

Open Door Recruit Report

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Theoretical Foundation

Beasley, C. R., & Xiao, Y. J. (2023). Incarceration history and ethnic bias in hiring perceptions:

An experimental test of intersectional bias & psychological mechanisms.

<https://link-gale-com.libproxy.wlu.ca/apps/doc/A733560381/AONE?u=wate18005&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=c1987a6b>

Summary: This article by Christopher R. Beasley and Y. Jenny Xiao discusses bias against incarcerated and ethnically minoritized job applicants (Beasley et al, 2023). By introducing intersectionality theory, the authors examine how things like race, gender, criminal history, and more intersect and create unique issues for people going through the hiring process. As discussed, mass incarceration is one of the most pressing social issues in the United States which results in collateral consequences such as severe racial bias. Such unemployment trends appear much more likely among formerly incarcerated Hispanic and Black individuals than White individuals, further establishing a racial bias against different ethnic groups of people (Beasley et al, 2023). A proposed theoretical model emphasized the role of hiring managers' perceptions of warmth and competence of ex-offender job applicants in their hiring decisions. The model argues that the lack of interest and/or motivation to gain additional individuating information about ex-offender job applicants elicits negative stereotypes, placing them disadvantaged during the hiring process (Beasley et al, 2023).

How it informed our design: This article informed our design in meaningful ways with a focus on intersectionality. In the case of the report, people are being discriminated against based on their incarceration record and their ethnic background, and being declined from working opportunities. In our design, we wanted to be extremely mindful and eliminate these implicit

biases hiring managers may have such as ignoring applicants based on name, gender, race, etc. With Open Door Recruit, by removing these identifiable features like applicants' names, we prioritize hiring more through experience and less through identifiable features. A main aspect of our app is removing applicants' names from the perspective of the recruiter to mitigate the risk of implicit hiring biases. Furthermore, by providing resources like Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles from workplaces for those looking for jobs and recruiters, our app raises awareness of the many biases during the initial hiring process. Through Open Door Recruit, we hope to eliminate these biases by promoting more objective hiring based on things like skills, experiences, etc. to ensure fair and equitable evaluation of applicants.

Spence, J. L. (2024). Is Your Accent Right for the Job? A Meta-Analysis on Accent Bias in Hiring Decisions. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 50(3), 371-386.

<https://doi-org.libproxy.wlu.ca/10.1177/01461672221130595>

Summary: This article published by Jessica L Spence, discusses the topic of accent bias in recruitment. The article goes on to detail that in some companies, when they have two equally qualified job candidates but have significantly different accents, the standard-accented candidate is more likely to be recruited than the non-standard-accented candidate which is a form of accent bias (Spence, 2022). This is because some companies believe that non-standard accents can negatively affect communications, and negatively impact employees to be less effective at their job. This is a discriminatory explanation that non-standard accent candidates are devalued as a result. These biases are rooted in social categorization and stereotypes (Spence, 2022).

How it informed our design: The article's author offered some informative points about accent bias and discrimination, and we wanted to make sure that Open Door Recruit is inclusive to

everyone no matter their accent. Some features allow people to enter their language but also give them options about their language proficiency levels. Another major point is that the Open Door Recruit is completely anonymous in the initial phase of a job application. To be more specific, our solution to help alleviate racial and accent discrimination is when you send in your application, your personal information is hidden except for skills. This way in pushing our goal to focus job hunting on skills rather than a person's background, hiring managers won't know who's applying up until or during interviews. All hiring managers see on Open Door are your skills and qualifications when you apply for a job with them.

