

Referee Report for “Field Experimental Evidence on Gender Discrimination in Hiring: Biased as Heckman and Siegelman Predicted?”

In this paper the author employs a correspondence study in the Belgian labor market to test for gender discrimination. The main contribution of this paper is to test for the bias in the case of group differences in the variances of unobservable determinants.

This study is a significant contribution to understand gender discrimination in the labor market. However, the author finds no evidence for a bias due to estimated and perceived variance of unobservables for the two groups, female and male job candidates.

Main Comments

- The paper is well-placed in the ongoing research in the area of gender discrimination and makes a contribution to the estimation of the predicted bias raised by Heckman and Siegelman (1993).
- The author employs distance between the candidate’s living place and workplace to identify the effects.
- It might be helpful to discuss the data more and confirm that this is randomly assigned across men and women on a number of other covariates.
- If it is not a common practice to include age or presence of children or marital status in Belgium in the application then possibly education level might be a proxy for age (year of graduation of high school or university). Age might interact in different ways with the distance between home and workplace and gender. Women of child-bearing and rearing age might be perceived less flexible when it comes to the distance of the workplace and home. This might make a larger difference for women than for men.