

Structured Employment References Can Help Reduce Gender Bias

SkillSurvey Analytics Team Presents Research at SIOP Annual Conference: "Gender Effects in Structured Employment References: No Cause for Concern"

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- [SkillSurvey](https://www.skillsurvey.com/), the leading provider of cloud-based reference-checking announced results of its research presented at the annual SIOP 2020 Virtual Conference showing that in a very large sample across a wide range of jobs, there was no support for the effect of gender bias impacting quantitative ratings from employment reference providers.



The team analyzed numeric ratings of competency behaviors of 926,000 job candidates, provided by more than 4 million reference providers (57% of whom were current or former managers). Results indicated that there was no significant effect of gender bias in the ratings that were provided. That is, there were no main effects for gender of candidate, no main effects for gender of reference provider, and no interaction between gender of candidate and gender of reference provider. These results remained consistent across a variety of stereotypically masculine, feminine, and gender-neutral jobs.

This contrasts sharply with some existing research and theory exploring gender prescriptions and proscriptions, which would suggest that men and women would be rated significantly differently on the basis of role and gender stereotypes. For example, recent studies by behavioral scientists at the University of Houston demonstrated that narrative letters of recommendation (LOR) for female candidates, as compared to LOR for their male colleagues, tended to include significantly more phrases they defined as "doubt-raisers." And these "doubt-raisers" had a negative effect on employment outcomes such as hiring. Doubt-raisers involved: negativity; uncertainty; or backhanded compliments, such as: "She may not be the strongest student we've ever put out in any one aspect of academic excellence, but her profile of talents is unique" or "She is unlikely to become a superstar, but she is very solid."

“Our team was inspired to look at potential gender bias in reference checks in alignment with the growing trend to help organizations improve diversity and inclusion in the workforce. We’re extremely pleased to affirm once again and add to our large body of research showing that SkillSurvey’s reference-checking solution, which employs confidential, structured feedback from multiple raters, does not show gender bias,” said Cynthia Hedricks, PhD, SkillSurvey’s Chief Analytics Officer.

The team of researchers presenting at SIOP included Peter A. Fisher and Dr. Chet Robie of Wilfrid Laurier University and Drs. Disha D. Rupayana and Cynthia A. Hedricks of SkillSurvey, Inc.

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