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BETWEEN A CROSS AND A HARD PLACE: RELIGIOUS IDENTIFIERS AND EMPLOYABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Unfair hiring practices in the form of differential treatment are forbidden by law (e.g., in the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964). Our experimental research examines whether differential treatment occurs based on the wearing of religious identifiers. Mainly, this study explores whether applicants who wear Muslim and Jewish religious identifiers are considered less employable than applicants who do not wear religious identifiers, and whether the job status and gender of the evaluator influence these ratings. Our findings revealed that applicants who wore Muslim religious identifiers were rated the most employable for low status jobs and least employable for high status jobs. Additionally, female applicants who wore Muslim religious identifiers received the highest employability ratings of all groups, but male applicants who wore Muslim religious identifiers received the lowest employability ratings of all groups. The implications of these findings for discrimination in the workplace are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Although the law mandates that employers reasonably accommodate the religious practices of employees (e.g., in the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964), numerous violations of this law continue to occur. For example, in the year 2006, the Equal

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Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC, 2007) received 2,541 religion-based complaints of employment discrimination, ranging from lack of accommodations for prayers to refusal to allow employees time off for religious holidays. Another example of employers' failure to accommodate religious practices was not letting employees wear religious attire (EEOC, 2005). The present study is intended to determine whether individuals engage in discriminatory hiring practices when they encounter someone wearing symbols or attire representative of a particular religious faith, henceforth referred to as religious identifiers.

Religious identifiers are symbols or attire that religious group members don for religious purposes and that reveal their religious identity. For example, a woman who wears a headscarf can be identified as a Muslim, while a man who wears a yarmulke can be identified as Jewish. Although these religious identifiers may be mandated by one's faith (e.g., the Muslim headscarf) or worn by members to reflect their faith (e.g., the Star of David), they may affect impression formation (Chia & Jih, 1994; Conner, Peters, & Nagasawa, 1975; Middlebrook, 1974). Impressions of people who wear religious identifiers are predicated on the rater's judgments of the religion represented by the religious identifier, judgments that might be affected by historical and cultural stereotypes (Chia & Jih, 1994). Additionally, these judgments may be grounded in various negative stereotypes pertaining to the religious group to which the individual wearing the identifier belongs. For example, Muslims have been stereotyped as being religious fanatics, violent, wild (Kamalipour, 2000), nomadic, backward, disorganized (Kenny, 1975), oppressing women (Kamalipour, 2000), and menacing (Pipes, 1990). Stereotypes of Jews include negative characteristics such as being disloyal, powerful, and greedy (Wuthnow, 1982). Based on these negative stereotypes, it is hypothesized that people who wear religious identifiers will be subjected to various discriminatory practices.

Discrimination against individuals who wear religious identifiers may occur for several reasons. Wearing a religious identifier may signal that the individual has strong affiliations with his or her faith and may hold extremist religious views. Some people may react negatively to this suggestion of fundamentalism (Chia & Jih, 1994). This may result in more discrimination against those who wear religious identifiers than against those who are members of the same religious group but do not wear religious identifiers. Previous research supports the view that highly identified ethnic minorities experience more prejudice than their weakly identified counterparts (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Major et al., 2002; Sellers & Shelton, 2003). Previous research has also shown that employers make negative personnel decisions about job applicants based on applicants' religious affiliations (Tomei, 2003).

The discrimination against individuals who wear religious identifiers can also be explained by the social categorization theory. This theory suggests that people have a tendency to place others in ingroups and outgroups—in categories of "us" and "them" (Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994). As a result of this process,

prejudice and discrimination may be directed against "them." When an individual identifies with a favorably evaluated ingroup, prejudice and discrimination serves to enhance that individual's self-esteem by fostering positive associations with the ingroup and negative associations with the outgroup (Tajfel, 1981). Below, we distinguish between two categories of religious identifiers, Christian (ingroup) and non-Christian (outgroup) identifiers, and show how these two types of religious identifiers affect hiring practices.

CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS IDENTIFIERS

Because the United States has a predominantly Christian population, this study will examine perceptions of people toward individuals who wear Christian religious identifiers. Research suggests that people favor their own groups over other groups in an effort to boost their status, which in turn boosts their self-esteem (Fein & Spencer, 1997). As 78% of the American population reports being Christian (CIA, 2009), Christianity is more likely to be considered the religion of an ingroup than of an outgroup in America. Additionally, it is likely that employers will feel more similarity with Christians and will be more receptive toward them at work than toward other religious groups. According to the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971), employers might perceive Christians as being more attractive because Christians, as a religious group, are more similar to the employers than individuals of other religions. Thus, due to their ingroup status and their similarity to the employers, we expect that applicants who wear a Christian religious identifier will be treated in a manner similar to applicants who do not wear religious attire:

> *Hypothesis 1. Applicants who wear Christian religious identifiers will be perceived as equal in employability to applicants who wear no religious identifiers at all.*

NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS IDENTIFIERS

Muslims constitute one outgroup that wears non-Christian religious identifiers and is particularly susceptible to discrimination in the workplace. In a recent study measuring prejudiced attitudes, people reported higher levels of feelings of prejudice toward Arab Americans than toward other minority groups (Bushman & Bonacci, 2004). This is unfortunate for Muslim Americans, because Arab Americans are generally perceived to be Muslims, even if they have different religious affiliations (Cainkar, 2002). Several discriminatory labor practices against Muslims are evident in reports from the U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission. In the period between September 11, 2001, attacks and May 7, 2002, the EEOC (2003) reported 497 claims alleging workplace discrimination on the basis

of being Muslim. The number for this same period in the prior year was 193, indicating a 153% increase over the year, while numbers for other religious groups held steady during that same time frame. The EEOC calls these discriminatory labor practices "backlash discrimination." The largest categories of "backlash discrimination" complaints pertained to biases acted out against Muslim employees by non-Muslim employers using harassment or discharge (Edwards, 2002). Discrimination in the workplace against Muslims directly due to their religious attire has also been reported, as evidenced by several legal cases involving Muslim women who wear the headscarf (Pluralism Project, 2004).

Jews constitute another religious group wearing religious identifiers that is a target of religious-based workplace discrimination. Various negative attitudes against Jews persist, following a history of anti-Semitism in the United States. According to the FBI (2007), hate crimes against Jews went up from 900 in the year 2005 to 1,027 in the year 2006. In addition to these anti-Semitic attitudes and hate crimes, Jewish people have also been subjected to workplace discrimination. According to Taylor (2002), a substantial 29% of a sample of 2,203 participants surveyed claimed to have heard anti-Semitic jokes in the workplace. There have also been several cases of failure to give leave of absence on religious holidays and refusal to hire Orthodox Jews due to their religious prohibitions against working on the Sabbath, even though such religious accommodations are required by law (Huang & Kleiner, 2001). A report by Human Rights First (2008) suggests that being a target for discrimination was frequently associated with being visibly identifiable as Jewish, for example, wearing traditional Jewish attire (e.g., a yarmulke). Bearing in mind the outgroup status of Muslims and Jews and the discriminatory climate today against such outgroups, we constructed our second hypothesis:

> *H2. Compared to those applicants who do not wear religious identifiers, applicants who wear non-Christian religious identifiers, such as (a) Muslim and (b) Jewish religious identifiers, will be perceived as less employable than applicants who do not wear religious identifiers.*

This study proposes that discrimination against individuals who wear non-Christian religious identifiers may be stronger for some types of jobs than for others. Previous research shows that workplace discrimination sometimes depends on job type. For gender, Cash, Gillen, and Burn (1977) found that evaluators tend to rate attractive or more feminine women more favorably for female-type and neutral jobs than unattractive women. However, raters judged attractive women less favorably for traditionally male jobs than unattractive women.

This study proposes that individuals who wear non-Christian religious identifiers will be perceived as less qualified for high job status occupations than for low job status occupations. This is based on previous research indicating that that the degree of hiring discrimination encountered by minorities is positively related

to the status of the job (Terpstra, 1980), such that the higher the status of the job, the more likely the individual will be discriminated against in the hiring process. Other research provides evidence of discrimination as a result of job status (Stewart & Perlow, 2001; Terpstra & Larsen, 1980). For example, Stewart and Perlow (2001) found that evaluators who had negative attitudes toward Blacks had less confidence in their decision to hire Blacks than in their decision to hire Whites for high status jobs, compared to evaluators with positive attitudes toward Blacks. However, this lack of confidence was not apparent when the evaluators were making decisions to hire Blacks over Whites in low status jobs. Because research shows that people evaluate minorities differently for high status positions than for low status positions, it is plausible to believe that employers will evaluate individuals who wear non-Christian religious identifiers more negatively for high job status occupations than for low job status occupations. Thus we hypothesize as follows:

> *H3. The relationship between religious identifier and employability is influenced by job status such that for high job status occupations, applicants who wear non-Christian religious identifiers will be perceived as less employable than applicants wearing such identifiers are for low job status occupations.*

Additionally, this study proposes that discrimination against applicants who wear non-Christian religious identifiers is moderated by the gender of the evaluator. Several studies show that there are gender differences in prejudice and tolerance, with males being more likely to express prejudice and intolerance than females (e.g., Akrami, Ekehammar, & Araya, 2000; Altemeyer, 1998; Hoxter & Lester, 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). It is believed that because of women's socialization into traditional gender roles, women tend to be more nurturing and accepting of others and, hence, less likely to discriminate than men (Mills et al., 1995). Several theories, such as social domination orientation theory (Sidanius, 1993) and authoritarian personality theory (Adorno et al., 1950), suggest that there are gender differences in social domination orientation and authoritarianism, which also lead to gender differences in discrimination, with men being more likely to engage in discrimination than women (Hughes & Tuch, 2003). Accordingly, we hypothesize as follows:

