SUBMISSION TYPE

Poster

TITLE

Examining Bias Towards Gay and Lesbian Applicants in Asynchronous Video Interview

ABSTRACT

This research examines evaluation bias in asynchronous video interviews (AVIs), specifically, towards gay and lesbian applicants. We created mock AVIs in which "applicant" gender and sexual orientation were manipulated. We hypothesized that hiring professionals/raters would discriminate against the perceived sexual minorities, but results indicated no discrimination.

PRESS PARAGRAPH

AVIs are a unique interview medium: the applicant simply video records answers to predetermined questions omitting any real-time interaction between applicant and evaluator. They could be prone to bias since elements in the applicants' background can indicate protected but otherwise unknown characteristics. We created mock AVIs and manipulated applicant sexual orientations by including various items in the background (e.g. rainbow flag). Gay applicants were not discriminated against more than straight applicants. A possible reason is that background items are not strong enough cues to infer sexuality and can alternatively indicate characteristics such as LGBTQ support. We advise following best practices when choosing AVIs as a selection tool and call for more research on the topic.

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Examining Bias Towards Gay and Lesbian Applicants in Asynchronous Video Interview

Job interviews have been serving as the primary tool for selection/hiring for over a century (Ryan & Ployhart, 2014). Asynchronous video interviews (AVIs) provide a convenient alternative beyond the capabilities of face-to-face and traditional digital interviews (Langer et al., 2017). Uniquely, AVIs omit any live interaction between evaluator and applicant (Torres & Mejia, 2017). Instead, applicants video record themselves answering a series of pre-determined questions that will be assessed later (Lukacik et al., 2020). Overall, existing research is largely limited to applicant reactions and there is little research to date on the practical implications of AVI usage for applicants and organizations.

Like other types of interviews AVIs are susceptible to evaluation bias (Lukacik et al., 2020). There are numerous visual stigmatizing features (e.g. gender, race, age) that play a role in the interview process (Pryor et al., 2004). However, AVIs can contain a backdrop of extra information as the applicant is free to determine to location of their recording (e.g. home). Potential items in the background can indicate otherwise unobservable attributes (e.g. sexual orientation, religious affiliation, etc.) and provide a greater opportunity of stigmatization (Goffman, 1963) and bias (Jones & King, 2014). Observation of a visual stigma rapidly (in less than 150ms; Thorpe et al., 1996) leads to forming a first impression of the applicant (Derous et al., 2016) by activating implicit scripts and stereotypes (Amodio & Devine, 2006) and possibly affecting job suitability ratings (see Purkiss et al., 2006; Finkelstein et al., 2007). Yet, it remains unexplored if similar events can transpire in AVIs.

The Dual Process Framework

To access information quickly, our minds organize it into scripts (accumulated knowledge from experience), but scripts can be associated with stereotypes. The dual process

theory explains the underlying workings of thinking, reasoning, social judgments and decision making and its' resulting subsequent behaviour (Evans, 2008). This theory comprises Type 1 processes (unconscious, uncontrollable, intuitive, impulsive and relying on scripts) and Type 2 processes (conscious, explicit and very slow). Based on this theory, Derous et al. (2016) suggested that interviewers instinctively form strong and biased initial impressions of stigmatized applicants (Type 1), but they can be adjusted in the interview process when Type 2 processes intervene (e.g. revised evaluations to not appear biased or discriminatory).

This framework was designed for other mediums of interview (such as a face-to-face interviews) and not AVIs. As well, meta-analyses (Blacksmith et al., 2016) and research conducted on other technologically mediated interviews (Langer et al., 2017), conclude previous research on traditional interviews cannot be generalized to AVIs. Nevertheless, the dual process theory is widely accepted and encountered in the world of social and cognitive psychology (e.g. Deutsch & Strack, 2006; Evans & Stanovich, 2013) and can serve as a framework to highlight where AVIs might be vulnerable to bias.

