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Ethnic Names, Resumes, and Occupational stereotypes: Will D'Money Get the Job?

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Ethnic Names, Resumes, and Occupational stereotypes: Will D'Money Get the Job?

By

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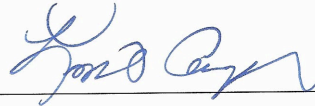
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ETHNIC NAMES, RESUMES, AND OCCUPATIONAL STEREOTYPES: WILL

D'MONEY GET THE JOB?

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Abstract

King, Madera, Hebl, and Knight (2006) found evidence that race-typed names can have significant influence on the evaluation of resumes. Specifically, they found significant differences between Asian, Hispanic, Black and White-sounding names. They also found that occupational stereotypes covaried the relationship between names and evaluation. The current study expanded on their research by manipulating race with new groups (White, Asian Indian, Nigerian, Muslim, and Non-traditional Black-sounding names), manipulating the quality of the resume (low, high), and by considering occupational stereotypes (low-status, high-status) as an explanatory mechanism. Participants who have claimed hiring experience (N=170) from several fields read a fictitious resume, gave an overall evaluation of the applicant, and judged the applicant's suitability for several occupations. A factorial analysis indicated that people who make hiring decisions do not evaluate applicants differently based on their name alone. Participants were able to evaluate candidates according to their resume, such that candidates with high-quality resumes received better evaluations than those with low-quality resumes. Also, no significant interaction of race and resume quality was found. Occupational stereotypes could not be explored as a covariate due to the lack of significant difference in names.

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CHAPTER 1

The lack of diversity has become a growing concern for organizations, as it is an important asset in gaining competitive advantage and has coincided with social and legislative pushes for equal opportunity amongst historically disadvantaged groups (Noe, 2005). Although extensive progress has been made to alleviate discrimination since the Civil Rights era, barriers to minority access in the workplace still remain. Due to legal advances in equal rights, discrimination has become more covert and displays of prejudice have become subtler in nature, an example being interpersonal discrimination occurring in interviews (Hebl, Foster, Mannix, & Dovidio, 2002). One of the first barriers minorities may face is the name on their resumes. A name can imply one's race and subsequent characteristics associated with that race; for example, Jose Gonzalez would elicit a Mexican image while Jamal Jenkins would elicit an image of a Black man. Bertrand and Mullainathan (2002) found that the race-typed names on identical resumes had a significant effect on the number of callbacks for interviews; specifically, White-sounding names like Emily and Brad elicited about 50% more callbacks than Black-sounding names such as Aisha and Jermaine.

Previous research has also shown that racial names can be associated with an occupational stereotype, a "preconceived attitude about a particular occupation, about people who are employed in that occupation, or about one's suitability for that occupation" (Lipton, O'Connor, Terry, & Bellamy, 1991). A key study by King, Madera, Hebl, and Knight (2006), which will be replicated in this study, found that different racial names on

two resumes, one high and one low-quality, had different evaluations. The high quality resume and low quality resume both had the same organizations, clubs, and amount of information. However, the high quality resume had a higher GPA (3.9 to 2.7), more leadership experience in their organizations and clubs (president instead of member), and presented more competent abilities than the low quality resume. To elicit racial content, they used the following names to represent each group: "Lee Chang" for Asians, "James Sullivan" for Whites, "Jose Gonzalez" for Hispanics, and "Jamal Jenkins" for Black applicants. Then they had participants rate the high and low quality resumes with the applicant's name being the only difference. They found that the Asian American applicants were evaluated highly for high status jobs regardless of resume quality, White and Hispanic applicants benefited from high-quality resumes, and Black applicant were evaluated negatively, even with strong credentials. However, they found that occupational stereotypes accounted for the relationship between race and evaluations of applicants. Specifically, the effect of race on overall evaluations and the interactions between race and resume quality did not approach significance after controlling for occupational stereotypes. For example, the Black sounding "Jamal Jenkins" had lower evaluations overall but when the controlling for occupational stereotypes, which rated Jamal as more suitable for low status jobs, he was no longer evaluated differently from other racial groups.

Whether intentional or not, employment discrimination where job-irrelevant factors like somebody's name are taken into consideration can have detrimental results to organizations seeking diversity and more importantly, severe implications for minority

applicants. The following study will expand on King et al.'s (2002) study on White,

Black, Asian, and Hispanic applicants by introducing Indian names, Nigerian names,

Muslim names, and for lack of a better term: non-traditional Black names, which are

colloquially known as stereotypical "ghetto names". The literature on Muslims and Asian

Indians in employment discrimination is extremely limited and research on Nigerian

Americans[1] in work contexts is virtually nonexistent. Studies that address Black

discrimination usually refer to traditional Black names such as Jamal, Tyrone, Keisha,

and Latoya (Bertrand & Mullanathan, 2002). But what about non-traditional names like

D'Money, Imamirical, La-a (prounounced Ledasha), and Alize? How do names influence

the perceptions of selection personnel in prescreening resumes? Will D'Money Jackson

and James Sullivan be evaluated the same way when their credentials are identical? This

is the focus of the current study.

The Importance of Resumes

The importance of resumes in the selection process cannot be overstated due to

their prevalence as the "most frequently used selection practice by organizations… even

more common than use of the employment interview" (Dipboye & Jackson, 1999 as cited

in Cole, Field, Giles, & Harris, 2009). It is likely that every selection decision includes an

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[1] Originally, I wanted to differentiate Blacks (African-Americans: those brought over through the Atlantic Slave Trade) from Africans (those who have a recent and direct lineage from countries in Africa) because the names and culture that comes with each heritage can be vastly different. However, it is important to note the diversity of countries within Africa, so it could not be merely "African" names. For this reason, I chose to focus on the Nigerian population, which has the highest representation of direct African ancestry in the United States at 253,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

evaluation of bio-data in the form of a resume, and it is estimated that one billion resumes are screened per year (Levine & Flory, 1975). It is also important to note that resumes are often used as the initial hurdle for a vast majority of selection processes, and their interpretation can have severe implications for an individual's access into organizations. Cole et al. (2009) clarify how vital the perception of a resume is as the first step of the common multiple-hurdle method of hiring:

> [B]ased on their resume reviews, recruiters act as an initial employment gatekeeper, deciding which applicants should remain active and which should be excluded from further consideration. This early phase is critical because recruiters' decisions to exclude prospective applicants for a job opening, based solely on their review of applicants' resumes, is tantamount to a rejection decision on the part of the organization.

