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RACE AND SELF PRESENTATION : A MACHINE LEARNING AND COMPUTER VISION INVESTIGATION OF HIRING DISCRIMINATION

by

Ming D. Leung

University of California – Irvine

19 October 2022 (Wednesday)

14:00 – 16:00

Room 812



Abstract / Synopsis

This study is a field experiment that uses computer vision and machine learning on an online platform for temporary staffing of low wage jobs in order to understand why and how market discrimination against ethnic minority job applicants continues to persist. A job applicant's race may be correlated with how responsible they present themselves, affecting their likelihood of being hired. Unfortunately, causal identification of this mechanism is difficult to isolate and interventions are difficult to implement. We address these challenges with a field-experiment on a mobile platform for employers seeking to hire local unskilled and low-skilled workers on a temporary basis. Employers choose which applicants to hire after viewing their photos online. Using computer vision and machine learning methodologies, we identified the features of applicant photos that accounted for them being considered more versus less responsible by survey respondents. Results of the machine learning yielded specific changes, such as to wear a tie or to smile, to improve perceptions of responsibility.

About the Speaker

Ming De Leung is an Associate Professor at the University of California – Irvine. He studies careers, hiring, and labor markets, and in particular, issues pertaining to diversity and discrimination in the workforce. His work explores how career transitions between jobs and within a firm affect ones likelihood of being hired and promoted. Another emphasis of his work is in innovative, contemporary platform markets, such as virtual freelancing, mobile gig-economy work and crowdfunding. His publications have appeared in top management and sociology journals, including *Organization Science*, *Management Science*, *American Journal of Sociology* and *American Sociological Review*. His work has also been featured on *NPR Science Friday* and the *Financial Times*. He has also advised both large and small companies, including UpWork, Google, Wonolo, Atipica and Intel, on issues of hiring and diversity initiatives. He holds a PhD from Stanford University's Graduate School of Business, an MBA from the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business and a BS from Carnegie-Mellon University.

Registration

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