Susceptibility to Bias

AVIs are useful as a screening tool to sort through potential candidates for in-person interviews and are thus typically short. Due to their length, lack of interaction, impersonality, and reduced accountability, AVIs restrict the activation of Type 2 disconfirming processes, reinforcing decisions based on first impressions (Derous et al., 2016; also known as anchoring bias; Eroglu & Croxton, 2010) Additionally, the absence of real-time interaction between applicant and evaluator during AVIs (Lukacik et al., 2020), can eliminate rapport building, increasing the likelihood that anchoring bias will occur. These effects have been seen to get counteracted when a decision maker takes on the perspective of the stigmatized individual (in a

negotiation context; Galinsky & Mussweiler, 2001), however, perspective-taking involves a great deal of empathy (Gloor & Puhl, 2016), and AVIs are characterized as one of the most impersonal forms of interview (Langer et al., 2017).

Accountability is one way to activate Type 2 processes as it increases the motivation to adhere to the rules (e.g. an organization's anti-discriminatory policies) and can instigate processing of personalized information rather than the stigmatized information (Derous et al., 2016). Evaluators who are held more accountable for their decisions are more inclined to gravitate towards more socially acceptable choices but must feel like they need to justify their decisions (Ford et al., 2005). Thus, hiding behind a computer screen, alone with less accountability, can increase the probability of discrimination in the hiring process (Nadler et al., 2014).

Even if there is an initial motivation to adhere to egalitarian norms, practised interviewers often experience a metacognitive feeling of rightness (Thompson, 2009) because they consistently rely on their intuition when making hiring decisions (Highhouse, 2008), reinforcing scripts and creating a larger biasing effect (Dipboye & Jackson, 1999). Overall, due to the design, structure and execution of AVIs, Type I processes will likely be strong and impactful on hiring decisions, particularly when faced with a stigmatized applicant.

LGBTQ Discrimination

Interview stakes are high and if an interviewer is caught being discriminatory, there can be major consequences. Therefore, individuals are likely to remain more guarded at explicitly being discriminatory (Hebl et al., 2002), however, discrimination can still manifest in other ways. The literature suggest that social biases are transitioning from "old fashioned" forms of discrimination (blatant and obvious), to more "modern" forms that are faint and complex

(McConahay, 1986). Comparable to aversive discrimination (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000), this phenomenon has already been observed with sexual orientation bias in an interview setting (Nadler et al. (2014). Hebl et al., (2002) further conceptualized these ideas into formal discrimination (clearly expressed; e.g. denial to fill out a job application), and interpersonal forms (more elusive; e.g. avoiding eye contact). Hebl et al. (2002) instructed confederates (wearing hats labeled "Gay and Proud" or "Texan and Proud") to visit various places of employment. The study revealed no significant effect of perceived sexual orientation on formal discrimination. However, interpersonal discrimination was significantly observed through shorter interaction length and fewer words spoken with the stigmatized applicant. The unbeknownst stigmatized confederates (and raters who reviewed audio recordings of the interactions) consistently perceived more negative attitudes from employers (Hebl et al., 2002).

Similarly, the purpose of this study is to investigate potential evaluation bias against gay and lesbian applicants in AVIs, using mock AVIs. Our hypotheses were as follows:

Hypothesis 1a. Job applicants will be discriminated against (i.e., received lower performance evaluations) because of their sexual orientation during the AVI hiring process.

Hypothesis 1b. Formal discrimination will occur through performance evaluations and interpersonal discrimination will manifest as skipping responses, alternative to less interaction time seen in Hebl et al. (2002).

As discussed in the literature, we predicted that AVIs will facilitate discrimination of stigmatized applicants because the design and execution of AVIs likely creates a vulnerability for bias caused by Type 1 processes. Although Hebl et al. (2002) did not observe any significant occasions of formal discrimination in their study, the employees had interacted with the

stigmatized applicants face-to-face increasing accountability. Such Type 2 processes that normally safe-guard formal discrimination from occurring, have a weaker presence in AVIs.

Hypothesis 2a. Job applicants who are perceived as gay or lesbian will be less likely to be invited back for an in-person interview compared to heterosexual applicants, because of discrimination.

