

Interviewer-Candidate Gender Similarity and Interviewer's Hiring Attitude in Interview Situations: The Role of Age

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Abstract: Interview is the most commonly used measurement tool in talent selection. In view of the severity of the current employment environment, how to motivate the interviewer to make a fair and just choice in the employment decision has gradually become a topic of concern in the society. Based on human-environment matching and resource conservation theories, this study explores the moderating effect of age on the influence of interviewer - candidate gender similarity on employment attitude. The results showed that: ①different gender combinations of interviewers and candidates produced different hiring attitudes; ②for interviewer-candidate gender similarity, the effect of female interviewer-candidate gender similarity on hiring attitudes ($M = 0.39$) was significantly lower than the effect of male interviewer-candidate gender similarity on hiring attitudes ($M = 0.56$); and for interviewer-candidate gender dissimilarity, female interviewers hired male candidates ($M = 0.53$), significantly higher than male interviewers lower than female candidates ($M = 0.59$); ③gender similarity of interviewers and candidates and interviewer age on hiring attitudes were analyzed for interaction effects, and the analysis showed that hiring attitudes reached statistical significance.

1. Introduction

Among the various assessment methods for talent selection, the interview should be the most widely used one^[1]. Few people will hire someone based on other metrics without an interview. If interviews are not conducted during the initial screening phase, then at least during the in-depth assessment phase, candidates should be evaluated using interview methods. Ideally, therefore, the interviewer should make the best choice for the organization based on the information he or she gets from the written resume and the interview, i.e., the best candidate for the organization^[2~3].

However, in practice, due to the subjective, intuitive, flexible and interactive nature of the interview itself, as well as the different professional knowledge, professional skills, social work experience, personal character training, self-awareness ability and psychological quality of individual interviewers, interviewers are prone to various psychological biases in the interview process, thus affecting the objectivity and fairness of the interview results^[4]. Gender is a

representative demographic characteristic, and numerous studies have identified gender role differences ^[5], with women emphasizing participation, interdependence, and collectivity and men emphasizing self-sufficiency, autonomy, competition, and independence. This gender role difference leads to the need to examine the gender compatibility of interviewers and applicants based on gender role characteristics when examining the interviewer-applicant dichotomy in an interview situation. At the core of gender are the specific social roles occupied by employees, i.e., complementary role differences between the genders ^[6], and the need for role complementation and role cooperation to meet the demands of different roles in the job ^[7]. Thus, gender matching falls into the category of compensatory matching. Previous research has pointed out that interviewers' evaluations of candidates may be influenced by the background choices of both the interviewer and the candidate, resulting in biased interviewer results. Arvey and Campion (1982), after reviewing the literature on the effect of gender on job applicant interview evaluations, noted that even when female job applicants had similar qualifications to male applicants, female job applicants' ratings also tended to be lower. Male interviewers were more lenient in their evaluations of candidates, while female interviewers were more critical. However, if the interviewer and the candidate do not match in gender, the interviewer will form a more positive evaluation ^[8]. Specifically, when the interviewer and the candidate are of the same gender, female interviewers may give lower evaluations to female candidates in order to maintain their status and the need to demonstrate that they are different from other subordinates of the same gender in the organizational setting. As a result, we propose that:

Hypothesis 1: In the social interaction process of personnel selection and recruitment, for the gender similarity of candidates and interviewers, male interviewers (vs. female interviewers) are more likely to admit candidates in the case of two gender similarities, while female interviewers have significantly lower hiring attitudes toward female candidates than other gender similarities.