Resumes are used often *because* they allow the employer to quickly match their needs with applicants' skills, education, activities, and on-the-job experiences. Although recruiters are supposed to focus on factual job relevant content, other dispositional characteristics can be inferred (Ash et al. 1989; Knouse 1989). For example, one can assume an applicant's religion based on church/temple service, age from their graduation date, and ethnicity based on cultural extracurricular group membership titles like "National Society of Black Engineers." While an applicant can choose whether to engage in or list experiences that suggest gender, race, or age, it is important to note that they cannot avoid listing their name. An applicant's name, which is necessary for

identification, is not an arbitrary label and can spark several characteristic inferences made by recruiters; they can convey information about the sex, age, and race of a person (Young, Kennedy, Newhouse, Browne, & Thiessen, 1993 as cited in King et al., 2006).

Past research has shown that recruiters often form impressions from resumes that go beyond job relevant characteristics (Cole et al. (2009); Cable and Gilovich 1998; Cole et al. 2004; Dindoff 1999; Glick et al. 1988). These additional inferences are also used to compare employability between applicants (Brown & Campion, 1994). Whether these inferences are correct or not, they can influence an organization's hiring decisions; when racial and cultural inferences are taken into account specifically, they can severely limit minority access at the earliest stages of selection. Race plays a major role in occupational stereotypes, conditioned ways of thinking about a job's characteristics, and evaluations of who is suitable for such titles.

Occupational Stereotypes

Although race will be examined as a key influencer in recruiter perceptions, I also expect the occupational stereotypes that come along with race to be even more important in ratings. Occupational stereotyping is defined as "a preconceived attitude about a particular occupation, about people who are employed in that occupation, or about one's suitability for that occupation" (Lipton et al., 1991, p. 129). For example, East Indians are often seen in engineering and medical positions, so they may be a part of a mental model for high-wage jobs. Thus, they may receive higher ratings in the selection process due to the recruiter's preconceived ideas of them being prevalent in high-wage jobs, and thus

more suitable for high-status positions. Equally qualified Black applicants may not get the same luxury for high-wage jobs where they are historically underrepresented (Anderson & Shapiro, 1996; Hewes, 2003; Rogers, 2006). In fact, King et al. (2006) found that occupational stereotypes influenced perceptions of applicant resumes such that race effects became non-significant when occupation was considered. This implies that it is not simply overt racial prejudice that incites hiring discrimination, but the conditioned occupational stereotypes that are attached to each race.

To explain why occupational stereotypes happen, one needs to first look at the term "stereotype." Lippmann, who coined the term, referred to them as "pictures" individuals hold in their heads. This later evolved into a social psychology concept for storing a mental model in one's head that can be retrieved to quickly process information (Devine, 1989). These "pictures" are reinforced when formed through contact experiences. However, when opportunities for direct contact with the stereotyped concept are lacking (e.g. being unable to meet and get to know people of minority races who contrast stereotypes) the media serves as a critical agent in formation and reinforcement (Dalisay & Tan, 2009).

These perceptions, whether or not they reflect reality, can have serious consequences at the individual, group, and organizational level (Goldman et al, 2006; Gutek et al., 1996; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2007; Mays et al., 1996; Sanchez & Brock, 1996 as cited by Forstenlechner & Al-Waqfi, 2010). Specifically, they can lead to discrimination in hiring where there are fewer job opportunities for those who are just as

competent and more job opportunities for those who are undeserving. The use of the resume as an initial pre-screening method for most selection processes consists of scanning hundreds of resumes, where personnel may spend 30 seconds or less per resume (Cotton, O'Neil, & Griffin, 2007). Given that individuals will use the most easily retrievable or accessible information, stereotypes, to make sense of incoming information, one can only imagine how often they are used during the extremely quick pre-screening of resumes. In order to get through that many resumes, selection personnel may go through the information so quickly that they may resort to stereotypes unintentionally by deriving non-job related demographic information from the applicants' name and activities. It should be noted that many organizations have utilized electronic tools to scan through resumes to find key job relevant words as an initial screening, avoiding possibilities of stereotyping. Despite these advances, a substantial number of organizations still rely on hiring managers to scan through resumes for initial screening, making this process susceptible to subjective stereotyping.

Extensive research has demonstrated how occupational stereotypes can influence how applicants are perceived and selected whether the stereotypes are based on race, gender or both (King, et al. 2006; Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2002). The perceived groups of interest in this study (Indian/ Nigerian/Muslim/Non-traditional Black), their inferred occupational stereotypes, and research demonstrating discrimination and differential treatment they face in the workplace will be discussed in further detail in the following sections.

Asian Indians

In American society, Asian Americans are often seen as a model minority (deemed too successful to be considered a disadvantaged minority group), and are popularly believed to have high educational attainment, high median family income, and high status jobs (Cheng, 1997). They are usually looked at as the most successful group of immigrants in the United States (Abraham, 2006; Pedraza, 2006; Seth, 1995; Zhou, 2002). When it comes to the perception of Americans, 80% view Asian Americans in a favorable light (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2008 as cited in Dalisay & Tan, 2009). The Model Minority Thesis is often applied to East Asian Americans (e.g. descendants or immigrants from China, Japan, and Korea), Asian Indians, and excludes Southeast Asians (e.g. Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians) (Barringer, Gardner, & Levin, 1993; Barringer, Takeuchi, Xenos, 1990).

Amongst Asian Indians specifically, the third largest immigrant group behind Mexicans and Chinese, over 77% of the foreign-born population is likely to be employed in white collar jobs compared to 58% of the White population (Seth, 1995; US Census Bureau 2012). Barringer, et al. (1993) point out that amongst Asians, Asian Indians "as a group were the super models, but only in the case of the newer immigrants, and only because their immigration was so selective [favoring highly educated immigrants]". This explains one of the main reasons why Asian Indians are prominent in high status jobs requiring advanced degrees or substantial job experience. Prashad (2000) notes "Between 1966 and 1977, 83% of the Indians who migrated to the US were under the occupational

category of professional and technical workers (roughly 20,000 were scientists with

Ph.D.'s, 40,0000 engineers, and 25,000 doctors)". They are also "likely to hold

professional and managerial positions because of highly transferable credentials from

India" which continues to explain why they are so successful in the American social

hierarchy (Hsia, 1988, Kitano & Daniels, 1995). From an employer perspective, Indian

Americans can be seen with an occupational stereotype as overachieving, hard

workers with a serious attitude toward educational values.