Hypothesis 2b. Evaluators' attitudes towards gays/lesbians will moderate the effect of applicants' gender and sexual orientation on the likelihood of being invited back for an in-person interview.

Method

Sample

A sample of 235 U.S. participants with HR/hiring experience were recruited through a pre-screened panel on Prolific. The sample included 131 individuals (55.7%) identified as male (mean age of M = 41.28 years, SD = 12.32) years, 103 individuals (43.8%) identified as female (mean age of M = 44.40 years, SD = 12.33), and one participant (.4%) chose not to identify. The majority described themselves as White (80.9%), straight/heterosexual (88.5%), and holding a full-time (66.4%), managerial position (63.0%). 61.7% have experience conducting interviews, 26.0% have had formal training to conduct interviews and only 3.4% have had experience with AVIs.

Design

Drawing on the methods of Hebl et al. (2002), we used a 2x2 factorial design where gender (female vs. male "applicant") and sexual orientation (lesbian/gay vs. straight) were manipulated. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions, and evaluated a mock AVI of an applicant (hired actors). Background props were placed among other common

items to manipulate sexual orientation. For the gay conditions, this included a rainbow flag, a mug that read "Gay and Proud" and a photograph of the actor and someone of the same sex. For the straight conditions, there was an American flag, a mug that read "Coffee O'clock" and a photograph of the actor with someone of the opposite sex (see Figure 1). Consistent with Hebl et al.'s (2002) design, the conditions were standardized by ensuring everything else in the background was the same, using the same response scripts, and the actors were dressed professionally. The two actors were chosen (based on a pilot test) to be similar on Sutherland et al.'s (2013) three-dimensional model of traits consistently inferred from first impression of faces (e.g., warmth, competence).

Procedure

Participants were presented with a scenario where they played the part of a manager for a local electronic store evaluating the AVI of a recent applicant for an entry-level customer service position. Each participant was randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. Each condition consisted of a mock AVI for which hired actors read pre-scripted responses. Participants were asked to complete an overall performance evaluation and attitudes towards gays/lesbian measures. The entire study's completion time averaged at M = 25.33 (SD = 11.30) minutes.

Measures

Overall Performance. After watching all five video responses of the "applicant", participants were asked to complete an overall performance/impression evaluation consisting of 5 items (α =.94; e.g. "Overall, based on the interview, I would evaluate this applicant positively") on a 7-point Likert scale (*strongly disagree-strongly agree*).

Formal Discrimination. Included in the overall performance evaluation was the item "Based on the interview, I would invite this applicant back for an in-person interview" to directly measure formal discrimination.

Interpersonal Discrimination. The mean time that participants stayed on each interview response (i.e. watching full vs. partial responses) was used as a measure of the interpersonal form of discrimination similar to Hebl et al.'s (2002) length of interaction.

Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men. We used the Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale (ATLG; Herek, 1998), which includes two sub-scales: The Attitudes Toward Lesbians Subscale (ATL; 10 items; α = .90; e.g. "Female homosexuality is detrimental to society because it breaks down the natural divisions between the sexes") and the Attitudes Towards Gay Men Subscale (ATG; 10 items; α = .96; e.g. "If a man has homosexual feelings, he should do everything he can to overcome them"), each measured on a 5-point Likert (*strongly disagree-strongly agree*). We combined the two scales in our analyses.

Results

To confirm that perceived sexual orientation was successfully manipulated, participants were asked what sexual orientation they perceived the "applicant" to be. 166 participants (70.63%) passed the manipulation check, whereas, 69 participants (29.36%) failed the manipulation check. Most of the failures occurred in the two gay conditions. However, results remained identical whether those participants were removed or not from the data.

A two-way ANOVA examined to the effects of "applicant" gender and sexual orientation on overall performance scores (see descriptive statistics in Table 1). There was no statistically significant main effect of gender, F(1, 231) = .02, p = .891, of sexual orientation, F(1, 231) = .02

.12, p = .725, or interaction effect of gender and sexual orientation, F(1, 231) = 1.05, p = .307, inconsistent with the hypothesis 1a.

