

# The Gender of Opportunity: How Gendered Job Titles Affect Job Seeker Attraction.\*

Paul M. Gorny, Petra Nieken, and Martin Trenkle

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## Abstract

We study the effects of gender-fair framing of job titles in online job ads in a randomized controlled trial in cooperation with a large online job platform in Germany. We investigate how a gender-fair job title affects the overall number of applications, the number of applications by females, and the share of female applicants. The goals of our study are (i) to investigate whether the number of female applications can be increased by deviating from the “generic masculine” which is typically used in German, (ii) to study whether any changes in overall applicant numbers are due to a specific sex of the applicants, and (iii) to investigate whether and how these effects differ across industries. We focus on three broad industries that differ in the share of employed females: “IT & Development,” “Business & Management,” and “Marketing & Sales.” For each industry, our study encompasses two treatments: In the baseline, the job titles in the ads used the generic masculine. In the gender-fair treatment, the jobs were advertised using a gender-fair job title. Our results indicate that, overall, the treatment manipulation did not affect the average number of applications or the number of female applicants. In “IT & Development,” where the share of employed females is relatively low, we do not observe any changes due to our treatment manipulation. In contrast, whereas “Business & Management” exhibited increased applications and fewer instances of job ads with zero applications with gender-fair job titles, “Marketing & Sales” showed a backfiring effect. We discuss potential mechanisms for our results.

**Keywords:** Gender, Gender in Language, Job Search, Field Experiments

**JEL Classifications:** C93, J16, J64

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