Although Asian Americans in general are often found in hard sciences,

quantitative specialties (e.g. accounting), business, and engineering, they are not

found suitable across "people-contact professions and occupations, such as law,

advertising, and journalism" due to their reserved stereotype (Cheng, 1997). In

addition, there are instances where having a traditional Indian name may be

perceived negatively for how unfamiliar it is, a topic mentioned earlier. An actor

named Kalpen Modi had trouble attempting to get jobs, experiencing dismissive

attitudes from producers. After he changed his name on his resume to Kal Penn, a

more American-sounding name, he saw his auditions increase by almost 50 percent

(Bhattacharyya, 2004). A name's novelty may detract from the person's ratings, but

I believe Asian Indians will be seen as model minorities as long as the name incites

such group membership from the recruiter's perspective. Most research on the topic

focuses on Asian minorities as a collective of several origin countries, but few look at

Indian minorities alone. Therefore this study could expand the literature on Asian Indians in the workplace.

Nigerians

This study will also attempt to look at how those of African descent are perceived in the workplace. By "African" I mean those who are direct immigrants, or their descendants, from one of the 54 unique countries in Africa, not "Blacks" or "African Americans". For the purpose of this study, I will focus on the Nigerian population because they are the most prevalent African representation in the US, having more representation than Somalis and Ethiopians (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). The differences between the cultural and familial traditions between Nigerians and Blacks can be vast, and this study is attempting to differentiate job-related outcomes from Black names (e.g. Jamal, Tyrone, Terrell) and Nigerian names (e.g. Oluwaseun, Babatunde, Titilayo). Such research on African immigrants and their descendants in the American workplace is virtually nonexistent. Brettell (2006) gives several personal accounts of Nigerians facing discrimination: being passed over for promotions, getting cut despite high selection exam scores, and being told they were not hired due to a language barrier. One respondent from the study stated:

> "I have never experienced racial discrimination in terms of getting a job (but) I have been passed over for promotions because of race. I trained people who were later promoted over me. However, I did not go to court in order to protect my family."

Similar to Indian immigrants, African immigrants are well educated due to the selectivity of migrants. Non-refugee immigrants are extensively screened before they are able to acquire visas, allotting only the most intelligent and most skilled through (Imoagene, 2011). Despite such credentials, education, and job-relevant skills, Nigerians may still fall under disadvantageous perceptions due to their negative portrayal in the media as corrupt thugs, impoverished swindlers (e.g. spam e-mails asking for money and bank information called "419 scams"), jungle barbarians, and war-mongering terrorists (e.g. *District 9, X-Men Origins: Wolverine*) (Karimi, 2009; Hirsch, 2013; DellaFlora, 1995). I believe that these negative stereotypes and their characteristic "unfamiliar" names lead to Nigerians being discriminated against in the workplace, a trend I expect to see in this study as well.

Muslims

There is a substantial amount of research supporting that Muslims are negatively viewed in American society, this perception spiking dramatically after the tragic events of September 11th, 2001. Bushman and Bonacci (2004) note that individuals report greater prejudice toward Arab Americans (which is not synonymous, yet perceptions overlap largely with that of Muslims) than African Americans, Asian Americans, or Hispanic Americans. A survey of Muslims revealed that "levels of perceived subtle or indirect discrimination had risen by 82.6% and perceptions of overt discrimination have risen by 76.3% since September 11th "(Sheridan, 2006)**.** They are often seen as terrorists and religious fanatics that are evil, barbaric, cruel, hot-tempered, and irrational (Zogby

International, 2007; American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, 2008). It is also important to note that specifically, Muslim men are seen as aggressive, belligerent, and hostile while women who wear the hijab (51% of female Muslim population wear the hijab all or some of the time) are considered unattractive and less intelligent (Mahmud and Swami, 2010).

These harsh perceptions of those who practice faith in Islam reflect their experiences of inequity in the workplace. Choudhury (2008) noted that the "number of discrimination claims by Muslims between September 11, 2001 and the same date in 2005 nearly doubled when compared with the previous 4-year period". Malos (2009) provides a slew of workplace court cases that involve Arab-American and Muslim American discrimination charges. These incidents involve workers of the minority group being ostracized from their jobs for their beliefs to the point where they are forced to leave, verbal abuse from supervisors and peers, multiple accusations of being a terrorists, and death threats. *Zayed v. Apple Computers* (San Jose, CA, 2006 as cited in Malos, 2009) illustrates the extent of discrimination at a multinational corporation that supposedly embraces diversity and shuns discrimination in their recruitment policy:

> Zayed, an Arab Muslim woman of Egyptian descent, had worked successfully as an at-will engineer in Apple's software operations division since 1994 [After 9/11] colleagues began asking her whether the Quoran really instructed Muslims to participate in suicide bombings, stared at her with allegedly malicious expressions, frequently slammed her door, and often stormed off after arguments

over Zayed's stated opposition to the war in Iraq. At one point, Apple sent out requests for her citizenship status…by mid-2004, Zayed found herself isolated and marginalized, and believed she was denied projects and career opportunities given to male Caucasian non-Arab colleagues. Zayed also claimed she was evaluated poorly…(Apple) eventually demoted her. Ultimately, Zayed took disability and sick leave in part due to stress caused by allegedly demeaning and intimidating treatment by managers and co-workers at Apple…. Zayed was (eventually) terminated. (pp. 301)

Research has been able to replicate the discrimination seen in real world settings. King and Ahmad (2010) explained whether Muslim attire could influence how one was treated in a selection process. Coders and confederates noted that applicants experienced more negative interpersonal behavior (e.g. rudeness, hostility) when they appeared to be Muslim than when they did not. Store managers also spent less time interacting with those who appeared Muslim. Research has also shown that Muslims are perceived to lack warmth, and will continue to receive negative reactions if they do not provide stereotype-inconsistent information (e.g. showing warmth by emphasizing volunteer experiences on a resume or come across as congenial in an interview) (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick & Xu, 2002; Eden & Ahmad, 2010). Although it has been shown that the discrimination against Muslim names on resumes is eradicated once substantial volunteer activities are listed (King & Ahmad, 2002), there are still Muslims who believe their traditional names bring detriment to their job prospects. In a qualitative study by Forstenlechner and Al-Waqfi (2010), interviewees reported that they would do "their own little experiments, like

shortening "Mohammed" to "Mo" on applications and suddenly getting a chance to go to an interview, or taking off their headscarves prior to entering an organization's building for an interview". They went on to aptly summarize what the literature supports as a common experience of Muslims in the workplace:

