

Interview Sequences and the Formation of Subjective Assessments

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This paper studies how and why the interview assessment of a candidate depends on the other candidates seen by the same evaluator. We use data on admission and hiring interviews where candidates are quasi-randomly assigned to evaluators and time slots. Results show that the assessment of a candidate decreases in the quality of the other candidates assigned to the same evaluator. In particular, the previous candidate has a strong negative influence, resulting in a negative autocorrelation of up to 40%. We provide reduced-form and structural evidence that the findings are in line with a contrast effect model with associative recall.