

Timing can affect whether women and minorities face discrimination

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Timing can affect whether females and minorities experience discrimination — says a study published today in *Psychological Science*, a journal of the Association for Psychological Science.

Emails were sent from fictional prospective doctoral students to 6,500 professors across 258 institutions, requesting a meeting either that day or next week. Prospective doctoral students with Caucasian male names were 26% more likely to be granted an appointment with a professor when requesting one for next week than those with names signaling that they were minorities (African American, Hispanic, Indian or Chinese) or [females](#). But if the requested appointment was for that day, students of all types were equally likely to get an appointment.

The difference, the paper explains, is that the time delay between the decision to meet and the moment of the requested appointment affects the way the request is processed. An individual considering scheduling an appointment today thinks concretely and considers "Can/where/when will I do it?" whereas an individual considering the same appointment in the distant future thinks more abstractly, and considers "Is doing it worthwhile/valuable/desirable?" Those who focus on the desirability of a meeting are more likely to discriminate against women and [minorities](#) than those who focus on logistical concerns.

These results fit well with previous research showing that decision-makers thinking more abstractly rely more on stereotypes to fill out their picture of future events and their impact. The research both highlights

discrimination in academia and shows that subtle shifts in context, such as timing, can alter patterns of race- and gender-based [discrimination](#), even eliminating it altogether.

More information: To read the full papers, visit: Temporal Distance and Discrimination: An Audit Study in Academia
pss.sagepub.com/content/early/.../97611434539.abstract

Follow up: "Heterogeneity in Discrimination?: a Field Experiment"
[papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm...?abstract_id=2063742](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?...?abstract_id=2063742)

Provided by Association for Psychological Science

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