> Negative stereotyping of Muslims that leads to discriminatory behaviours ranging from denied equality in access to jobs to perceived unfair treatment by supervisors and co-workers, manifested in such behaviours as unwillingness to accommodate a worker's right to religious freedom and exerting more stringent standards in evaluating performance of Muslim employees. (pp. 777)

The aforementioned literature review involves studies done in person and this study intends to see if these negative perceptions surface from a Muslim name on resumes alone. The court cases show extremes of what happens to employees in the workplace, but we are interested in seeing their chances of getting into the organization in the first place. If these incidents happen after someone has been in an organization for years, one can only imagine how many Muslims do not get jobs to begin with due to their name.

Blacks and Non-Traditional Names

King et al.'s (2006) study being replicated found that Blacks were assessed the least positively in their evaluation of resumes out of Hispanics, Asians, and Whites. They also found that Blacks were perceived to be most suitable for low-status occupations out of the applicants with low-quality resumes. Most importantly, they found that Black applicants were perceived negatively in such a way that a high-quality resume did not

differ from a low-quality resume. Although research that supports their findings of unequal access for Black applicants is limited, it is quite telling. Studies show that Whites with a conviction for selling drugs are more likely to get call backs for job interviews than Blacks with no record, resumes with Black-sounding names receive 50% fewer callbacks than Whites with identical resumes, higher quality resumes do not help Blacks the same way they help Whites, (Pager, 2003; Beltrand & Mullainathan, 2002). When it comes to occupations, Blacks are underrepresented in high status jobs that require advanced education and experience and are overrepresented in low status jobs. Bigler, Averhart, and Liben (2003) note that "African Americans are employed at 40% the rate of Whites in managerial, professional, and sales occupations but are employed at almost twice the rate of European Americans in private household, service, and laborer occupations".

Prevalent negative perceptions and stereotyping of Blacks could explain such inequality. Shih (2002) investigated employers' and co-worker attitudes towards Blacks noting that: Sixty-one percent of employers interviewed claimed that Blacks had an "attitude problem", employers saw blacks lacking in motivation saying that they are "not interested in learning and working all day", employers found blacks to be more "hostile towards management", and even amongst races with similar socioeconomic status, such as Latinos, Blacks were rated worse on work ethic. Another study by Gilbert, Carr-Ruffino, Ivancevich, and Lownes-Jackson (2003) comparing Asian Americans and Black employees found that Blacks were seen as less competent, less polite, and less serious about work. Bigler, Avenhart, Liben, 2003 noted that even Black youth are

knowledgeable about the stereotypes and internalize them, as they are more likely to assign positive traits to Whites and negative traits to Blacks. Their results also suggests that Black children as young as 6 were found to assign higher status jobs to Whites and lower status jobs to Blacks, regardless of their socioeconomic status. This insinuates that a person of the same race will not necessarily view someone else as more suitable for high status jobs like the "similarity-hypothesis" suggests.

Previous research investigating the effects of Black names have typically resorted to fairly traditional names such as Jamal and Tyrone. However, for this study, I will investigate non-traditional Black names (i.e. unique or unusual, a play on words, unconventional spelling or punctuation, or an invented combination of words). Here are some meanings behind a few common traditional Black names: Tyrone is *king*, Jamal is an Arabic masculine given name for *beauty*, and Davonte means *river*. Examples of nontraditional names include Alize (named after the brand of alcoholic beverages), La 'Vonte (use of La and apostrophe with an "on-tay" sound at the end), Le-era (pronounced Ladashera), Cash Mone (play on currency), and Devonair (play on the adjective "debonair"). Fryer and Levitt (2004) found that these distinct names tend to be more common among lower-class Blacks and individuals with these names are perceived to be the child of low class single mothers, uneducated, and less desirable (Mehrabian, 2001).

One could imagine how these negative perceptions can hinder a person with a seemingly "ghetto" name in the professional business world. In addition to carrying the negative connotations that come with a Black name, they also have the less attractive trait

of being unusual and incite a low class, uneducated upbringing. Due to these elicited attitudes, I believe that nontraditional Black names will be rated poorly.

It is important to note that there are also gender stereotypes such as females showing communal traits such as warmth and males showing traits such as competence and assertiveness (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). These traits also interact with racial and religious minority groups, an example being Muslim men noted as aggressive while women are less intelligent (Mahmud and Swami, 2010). Due to limited participants, this study will focus on males only, similar to the replicated study.

Hypotheses

Overall, this study intends to find out how inferred group membership from names influences how resumes are evaluated. We also expect occupational stereotypes to account for the differences in the groups.

Hypothesis 1: *The Indian sounding name will get rated higher than the White sounding name and both groups will be higher than Nigerian, Muslim, and Non-traditional Black sounding names on overall evaluations.*

Hypothesis 2: *Race type names will interact with the quality of the resume. Specifically, applicants with Indian and White sounding names will benefit from a high quality resume while applicants with Nigerian, Muslim, and Non-traditional Black sounding names will benefit less.*

__Hypothesis__ 3: Occupational stereotypes will account for the relationship between race

and evaluation of applicants.

CHAPTER II

Method

Participants

Due to the nature of this study, the sample included only participants who had experience looking over resumes or who had input on hiring decisions. A total of 207 participants were recruited through two methods. The first group of participants ($N=107$) was recruited by contacting supervisors and employees at several organizations and asking eligible staff members to take the survey. They were told that the results of the survey would not get back to their supervisor and influence their job status. The locations included a human resources department in a large southwestern metropolitan city, a law firm in a large southwestern metropolitan city, a mobile apps company in a large southwestern metropolitan city, a career development center and student residential life organization in a large southwestern university, two medical and research centers in a large southwestern city, and a consulting firm in a large southwestern city. Out of the 107 respondents, 82 responded to all items yielding a 76.6% response rate. These participants were not compensated for their participation. The other half of the participants ($N=100$) was recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk tool, an online crowdsourcing service where anonymous online workers complete web-based tasks. In order to screen applicants out, a preliminary question asked **"**Have you looked at resumes to judge job applicants' qualifications in the past?**".** Applicants who said no ($N=25$) were directed to the end of the survey. Out of the 100 recruited, 88 responded to all items, yielding an

88% completion rate. Both recruitment methods combined for a total of 170 respondents used in analyses, yielding a total 82% response rate. There were no appreciable differences in effect sizes or results between samples. Demographics of age, income, location, and race were not recorded for anonymity.