> *H4. The relationship between religious identifier and employability is influenced by participant's gender such that male participants are more likely to perceive applicants who wear non-Christian religious identifiers as unemployable than do female participants.*

METHODS

Participants

Data were collected via a Web-based experiment from 428 participants from a large Midwestern university recruited through a Psychology Department subject pool site. There were 111 males and 312 females. The mean age was 19.2 years, with participants ranging from 18 to 26 years old. In terms of percentages, 80% of the participants were White, 6% were Black, 5% were Asian, 3% were Hispanic, and 1.1% were Middle Eastern. In all, 97% were U.S. citizens. Also, 68% of the participants were Christian (40% Catholic), 4.6% were Jewish, 0.9% were Muslim, and 18% had no religious affiliation. All of the participants received course credit in psychology courses for their participation in the experiment.

Experimental Stimuli

Participants were randomly assigned to one of eight conditions resulting from a 2 (gender of applicant) × 4 (religious identifiers: no religious identifiers, Christian, Jewish, Muslim) factorial design. To manipulate the applicant information, photographs and resumes of the hypothetical job applicants were shown.

Applicant Photograph

Applicants' photographs varied based on gender and religious identifier (see Appendix). The photographs were of either a male or a female dressed in one of the four religious identifiers (turban, yarmulke, cross, no religious identifier for male target; Muslim headscarf, Star of David necklace, cross, and no religious identifier for female target). It should be noted that the turban as a religious identifier can pertain to people of both the Muslim and Sikh faiths. In our study, the perceived applicants were perceived as Sikh in only three cases, which were deleted from subsequent analysis.

Occupation

The occupations chosen for the study were community organization manager, mail superintendent, technical writer, and associate editor. Multiple occupations were used to increase the generalizability of the findings. These occupations were based on O*NET (2006) and NORC (National Opinion Research Center) ratings (Davis et al., 1991). All four of these occupations were considered gender neutral, with an average rating of 1.88 on a 1 (more males than females) to a 3 (more females than males) point scale, and were not statistically significant in terms of gender ratio $F(3, 417) = 2.44$, *ns*.

Resume

Resumes were created for each of the four occupations. The resume types were identical except for minor differences in the phrasing of the content (based on the occupation). The resumes showed the candidates as being average in terms of qualifications.

Procedure

Upon logging on to the Web experiment, participants were shown a picture of a job applicant who was either male or female and was wearing one of four separate religious identifiers (2 × 4). Additionally, participants were shown a job description for the occupation for which the applicant was applying, along with the applicant's one-page resume. After observing the applicant's picture, resume, and job description, the participants were asked to complete the measures listed below.

Measures

Employability

Dependent measures were ratings of how employable the applicant was for the job, such as how qualified the applicant was and how likely the applicant was to succeed at the job. The 2-item measures were rated on a 7-point item scale ranging from 1 (very unlikely) to 7 (very likely). The reliability of the scale was .79.

Job Status

To measure job status, participants were asked to rate prestige, importance, social contribution, educational requirement, and opportunity for advancement on a 1 (low) to 7 (high) point scale. This 4-item scale had an internal consistency of .77. A tertile (three-way) split was conducted to create a categorical variable, dividing the participants into three groups: (1) low job status, (2) moderate job status, and (3) high job status.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1

Pearson chi-square tests indicated that the actual religious affiliation of the applicants, as intended from the pictures, was statistically different from the participants' perceived religious affiliation (χ^2 (9, N = 422) = 464.23, $p < .05$). Primarily, in the no religious identifier condition, 12% of the participants still identified the applicants as Christian. Likewise, in the Christian condition in which the applicants wore a cross, 30% of the participants reported that they didn't know what the participant's religious affiliation was.

Hypothesis 1 suggested that individuals who wear Christian religious identifiers will be perceived as equal in employability to applicants who wear no religious identifiers. An ANOVA was conducted to see if the Christian religious identifier condition and the no religious identifier condition affected the DV, employability. The no religious identifier condition ($M = 5.44$) and the Christian religious identifier condition ($M = 5.53$) did not demonstrate a significant difference in employability, $F(1, 191) = 0.15$, *ns*, supporting our hypothesis that individuals who wear Christians religious identifiers will not be perceived much differently than individuals who do not wear any religious identifiers. Because there were no differences between these two conditions, the Christian and no religious identifier conditions were grouped together into a larger Christian-identified condition, yielding three religious identifier conditions (Christian-identified, Jewish, and Muslim). Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypotheses 2–4

A 3 (religious identifier) × 2 (applicant's gender) × 2 (participant's gender) × 3 (job status) analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was performed on participants' ratings of applicants' employability, with the participant's age entered as a covariate to account for age differences in employability ratings. Although we did not propose any hypothesis for the applicant's gender, applicant gender was also entered as a variable in the ANCOVA to see if it influenced employability ratings. Previous research suggests that men and women are sometimes evaluated differently (Eagley, Mladinic, & Otto, 1991). See Table 1 for ANCOVA results and Table 2 for means and standard deviations.

