Cent-GPS

Centre for Governance
and Political Studies

Racism in Recruitment:

A Study on Racial Bias For Entry Level Jobs in Malaysia

Researched by:
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INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT
– WHY IT MATTERS

For the past few months, the Centre for Governance and Political Studies (Cent-GPS) has been conducting an experiment. In Malaysia, there is a strong sentiment that, when it comes to job applications and job hunting, there are instances of discrimination through race; that certain human resource departments identify a good candidate by the color of their skin or the racial hint of their name. Whilst this has been explored before, Cent-GPS, in its belief of strengthening and shedding light on Malaysia's social mobility, wishes to factualize and update this sentiment. Is it true?

Social Mobility has always been the key focus for the research behind Cent-GPS. Our priority is to identify whether a local fresh graduate from outskirts, someone who has worked hard and studied hard to obtain great grades, has the platform and tools available to succeed in Malaysia. In a way, it's about the Malaysian dream, that all you have to do is work hard and the ladder to improve your status is available.

In every way, looking into discrimination in the job sector here in Malaysia is about social mobility. If an A plus student is not getting the same opportunities as another student who gets lower grades albeit with a different ethnicity, then these are the foundations of an unequal society. Inequality is the catalyst for the disruption of social peace. It breeds crime, and disillusionment to the common goals we have as Malaysians.

Does the Malaysia's private sector discriminate candidates by their race? If they are, what type of candidate would benefit the most? What type of candidate would likely be overlooked?

Goal

Our study revolved around the assumption that there is vast discrimination in job application and that Bumiputera fresh graduates are discriminated against in Malaysia's private sector. This assumption is supported by Dr. Muhammed Abdul Khalid and Dr. Lee Hwok Aun's study, "Degrees of Discrimination: Race and Graduate Hiring in Malaysia" in 2016. The objective of this study is to confirm whether this continues to happen in 2019. Three years on, are the results different? Has Malaysia improved, is there now zero discrimination in the private sector? Is there still an obvious difference in call-back rates between Chinese and Malay and Indian candidates.

BACKGROUND:
THE JOB ENVIRONMENT IN MALAYSIA

First, let's get a general overview of the employment environment in Malaysia.

Today's youth group represents the nation's best-educated generation. According to Khazanah Research Institute, despite this, many are facing difficulties in transitioning from school to work. According to KRI, youths aged 15 to 24 represent 56% of those unemployed whilst those aged 25-29 years account for 21% of those unemployed.

Last year, the School-To-Work Transition of Young Malaysians reported that educational and training institutions were not producing graduates that employers are looking for. Whilst firms and the private sector needed industry specific soft skills, Malaysia tended to, on the majority, produce more technical graduates that, if global trends are accurate, would enter a job scope that would likely face job security issues due to improved technology.

Job seekers today and the unemployed are mostly young people and fresh graduates. Politicians on both sides have accepted this trend, working to seek solutions that will increase youth employment. Companies have been encouraged to open up employment opportunities and training to young adults. Companies themselves have complained, that the youth today do not fit their skill sets required in the job scope.

Youth unemployment in Malaysia has jumped up to 10.7%. This is three times more than the national unemployment rate which is 3.1%. Surveys from employers by previous studies by JobStreet in 2017 reveals that the top five reasons why the youth are seen as less valuable for employers is due to

1. Unrealistic salary or benefits expectations (72%)
2. Too picky about the job or company (64%)
3. Poor character, attitude or personality (64%)
4. Poor command of the English language (59%)
5. Poor overall communication skills (53%)

From this study by JobStreet Malaysia, we get the notion that employers generally prefer candidates with experience rather than hiring and having to train from scratch. In its closing, JobStreet recommended that new employers need to put effort into training young graduates as the opposite effect may be having to provide higher salary for older workers. There is no candidate that is "ready-made" the report noted.

Over in Penang Institute, the policy and research firm reported that young graduates are having a hard time looking for jobs as they are competing with those who are highly experienced. "In a trying economy, companies will always choose to hire someone with experience, rather than spending resources to train fresh graduates, leading to fewer opportunities for the youth," said Penang Institute. Another trend, one that JobStreet earlier had also noted, was that young graduates were unrealistically

starting salary expectations that were too high. It seems many candidates were impatient to breach a certain threshold of salary instead of working hard in one company to eventually get that raise.

"In this sense, if the youths are unable to accept a position that is beneath their expectations, the period of unemployment will be lengthened as they continue to search for the 'right' job," said Penang Institute. The study also noted that many graduates were unaware as to what was the right expectation of starting salary according to their applied industry.

"In terms of experience, companies should offer internships to university students so that they can gain knowledge and experience of the workforce. For more technical jobs, apprenticeships can be introduced as part of vocational skills training."

The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) claims that part of the issue is in effectively communicating with employers. Oftentimes, whilst it does look unrealistic, some candidates actually set their salary expectation in accordance to current living standards. 10 years ago, a fresh graduate could expect to get RM 2,500. If it is still the same today, then we know that it may not be enough, especially in KL.

In the report by MEF, many subjects noted the frustration of having to live in the current cost of living. "A can of tuna used to cost around RM4, it's now RM5.30. The living expenses have increased, but the starting salary for a fresh graduate remains the same and young people are expected to manage. Isn't that unrealistic?"

Other candidates in the MEF report are more realistic, pointing to the vast competition and options that employers have. Most often, fresh grads don't have

the experience and skill set that are required to excel in their jobs. The university education may not always be applicable when applied to real life. "As a job-seeker, I can see why these fresh graduates feel like they should be paid a certain amount, as they sometimes think their skills and education are worth as much. But, you also need to understand that in the employers' point of view, they are looking at how much your skills and knowledge can contribute to the company."

The trend today is that hiring is slow. Businesses are cautious and the moderate economy is restricting companies from expanding drastically. Looked at more deeply, unemployment amongst the youths today poses great dangers. Serious long-term negative effects such as brain-drain is a huge risk. This generation also, due to lack of income would be more reliant on their parents, creating a domino effect where parents may not have as much as they wish upon retirement.

Now that we've touched on the unemployment and employment environment in Malaysia. Let's dive deeper into the unemployment in Malaysia. Specifically, let's start breaking it down.

When breaking down the unemployment rate in terms of race, we find that 4% or 3.36 million bumiputeras are unemployed, followed by 771,000 (2.4%) chinese, 433,000 (4.7%) indians and 68,000 others (6.6%). This has been published and reported on before.

When breaking it down further, the unemployment rate in terms of gender, women are more unemployed at 3.8%. Women are also more likely to exit and re-enter the workforce due to family related matters.

Reports of discrimination in Malaysia's work

environment culture has been widely reported. In a New Straits Times special, columnist Tasnim Lokman interviews several subjects to understand the heart of the discrimination issue.

One subject, a public relations officer from a property development company noted that she was always left out of conversations as her colleagues spoke in Mandarin. She said that her superiors also spoke Mandarin and that this would oftentimes be the medium of communication during work meetings. Her superiors never addressed the language issue as they always assumed another officer would translate. "It can be frustrating, especially when I am trying to blend in with other employees. I can't help but feel upset. What's worse is that they would not acknowledge my existence when I was standing near them." The subject noted that other colleagues who were not fluent in Mandarin also experienced the same issue.

Another subject noted how she would always be the last to receive work updates because the instruction had been given in Mandarin. According to this subject, some colleagues were cold towards her because she was not of the same background. The co-workers seldom included her in projects and discussions.

In terms of gender discrimination, reporter Tasnim also identified female professionals who were feeling marginalized due to their gender. One subject that she interviewed, a mother of five, told the New Sunday Times that her male colleagues would be skeptical of her ideas because she was a woman. Despite having worked for more than 20 years, she was still not being promoted even as she passed all the requirements.

A different subject noted discrimination in terms of his religion. At 33, the subject reported being questioned for having his prayer breaks during the day. He was the only Muslim in the dealership and when he took breaks to perform prayers, his superiors would call him constantly to return to the office, only to find work that was not pertinent. "It was so obvious. When I go to the surau, someone will call or message me to come back to the office. I would have to rush through my prayer. But when i'm in the office, nobody bothers me. I even skip lunch to attend Friday prayers because there will always be something on."

From this we get the idea that there is racial, to identity discrimination in Malaysia's private sector. Whether it is a language barrier, religious factors or racial ones, evidence of it happening in Malaysia has been made clear. Yet how wide is this discrimination. Is it happening in a minority of companies? Or does it happen to a majority? The next chapter highlights studies that have tried to model and identify discrimination in Malaysia's private sector.

