



Men Should Be Competent, Women Should Have it All: Multiple Criteria in the Evaluation of Female Job Candidates

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Abstract

The present research investigated whether evaluations of female and male job candidates rely on different dimensions. Going beyond previous studies on the role of gender stereotypes, we examined the relative importance of competence, morality, and sociability in employment decisions. In Study 1, we content-analyzed 68 archival reports of professionals to explore the extent to which they spontaneously referred to the three dimensions in evaluations of women and men. In Study 2, 259 Italian student participants rated the importance of different traits in hiring a female or male candidate for a job position. Additionally, we tested the relative influence of specific information about candidate competence and morality in predicting hiring (Study 3; $n = 123$ Italian students) and contract renewal (Study 4; $n = 108$ Italian students) decisions. Findings consistently showed that competence was the most important dimension in evaluations and decisions concerning male candidates, whereas all dimensions were important for female candidates. Moreover, decisions concerning women were influenced by the dimension on which they appeared to be relatively weak. Overall, findings suggest that women are evaluated against multiple criteria and might therefore be asked to meet more requirements than men to be selected and make a career. These findings can help evaluators and decision makers adopt assessment strategies that prevent more critical evaluations of women, such as establishing specific evaluation criteria before the disclosure of a candidate's gender.

Beslissingen om vrouwelijke sollicitanten aan te nemen, of om het contract van vrouwelijke werknemers te verlengen, worden gemaakt op basis van meer criteria dan bij mannelijke sollicitanten/werknemers. Vrouwen moeten hiermee aan meer eisen voldoen, en kun op basis van meer dimensies worden afgewezen, dan mannen.