

Leadership Excellence and Gender in Organizations

The relationship between role congruent job ad language and applicant pool gender diversity

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Strategic recruitment is one solution to the underrepresentation of women in academic faculty. Job ads serve as a tool to attract and recruit potential applicants. This study investigated whether the wording and content of faculty job ads, specifically the amount of emphasis on interdisciplinary science and collaboration, impacted the gender composition of applicant pools. Furthermore, we formally tested the hypothesis of whether women applicants were in fact more interdisciplinary than men. Our results suggest that faculty members who were women have more interdisciplinary academic backgrounds than men, and that the ads most strongly emphasizing communal goals, via either wording or content, attracted the most diverse applicant pools with respect to gender and interdisciplinarity of the applicants. These results illustrate the power of careful and strategic consideration of ads and their wording in impacting women's application behavior. Academic institutions can use job ad wording and content to fulfill dual goals – recruiting and retaining more women in faculty positions thereby improving the gender diversity of their faculty and hiring faculty with interdisciplinary academic backgrounds. Future directions and implications for recruitment, hiring, and the academic as well as STEM pipeline are discussed.