Design

A 2 (Resume Quality: high/low) X 5 (Resume Race or Minority Group: Asian Indian, Nigerian, Muslim, Nontraditional Black) design was used to explore the effect of applicant race and resume quality on occupational suitability and ratings. Specifically, the applicant's college grade point average was manipulated from low to high and their work and volunteer experience was changed from member to a leadership position. The race or minority group of the resume was manipulated by using a stereotypical White (James Sullivan), Asian Indian (Rohit Singh), Nigerian (Oluwaseun Ojetunde), Muslim (Muhammad Azam), and nontraditional Black (D'money Jackson) male name for the applicant.

Materials and Procedure

Names. Five subject matter experts from each minority group were consulted to solicit what they thought were the most common, traditional, and stereotypical names of their respective group. For example, they were asked "what is the 'Jose Gonzalez' of your race or minority group?'. After compiling a list of names from each person, first and last names were chosen and reaffirmed by them.

Rohit Singh: To represent Indian applicants, the name "Rohit Singh" was chosen. "Rohit" derives from Sanskrit, the mother language of Hindi that pervades India, meaning "the first rays from the sun". It is also named after Indian Gods and nature. "Singh" is a common surname used in India, deriving from Punjabi, meaning "the lion". Subject matter experts have noted that "Singh" is a typical Indian last name similar to "Smith" in the U.S.

Oluwaseun Ojetunde: "Oluwaseun" means "thank you Lord" in Yoruba, which is the language spoken by the Yoruba people deriving from southwestern Nigeria and Southern Benin in West Africa. "Ojetunde" does not have a literal translation into English. However, it means "someone had a child and the child died so the next one won't die", insinuating that the next child will be healthy.

Muhammad Usman: "Muhammad" means "praiseworthy" and is derived from Arabic. It was the name of the prophet who founded the Islamic religion in the 7th century and is very common in the Muslim world. "Usman" means "the chosen one" and also has Arabic origins. It is also the name of the third Caliph (ruler/ elected monarch) of Islam, who was synonymous with generosity, sincerity, and pureness of heart.

D'Money Jackson: After compiling a list of actual names, D'Money was chosen due to its obvious nod at currency and its "D" prefix with the apostrophe sounding like "da money" instead of "the money". The name alludes to stereotype of people in lower class Black communities materialistically idolizing money. While Black first names are distinguishable, there are not last names that belong specifically to the Black community.

For example, studies have used the same last name when comparing Black and White applicants like Mark Thomas versus DeMarcus Thomas, still finding significant differences (Watson, Appiah, & Thornton, 2011).

James Sullivan: This name was used in the previous study and "Sullivan" has Irish origins.

Resumes. Resumes were designed for this study based on actual resumes written by college students. Two templates for resumes were designed; both resumes cited similar experiences, but the *high-quality* resume includes roles with more leadership responsibility and used more professional language than the *low-quality resume* (see Appendix). Furthermore, the names were changed on these resumes were altered to provide the minority group manipulation.

Overall Applicant Quality. After reading the resume, participants will be asked to provide an overall evaluation by responding to 16 questions about the applicant's quality using a 7-point Likert-type scale, which ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very*). This measure, designed by King et al. (2006), consists of items assessing in the participants' perception of applicant intelligence, likability, motivation, laziness, creativity, and ambition (for the full measure, see the Appendix). King et al. (2006) found that a principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation indicated only one meaningful factor that accounted for 49.83% of the variance with the internal consistency reliability at .91.

Applicant Suitability. Finally, participants will indicate the applicant's suitability for high status and low status occupations on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not suitable)* to 7 (*very suitable).* Based on a principal components factor analysis by King et al. (2006), high status occupations consisted of chemist, physician, architect, engineer, computer programmer, judge, and pilot while low status occupations included custodian, kitchen staff worker, construction worker, public transportation employee, and repairman. They found high internal consistency reliabilities for both high (α=.91) and low-status occupations (α=.92). I expect that this sample will replicate King and colleagues' findings.

CHAPTER III

Results

A two-way (Name x Quality) ANOVA was used on each of the dependent measures of overall evaluation, low-status occupational suitability, and high-status occupational suitability.

Overall Evaluation

The first hypothesis was that the Indian-sounding name will get rated higher than the White sounding name and both groups will be higher than Nigerian, Muslim, and Non-traditional Black sounding names on overall evaluations. The 2x5 factorial indicates a significant main effect of resume quality, $F(1, 160) = 55.81$, $p<.001$, such that high quality resumes ($M=5.44$, $SD=.12$) received higher overall evaluations than low quality resumes ($M=4.17$, $SD=.12$). However, there was no significant main effect of name, suggesting that the race of the applicant does not influence their overall evaluation, $F(4,160)=.80$, $p>.05$. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was not supported. ANOVA results can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Means and Standard Errors of Overall Evaluations for Race and Resume

Quality

Name	Total		High Quality		Low Quality	
	M	*S.E.*	*M*	*S.E.*	*M*	*S.E.*
White	4.65	1.28	5.22	.84	3.97	1.40
Non-traditional Black	5.12	1.13	5.65	.86	4.47	1.10
Indian	4.77	1.30	5.55	.62	3.99	1.34
Nigerian	4.90	1.12	5.30	.85	4.33	1.26
Muslim	4.43	1.22	5.48	.74	4.09	1.16
Total	4.77	1.23	5.42	.80	4.14	1.24

The second hypothesis was that race type names will interact with the quality of

the resume, such that applicants with Indian and White sounding names will benefit from

a high quality resume while applicants with Nigerian, Muslim, and Non-traditional Black

sounding names will benefit less. The 2x5 factorial indicates that there is no significant

interaction between the quality of the resume and the name, $F(4,160)= .37$, $p>.05$, failing

to support Hypothesis 2.