PAST STUDIES

The issue of discrimination in aspects of life in Malaysia has long been studied on. Most recently, Malaysia paid attention to discrimination in tenants seeking to rent homes to a group or skin color of their preference. The emphasis on race, albeit often unintentional is very much a part of Malaysian life.

According to research by YouGov Omnibus, one in five Malaysians or 21% of 1,204 Malaysians surveyed, claimed to have experienced discrimination based on their ethnicity when seeking a place to rent.

The same study showed that about 46% of Indians polled claimed to have faced discrimination. This is higher than local Chinese (20%) and Malays (18%), who have faced ethnic discrimination when surveyed. The study interviewed 1,204 Malaysians, aged 18 and above. The study also revealed that a third (34%) of those surveyed are currently staying in rented properties, while 7 out of 10 (69%) had rented property at some point in their lives. According to YouGov, 62% or six in 10 of those surveyed have come across rental advertisements with specific racial requirements, such as only a certain race, or a select few, being eligible to rent such premises.
A third of those surveyed also admitted they knew others who had also faced ethnic discrimination. It showed that six out of 10 Malaysian Indians who took part in the survey were being discriminated. Furthermore, two in five or 37% of those surveyed found that stating a racial preference in property advertisements is considered racism, with 58% of the local Indians surveyed agreeing to this.

Perhaps most surprising, 32% of those surveyed as a whole believe that landlords, who had racial preferences, were making good business judgment. This stance was taken by mostly 39% of the Malaysian chinese subjects. To add on to this, about 60% of those polled felt that landlords should have "absolute discretion" when it comes to renting out their properties. This group essentially felt, while it was disturbing to see landlords prefer certain races, being in their shoes, these respondents were okay with those actions.

The study concludes that:
"While a notable number have experienced racial discrimination in the rental market and many believe that race requirements in rental property ads constitute racism, a large proportion also believe that landlords renting out to preferred races made good business sense.

"Despite certain ethnic minorities feeling more strongly about the issue than others, the majority

believe landlords should be left to their own devices," said YouGov.

All in all however, the existence of this appeasement is dangerous. Discrimination in housing is a key element of institutional racism. This is something the current government is looking to fix.

According to Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin, the government is looking into drafting new legislation to protect tenants against discrimination based on their ethnicity when seeking a place to rent.

The Residential Tenancy Act is meant to better protect landlords and tenants. According to the Minister, "The new law will include provisions against discrimination in accordance with international law."

She added that the government would look at the models used in Australia and Scotland in drafting the law. A study on the proposed law would also look into the bumiputera housing quota. The oversight of this law comes as a new national housing policy is set to be passed in parliament in 2020.

When looking back at the private sector and hiring modus operandi, it seems clear that employers prefer soft skills and work experience above academic or professional qualifications. This was confirmed by a KRI research that studied young Malaysian men and women aged 15 to 29. Supplying the market with young workers of technical and vocational education (TVET or with STEM) is falling short of employer demands.
This is what is contributing to the high unemployment amongst the youth. Another problem, according to KRI, is the mismatch between entrepreneurship skills. Most youths reportedly prefer to be working

for other rather than to start their own business.

"Youth do not appear to recognise the importance of entrepreneurship skills and they are also not aware of government incentives and support for micro and small enterprises," according to KRI.

This research by KRI is crucial for it kills the myth (and somewhat condescending tone towards the youth) that unemployment amongst the young is a result of them being too "choosy" or that they have wage expectations that are too much. This was certainly hinted at in the previous reports we highlighted.
Rather, the report points to massive amounts of over-educated youths who occupy low-skilled jobs. The frustration therefore is bare to see. There is also a mismatch between what employers expect and what youths prefer. Whilst youths prefer job security and work-life balance, employers identify high income as the main priority. Interestingly as well, the youths surveyed expressed concern that foreign workers were taking their jobs and job opportunities.

In trend, the report by KRI highlights that more youths are taking up temporary part-time jobs. This includes freelance work, gig work, all made accessible by the internet. These jobs however were unfulfilling for the youths as they did not provide health insurance or security. The instability of the income was also of concern.

The Work by University Malaya's Dr Muhammad Abdul Khalid

A study that investigates racial discrimination in Malaysia's private sector hiring has been done before. The work of Dr Muhammed and Lee Hwok Aun, "Degrees of Discrimination: Race and Graduate Hiring in Malaysia" in 2016, was a key basis for our own study.

This study sent fictitious Malay and Chinese resumes to job advertisements and then analyzed the variations in the callbacks for interviews. Their controls, much like the study by us, included applicant characteristics, employer profile and job requirements.

Dr Muhammed's team sent out a total of 3,012 resumes that were made of four different types of candidates, "Above Average Malay," "Above Average Chinese," "Below Average Malay," and "Below Average Chinese." In contrast to our study, our resumes, inclusive of an Indian candidate, all had the same level of qualification and academic background.

The study reported that race mattered more than resume quality. Malays were found to be less likely to be called for an interview. Dr Muhammad's report highlighted that the callback rate of Chinese applicants were 22.1% whilst the callback rate for Malays was 4.2%. Even companies that were Malay-controlled called Chinese applicants 1.6 times more than they called Malay applicants. Quite disappointingly, the "Below Average Chinese" resume received more calls than the "Above Average Malay" applicant. Malays who had proficiency in Chinese were more likely to be called for an interview than Malays without it.

Even if the applicant had written a good English cover letter and stated proficiency in English, callback rates were no different. This was particularly evident for Chinese resumes. Foreign-controlled companies were also found to be less likely to callback Malay resumes.

Online, the arguments against the study noted that the study "did not measure the racial percentages of the companies being measured. If company already had more Malays than the population warranted." The comments argue that perhaps the company was actively looking for more Chinese applicants because its own company already had too many Malays. This is an important indicator that we will address in our own study.

Critics also argued that, simply through bigger numbers, "there is a higher chance that a genuine applicant may receive a callback and he or she would most likely be a Malay because Malays make up the bigger majority." In other words, the office that received the resumes may have had plenty of other options for Malay applicants, with few Chinese applicants, the Chinese resume sent by Dr Muhammad's team simply received greater popularity. This criticism however, of course becomes minuted when recognizing that even substandard Chinese resumes received greater callbacks than Malay above average resumes.

The study by Dr Muhammad also sent resumes that had different contents. Some peer reviews noted that "a better test might be to send identical resumes to 1000 employers. This should reduce noise from the data." The argument here is that the way a resume looks plays a critical role in influencing

human resource departments. Because the content of the resumes sent out by the research team were not standardized, it may have contributed to the end result. Whilst this may have been difficult to do for Dr Muhammad's team as Malays and Chinese largely follow different pathways through education, our team tried to address this.

Other comments on the study noted the possibility of confirmation bias, a tendency to favour information that confirms a person's assumptions. Some have also pointed out that a majority (63.7%) of the sample came from Chinese-controlled companies. With this sample, it was suggested, Chinese applicants would always be favoured over the Malay applicant. Some called for the sample to be more equal and representative, including more Malay controlled companies as well. Yet, in a standard that was meant to be black & white, the mere assumption that Chinese controlled companies would most likely call Chinese applicants only is disturbing in and of itself.

Other studies have also attempted to look at this issue. A study called "Age Discrimination in the Evaluation of Job Applicants" in January 2013 by Ben Andrew Richardson and Lynn S Webber of

the Journal of Applied Social Psychology studied the nature of age discrimination against older job applicants. One hundred fiftysix participants (102 students; 54 organization based) evaluated a hypothetical job applicant's (aged 33–66 years) work related competences and likelihood of being hired. Applicant age affected hiring decisions for both samples where there was a preference for hiring applicants aged 42–48 years. Applicants at both the older and younger ends of the continuum were less likely to be hired, with the oldest applicants (over 54 years) being the least likely to be hired. Although the applicants' age negatively affected evaluations of their trainability and sociability, the effect of applicant age on hiring evaluations was not mediated by these workrelated competencies, suggesting that age discrimination occurs via direct bias against older workers.

METHODOLOGY

We sent 3,829 resumes to over 500 jobs. Before sending these resumes however, our team ensured that whilst the resumes looked different, crucial factors that may possibly play a role in obtaining a callback for the candidates are held constant and the same.

In our model we will send resumes with fictitious details and fictional characters to job vacancies across the Klang Valley. Below are the steps taken by us during the process of the research that took place:

STEP 01 — Model

STEP 02 — Resume Design (Academic Qualification, Job Experience & Language Spoken)

STEP 03 — Job Selection

STEP 04 — Application process

STEP 05 — Feedback

The models we used in this study are a crucial element in the significance of this study. Previous studies had omitted putting a picture of the candidate in the resume. This is understandable. Putting a picture on a resume may play a crucial role in the success and failure of a candidate being accepted. One model may perhaps look more attractive than the other and influence the decision of the employer. Our core team debated in the inclusion of a picture for a while. In the end, we decided to go ahead with insertion of a model. The key element however was that the models had to be of the same person. For a male, the same model would be given make-up to ensure he looked Chinese, Malay and Indian. In our judgement, by using the same model, employers would not have the excuse of saying that one was more good looking than the other. All the models (in their gender) had the same physical features. Only their skin was toned differently to reflect the race they were given.

