): religious volunteering; general volunteering x2. Operationalisation:
 - Religious volunteering: volunteer at church for Christianity, volunteer at mosque for Islam.
 - General volunteering: volunteer at local community centre.
5. Religion (3 levels): Islam, Christianity x2. Operationalisation by determining the specific implementation of the above vignette dimensions. If none of the dimensions indicates a minority signal (religious or ethnic), this dimension will not be reflected and recoded to no religion.

Measured variables

1. Hiring preferences
The primary outcome measures hiring preferences on an 11-point Likert scale. Recruiters are asked how likely it is that the candidate would be invited to the next round of the hiring process.
2. Perceptions of recruiters towards candidates
These variables capture perceptions related to religious identity, taste-based discrimination, and statistical discrimination. Unless otherwise specified, all perceptions are measured on an 11-point Likert scale. First, recruiters are asked to assess how religious they perceive the candidate to be and to classify the candidate as (i)

Christian, (ii) Muslim, (iii) atheist, or (iv) I do not know. Second, perceptions related to taste-based discrimination are measured by assessing whether the employer, colleagues, or clients would like to work with the candidate. Third, perceptions related to statistical discrimination are measured using the six HEXACO personality dimensions, with one work-related statement per dimension. For honesty–humility, recruiters indicate whether the candidate appears likely to take advantage of others at work if it would yield personal benefit (reverse-coded). Emotionality is measured by asking whether the candidate appears prone to worry or emotional distress when facing problems or uncertainty at work. Extraversion is assessed by asking whether the candidate appears likely to remain in the background and take little initiative in social interactions at work (reverse-coded). Agreeableness versus anger is measured by asking whether the candidate appears likely to become irritated quickly or respond angrily during disagreements at work (reverse-coded). Conscientiousness captures whether the candidate appears likely to perform tasks carefully and to value planning and accuracy at work. Openness to experience assesses whether the candidate appears open to new ideas and different ways of approaching work tasks. The order of items for the two questions on perceived religious identity are randomised in Qualtrics. Subsequently, the order of all discrimination perceptions (taste-based and statistical) are also randomised through Qualtrics.

3. Company characteristics

Company characteristics include company size, categorised as micro (<10 full-time equivalents, FTE), small (<50 FTE), medium (<250 FTE), large (≥ 250 FTE), or unknown. Profit status is recorded as profit-oriented, non-profit, or unknown. Respondents are also asked whether their main employer has a diversity policy (yes, no, or I do not know).

4. Recruiter characteristics

Recruiter characteristics include experience, demographics, religious identity, trust in individuals of different religious backgrounds, political preferences, and social desirability bias. Experience is measured by asking how frequently respondents are involved in hiring decisions, with response options ranging from daily to never. Demographic characteristics include gender (male, female, or other), age, and highest level of education (primary education, secondary education, bachelor's degree, master's degree, or doctorate). Religious identity is measured by asking whether respondents consider themselves to belong to a religious denomination (yes or no). If yes, respondents are asked to specify the denomination (Roman Catholic, Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, other Christian denomination, Jewish, Muslim, Eastern religions, or other non-Christian religion). Respondents are further asked to indicate the extent to which they trust individuals who are Christian, Muslim, or atheist, using response categories ranging from complete trust to no trust at all. In addition, respondents are asked to estimate how other recruiters would respond to these same trust statements. Political preferences are measured by asking respondents which party they would vote for if federal elections were held tomorrow. Social desirability bias is measured using the 13-item Marlow–Crowne scale. We register the type of device the respondents use to complete the survey (mobile or not).

5. Behavioral metrics

Response time is recorded as the total time required to complete the survey.

Indices

For the cluster capturing taste-based discrimination and statistical discrimination, composite measures are constructed by calculating the mean of the individual perception items within each cluster.

A Bayesian Truth Serum score is computed for each respondent following the procedure proposed by Prelec (2004). This score is based on respondents' answers to the trust statements regarding individuals of different religious backgrounds, and on the estimated distribution of responses among other recruiters. For each religious category, a normalised Bayesian Truth Score is calculated. The mean of these three scores is then computed and subsequently normalised to obtain an overall respondent-level Bayesian Truth Serum score.

A composite score for the tendency toward socially desirable responding is calculated as the sum of the binary responses to the 13 items of the Marlow–Crowne Social Desirability Scale. Prior to aggregation, all reverse-coded items are recoded so that higher values consistently indicate a stronger tendency toward socially desirable responding.