Low-Status Occupational Suitability

There were no hypotheses on low and high-status occupational suitability, but

factorials were used to explore differences. A 2x5 factorial indicates no significant main

effect of name on low-status occupational suitability, suggesting that the name of the

applicant did not influence the type of job that was seen as suitable by the raters, $F(4,175)=.369$, $p>.05$. Also, there was no significant main effect of resume quality on low-status occupational suitability $F(1,175)=2.26$, $p>.05$.

High-Status Occupational Suitability

A 2x5 factorial indicates a significant main effect of resume quality on high-status occupational suitability, $F(1,175)=23.19$, $p<.001$. Specifically, high quality resumes ($M=2.96$, $SD=.15$) were rated as more suitable for high-status occupations than low quality resumes ($M=2.02$, $SD=.13$). There was also a significant main effect of name on high-status occupational suitability, $F(4,175)=.3.43$, $p<.05$. Several tests were run to find specific differences; a Tukey HSD, Bonferroni, and Ryan-Einot-Gabriel-Welsch Range *post* hoc test did not find any significant differences between applicants. This, combined with the small F value, indicates that this difference does not reveal any practical implications.

The analyses also revealed a significant two-way interaction, $F(4,175)=2.59$, $p<.05$, suggesting that the influence of resume quality on perceived suitability for high-status occupations depended on their name (see Figure 1). Specifically, Muhammad had the highest suitability ($M=4.07$, $SD=.45$) with a high quality resume compared to D'money ($M=3.41$, $SD=.32$), James ($M=2.52$, $SD=.28$), Rohit ($M=2.51$ $SD=.29$, and Oluwaseun ($M=2.27$, $SD=.27$) with high quality resumes. This trend was not seen with low quality resumes, where Muhammad had the lowest suitability for high-status occupations. This suggests that Muslims benefit more from high quality resumes when it

comes to their suitability in high-status occupations. However, it is important to note that although it was significant, the F value was small, suggesting that this difference may not have much practical significance.
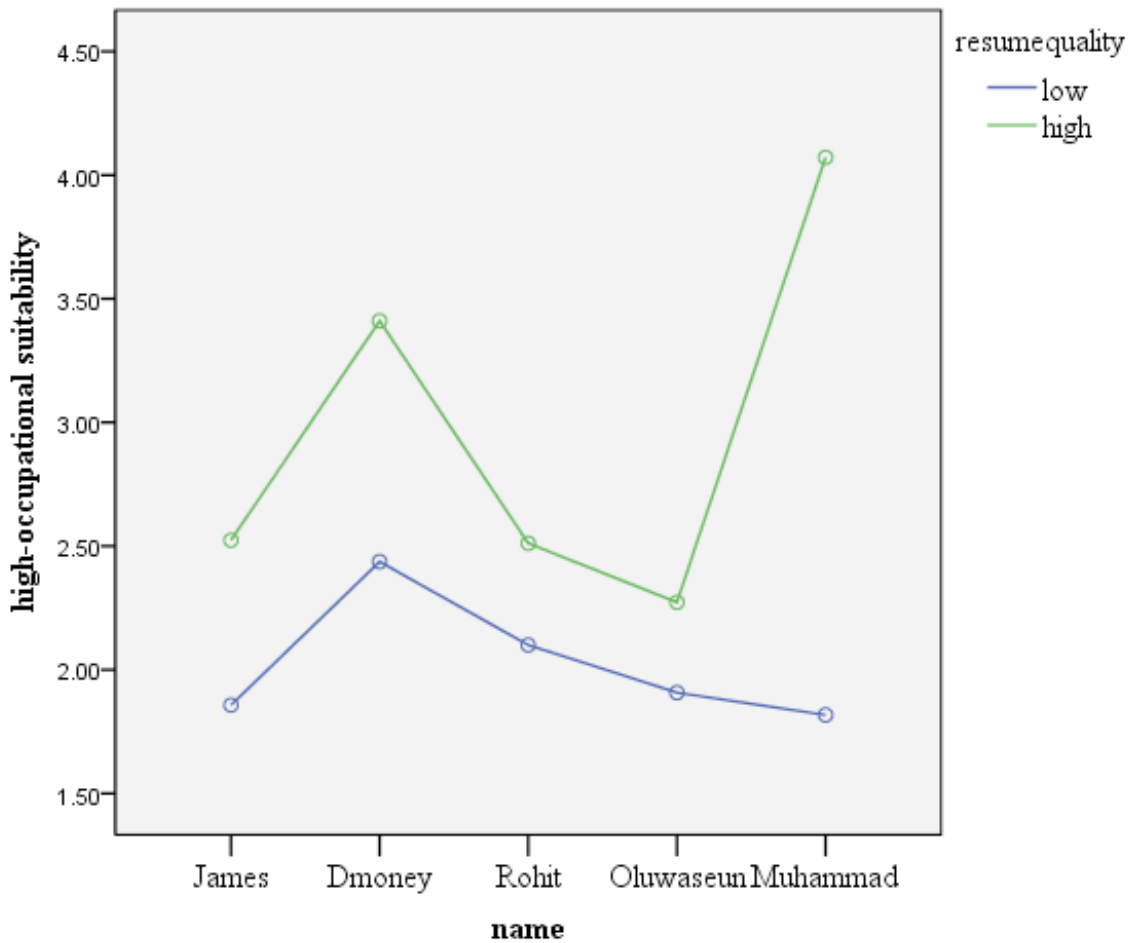
Figure 1. High-status occupational Suitability of targets as a function of race and resume quality.

Mediation Analyses

I intended to follow up these analyses with a two-way (Race x Quality) ANCOVA mediation analysis using high-status and low-status occupational suitability as covariates

in predicting overall evaluations. However, no mediation analysis was necessary, because there were no significant differences between race groups and overall evaluations. Thus, hypothesis 3 was not supported.

CHAPTER IV

Discussion

The results of this study contradict the implications of the replicated study done by King et al. (2006), suggesting that applicants do not get differential evaluations based on their names. One possible explanation is the different sample used in the current study. Although the previous study indicated that African-Americans, Hispanics, Whites, and Asians receive different overall evaluations and interactions based on the quality of their resume, the participants were solely White males. The current study attempted to select participants who had experience looking over resumes and making hiring decisions. It is also important to note that although demographics were not collected, this study was not explicitly limited to White individuals. These results suggest that people who have input on hiring decisions are able to effectively differentiate between high-quality and low-quality resumes, regardless of what minority group the applicants' names imply. Ultimately, D'Money was rated just as positively as everyone else was when resumes were high quality and just as poorly as everyone else when resumes were low quality.