The first fear was of course that employers may notice that the models were of the same person. We debated on this for a lengthy time as well. But we concluded that the only reason we would think these models were the same person was because we knew they were the same person. What if employers were receiving thousands of resumes on a weekly basis? What if the resumes we sent out were sent on different days? As we mention below, this fear was not met. Very few if any employers noticed that the resumes were of the same person.

DESIGNING THE RESUMES

Our team put a lot of effort in designing the resumes. Previous studies had in fact excluded pictures in resumes in fear that the attractiveness of a candidate would distort the study. We however took the risk of inserting pictures, but with a catch. Of all the Indian, Chinese, and Malay candidates, we used the same person albeit with make-up to fit the profile.

After this, we ensured that the resumes were designed to have similar qualification, co-curricular involvement, age, university qualifications in Private Higher Institutions, grade results, internship experience, and that all the resumes were fluent in Mandarin. All seven candidates achieved a second class upper degree, were involved in co-curricular activities and had a 3 month internship.

There are a few reasons why we decided to specify our candidates within these criteria. We wanted to eliminate all other possible biases to strengthen the control variable of race. This means, whilst the race, name and picture of the resumes were different, other factors such as education and experience are held common. Ceteris Paribus. This leaves very little room to say that one candidate got a callback because his or her CGPA was higher or that one candidate was preferred because he or she went to a private school and not a public school. We put

them with reputable private universities with real degree names, to make them as equally competitive amongst each other.

These controlled variables are crucial because they ensure that the callbacks we receive for different candidates, if other candidates were not called, was based solely on race (within the genders). No candidate had an advantage over the other. No candidate had a better experience than the others.

Resume Design

Let's look specifically at the resume design. The names on the resumes were Nicola Yeoh, Zulaikha Asyiqin, Kavita Muthusamy, Nur Sakinah Yusof, and for the males, Gabriel Liew, Saddiq Azmi, Thivakar Gunasegaran.

As explained already, each of these names represented their ethnicity. If the name did not make that clear, the pictures that came along with it also confirmed the races.

All the seven candidates had a Second Class Upper Degree in Accounting & Finance. This degree fits across numerous industries, especially of the ones that we filtered that had vacancy. They all have typically the same level of involvement in co-curricular activities as well, where each is not perceived to have excelled beyond the rest. Anyone that may glance upon these resumes would judge that the candidates had the same level of experience. We wanted to include co-curricular activities as we wanted all our candidates to be of stellar levels. For example, the Malay male candidate, Muhammad Saddiq Azmi obtained his Bachelor of Business from Taylor's University with a CGPA of 3.33. The Chinese male, Gabriel Liew obtained his Bachelor of Business in Banking & Finance also from Taylor's University with a CGPA of 3.25. The difference is minimal. None would be better than the other. The years of experience, the takeaway from those experiences and the prestige of the institution where those candidates did their co-curricular activities would generally be judged the same. Again, all of this was controlled to ensure that the only factor that stood out to differentiate the candidates was their race (amongst inter-gender).

All of the candidates were born between the years 1995 and 1996. Some employees might have different preference on the age depending on the job requirement yet we narrowed our candidates down to these two years to minimize variation and difference. Again, the goal was to ensure the candidates all provided the same content. It would have been hard for an employer to look at one candidate, look at the age and claim that one was preferred as it was significantly older than another.

Each of the candidates had one internship experience. This was important as it complimented the degree. We made sure that the internship experience was also round-about the same. For example, for the Indian female, Kavita Muthusamy, we gave her an internship at Nexus Advance Corporate Services Sdn Bhd. In this experience, we listed down that she assisted in day to day accounts, that she prepared and assisted in the GST/SST reports. She was also involved in office administration duties. For the female Chinese candidate, we gave her an internship at Popular Book Co. Sdn Bhd where she assisted in "coming up with international business partners and publishers" as well as liaised "with international book publishers for marketing and sales opportunities." The level of prestige and extracted experience the candidates received from their internships were fundamental and similar.

In terms of residency, availability and easy access, all our candidates stayed in the Klang Valley, either in Kuala Lumpur or Selangor. This ensured that if the company was calling from its office in KL or PJ perhaps, they would know that the candidate would be able to commit to the commute. For example, for our Malay female, Nur Sakinah Yusof, her residency was in Ampang, Selangor. For our Malay male, his residence was in Kelana Jaya, Selangor.

One key control we wanted to focus on was the language factor. We wanted to see if a candidate's fluency in Mandarin really played a key role in getting a job. As highlighted above, many private sector companies argue that they do many dealings with China-based companies, so they would rather hire a Mandarin-fluent candidate. Is the Mandarin fluency really about the skills of the candidate to communicate with clients or is it a smokescreen for employers to pick and choose a certain candidate based on his or her race. To study this, we ensured that all our candidates were fluent in Malay, English and Mandarin. Therefore, if a company were to

call Gabriel Liew and not Thivakar Gunasegaran, they would not be able to say that they chose Gabriel because he was fluent in Mandarin. For example, Gabriel Liew's resume listed him down as "intermediate" in speaking and writing Mandarin. Similarly, Thivakar's resume also noted that he was "intermediate" in speaking and writing in Mandarin.

With all these control factors made constant, the only variable left distinct amongst the resumes was the name, gender, and ethnicity of the candidate. The picture of the candidate we attached to the resume was the same person albeit with makeup to ensure that they had a different colour of their skin tone to fit the name. As mentioned earlier, we tried to eliminate all possibilities of preferential biases on grades, universities, and also achievement biases. The intended outcome of this experiment is to study whether or not job seekers are being discriminated against because of their ethnicity only.

JOB SELECTION PROCESS

As most job applications nowadays are done online, we decided to choose the most reputable and popular online job portal in Malaysia for jobs hunting. There are more than 27,000 vacancies on this website thus it is the best place for the candidates to get a good response rate.

We filtered out the available job to relevant criterias to match our candidates. Firstly, we narrowed to KL and Selangor as our candidates are either located in Selangor and KL. We chose the relevant sector to the resumes which are the sales & marketing in general. It comprises of companies from various sectors such as logistics, pharmaceuticals, oil & gas, retail and IT.

As the jobs were narrowed down to our specific requirements, the jobs available for our candidates are around 1,800 in average.

Digital Marketing, Sales - Corporate, E-commerce, Marketing/Business Dev, Merchandising, Retail Sales, Sales - Eng/Tech/IT and Sales - Financial Services jobs for Fresh/Entry Level and Junior Executive match your minimum salary criteria of MYR 2,500.00 in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor   1 - 20 of 1,850 jobs

We compiled 500 different companies with 500 individual job postings per company for all the seven candidates to apply to prevent redundancies in regards to analysis. To ensure that the resumes (and their similarities) go unnoticed by the HR departments, we ensured each applicant will apply at different times. In addition, the application was done gradually in stages so that we were not categorized by the portal as spam and bots.

During the application, every application form is filled with the necessary skill sets that are required by the specific jobs. For example, microsoft office skills, experience in marketing, and language fluency.

Within the 500++ job applications we submitted, we grouped 10% of employers that specifically requested Mandarin as one of the job requirement. This is a sub-test to see if Mandarin is the overriding factor for candidate screening.