In addition, in recent years, the diffusion of information technology has led to the rapid spread of many ideas and a rapid change in the values of society. In China and Western societies, the idea of gender equality is gradually becoming a value. So, is there still a phenomenon of women undervaluing women? If so, according to this study, there are two possibilities. First, the phenomenon of low esteem for women could be a "generational phenomenon. That is, if it exists, it is more likely to be found among older women rather than younger women, since the younger generation does not necessarily accept and practice the concept of gender equality in terms of perception and behavior^[9]. The second possibility is that successful professional women believe that they have worked long and hard to achieve their current position and success, and therefore often do not want to see other women achieve the same success more easily than they have, leading to rejection of same-sex workers and the psychological and verbal need to defend their difficult position and power. Because they do their best, they tend to view their female colleagues and late-career workers as rivals and adversaries. Successful women in these professions usually have certain qualifications in the workplace and may be relatively older. Ellemers, van den Heuvel, de Gilder, Maass, and Bonvini's (2004) study found that senior female professors perceived lower academic commitment in female doctoral students than in male graduate students, but there was no difference in the perceptions of female doctoral students' academic commitment in junior female professors. This finding seems to imply that the age of the evaluator is an important confounding variable^[10]. Thus, synthesizing the above analysis, we propose that:

Hypothesis 2: Test whether the age of the interviewer interferes with the fact that similarity in gender between the interviewer and the candidate can have an effect on hiring attitudes.

2. Research object and process

In this study, graduates who had participated in campus recruitment interviews in spring were selected as the survey objects. In a university in Xi 'an, convenient sampling was adopted to collect data by questionnaire survey. In the process of data collection, the researcher first collected the information of graduates from the employment practice center of the university, and confirmed by telephone whether the students had recently participated in the job interview, and then forwarded the questionnaire to the graduates who participated in the job interview. A total of 220 questionnaires were sent out in this study, and 178 were received with a recovery rate of 80.9%. After deducting 9 invalid questionnaires (those with too many missing answers), 169 valid questionnaires were received with an effective recovery rate of 76.8%.The sample of this study was distributed in a university in Xi 'an. There were 101 male applicants (59.8%) and 68 female applicants (40.2%).In the questionnaire, the applicant should write down the gender of the interviewer in the interview situation. According to statistics, there were 74 male interviewers (43.8%) and 95 female interviewers (56.22%).In terms of gender, male interviewers evaluated male applicants 32 times (18.9 percent), male interviewers evaluated female applicants 42 times (24.9 percent), female interviewers evaluated male applicants 39 times (23.1 percent), and female interviewers 56 times (33.1 percent).In addition, 57 interviewees (33.7 percent) were under the age of 40, and 112 (66.3 percent) were over 41.

In the questionnaire guidance of this study, the subjects were first asked to recall their recent interviews and then answered the questionnaire for the most impressive one.Secondly, the gender combination of interviewer and applicant refers to the gender composition of interviewer and applicant in the interview situation, according to the information answered by the subject

3. Program and data processing

SPSS 26.0 and the SPSS macro PROCESS compiled by Hayes in 2013 were used to process and analyze the data^[11].

4. Experimental results

In this study, the general linear model (GeneralLinearModel; GLM) to test the hypothesis. In the model, gender similarity between the interviewer and the applicant, the age of the interviewer and their interaction terms are shown in Table 1 and Table 2.The analysis results in Table 1 show that gender similarity between the interviewer and the applicant has a significant difference in hiring attitude ($F=5.78$, $p<0.001$).This suggests that the different gender mix of the interviewer and the applicant will produce different hiring attitudes.

Table 1: Results of variance analysis of employment attitude

variable	SS	DF	MS	F
gender similarity of interviewers and candidates	20.28	3	6.76	5.78***
interviewer age	3.23	1	3.23	2.73
gender similarity of interviewers and candidates x interviewer age	9.02	3	3.01	2.42*

Caution: * <0.05 ; *** <0.001 ;

