

Self-presentation and personal features: a systematic analysis of hiring outcomes in an online labor market

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Obtaining a job requires complex efforts from jobseekers. Several studies have reported on the importance of cultural signaling as a form of impression management in the selection process. It implies that jobseekers cannot merely rely on their skills, credentials, and expertise, but need to engage in a convincing self-presentation when one can give an account of their cultural capital, signal their status, group membership, style, character traits, etc. This cultural component is a well-documented mechanism in the process of social allocation, and as such, in hiring decisions. Although, there are studies investigating how self-presentation affects hiring outcomes, only a handful of research has dealt with this topic in online platforms despite their increasing importance in job seeking. In this work, we address this gap by making a systematic analysis of the facets of self-presentation and their impact on successful job applications in Freelancer, one of the biggest online labor markets. Besides investigating skills, credentials, geographic distance, job category, gender and ethnicity, we seek to understand the role of impression management in online hiring outcomes. Addressing these matters, we use natural language processing, image recognition and fixed effect regression models to analyze more than 100000 job seeker applications. Relying on scraped, online data and conducting a systematic exploration of these complex mechanisms, our work provides a valuable insight on the functioning of online labor markets and hiring outcomes.

Keyword: hiring outcomes, online labor markets, self-presentation, job application, skills