In addition to overall evaluations, there were no differences in low-status occupational suitability. This indicates that the name of the applicant did not elicit any occupational stereotypes in this sample. Also, there were no significant effects of resume quality on low-status occupational suitability, implying that the quality of the resume did not make anyone more or less qualified for low-status occupations. This could be due to both the high-quality and low-quality resumes used in this study represented entry-level

applicants finishing their four-year bachelor's degree. Both resumes may have received similarly low suitability ratings for low-status occupations due to their similar experiences, despite the high quality resume having more responsibilities and qualifications with those experiences. This implies that a college student with a poor resume would be just as suitable as the student with a good resume for low status occupations, as long as they are involved in similar professional activities.

Contrary to low-status occupational suitability, the quality of someone's resume impacted their high-status occupational suitability such that higher quality resumes were more suitable for high-status occupations than low-quality resumes. A possible reason for this difference could be that someone with a higher quality resume could be perceived to have more potential to achieve a high-status occupation than someone with a low quality resume. For example, it may be difficult to see someone with a 2.7 GPA go on to be a physician or a judge, because requirements for programs leading to such occupations are extremely competitive.

It is interesting to note that high-status occupational suitability also had a main effect with names. However, multiple *post hoc* tests suggested that there were no differences amongst names in high-status occupational suitability, These results, combined with the small effect size, imply that the difference between names in high-status occupational suitability are practically negligible. There was also a significant interaction suggesting that Muslim applicants benefit more from high quality resumes

when it comes to their high-status occupational suitability. However, the effect size was also very small indicating that there may be no practical implications.

Overall, this study indicates that people who make hiring decisions do not discriminate against individuals based on the name on their resume. There could be a number of reasons for this finding. Because this sample had experience with hiring, participants may genuinely be more attentive to relevant job features rather than names or occupational stereotypes, suggesting that diversity initiatives in the workplace have paid off across recent years or that they do not care about an applicant's implied race.

Another possibility is that the participants may not have been able to identify racial content in each of the names. While the previous study looked at easily salient names like "Jose Gonzalez" to represent Hispanics, names used in this study like "Rohit Singh" or "Oluwaseun Ojetunde" may not elicit stereotypes due to their lower prevalence compared to more common minority groups. This means they may not register "Rohit" as an Asian Indian name or even be aware of the stereotypes associated with them. Because there was no manipulation check to determine whether people recognized the ethnicity of each name, this explanation cannot be ruled out.

Unconscious emotional conflict in the form of aversive racism could have also played a role in the lack of racial differences. Aversive racism describes unpleasant internal conflict characterized by one's desire to be non-prejudiced towards races they are uncomfortable with, typically resulting in racial minorities faring better than Whites (Davidio & Gaertner, 1998). For example, a person succumbing to aversive racism will

often discriminate in favor of Blacks except when discrimination against Blacks can be

justified as non-racist (Nail, Harton, & Barnes, 2008). In this study, the applicant with the

non-traditional Black name, D'Money Jackson, was the highest rated in overall

evaluation in this study despite no significant differences. This suggests that perhaps in

this case, because the participants could not justify discriminating against D'Money, they

experienced aversive racism and rated him higher on average.

Another possibility for the lack of expected differences could be the method of

recruitment for participants. Eighty-two of the participants were asked to take the survey

by their supervisor or co-workers. Although they were told that the results of the survey

would not be shared with their supervisor or influence their job status in any way,

participants may still have suspected surveillance. Nail, Harton, and Decker (2003) found

that if participants do not know their potential discrimination is being monitored, they

should be less on-guard, and thus less likely to conceal their prejudice. Participants could

also have guessed the hypothesis of the study, prompting them to thoroughly judge the

resume and give fair evaluations in order to protect their job. However, the other 88

participants recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk tool should not have had this

problem, because they did not have any reason to feel monitored by anyone in power.

Analyses conducted on these two samples demonstrated no appreciable difference in

effect sizes or results. This indicates that there are no substantial differences between

participant groups.

Finally, this study has a number of limitations. Although the results are generalizable to a number of occupations because participants came from a variety of fields and backgrounds, there was no demographic information taken from them. The race and gender of each participant was not accounted for and this could have resulted in significant results specific to a race based on King et al.'s (2006) study, which used only White men. Also, half of the participants were recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk tool and there was no specific way to ensure that that they had hiring experience besides asking a preliminary question about this experience. A response indicating that they did not have such experiences would skip to the end of the survey and this worked to an extent, eliminating 25 participants from the study.

Another design limitation involves participants only being able to look at only one name off one resume. This creates a lack of fidelity, because those who look over resumes would normally be sifting through many resumes rather than just one. However, King et al. (2006) had each participant view one resume and they found significant effects using this design.

In conclusion, none of the hypotheses for this study were supported, and other significant results were not supported by literature and had practically negligible effect sizes. The results of this study contradict the King et al (2006) study I attempted to replicate, suggesting that people who have experience reviewing resumes do not discriminate based on the applicant's racial group. Considering that the previous study purposely used only White males as participants and found results, future research should

use look at the race of the evaluator as a variable. The similarity-attraction theory suggests that reinforcing stimuli, like similarity in race, can lead to an affective response that, in turn, leads to an evaluative response (Byrne, 1971). However, this does not explain why White males in the previous study rated Asians more positively than Whites overall. More research should be done to explore participant race to further understand these relationships.

Another facet that should be explored is the relationship between gender, race, and evaluations; female names were not included in this resume due to limitations in participant recruitment. For example, Mahmud and Swami (2010) found that Muslim men were seen as aggressive, belligerent, and hostile while women who wear the hijab were considered unattractive and less intelligent. Other demographic variables such as names of various religions, outside of Muhammad for Muslims, could be considered as well. While there is research on the impact of religion on the workplace, there is no notable research on religious activities or identifiers and their impact on selection decisions (King, 2007). There is also a lack of research on age and selection decisions despite efforts demonstrated by the EEOC's Age Discrimination in Employment Act, which forbids age discrimination against people who are age 40 or older. For example, an applicant's graduation date on their resume, should they choose to display it, could give evaluators a poor impression if they negatively stereotype older or younger people. Another facet of the resume worth exploring would be the perceived prestige of an applicant's educational institution. For example, a highly regarded research university could make an applicant much more competitive than an online for-profit institution.