We sorted the Chinese preferred employers through their chinese/mandarin speaking requirement at the job title, or in the job description. There are even companies that advertised their job title in full Mandarin without any English translation. This is shown below:
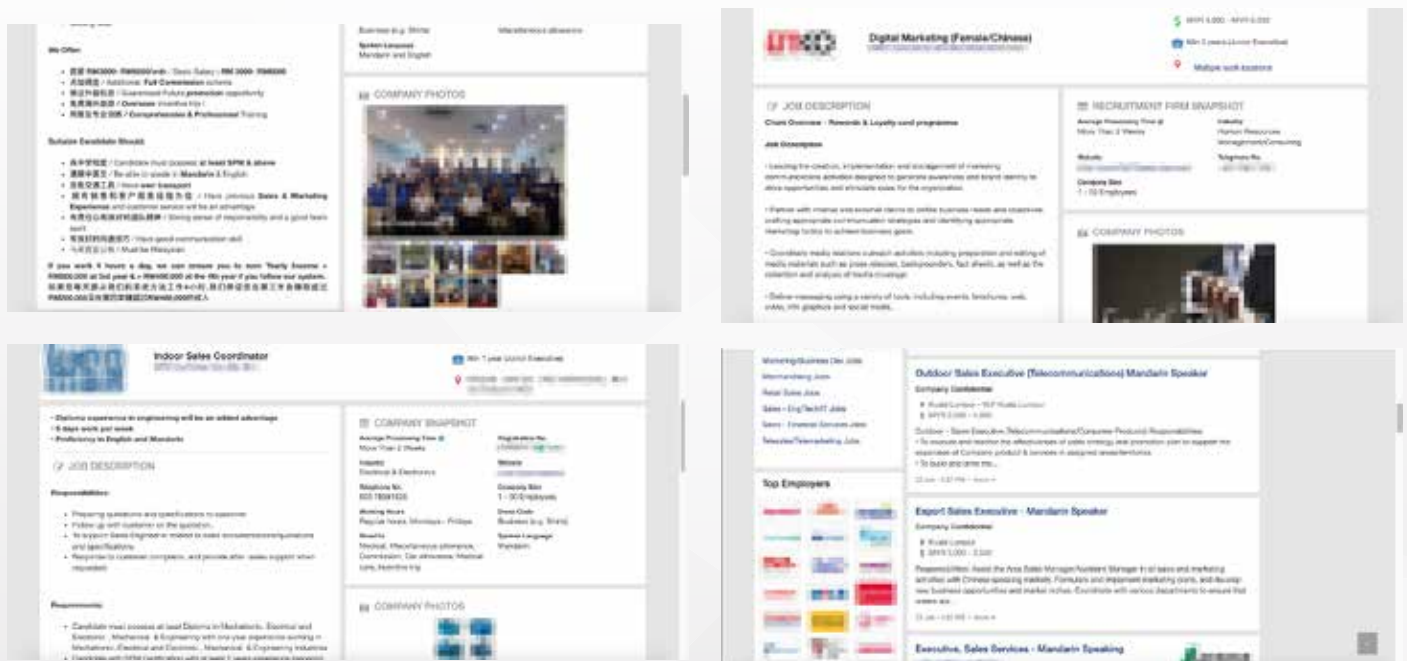
As we applied to more and more companies, we used a mastersheet data table to keep track of the status of each application for each company. A glimpse of this is seen below. The table lists out the name of companies as well as the status of successful application. For candidates that have applied, the boxes are marked with yellow. When they received a response, their box will be marked green.

This is a glimpse of the master sheets.

Records are collected and kept in a spreadsheet for every job application and each call ups that we receive. Separately on a different sheet, for each resume, we listed down the position that the candidate received as well as the contact details of that HR's department. This was also crucial as it allowed our second team to check all the numbers to ensure if the number and contact detail really came from that company.

JOB APPLICATION PROCESS

As the portal that we are using has a job application per month limit, we had to do the job application by stages. The limit is 200 jobs per month therefore we applied to 160++ jobs per month from December 2018, January, and early February 2019.

For every job application, we provided a minimum buffer time of about 1 month from the date of application. However, we are still updating our record until the end of our experiment. The cut off date is set on the 1st week of March 2019.

Apart from stating the 3 language fluency (Malay, English, & Mandarin) in the candidate's resume, a bunch of companies requested multilinguality. This question was asked during the job application process and so our team ensured that each candidate ticked the box to further highlight the candidates ability to converse in all languages.

JOB APPLICATION PROCESS

Register Online Profile

Search For Matching Job
NO
YES

Fresh Graduate
NO
YES

KL & Selangor
NO
YES

Salary RM2.5k Above
NO
YES

Can All Apply
NO
YES

Mandarin
YES
NO

Mandarin Database

Main Records

Phone
YES

Email
YES

Online Account
NO
YES

Reply Records

FEEDBACK

To receive "callback", we ensured that the companies had various platforms to contact us back. For each candidate, we assigned and made an email address, a specific (different) phone number as well as openness to being called for interviews from the website. In total, we had seven different phone numbers assigned to specific resumes. If one company were to call Kavita Muthusamy, our Indian female, one researcher in charge of that phone number would receive the call, jot down the name of the company and then move on.

To ensure that the data was compatible, each researcher in our office was assigned to take care of one resume. At all times, whether it was the weekends or during post-working hours, the researcher would bring along a phone that companies would reach to get in contact with the resume candidate. As we will note latter, some of our researchers had a busy time jotting down the numerous companies contacting their resume. Whilst other researchers had barely any companies calling them back. Each researcher, on top of taking care of the phone number, was also in charge of checking the fictitious candidate's email. Here, a lot of companies also reached out to ask for an interview.

Whenever each applicant received an interview callback, the name of the employer is identified and recorded in a table. The table ensures that there is no redundancy in the recording of call ups for the applicants. This was important as many companies called numerous times and oftentimes with different numbers. Our second team went through this data to ensure that there were no redundancy and repeats. Oftentimes, the researcher would be busy and missed the call, the job of the red team therefore was to call back those missed calls and check if they were a new company calling for interview. The "red-team" did a good job ensuring that some companies that called twice were listed once in our mastersheet of callbacks.

Before we began our study, our core team reviewed several procedures to send these resumes.

Method 1 - Wide net data collection (General Overview)

In this method, our team would create seven candidates with seven different names. All would have similar academic qualifications, a generic degree that can be casted across a few industries and sectors. Such a degree would have to be a liberal arts degree or a generic technical degree in Computer Science, IT or finance. Then the team would simply wait for a call or an email for interview. The easy thing about this method is that it would not have been restraining on the team. The bad side of this method is that it is very generic and not specific to industry. It would also have lengthened the time period of our study, thereby making the first data collections of the first month increasingly irrelevant.

Method 2 - Sectoral data collection (Comprehensive)

Our second proposed method was to set-up seven sets of candidates for each industry. Specifically our team would have to create seven different resumes for each industry and sector, i.e. communications, banking and finance, electrical & electronics, energy, oil and gas and others. Therefore, in total, our team would have to make 35 distinct resumes, each catered for their specific industry. There would also have to be 35 different email set-up, 35 different phone numbers as well. The plus side of this method is that it is comprehensive and more targeted. The bad side is that it would have been heavily time-consuming and it would have taken up a lot of our resources.

Method 3 - Narrow data collection (Proof of Concept)

Our third proposed method was to narrow the data collection. Here, we would create seven fictitious resumes with similar degrees in Business. All would have to come from a Private University in Malaysia. All the candidates would have to be fluent in English and Malay and Mandarin. This method would also entail that four female and three male candidates have pictures in their resumes to further emphasize the role of race. Here, 500 jobs would have to be applied into for each of the seven resumes. Call for interviews would have to be received through either callbacks, email replies and online notifications. The replies would be centralised in a datasheet to see if there are any differences in reply rates and cross checking. One researcher would have to handle a candidate and ensure that they carried the phone at and check the email at frequent times.

GENERIC STEPS

01 Set online platforms
for job applications
Decided on suitability and
how easy it is to get callbacks

02 Decide data
collection method

03 Set resume and
characters

04 Create emails based
on resume/characters

05 Scout for vacancies and
define minimum sample
based on population and
confidence level

06 Make-up, photoshoot
and video shoot
(for publishing material)

07 Submission

08 Set up a centralised
email collection
(forwarding email)

09 Update the
data matrix

10 Tabulate and
analyse

HYPOTHESIS

As mentioned in previous chapters, there is wide speculation that Malaysia exhibits discrimination in its job application process in the private sector. These assumptions come from the findings of various published studies and reports of which many confirm that there is a general trend of discrimination when it comes to the recruitment of fresh bumiputera graduates.

The reason why most studies focus on fresh graduates is to reduce the experience bias that may affect the outcome of the study, by subtracting a highly subjective factor in a job application analysis, it helps the researcher in drawing a clear and objective pattern in regards to the recruitment trend in the job market. Looking at fresh graduates also gives us insight into youth unemployment. It allows us to go beyond just a general scope of why there is vast youth unemployment but also who specifically amongst the youth are not getting their rightful opportunities.

By right, in a truly equal and merit-based society, a pattern of uniformity emerges around individuals with similar academic qualifications regardless of ethnic, physical appearance and to some extent gender. Thus to really measure the impact of race and ethnicity in the success of one's job application, we did our best to minimize the differences between the fictitious resumes we sent out. All of the applicants had almost similar CGPA scores, comparable working experience (internship at a company), graduated from a recognised and respected private college, identical qualifications (Bachelor's Degree majoring in business), and proficient in three languages (Malay English and Mandarin).