Hypothesis 2 states that individuals in the Muslim and Jewish religious identifier conditions will be rated as less employable than those in the Christian-identified condition. Contrary to our expectations, Table 2 shows that the participants rated the applicants in the Jewish and Muslim religious identifier conditions as more employable than those in the Christian-identified condition (see Table 2 for means and standard deviations). However, there was no significant main effect for an applicant's religion on employability. Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Hypothesis 3 suggested that the relationship between religious identifier and employability is influenced by job status such that in high job status occupations, applicants wearing non-Christian religious identifiers will be perceived as less qualified than are applicants wearing such identifiers for low job status occupations. Although there was no significant main effect for an applicant's religion or job status (see Table 1 for statistics), there was a significant religious identifier × job status interaction. As can be seen in Figure 1, the participants rated Muslim applicants higher than those in any other religious identifier condition for low job status occupations, but Muslim applicants were considered least employable for high job status occupations. In general, both Jewish applicants and Christian-identified applicants were considered more employable as job status

Table 1. ANCOVA for Religious Identifier, Applicant's Gender, Participant's Gender, and Job Status on Employability

Source	SS	df	MS	*F*-ratio
Main Effects				
Participant's Age	5.60	1	5.60	4.69*
Religious Identifier	5.65	2	2.83	2.37
Applicant's Gender	9.27	1	9.27	7.78**
Participant's Gender	11.92	1	11.92	10.01**
Job Status	1.43	2	0.72	0.60
Two-way Interactions				
Religious Identifier × Applicant's Gender	7.60	2	3.80	3.19*
Religious Identifier × Participant's Gender	5.75	2	2.87	2.41
Applicant's Gender × Participant's Gender	8.83	1	8.83	7.42**
Religious Identifier × Job Status	17.75	4	4.44	3.72**
Applicant's Gender × Job Status	6.30	2	3.15	2.65
Participant's Gender × Job Status	8.00	2	4.00	3.36*
Three-way Interactions				
Religious Identifier × Applicant's Gender × Participant's Gender	8.57	2	4.29	3.60*
Religious Identifier × Applicant's Gender × Job Status	19.86	4	4.97	4.17**
Religious Identifier × Participant's Gender × Job Status	9.48	4	2.37	1.99
Applicant's Gender × Participant's Gender × Job Status	3.39	2	1.70	1.42

Note: *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$

increased, with Jewish applicants being considered the most employable for high job status occupations. Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 4 suggested that the relationship between religious identifier and employability is influenced by the participant's gender such that men are more likely than women participants to perceive applicants who wear non-Christian religious identifiers as unemployable. There was a significant main effect for participant's gender (see Table 1 for statistics). In general, male participants rated applicants as less employable than did female participants (see Table 2 for means and standard deviations). However, there was a nonsignificant religious identifier × participant's gender interaction. Although the male participants did give lower ratings than did female participants, the male participants rated applicants who wore non-Christian religious identifiers more highly than the applicants in the

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Religious Identifier, Applicant's Gender, Participant's Gender on Employability

Religious Identifier	Participant's Gender	Applicant's Gender	Mean	*SD*	*N*
Christian-Identified	Male	Male	4.86	1.27	29
		Female	5.48	1.15	26
		Total	5.15	1.24	55
	Female	Male	5.66	1.24	74
		Female	5.67	1.25	86
		Total	5.66	1.24	160
	Total	Male	5.43	1.29	103
		Female	5.63	1.22	112
		Total	5.53	1.26	215
Jewish	Male	Male	5.69	0.99	18
		Female	5.77	0.79	11
		Total	5.72	0.90	29
	Female	Male	5.84	1.07	32
		Female	5.89	1.04	49
		Total	5.87	1.05	81
	Total	Male	5.79	1.03	50
		Female	5.87	1.00	60
		Total	5.83	1.01	110
Muslim	Male	Male	5.36	1.63	14
		Female	5.95	0.96	10
		Total	5.60	1.40	24
	Female	Male	6.06	0.67	27
		Female	6.01	0.83	36
		Total	6.03	0.76	63
	Total	Male	5.82	1.13	41
		Female	6.00	0.85	46
		Total	5.91	0.99	87
Total	Male	Male	5.22	1.32	61
		Female	5.65	1.04	47
		Total	5.41	1.22	108
	Female	Male	5.78	1.11	133
		Female	5.80	1.12	171
		Total	5.79	1.11	304
	Total	Male	5.61	1.20	194
		Female	5.77	1.10	218
		Total	5.69	1.15	412