Thematic Relevance

Our goal with Open Door Recruit was to understand better how the recruiting industry operates, and what it's done poorly and can do better. We have 3 important points of interest we believe will help improve the recruitment space such as

1. Increase the diversity of different races, ages, genders, and identities on the app: By eliminating features like name, age, gender, etc. that can tie an individual to certain races, Open Door Recruit creates a space where people are valued not for their names, or who they know but for their skills and qualities. Additionally, by providing EDI resources for those looking for jobs on how EDI principles are implemented at various companies as well as providing resources for recruiters to create inclusive hiring processes. In doing this, we hope to create a more equitable workforce.
2. Remove various forms of bias from the recruiting processes: By incorporating features that mitigate hiring biases during the initial application screening, such as anonymizing

resume and cover letter screening, Open Door Recruit emphasizes hiring applicants based on their skills and qualifications, nothing else.

3. Establish a multigenerational workforce: Our app aims to provide opportunities for all demographics including both younger and older applicants seeking work. Furthermore, by providing different educational resources, we hope to create a workplace for companies that fosters collaboration and learning all derived from EDI principles

As we developed our prototype of the Open Door Recruit app we used some knowledge of trends and practices as insights on each major section of the app.

App On-Boarding

With the onboarding section on the app, we implemented EDI in meaningful ways that support our users. All employers have the option when creating an account on the application to set their status as Disability confident. This allows those with disabilities searching for jobs to find companies that are willing to support them and offer personalized tools to make a positive experience. Adding this feature attempts to halt bias within the hiring process to make the already stressful process smoother for our users. When users are adding files to their profiles such as resumes and cover letters, on our applications we have added auto-fill. This feature takes information from another location, for example, LinkedIn.

App Navigation

Navigation is one of the most important aspects of a mobile application as it is the central tool to help you find information that allows you to complete your current tasks. Having clear navigation allows for the flow of information to be concise, creating a better user experience.

Our mobile application achieves this by creating and using universally recognized icons to symbolize their function and purpose to users, as well as filters to create better job-searching experiences. Open Door Recruit has original ideas that are accessible to all and promote inclusivity. The application uses features like the ‘Trending Topics’ section to promote EDI trends and allows users to learn what companies are doing to promote EDI in their workplace. Having this feature in an application designed for finding jobs allows companies to be rewarded for their great EDI practices. It navigates other people who are interested and well-versed in EDI to find these companies to potentially bring their skills to like-minded teams.

App Profile

A user profile is what allows you to share information about yourself with other users and in the case of Open Door Recruit, with employers as well. The user profile on our application has many EDI-friendly features that have been included and implemented. For example, the profiles have areas where users can add their pronouns to affirm gender identities and create safe spaces within the application. The user profile on Open Door Recruit gives you the tools to display your disability status if applicable, making sure that everyone feels included in the job search environment. The application also has options to allow all different language speakers to have a place to display their skills and how proficient they are. To tackle biases that can be found during the hiring process we have implemented ‘blind recruitment’. This assists in removing biases by anonymizing candidate profiles during the initial screening process.

App Settings

Open Door Recruit has a plethora of settings that can be customized to fit the needs of the different users who use the application. This is done to ensure that anyone who chooses to use

the application feels included and heard, as well as to make everyone's experience comfortable. Our application has a separate section for accessibility settings on top of the default settings found in most mobile apps. Our accessibility settings are designed to meet the needs of any user regardless of their disability. For example, some settings include optimization for hearing accessories, voice control, and a variety of visual settings such as text sizes or colour blind modes. Some settings aim to make the application less overwhelming by changing the colours or the brightness. All these settings aim to assist those with cognitive, visual, hearing impaired and motor disabilities.

References

- Beasley, C. R., & Xiao, Y. J. (2023). Incarceration history and ethnic bias in hiring perceptions: An experimental test of intersectional bias & psychological mechanisms. *PLoS ONE*, 18(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0280397>
- Spence, J. L., Hornsey, M. J., Stephenson, E. M., Imuta, K. (2024). Is your accent the right for the job? A meta-analysis on accent bias in hiring decisions. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 50(3), 371-386. <https://doi-org.libproxy.wlu.ca/10.1177/01461672221130595>