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Discrimination in a Covert Methodology: An Analysis of Physical and Social Characteristics That Prohibit People from Becoming Employed

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ABSTRACT

Organizations all over the world are found guilty of using stereotypes to discriminate against applicants in the selection process for employment. This research seeks to answer the question what stereotypes are used to discriminate against people in the selection process and consequently provide an analysis of the physical and social characteristics that prohibit people from gaining employment. A sample of 87 working adults taking a Human Resources Management course were selected to complete a survey that questioned them on physical characteristics and how they affected their decisions on hiring or rejecting applicants. Historical research has held that interviews possess some stereotypes such as race, gender, age, height and weight to judge applicants rather than their skills, knowledge and ability to perform the job. Five hypotheses were posited for testing. Mixed support was provided that respondents ignore most stereotypical characteristics in the employment selection process but surprisingly strong support for one's appearance and dress was found. It is recommended that interviewers undertake detailed training, decrease stereotyping by focusing on job description and keep interviews job related. It is also wise for interviews to include tests when judging applicant's skills, knowledge and ability. Federal laws and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission also serve to ensure that equal opportunity is granted to all and discrimination is avoided.

KEYWORDS

Employment Selection; Discrimination; Stereotyping; Employment Law

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