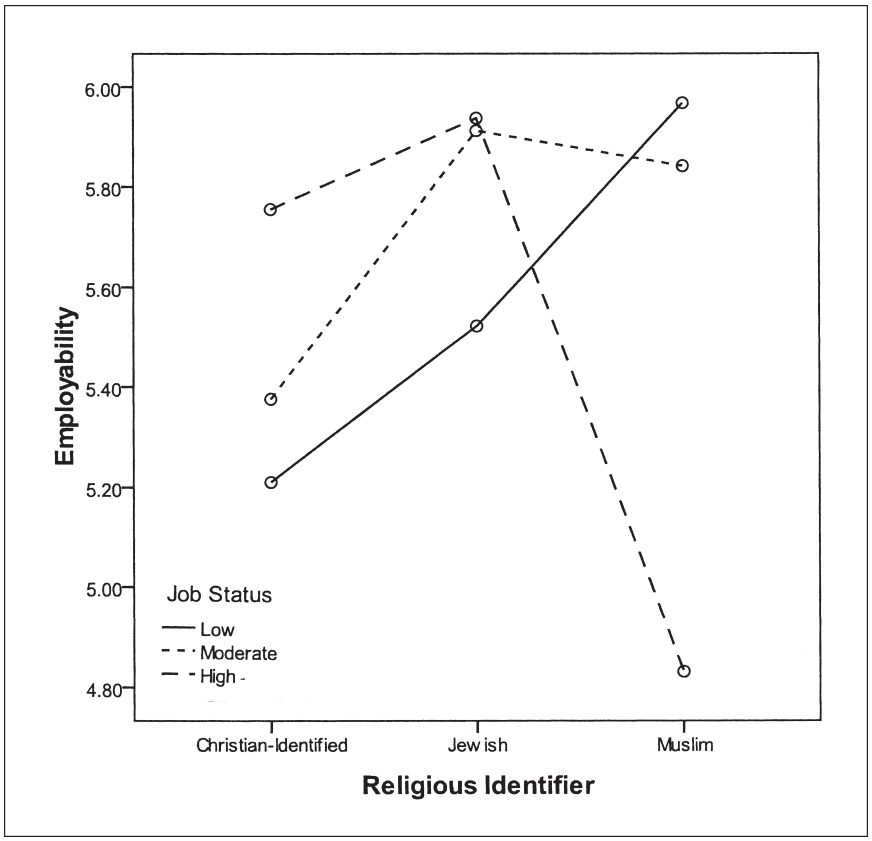


Figure 1. Interaction between religious identifier by job status on employability.

Christian-identified condition. Similarly, females rated the applicants who wore non-Christian religious identifiers more highly than the applicants in the Christian-identified condition. Therefore, hypothesis 4 was not supported.

Further investigation of the interaction between the participant's gender and religious identifier found that the applicant's gender influenced this interaction (see Table 1 for statistics). There was a significant main effect for the applicant's gender on employability. In general, participants rated the male applicants as less employable than the female applicants (see Table 2 for means and standard deviations). There was also a significant applicant's gender × participant's gender interaction. As can be seen in Figure 2, male participants rated female applicants

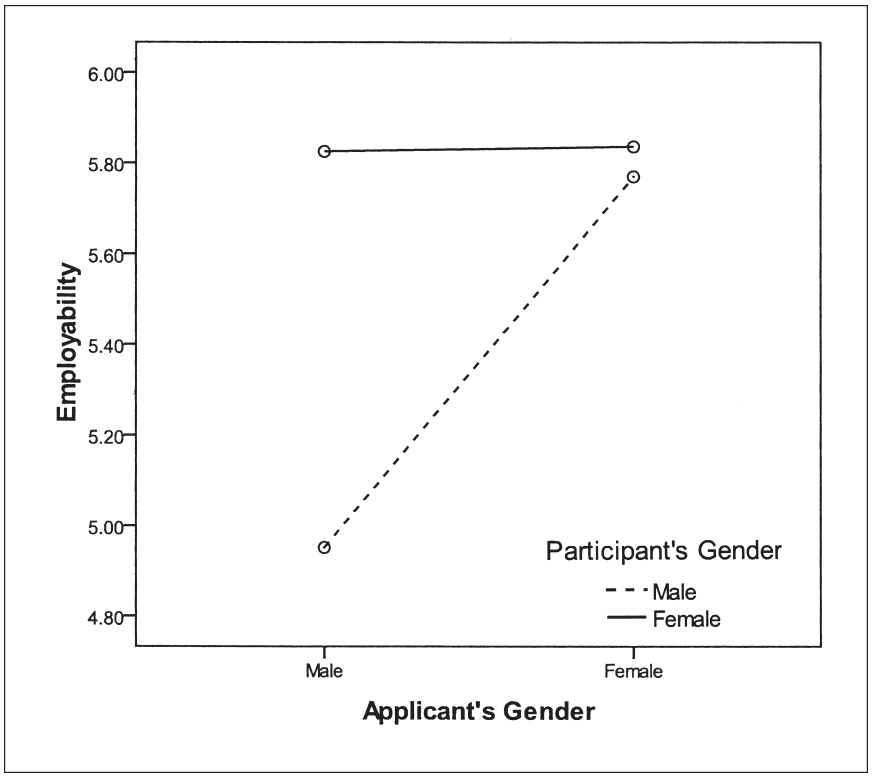


Figure 2. Interaction between applicant's gender and participant's gender on employability.