A two-way ANOVA examined the effects of "applicant" gender and sexual orientation on the time spent on the "applicant" responses. There was no statistically significant main effect of gender, F(1, 231) = 2.01, p = .158 sexual orientation, F(1, 231) = 1.17, p = .281, or interaction effect of gender and sexual orientation, F(1, 231) = .01, p = .903, inconsistent with this hypothesis 1b.

A two-way ANOVA examined the effects of "applicant" gender and sexual orientation on the likelihood of inviting the "applicant" back for an in-person interview. There was not a statistically significant main effect of gender, F(1, 231) = .26, p = .612, sexual orientation, F(1, 231) = .12, p = .729. or interaction effect of gender and sexual orientation, F(1, 231) = .49, p = .483, inconsistent with hypothesis 2a.

For the final hypothesis, a three-way linear regression analysis was conducted to determine if scores on the ATLG scale significantly predicted if an applicant was invited back for an in-person interview. Table 2 demonstrates that "applicant" gender, sexual orientation, attitudes towards gays/lesbians, or any interaction term were not significant predictors, inconsistent with hypothesis 2b.

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to explore potential evaluation bias against gay and lesbian applicants in AVIs. While this goal has been achieved, the main results did not provide ant support for the hypotheses. Results of performance evaluations revealed that the stigmatized applicants did not seem to be discriminated against in AVIs (H1; formal or interpersonal). The results indicated that gay and lesbian applicants were not less likely to be invited back for an in-

person interview compared to heterosexual applicants (H2a), and this relationship was also not moderated participants attitudes towards lesbians and gays (H2b).

Limitations

Perhaps our sample was not completely representative of the population because most participants scored low on the attitudes towards lesbians and gays (95% scored between 1.55 and 1.82 out of a possible 5, this is illustrated in Figure 2) indicating very positive attitudes towards gays and lesbians. It might be that those who have more negative attitudes towards those stigmatized individuals (high score) do discriminate, but these individuals were too rare in this sample to have had a statistically significant impact on the results.

The relative failure to manipulate sexual orientation with background props (as highlighted by the manipulation check results) could also explain the results. However, several participants who failed manipulation checks, did not choose the wrong orientation, but chose "not listed above (please specify)". Many participants wrote comments refusing to answer (e.g. not their business; had not thought of it; noticed props but could not tell from the individual; does not matter, etc.). Derous et al.'s (2016) framework highlights that initial impressions are produced faster when stigmatizing applicant characteristics are apparent because they are strong cues. Perhaps our background props (e.g. rainbow flag), did not provide a strong enough cue for sexual orientation and instead indicated other characteristics like LGBTQ support.

It is possible the "applicants" were too evidently actors. Several participants mentioned that the actors seemed robotic and cold and appeared to be reading from a script (which they were). Some participants believed that this was due to practice and demonstrated that they were prepared, whereas others equated the unnaturalness to the simple fact that the AVI format is

already awkward. After all, AVIs are the most impersonal form of interview, and tend to feel "creepy" (Langer et al., 2017).

Some participants mentioned that the impersonality of the AVI allowed them to disregard the "applicants" demeanor or characterizing features and focus solely on the content of their responses, i.e. instigating the Type 2 processing by incorporating job-related information rather than focusing on the stigmatized information (Derous et al., 2016). It is possible that the callousness of the AVIs also increased accountability (Type 2 process) as the participants could deduct what the study was measuring, initiating engagement in impression management tactics in order to not appear discriminatory.

Practical Implications and Future Research Directions

Because this study was the first to examine sexual orientation evaluation bias in AVIs, the existing literature can only provide so much guidance. While the literature suggests sexual minority, discrimination occurs in interviews (e.g., Hebl. Et al., 2002), research findings based on in-person interview cannot be generalized to AVIs. Overall, it is possible that the standardized or structured nature and execution of AVIs is in itself limiting sexual orientation discrimination.