To take things further, our team ensured that these resumes were accompanied with pictures of the candidate. The catch was that these pictures were of the same person. For the Malay male, Indian male and Chinese male, we took one researcher and applied makeup on him to look the race he was labelled. For the Malay female, Chinese female and Indian females, we similarly took pictures of the same person and only applied makeup to make her look the race she was given. The concept behind this is to ensure that physical attributes played no role in the candidate's chances of getting a callback. Whilst the male was made to have different color skin for each resume, his nose, the sharpness of his chin, the thickness of his eyebrows and quite generally the shape of his face was the same. The only difference? Skin color and racial background.

To further minimize any unmeasured bias, we even focused on the selection of applied vacancies. First, through the algorithm made available on the online job portal, we identified and noted down which vacancies were available, and which of those made available suited the respected degrees of our candidates. Secondly, we cross checked these vacancies with the resumes of our candidates to see if applying there would prove equal chance for all our candidates. All seven resumes and fictitious profiles applied to the same job vacancies. If there were instances of one applicant being sent before a certain cut-off date before the other resumes were sent, we excluded these companies as it would have been unfair for the sample. The total amount of jobs that our team applied to represents 7 resumes being sent to each of these jobs. This ensures a fair fight. It means that all the 7 resumes were given equal opportunity with the same employer to get a callback. By right, if one of the candidates is called for an interview, most of them would be called for that same interview as they all had the same qualifications and experience. This study is specifically designed to measure this expectation.

On a side note, about 10% of the total job applications were specifically chosen for their Mandarin requirement, this is to determine whether the language prerequisite is a legitimate requirement by the employer. In other words, do companies put up "Required fluency in Mandarin" really because they need a candidate that can discourse with China-based clients, or is it a filter to ensure that certain specific races get chosen to fill to role (ie, Chinese).

Based on strong assumptions made by articles and previous studies, this study began with these following hypotheses:

There is an ethnic bias in regards to job recruitment in the private sector of which ethnic Malay applicants will have a major disadvantage to their non-bumiputra peers.

Mandarin is a key factor in helping or boosting a candidate's chance of securing a job interview.

The hijab plays a crucial factor in determining a candidate's successfully job application.

With our control variables and strict methodology of ensuring that the candidates all apply to the same jobs, with researchers carrying their phones at all times, these hypotheses will be observed. From here on end, it was about measuring reality to idealism. Ideally, all the candidates have the same content, the same level of experience, the same value of education. In a merit-based society, in a Malaysia that puts racial discrimination second, all our candidates should obtain the same level of callbacks. All our fictitious resumes should get the same opportunity. Whether or not a candidate speaks Mandarin, if the job requires it, should be the key callback factor. All our candidates, from the Indian male to the Chinese female, have listed Mandarin as an "intermediate." Is it true that companies are really looking for Mandarin speaking candidates, or are they really just using that as an excuse to hire a Chinese candidate?

OUTCOME

1.0 - OVERALL SCORECARD

1.1 - Since the online portal limits up to 200 applications per month, our team could only apply to around 180 vacancies per month. This would ensure that our accounts would not get red flagged. It would be a major disturbance if one of our candidates had his/her account banned whilst the rest was still receiving offers. Throughout therefore, this caution was eminent.

All in all, our team sent over 3829 job applications to over 500 companies. After three months of searching for viable jobs and applying to those jobs. And also allowing a one month buffer time for employers to call for an interview, our team of researchers managed to obtain and apply for over 500+ job vacancies from over 500+ companies. One company received one application from each candidate. We had seven candidates. The Malay male, Indian male, Chinese male, Chinese female, Indian female and two Malay female (one with hijab and the other without).

Our team felt that the sample size was sufficient. It is not based on the total number of vacancies throughout the year, nor is it supposed to represent the entire employed population of Malaysia. Rather, this sample size is meant to represent the total number of available jobs for fresh graduates during December 2018 to February 2019.

3829

job applications
were sent to over

500

companies

during December 2018 to February 2019.

Below is the overall scorecard of each candidate -

	Female				Male		
Candidate	Nicola	Zulaikha	Kavita	Nur Sakinah	Gabriel	Saddiq	Thivakar
Jobs Applied	547	547	547	547	547	547	547
Interview Call	240	70	49	50	179	43	20
Call Back Rate	43.88%	12.80%	8.96%	9.14%	32.72%	7.86%	3.66%
Probability Score (Gender)		3.43	4.90	4.80		4.16	8.95
Probability vs highest overall		3.43	4.90	4.80	1.34	5.58	12.00
Application per Interview	2.28	7.81	11.16	10.94	3.06	12.72	27.35
Average Call Back by gender	18.69%				14.75%		

Note:
- *Interview Call - Number of callbacks by employers for an interview session*
- *Call back rate - Percentage of interview success per application*
- *Probability Score (By Gender) - Probability score of the best performing candidate (by gender) in securing an interview versus the said candidate.*
- *Probability Score (Overall) - Probability score of the best performing candidate in securing an interview versus a candidate.*
- *Application per Interview - Amount of application submission to score an interview.*

**When our red team checked our work. One of the biggest arguments is that employers would notice that the candidates (especially if you look carefully at the pictures) are actually the same. Our red team argued that this could potentially derail the entire operation and study. We argued otherwise. If the companies did notice that the candidates were the same, why then did Nicola Yeoh (our Chinese female) get an almost 50% callback rate? She was not the first one to apply to all the jobs. Neither was she the last. As our researchers guarding Nicola's accounts noted, the calls they receive under Nicola's number all asked for an interview, to schedule an interview and to even do a phone interview. This indicates that very few if any companies actually noticed that the resumes were the same. Worse, maybe they did not even look at the other candidates if those candidates were not of a specific race. If companies had noticed that the candidates were the same, the callback rate should have been significantly lower. If companies did notice that the resumes were of the same person albeit different name, the portal would have blacklisted all our resumes by now. To this date and to the date of this report's publishing, the resumes are still online. Nicola is still receiving calls as this report is being written. Our core team had addressed this concern in its methodology as well, that we would resolve it by sending the resumes (of the seven candidates) on different random days.

2.0 - GENDER & ETHNIC DISPARITY

Male vs Female (Callback)
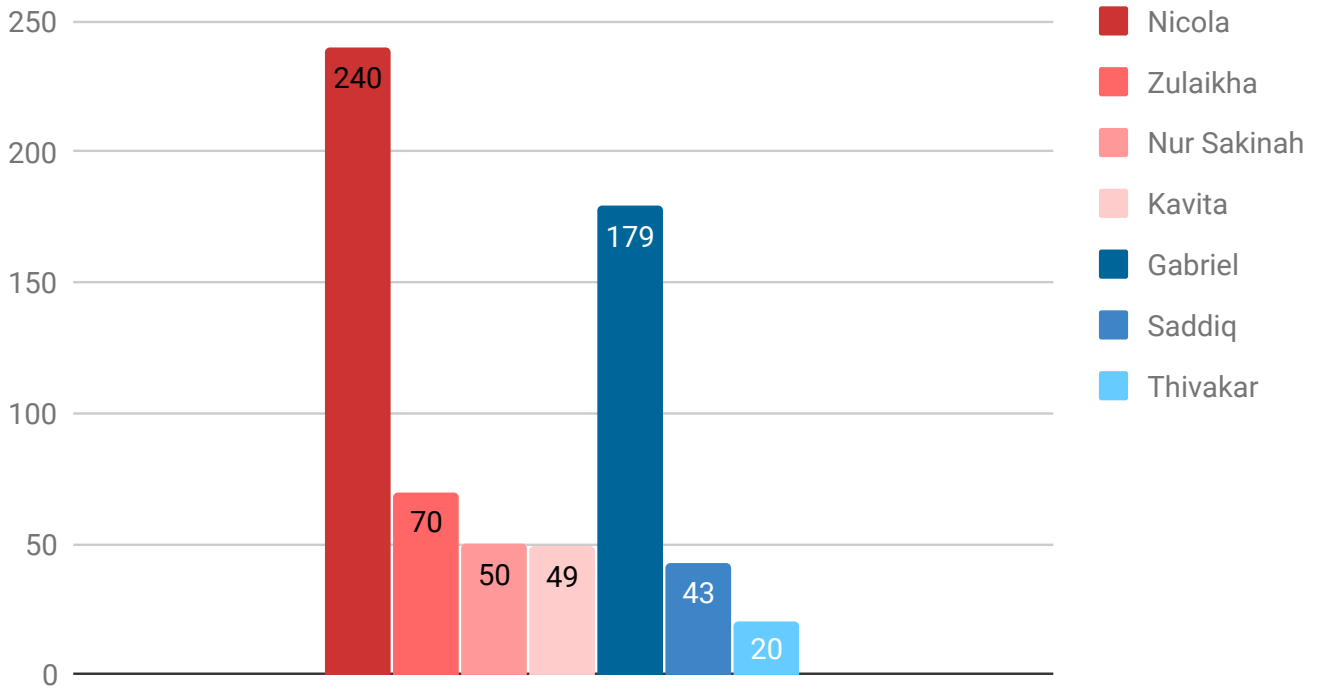
2.1 In terms of gender disparity there seems to be a general trend that points towards an advantage to women, however the disparity when calculated as an average, only gives a slight advantage to female candidates.