more highly than male applicants. Female participants rated male and female applicants similarly on employability.

There was also a significant religious identifier × applicant's gender interaction (see Table 1 for statistics). On average, participants rated female applicants who wore Jewish and Muslim religious identifiers higher than applicants who wore Christian-identifier religious identifiers. However, participants rated Muslim male applicants lower than applicants in any other religious identifier condition (see Table 2 for means and standard deviations). Additionally, there was a significant religious identifier × applicant's gender × participant's gender three-way interaction. As can be seen in Figure 3, male participants rated Muslim male applicants lower on employability than those in any other religious identifier condition including that of Muslim female applicants. Female participants rated both female and male applicants similarly but rated Jewish applicants higher than

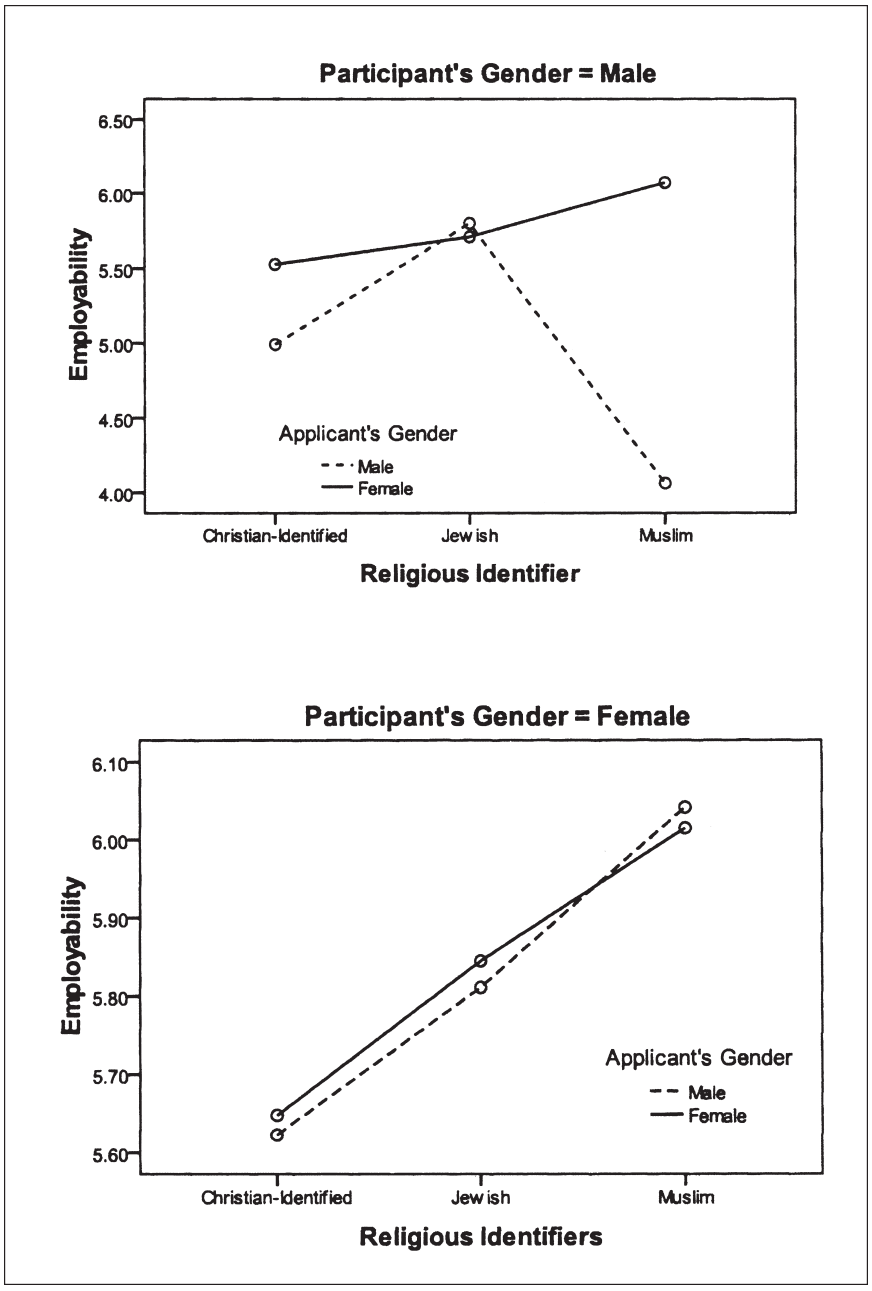


Figure 3. Interaction between religious identifier by applicant's gender on employability as a function of participant's gender.