The average of Table 2 shows that, according to Scheffe's multiple postmortem tests, the average of female interviewers' attitude toward evaluating female applicants ($M=0.39$) is significantly lower than that of male interviewers ($M=0.56$), and female interviewers' attitude toward hiring male applicants ($M=0.53$).Significantly higher than male interviewer and lower than female applicant ($M=0.59$);Specifically, for interviewer-candidate gender similarity, female interviewers' hiring

attitudes toward female candidates are significantly lower than male interviewers' hiring attitudes toward male candidates; while for interviewer-candidate gender dissimilarity, female interviewers' hiring attitudes toward male candidates are significantly higher than male interviewers' lower than female candidates. Therefore, hypothesis one is supported by empirical data, for the gender similarity between candidates and interviewers, male interviewers (vs. female interviewers) are more likely to hire candidates in the case of two gender similarities, while female interviewers have significantly lower hiring attitudes toward female candidates than other gender similarities. And in further looking at the mean hiring attitudes of male interviewers vs. female interviewers, the results also seem to show that male interviewers are more lenient in their evaluations than female interviewers.

Table 2: Analysis results of the influence of gender similarity between interviewer and applicant on hiring attitude

interviewer gender gender of applicant	gender similarity of interviewers and candidates			
	male interviewer		female interviewer	
	male ($\bar{X} \pm SD$)	female ($\bar{X} \pm SD$)	male ($\bar{X} \pm SD$)	female ($\bar{X} \pm SD$)
employment attitude	0.56±0.52	0.59±0.49	0.53±0.48	0.43±0.48

Hypothesis 2 of this study speculated that older female interviewers were more likely to rate female applicants lower. Ellemers et al. (2004) distinguished the high age group from the low age group with the median of 47 years old in the sample. Limited to the collection of age in the questionnaire in this study, the subjects were asked to fill in the closed questions within the range of 10 years old. This study decided to use 40 years old as the cut-off point to distinguish the high and low age groups. In this study, the gender similarity between the interviewer and the applicant and the age of the interviewer were analyzed to interact with the employment attitude. The analysis results showed that the employment attitude was statistically significant ($F=2.42$, $p<0.05$). The analysis results are shown in Table 3 and the interaction diagram in Figure 1. Through the main effect analysis, the employment attitude of the senior age group ($M=0.13$) was significantly lower than that of the female interviewers in the lower age group ($M=0.27$). Not only did the younger female interviewers not show this phenomenon, but they even gave slightly higher evaluation to female candidates ($M=0.27$) than to male candidates ($M=0.20$) (not statistically significant). In summary, hypothesis 2 is supported by empirical data.

Table 3: Analysis results of the interaction between the gender similarity between the interviewer and the applicant and the interviewer's age on the employment attitude

	Interviewer and candidate gender similarity			
	male interview male ($\bar{X} \pm SD$)	male interview female ($\bar{X} \pm SD$)	Female interview Female ($\bar{X} \pm SD$)	Female interview male ($\bar{X} \pm SD$)
	employment attitude			
interviewer age				
< 40 years old	0.25±0.54	0.26±0.52	0.27±0.51	0.20±0.49
> 41 years old	0.31±0.51	0.33±0.49	0.13±0.53	0.35±0.51