Gender	Average Callback	Percentage
Female	102.25	18.69%
Male	80.67	14.75%

2.2 A much more clearer disparity can be seen when the candidates are separated by the gender and measured based on the ethnicity.

Ethnic Disparity (Female)
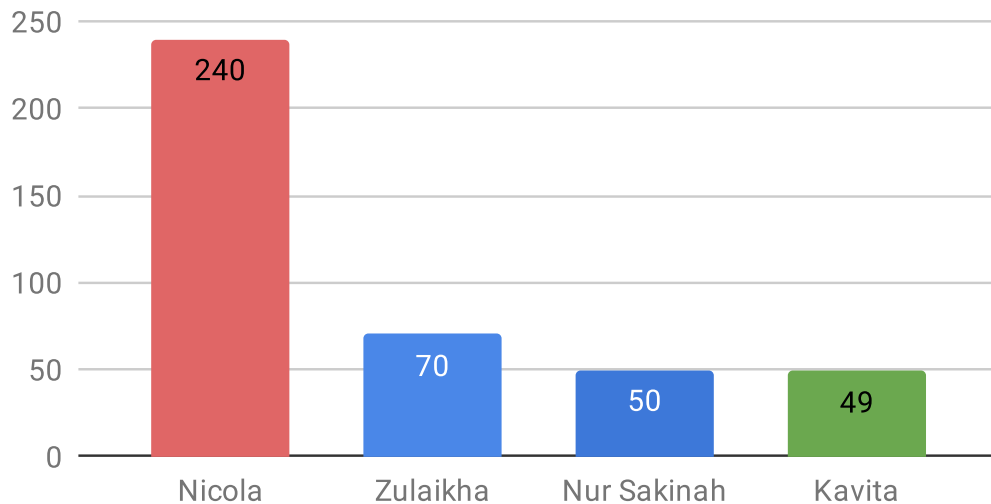
Ethnic Disparity (Male)
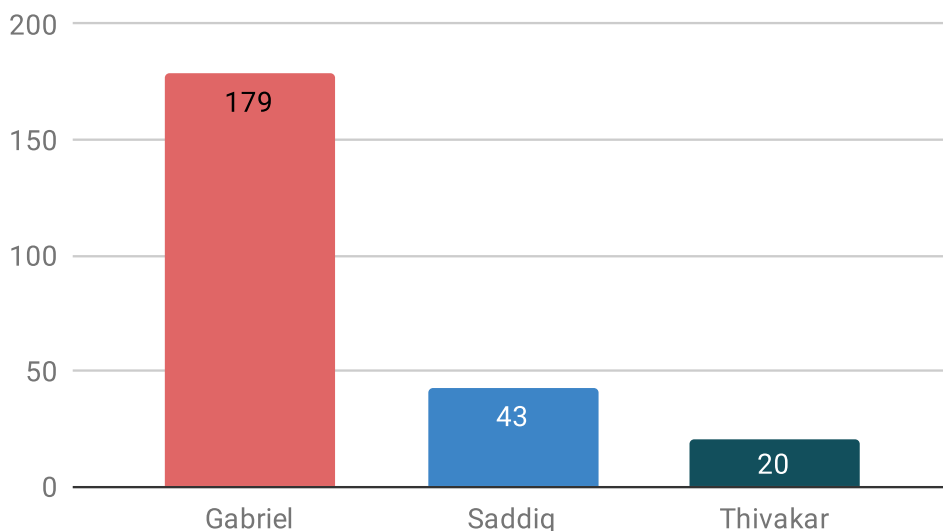
The two graphs point to one trend, that there is clear disparity between the ethnic Chinese candidates and the rest of the pack. Our fictitious Chinese candidate dominated in callbacks by a huge margin. The Chinese candidates were 4 times more likely in securing a job interview than the distant second. Both our Chinese candidates obtained more job callbacks than their Malay and Indian counterparts combined. Of all the candidates, Thivakar has by far the lowest number of callbacks.

3.0 - SUCCESS RATIO

3.1 - The success ratio of each candidate is important to analyze. Nicola, our Chinese female candidate, led the group with an almost 50% chance of securing a call for an interview. Gabriel Liew had a 1 in 3 chance of securing a callback for interview. Below is a graph that puts all the seven candidates together in terms of call back rate.

Callback Ratio
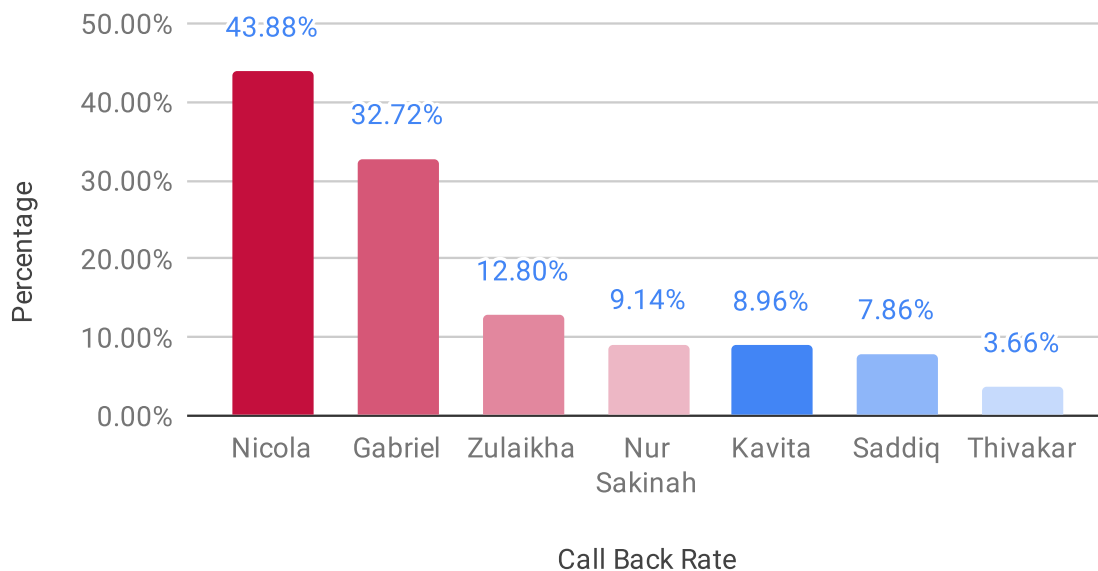
3.2 - Based on the graph there seems to be a disadvantage for a Malay girl who wears a tudung when it comes to job application. Zulaikha (non-hijab) obtained a 12.7% callback rate whilst Nur Sakinah obtained a 9.14% callback rate. The two lowest scoring candidates are the Malay male and the Indian male.

Jobs Application vs Interview
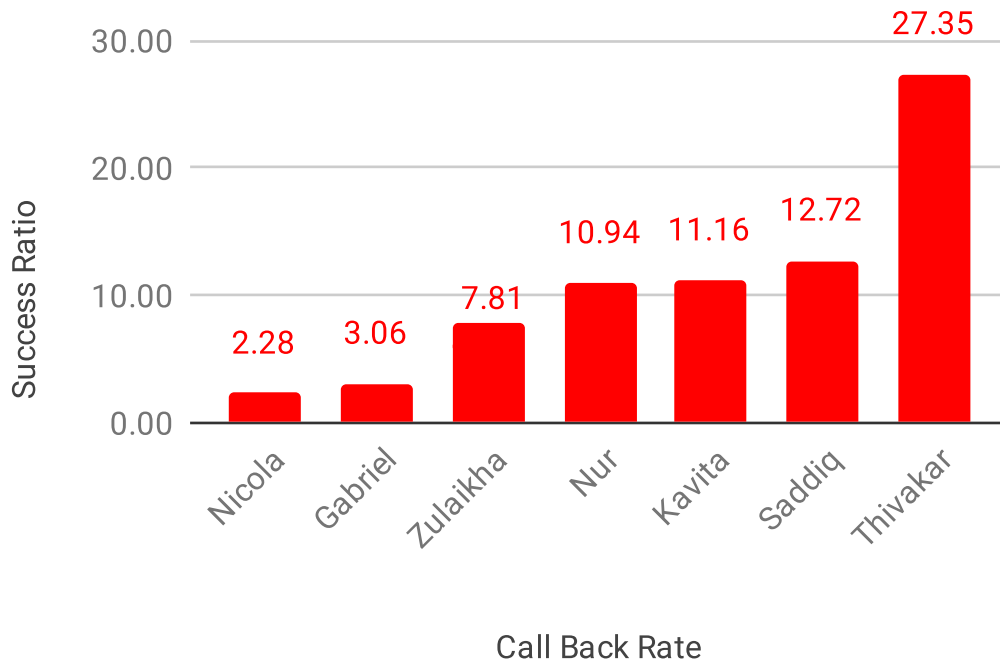
3.3 This graph shows a different angle to the results. We wanted to identify how many job applications a specific candidate would require to get one callback. The results are tragic. Nicola only needs to apply to roughly 2 jobs for her to get a callback. Nur Sakinah, the Malay girl with hijab, needs to apply to around 13 jobs to get one callback. Quite devastatingly, Thivakar, our Indian male, needs to apply to 28 jobs to get one callback for interview.