Christian-identified applicants, and gave the highest employability ratings to Muslim applicants.

DISCUSSION

Although applicants who wore non-Christian religious identifiers were not perceived differently on employability measures than applicants who did not wear religious identifiers or wore Christian-identified religious identifiers, our findings reveal that the relationship between wearing religious identifiers and employability is much more complex than initially hypothesized. The relationship between religious identifier and employability is influenced by several factors, including status of occupation and gender of both participant and applicant.

As predicted, the job status of the occupation moderated the relationship between wearing a religious identifier and employability ratings. The interactions between job status and religious identifier revealed that Muslims were rated as most employable for low job status occupations compared to other religious identifier groups and least employable for high status occupations compared to other religious identifier groups. This finding is consistent with previous research, which has shown that minorities are rated unfavorably for high status jobs but not for low status jobs (Stewart & Perlow, 2001). Surprisingly, applicants wearing the Jewish religious identifier were perceived as the most employable group for both moderate and high job status occupations, even more employable than the Christian-identified group. One possible explanation could be the stereotyping of the Jewish applicants as a model minority, including stereotypic perceptions of Jews as smart, successful, and high achievers (Freedman, 2005), characteristics often associated with high status jobs.

Our study also found that the applicant's gender approached significance as a moderator of the relationship between religious identifier and employability. Male participants tended to rate all the applicants lower than did female participants. This is consistent with previous research, which suggests that males are more likely to discriminate than women (Mills et al., 1995). However, this finding was mixed, in that males still rated the applicants with non-Christian religious identifiers as more employable than the Christian-identified applicants, in a fashion similar to the ratings of female participants.

The interaction between religious identifier, participant's gender, and applicant's gender revealed some interesting results. Male participants rated Muslim male applicants lower on employability than any other religious identifier group but rated Muslim female applicants higher on employability than any other religious identifier group. The low ratings given by male applicants to Muslim male participants can be explained by the subordinate-male target hypothesis within the social dominance orientation theory, which suggests that outgroup males are more likely to be targets of discrimination than outgroup females, because

males engage in intrasexual competition directed against males, in which it is evolutionarily beneficial to maintain one's own resources and exploit the resources of outgroup males by resisting them (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius & Veniegas, 2000). Considerable evidence has been presented to support the subordinate-male target hypothesis. For example, the discrepancy in pay between minority women and White women is less than the discrepancy in pay between minority men and White men (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Minority men are also more likely to be targets of discrimination than minority women in both housing sector and criminal sentencing practices (Hood & Cordovil, 1992; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Similarly, our findings suggest that Muslim males, as outgroup males, are being discriminated against in ratings of employability by male participants while Muslim females are not.

CONCLUSION

It is important to address the limitations of this study. One limitation of this study is that the use of a photo of an applicant is not representative of real hiring settings and, therefore, lacks mundane realism. Although Ilgen (1986) stated that evaluating applicant resumes is very similar to practice in real personnel selection settings, adding pictures of the applicant adds a not so common feature that is rarely attached to resumes in the real work setting. Future research should replicate this study using a field design, in which applicants wearing religious identifiers apply in person, thereby increasing the ecological validity of our findings.

Finally, we used a college student sample to rate potential job applicants. Since some of these students might have not been familiar with some of the occupations chosen for this study (e.g., mail superintendent) and probably had no previous experience as personnel staff making hiring decisions, they might have not been the ideal group to rate the job applicants. To account for the variance of age in our sample, we did control for age in all of our analyses, and our findings were still significant. In addition, research suggests that many recruiters are often untrained and have little experience in recruiting (Connerley & Rynes, 1997; Drake, Kaplan, & Stone, 1973; Rynes & Boudreau, 1986; Walters, 1985), and has found no significant difference between untrained recruiters and trained recruiters in terms of organizational attractiveness to job applicants (Taylor & Bergmann, 1987), rating agreement (Maurer, 2002; Maurer & Fay, 1988), or rating accuracy (Maurer, 2002). Also, research has shown that there are no major differences between college students' and professionals' evaluation of resumes (Dipboye, Fromkin, & Wiback, 1975) or interviews (Maurer, 2002). Future research should investigate the generalizability of our findings by using actual recruiters, to see if they differ in their evaluations from our college student sample.

