

Timing of job interview may determine outcome

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Study found applicants fared worse if they followed several strong candidates.

(HealthDay)—For job seekers, their chances of being hired may have a lot to do with who else was interviewed on the same day, a new study suggests.

Researchers found that employers who have just interviewed several strong candidates are more likely to view the next applicant negatively. This phenomenon, known as "narrow bracketing," or making choices in isolation, could not only apply to employment, but also to school admissions, loan applications and even casting for reality shows.

The study was published recently in the journal *Psychological Science*.

"People are averse to judging too many applicants high or low on a

single day, which creates a bias against people who happen to show up on days with especially strong applicants," Uri Simonsohn, of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, and Francesca Gino, of Harvard Business School, explained in a journal news release. "We were able to document this error with experts who have been doing the job for years, day in and day out."

After analyzing 9,000 interviews involving MBA candidates that occurred over the course of a decade, the researchers found interviews conducted early in the day had a negative influence on perceptions of candidates interviewed later in the day.

Once several favorable scores were given to applicants, the scores to follow were likely to be lower. This phenomenon held true even after the researchers considered differences among the applicants and their interviews.

On a scale of one to five, the study revealed the projected score for applicants to be interviewed dropped by about 0.075 as the average score for previous candidates increased by 0.75. This trend worsened for applicants as the day progressed.

The researchers noted that this effect is the equivalent of roughly 30 extra points on the GMAT, 23 more months of experience or 0.23 more points in the assessment of the applicants' written application.

The study's authors added that the effect of "narrow bracketing" was twice as large following a series of identical applicant scores than with different scores with the same average.

More information: The New York State Department of Labor provides more tips for a successful [job interview](#).

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