However, more research is needed. For instance, future research should discover stronger or clearer ways to manipulate sexual orientation (and distinguish being in a sexual minority from being a LGBTQ supporter). It could also be beneficial to explore the effects of explicitly providing stigmatizing information in the interview responses (vs. in the background only). We suggest hiring experienced actors or collecting real interviews with instructions to arrange background items (although one must account for varying degrees of responses with independent raters).

Conclusion

Due to the novelty of the current research, further experiments need to be conducted in order to provide a better understanding of, if and how, evaluation bias occurs against sexual minorities in AVIs. Discrimination based on stigmas is still a significant issue in the hiring process, regardless of interview medium. Therefore, we advise exercising caution when choosing AVIs as a selection tool and suggest adhering to suggested best practices (see Lukacik et al., 2020) when choosing their design and execution. Considering the current situation regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, AVIs could prove more useful now than ever before.

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Figure 1Gay Conditions





Straight Conditions





Figure 2

Box Plot Summarizing Participant Scores on The Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men

Scale (ATLG)

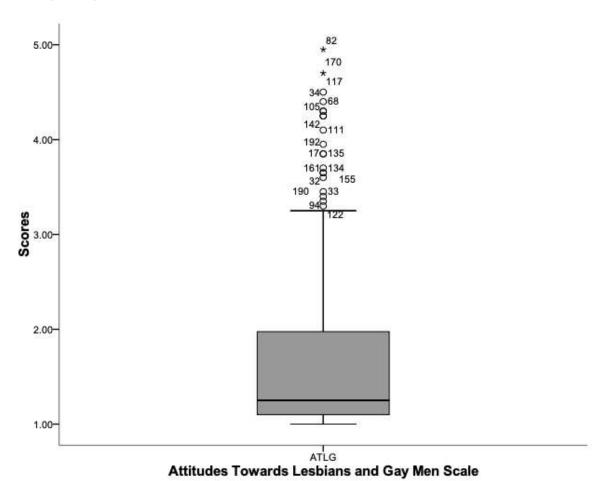


Table 1The Means and SDs for Each of the Four Conditions, on All Key Dependant Variables (DV)

	Gay female (condition 1)		Straight female (condition 2)		Gay male (condition 3)		Straight male (condition 4)	
DV	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Overall Evaluation	6.24	.90	6.31	.89	6.37	.62	6.22	.90
Invite for In- Person Interview	6.41	1.01	6.46	1.03	6.44	.71	6.31	1.10
Overall Time Spent on Videos	21.10	21.75	26.48	23.17	28.02	34.60	32.60	52.72

Note: Condition 1 N = 58; Condition 2 N = 61; Condition 3 N = 57; Condition 4 N = 59. Overall

Evaluation and Invite for In-Person Interview: Score out of a Possible 7; Overall Time Spent on Videos: in Seconds.

Table 2Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Invitations Back for InPerson Interview

			Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients			
Step	Predictor	В	SE	ß	p	R^2	F	p
1						.01	.42	.739
	Gender	.06	.13	.03	.632			
	Orientation	.05	.13	.03	.697			
	ATLG	07	.07	06	.351			
2						.01	.40	.879
	Gender	.32	.30	.16	.298			
	Orientation	.11	.31	.06	.727			
	ATLG	03	.15	03	.815			
	Gender × Orientation	20	.26	09	.438			
	ATLG × Gender	09	.15	10	.545			
	ATLG × Orientation	.02	.15	.02	.903			
3						.01	.34	.933
	Gender	.28	.40	.15	.497			
	Orientation	.07	.42	.04	.863			
	ATLG	05	.18	05	.789			
	Gender × Orientation	13	.57	06	.815			
	$ATLG \times Gender$	07	.22	08	.749			
	ATLG × Orientation	.04	.22	.05	.857			
	ATLG × Gender × Orientation	04	.30	03	.893			

Note: N = 235. Gender: 0 = Male; 1 = Female; Sexual Orientation: 0 = Straight; 1 = Gay; **p < Straight

.05. Predictors are Applicant Gender and Sexual Orientation and Participant Scores on Attitudes
Towards Lesbians and Gay Men Scale (ATLG).