Very little research has examined the relationship between religious identifiers and employability ratings, and our findings contribute to the field theoretically by increasing our understanding of workplace discrimination based on non-Christian

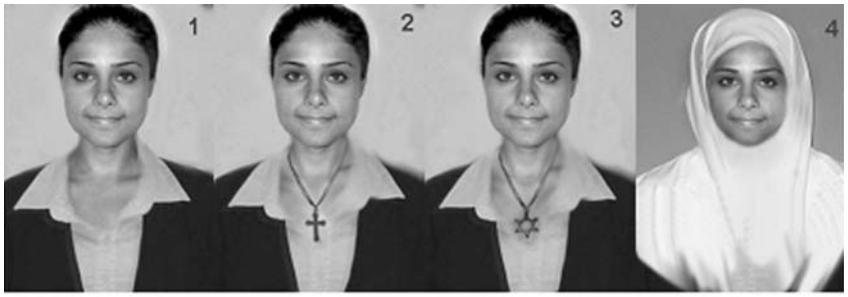
religious identifiers. Specifically, our study shows that even though applicants who wear non-Christian religious identifiers are not treated differently than applicants who do not wear religious identifiers, several moderating factors do in fact lead to discrimination against applicants who wear non-Christian religious identifiers. Because the status of the job and the gender of the participants (evaluators) and applicants influenced discrimination against individuals who wear non-Christian religious identifiers, our research suggests that employment discrimination depends very much on situational factors. So, future research examining religious discrimination should use a more refined approach, in which studies should not limit their focus to main effects but include the interactions of several other factors as well.

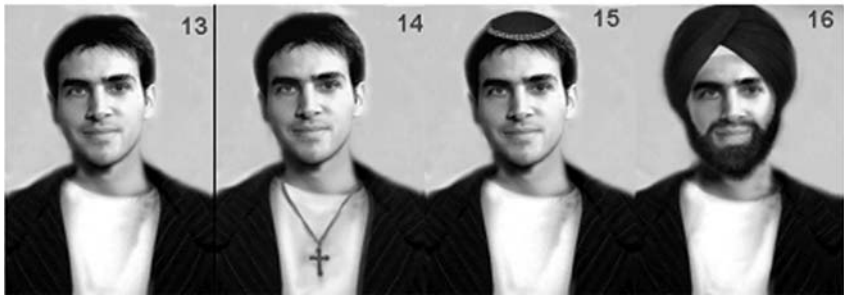
This study also has several practical implications. The evidence we found for discrimination against individuals who wear Muslim religious identifiers suggests that despite the law, religious discrimination in employment still exists. Even though there are federal laws that claim to prohibit religious discrimination in employment (e.g., the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964), they have failed to eradicate religious prejudice in a generation that was born decades after these laws were passed. What is especially interesting about these findings is that even though research on outgroups (e.g., racial outgroups) and measures of prejudice are susceptible to the influence of social-desirability factors or participant impression management effects (Phillips & Clancy, 1970; Stone, Stone, & Dipboye, 1992), we were still able to detect discrimination against individuals who wear religious identifiers. Overall, the ratings of our college student sample suggest the need for educating today's college students about workplace discrimination; our results suggest a dismal outlook for the future as these students will be tomorrow's decision makers. There is no reason to believe that they will become less prejudiced when they graduate and make hiring decisions, since research has suggested that prejudiced attitudes tend to be stable across the adult lifespan (Hoover & Fishbein, 1999).

Our study highlights the need to combat discrimination against individuals who wear religious attire, by publicizing the extent of religious discrimination in today's workplace. Often, organizations' discriminatory hiring practices with regard to applicants of various religions go unnoticed. However, our study suggests that discriminatory hiring practices are employed, and employees can only begin to eradicate this problem once we identify these practices as a problem in our society. One way in which organizational discriminatory practices can come to light is to have employees of equal qualifications apply for similar jobs wearing different religious identifiers. If any such employees experience highly different treatment compared with that given to individuals who do not wear such religious identifiers, this can be used as evidence that discriminatory hiring practices are employed, and employees can choose to rightfully take legal action against employers or publicize their differential treatment.

Since some applicants wear non-Christian religious identifiers when applying for work, it is also important that they become aware that hiring decisions about them may be influenced by their religious affiliations. Because our findings are based on photographs of applicants that visually displayed the religious affiliations of the applicants, it is plausible to believe that face-to-face meetings will be especially influential in employers' engaging in discriminatory hiring processes. If possible, applicants who wear non-Christian religious identifiers should apply for work using non face-to-face methods, for example, applying online or via phone, as one means of combating religious discrimination in employability assessments. Even more importantly, individuals who wear religious attire should be educated about their rights and how to take action if they experience discrimination during the hiring process or at work. Additionally, their respective religious communities should work together to stress the problems individuals wearing traditional religious attire might face when applying for work, and keep track of and report any incidents of discrimination.

APPENDIX
SAMPLE APPLICANT PHOTOGRAPHS





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