With a cap of 200 applications a month, Thivakar can only secure about seven interviews. It's important to remember here that Thivakar, just like the other candidates, had a second class degree, a good experience and was intermediate in Mandarin.

4.0 - THE MANDARIN FACTOR

4.1 - As mentioned in our methodology, about 10% of the jobs we sent resumes to required that the candidate be able to speak or write in Mandarin. All seven of the fictitious candidates we made listed Mandarin as as a skill in the "Intermediate" level. Additionally in the online form, we ticked this as a filled up skill when applying. Whether it was Thivakar or Nicola Yeoh, employers knew that the applicants were "intermediate" at Mandarin. Below are the results of the callbacks from these companies which listed Mandarin as a required skill.

Candidates	Reply Rate
Nicola	54.72%
Gabriel	39.62%
Kavita	15.09%
Saddiq	15.09%
Zulaikha	9.43%
Sakinah	11.32%
Thivakar	9.43%

Again, the top two candidates that received the most callbacks were Nicola and Gabriel, with a distant third Kavita. Nicola again had a roughly 50% callback rate for these Mandarin language required jobs. On the lowest end, Thivakar once again is the worse off with a callback rate of 7.55%. With Nicola and Gabriel scoring such higher scores than the rest, it is safe to conclude that having Mandarin as a skill, if you are not a Chinese candidate, does very little to make you stand out. We can confirm that this Mandarin language requirement is just a filter for employers (most) to hire a Chinese candidate.

Reply Rate vs. Candidate

Candidate	Reply Rate
Nicola	54.72%
Gabriel	39.62%
Kavita	15.09%
Saddiq	15.09%
Zulaikha	9.43%
Sakinah	11.32%
Thivakar	9.43%
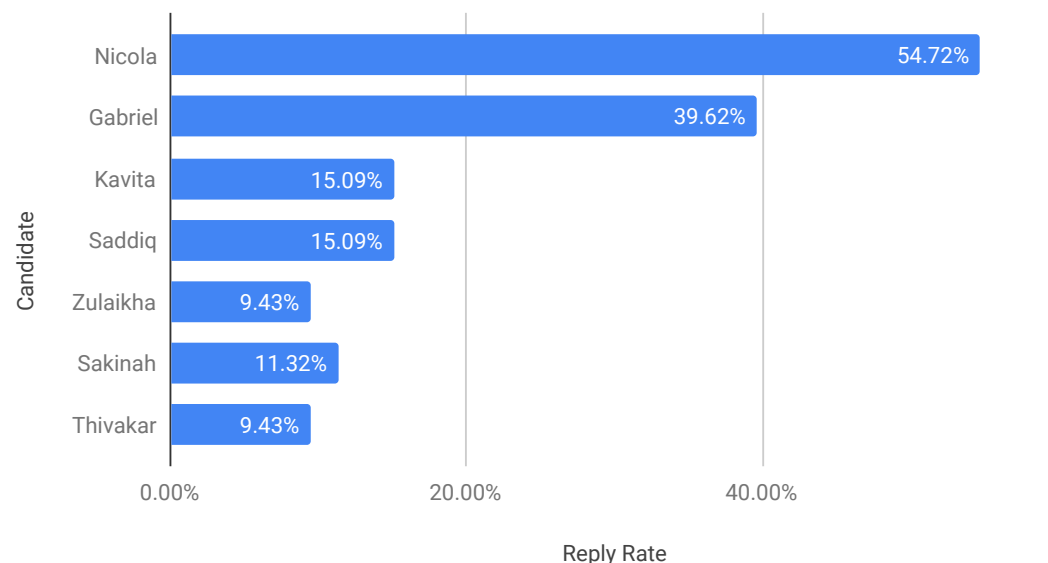
In most cases, most of the companies that insist on having a mandarin as a prerequisite would only call one or two out of the seven candidates and in all 22 cases, they would only call either Nicola or/and Gabriel. Only 9 companies decided to call the other candidates.

Companies that include non Chinese mandarin speakers

Inclusive
29.0%
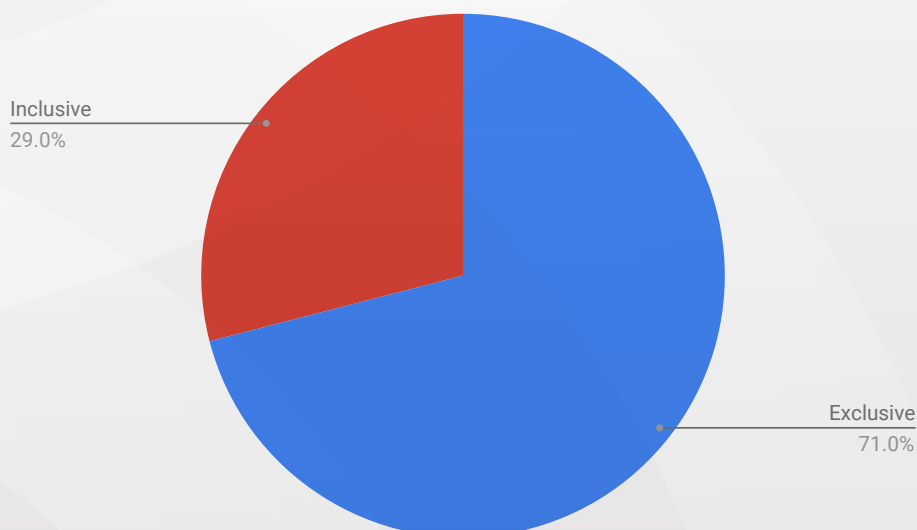
Exclusive
71.0%

Based on our sample, only 30% of companies which required Mandarin as a prerequisite actually practice inclusive hiring practices. They did not just look to see if the candidate was Chinese, they recognized that the other candidates were similarly "intermediate" at Mandarin and decided to call those candidates. The rest, around 70%, were not willing to go beyond the ethnic exclusivity.

5.0 - HIJAB FACTOR

For the Malay Female candidate, our team made a calculated decision to look at whether or not a hijab would play a key role in the success of one's job application. Would a candidate who wears a hijab have a higher chance of getting a callback for interview?

Again, the model in these two resumes were the same. We wanted to use the same model/researcher because we wanted to minimize chances that one would be called up because she was more attractive than the other. Literally, there is no difference between the two. The only difference is that one is wearing a hijab.

Candidates		Interview Calls	Callback Rate	Advantage
Zulaikha	Non hijab	70	12.80%	40%
Nur Sakinah	Hijab	50	9.14%	
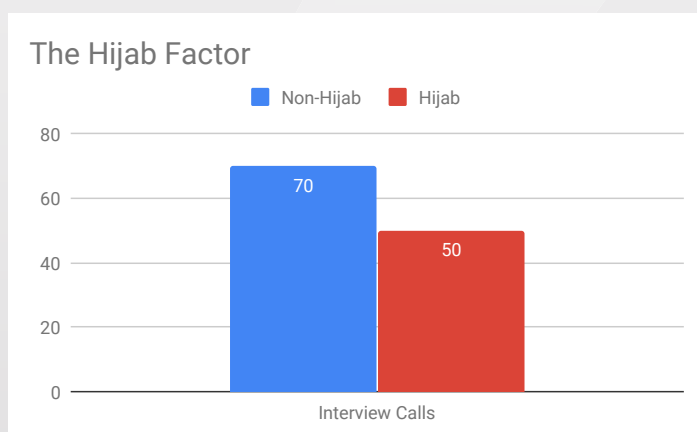
Based on the numbers, there seems to be a disadvantage for a female malay candidate who wears a hijab. Zulaikha, who did not appear on her resume to have a hijab, received 70 interview calls whilst Nur Sakinah, who did wear a hijab, got only 50.