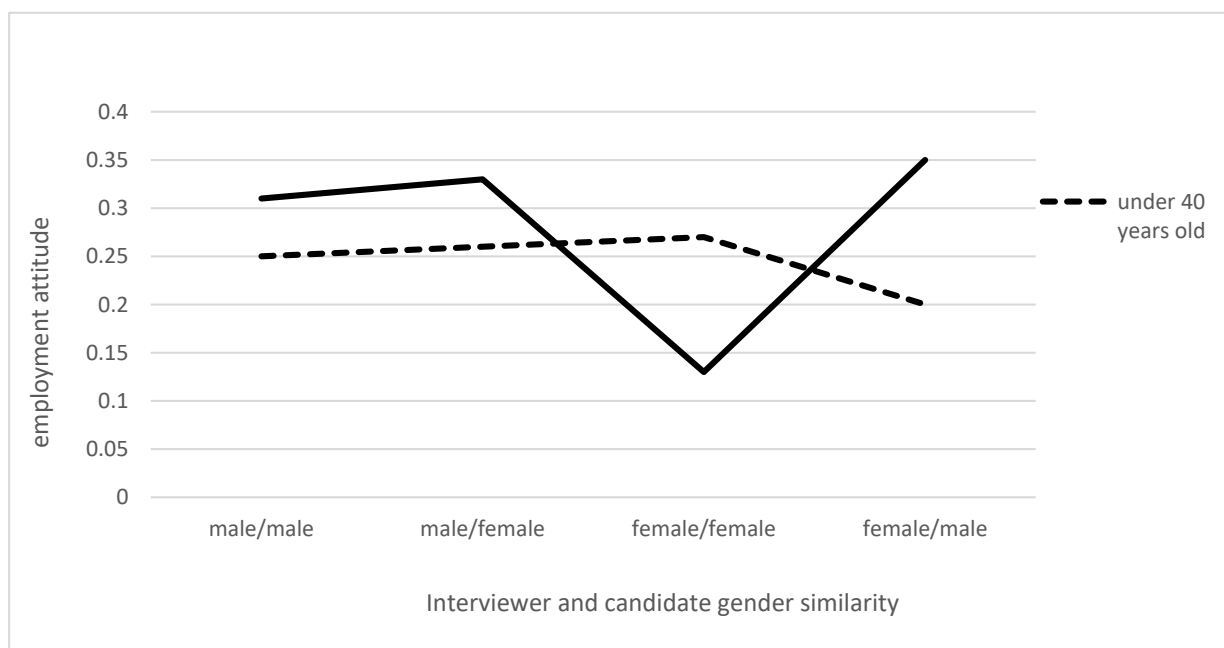


Figure 1: Analysis of the interaction between interviewer and candidate gender similarity × interviewer age.

5. Conclusions

The results of this study indicate that different combinations of interviewer-candidate gender similarity produce different hiring attitudes; for interviewer-candidate gender similarity, the effect of female interviewer-candidate gender similarity on hiring attitudes is significantly lower than the effect of male interviewer-candidate gender similarity on hiring attitudes; while for interviewer-candidate gender dissimilarity, female interviewers hire male candidates significantly higher than that of male interviewers lower than that of female candidates; in view of the excessive difference in hiring attitudes in the four cases of interviewer-candidate gender combinations, it is very necessary to investigate the role of other factors in the relationship between the two. The interviewer's age produced a significant interference in the influence of interviewer-candidate gender similarity on interviewer hiring attitudes, so the interaction between interviewer-candidate gender similarity and interviewer age was analyzed, and the results showed that the interaction was significant. This indicates that for the high age group interviewers' hiring attitudes toward female candidates were significantly lower than those of the low age group female interviewers' hiring attitudes toward female candidates. The female interviewers in the lower age group did not show this phenomenon, and even had higher hiring attitudes toward female candidates than toward male candidates.

This study further explores the moderating effect of age on the influence of gender similarity between interviewers and candidates on the interview results. It holds that female interviewers in the higher age group significantly lower rated female candidates, while those in the lower age group did not have the phenomenon of female lower rated female candidates. In reality, because most older female interviewers have extensive experience in the workplace, they may think that they have come a long way to reach their current status and achievements^[12]. As a result, when faced with female candidates, they are more likely to question each other using the same demanding criteria they experienced when they first entered the organization, assuming that female candidates must also pass difficult tests. In contrast, the growth experiences of female interviewers in lower

age groups may not be limited or inhibited compared to those of female interviewers in higher age groups^[13]. Even female interviewers in lower age groups may feel sympathy for female candidates or want to support each other, so they give better interview reviews.

Although this study has certain theoretical significance and practical value, it inevitably has some shortcomings. First of all, the results of this study show that female interviewers in higher age groups have a low opinion of women. Is it because people in different times have different values? Secondly, after finding the result deviation caused by the difficult subjective component of women's low evaluation of women in the interview context, future research will determine which methods or measurements should be controlled in the interview context, or social approval variables should be added into the control variables to ensure that excellent female applicants can enter the organization.

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