Also, it would be interesting to examine other dimensions of one's education, such as whether the applicant went to a historically Black college or university (HBCU). Finally, future research should try to replicate the study with the identical names used in King et al (2006) and use people who have input on hiring decisions, as opposed to White males on a busy street, to see if there would still be results. The current study suggests the positive notion that people who make and have input on hiring decisions do not discriminate based on applicants' names.

CHAPTER V

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CHAPTER VI

Appendix

Overall Evaluation Items

Please rate the candidate on the following qualities on a scale of 1-7 (1=not at all, 7=very)

1. How intelligent do you think this individual is?

2. How creative do you think this individual is?

3. How lazy do you think this individual is?

4. How friendly do you think this individual is?

5. How responsible do you think this individual is?

6. How competitive do you think this individual is?

7. How motivated do you think this individual is?

8. How likable do you think this individual is?

9. How ambitious do you think this individual is?

10. How likely would you want to work with this individual?

11. How likely would you see yourself working under this individual?

12. How likely would you offer this individual an interview?

13. How likely would you be to hire this individual?

14. How likely would you be to promote this individual within the first year?

15. How likely would you be to increase the salary of this individual within the first year?

16. How likely would this individual be to get a bonus his first year?

Occupational Suitability Items

Rate the applicant's suitability for the following occupations on a scale of 1-7 (7=very suitable, 1=not suitable)

1. Chemist

2. Custodian

3. Kitchen staff worker

4. Physician

5. Construction worker

6. Architect

7. Engineer

8. Computer programmer

9. Public transportation employee

10. Judge

11. Repairman

12. Pilot

Resume A: High Quality

D'money Jackson

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EDUCATION

California State University, Fullerton
Bachelor of Arts, Communications – Expected June 2014
GPA: 3.9

WORK EXPERIENCE

RESIDENT ASSISTANT & SOCIAL DIRECTOR   September 2012 – Present
CSU, Fullerton Residential Life
- Planned events that support academic mission, create safe environments, promote responsible citizenship, and foster student development for residents in both local (115 residents) and larger (~700 residents) communities,
- Maintained CSU's On Campus Housing policies in order to provide an emotionally and physically safe community for residents, acting as the first responder to high-pressure situations
- Consistently received above average ratings in peer reviews, supervisor feedback, and resident surveys for three years; commended for excellent interpersonal skills, knowledge of resources, and counseling

PUBLIC RELATIONS INTERN   June 2013 - Present
Vega and Winnfield Public Relations
- Assisted Managing Director in creating marketing reports and asset allocation proposals
- Prepared marketing materials for prospective corporate clients by applying strong research skills, developing comprehensive media lists, and frequently performing media outreach

ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR   June 2007 – Present
SubUrban Clothing Company
- Recruit, train, and supervise local sales staff to deliver excellent service in a fast-paced environment
- Assign shifts, establish quotas, prepare and supervise sales promotion projects, make decisions that impact store operations, and supervise achievement of quarterly goals
- Engage customers and community with strong communication skills to understand their needs and model actions from them

CLINICAL RESEARCH ASSISTANT   April 2011 to Present
Fullerton Medical Center, Cardiac Laboratory
- Collected and compiled data in Excel spreadsheets for researchers
- Prepared patient paperwork for doctor visits, and entered outdated demographic information into patient files
- Cleaned and maintained laboratory areas, and took weekly inventory of supplies.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

PRESIDENT   October 2011 - May 2013
Alpha Beta Gamma
- Compiled and created Annual Business Report and submitted final copy to the National Chapter
- Managed financial statements, recoded activities, and contacted employers to support organization's efforts
- Organized events and strategies for volunteer recruitment and awarded for my work at the 2012 CSU Volunteer Awards

CAMP LEADER   March 2011 – Present
CSU Youth Camp
- Lead a team of 20 undergraduate camp counselors a year and train them on their interpersonal, time management, and decision making skills to help them balance their academics and counseling endeavors
- Plan programs that encourage teamwork, communication skills, leadership, and educational goals for at-risk youth at a charity summer camp while mentoring and tutoring them

Resume B: Low Quality

D'money Jackson

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EDUCATION

California State University, Fullerton
Bachelor of Arts, Communications – Expected June 2014
GPA: 2.7

WORK EXPERIENCE

RESIDENT ASSISTANT   September 2012 – Present
CSU, Fullerton Residential Life
- Resident assistants try to plan events for residents on the floor to get to know each other, usually socials involving food
- Had to write up residents for violating policies like drinking, being loud and partying in the dorms
- Went to meetings to discuss weekly and monthly events and do team building activities
- Talk to residents, counsel them when sad, advise them on taking the easiest classes, and provide vacuum for them when they want to clean their rooms

PUBLIC RELATIONS INTERN   June 2013 - Present
Vega and Winnfield Public Relations
- Assist employees by filing paperwork, stapling packets, delivering materials across the office, informing older members about Facebook and occasionally attend meetings to listen in
- Responsible for getting coffee, donuts, and pastries for weekly meetings; commended for promptness

CASHIER   June 2007 – Present
SubUrban Clothing Company
- Convince customers to buy our merchandise and sign up for sale card memberships
- Responsible for operating the cash register, cleaning the floors, and opening/closing the store
- Unpack boxes of shipments and put matching clothes up on mannequins to entice people

CLINICAL RESEARCH ASSISTANT   April 2011 to Present
Fullerton Medical Center, Cardiac Laboratory
- Get spreadsheets of patient information and enter data into another database for researchers
- Enter demographic information of patients and prepare their history for doctor use
- Clean laboratory supplies and organize the cabinets by putting the tools in their spots

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

PROUD MEMBER   October 2011 - May 2013
Alpha Beta Gama
- Participated in volunteer efforts: working at homeless shelter, educational outreach, and fundraising
- Join brothers in multiple socials throughout the year to develop my interpersonal and networking skills while reinforcing the Alpha Beta Gama reputation across campus

CAMP COUNSELOR   March 2011 – Present
CSU Youth Camp
- As camp counselors we hang out with less=fortunate kids during the summer doing various activities: campfires, coloring books, playing with toys, role playing, and arts and crafts
- Occasionally tutor children and inform them of what college is like so they can go there one day