In fact, by comparison, a non hijab Malay candidate will have a 40% advantage in terms of numbers of interviews secured as opposed to a hijab candidate.

6.0 - RESULTS VS HYPOTHESIS

Let us revisit the three hypotheses we held at the beginning of this study. The first,

1 | **There is an ethnic bias in regards to job recruitment in the private sector of which ethnic Malay applicants will have a major disadvantage from their non-bumiputra peers.**

The result? Yes and No.

In general it is true that the Malay/Bumiputera candidate is receiving less callbacks are compared to the Chinese candidate. This was evident in both genders. Nicola Yeoh, the Chinese female, received more callbacks for interview than both the Malay girls (hijab and non-hijab) combined. But the discrimination is not felt by just the Malay candidates. What we can identify is that the Indian candidates, both male and female are also being significantly discriminated against; the indian community are (more than the Malay) not receiving their rightful amount of opportunity. Though it is true that amongst the female candidates, the hijab and hijab candidate scored the lowest number of callbacks, Thivakar, the Indian male candidate, got the worse scorecard amongst all the resumes we sent out. Of over 500 companies, Thivakar got a dismal 20 callbacks.

Thivakar Gunasegaran
Call back rate :
3.66%
Applications
per interview :
27.34

Nur Sakinah bt Yusof
Call back rate :
9.14%
Applications
per Interview :
10.94

Kavita Muthusamy
Call back rate :
8.96%
Applications
per Interview :
11.16

In other words, even though Sakinah is the lowest in her gender group, she is still twice as likely to get an interview appointment than Thivakar.

2

Mandarin is a key factor in helping or boosting a candidate's chance of securing a job interview.

Based on our analysis, this is false.

Rather, we can get a strong grasp that this "mandarin requirement" is really just a smokescreen. It was never about a candidate's ability to be able to speak to Chinese clients. It was never about language. Even though all our candidates were listed as "intermediate" in Mandarin, 70% of companies that required Mandarin speakers only called the Chinese candidates. Prior to sending the resume, our team had ticked the "Mandarin" requirement on the job portal for all the candidates. Employers knew that the Malay and Indian candidates could grasp and communicate in Mandarin, and yet they were still not given their rightful callback.

3

Measuring the hijab factor in calculating the chances of a female candidate in securing a job interview.

Based on our analysis the hijab decreases a candidate's probability of getting an interview.

Here we can be conclusive in saying that the hijab decreases a candidate's probability of getting an interview. With a 60 percent advantage in terms of getting job interviews, the resume that we featured of a Malay girl without hijab was significantly more popular than the one with a hijab. Wearing a hijab plays a crucial role in landing an interview when you hold a business degree and are looking into applying to jobs in the business, finance, marketing or sales sector.

To put things into perspective, a hijab wearing malay girl is 6 times less likely in getting called for an interview than a Chinese girl while an indian boy is 13 is times less likely.

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Additional Input

Headhunters are actively looking for chinese candidates.

Some companies are really adamant about winning the Chinese candidates, with some employers calling multiple times offering different positions once an applied position has been filled.

Upon listing down the companies, we do not specifically search for companies that is owned or controlled by a specific ethnic group. It's truly random, based on what the online portal suggests to us.

Conclusion

For the past few months, the Centre for Governance and Political Studies (Cent-GPS) sent 3829 job applications to over 500 jobs. In each of these 500 jobs, our team sent seven different but similar resumes. All seven of these resumes represented a different ethnic group candidate.

1. **Nur Sakinah Yusof, a Malay female with hijab.**
2. **Zulaikha Asyiqin Rashidi, a Malay female without hijab.**
3. **Kavita Muthusamy, an Indian female.**
4. **Nicola Yeoh, a Chinese female**
5. **Thivakar Gunasegaran, an Indian male**
6. **Gabriel Liew, a Chinese male**
7. **Muhammad Saddiq Azmi, a Malay male.**

In the resumes of these seven candidates, our team ensured that they all had the same qualifications. They all had a Bachelors in Business, they all obtained a CGPA of Second Class upper, they all graduated from a local private university, they all had a three month internship at a reputable institution, and they were all fluent in English and Malay and "intermediate" in Mandarin. To take things a step further, our team inserted pictures of the candidates in the resume. The catch? The passport sized pictures of the candidates were all taken from the same person, albeit with makeup to suit the ethnicity. In other words, Thivakar Gunasegaran, our Indian male candidate is the same model as Gabriel Liew, our Chinese candidate. Their physical features are the same, ensuring that one candidate was not better looking than the other. The only key difference was their skin color. The same was done for the female candidates, all the passport sized pictures were taken from the same model just with makeup.

Our team had three hypotheses.

1) Ethnic Malay applicants will be discriminated against in Malaysia's private sector compared to their non-bumiputera peers.

2) Mandarin is a key factor in helping or boosting a candidate's chance of securing a job interview.

3) The hijab plays a crucial factor in determining a candidate's successfully job application.

As we conducted the experiment, what we discovered was staggering.

Overall Scorecard

Candidate	Female				Male		
	Nicola	Zulaikha	Kavita	Nur Sakinah	Gabriel	Saddiq	Thivakar
Jobs Applied	547	547	547	547	547	547	547
Interview Call	240	70	49	50	179	43	20
Call Back Rate	43.88%	12.80%	8.96%	9.14%	32.72%	7.86%	3.66%
Probability Score (Gender)		3.43	4.90	4.80		4.16	8.95
Probability vs highest overall		3.43	4.90	4.80	1.34	5.58	12.00
Application per Interview	2.28	7.81	11.16	10.94	3.06	12.72	27.35
Average Call Back by gender	**18.69%**				**14.75%**		

Our fictitious Chinese candidates dominated the callbacks by a huge margin. Both our male and female Chinese candidates obtained more job callbacks than their Malay and Indian counterparts combined. Nicola has a callback rate of 44%, Gabriel Liew had a one in three chance of securing a callback for interview, whilst Thivakar has a dismal callback rate of 4%. The two lowest scoring candidates are the Malay male and the Indian male.

In a different perspective, Nicola only needs to apply to roughly two jobs for her to get 1 callback. Nur Sakinah, the Malay girl with hijab, needs to apply to around 13 jobs to get one callback. Again, quite devastatingly, Thivakar, our Indian male candidate, needs to apply to 28 jobs to get just one callback for interview. If Thivakar had applied to 200 jobs in one month, he would only get seven callbacks.

Our first hypothesis, that Malay candidates would be discriminated against compared to their non-bumiputera friends, is incorrect. Whilst Malay candidates definitely do not get as many offers as Chinese candidates, the worst off are actually the Indian candidates. Kavita, our Indian female has a callback rate of 9% compared to Nicola (the Chinese female) who has a callback rate of 44%. Thivakar has a callback rate of 4% compared to Gabriel of 33%.

Our second hypothesis is also incorrect. 10% of the jobs we applied to required that the candidate is capable to communicate in Mandarin. All seven of the resumes we designed claimed to be "intermediate" in Mandarin. The result similarly exposes discrimination.

Callbacks for Mandarin required jobs

Candidates	Reply Rate
Nicola	54.72%
Gabriel	39.62%
Kavita	15.09%
Saddiq	15.09%
Zulaikha	9.43%
Sakinah	11.32%
Thivakar	9.43%

Again, Nicola and Gabriel are ahead of the pack by a considerable margin. Nicola receives a 55% callback rate from these Mandarin-required firms whilst Thivakar only gets 9%. Despite both these candidates listing Mandarin as "intermediate" in their resumes, Nicola and Gabriel still got more opportunities, giving us the conclusion that, for the most part, when companies list "Mandarin required" in their advertisement, it is actually a filter to hire Chinese candidates.

In regards to our final hypothesis, a Malay girl without a hijab gets more callbacks than a Malay girl who wears a hijab. Zulaikha (who did not wear a hijab) obtained a 12.8% callback rate whilst Nur Sakinah obtained a 9.14% callback rate. Again, there was very little difference on their two resumes. The only difference was that in the picture, one wore a hijab and the other did not.

This study is important because it shows us just how discriminatory our private sector really is. Even as candidates had the same qualifications, education and experience, the ethnicity of a candidate still plays a vital role in the success of a job application. The implications of our study paint a devastating future for Malaysia's youth. If this trend continues, many more will be marginalized simply due to the color of their skin. Hard working Indian and Malay students will not get the opportunity they deserve, creating a dangerous future of inequality and social instability.

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