

Barriers to entry:
Decomposing the gender gap in job search
in urban Pakistan

Elisabetta Gentile Nikita Kohli
Asian Development Bank Duke University

Nivedhitha Subramanian Zunia Tirmazee Kate Vyborny
Bates College Lahore School of Economics World Bank SAR-GIL

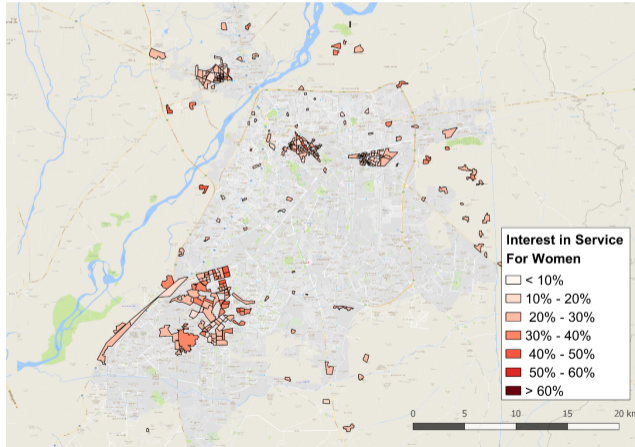
How much of the gender-labor gap comes from **supply** vs. **demand** side?

- ▶ Vast gap in labor force participation between men and women across South Asia
- ▶ Partly due to supply side factors: self-selection into occupations that conform to gender identity, differing preferences for job attributes, gendered social norms about time use, and household members' preferences that women stay at home
- ▶ Also due to demand side factors: discrimination based on managers' own beliefs and preferences, or anticipated preferences of coworkers and clients
- ▶ Micro evidence typically isolates specific supply or demand factors - but **quantifying supply vs. demand side constraints** overall is key to help prioritize interventions

Key challenges to quantifying supply and demand

- ▶ Survey data from representative samples (HHs, firms) tells us the equilibrium gap - but cannot separate supply vs. demand
- ▶ Alternative data sources such as job platform data allow researchers to observe the details of search activity by jobseekers and firms - BUT they are highly selected (those who choose to search at all, and search on platform)
- ▶ Downstream outcomes such as interview invitations are observed only on the selected sample of women who qualify and apply for the jobs posted
- ▶ We use a novel combination of matched data on the job market in Lahore, combining representative surveys, administrative data on job search, and experimental data to overcome these challenges

50,000 HH listing across urban and peri-urban Lahore



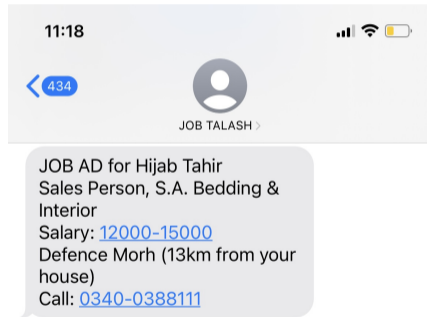
- ▶ Many studies recruit active searchers as participants - missing **“latent” female workers not searching because they anticipate low demand or do not know how**
- ▶ We start with a **representative listing of 50,000 households** (150,000 adults) and invite all members to sign up for a job search service; 10,000 signed up

Signup and latent labor supply

- ▶ We observe who signs up and does not from the representative listing
- ▶ Very different picture from labor force statistics; who is searching reflects **knowledge about and access to search opportunities**
- ▶ Gender gap in signup is much smaller than gap in working, and **60% of women who subscribe were not searching at baseline - suggests latent labor supply** among women

Administrative data: which potential matches are realized and why?

- ▶ Representative listing of firms across Lahore, with 672 ads posted: sweeper to HR manager
- ▶ Firms restrict their ad to be sent to those who qualify by **education, experience, and/or gender**
- ▶ Candidate receives job announcement through SMS when he/she meets these qualifications and expressed interest in the occupation at signup

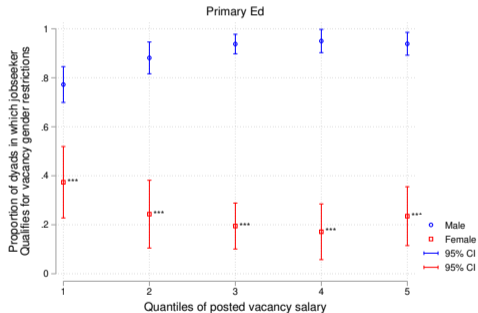


Administrative data: which potential matches are realized and why?

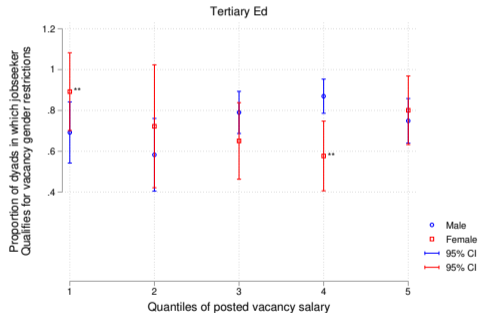
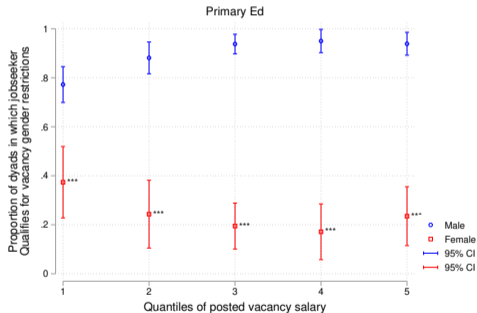
- ▶ In platform administrative data, we observe for each possible job-jobseeker pair whether the jobseeker is searching in that field; whether she qualifies; whether she applies and is chosen for an interview
- ▶ This allows us to **quantify the role of each supply- and demand-side constraint**

Firm side gender criteria are the largest constraint

- ▶ **Key finding:** firm gender criteria are a **larger constraint than supply-side decisions**
- ▶ Women are **53% less likely than men to satisfy explicit gender requirements**



This gap narrows as education levels rise



Importance of demand side constraints

- ▶ Pattern persists even for those who **meet all job qualifications** and **express interest** in the occupation
- ▶ Pattern would persist even if **every man and woman from the representative sample of households signed up** for the platform

Incentivized CV experiment: firm interview decisions when facing identical male vs. female CVs

Muhammad Ali
Male, Lahore, Punjab

EDUCATION

University of Central Punjab (UCP)
Bachelor of Arts
(English Literature)
Grade: B

Government Degree College Jan 1, 2015
Intermediate
(Biology, chemistry, physics)
Grade: A

EXPERIENCE

Dunya News Nov 1, 2016 - Jan 1, 2016
Intern
• I was in the reporting department. My responsibility was to go at different events, make reports about it, create voice overs.

Akhuwat Jun 1, 2017 - Jan 1, 2017
Intern
• It was an NGO job. We were made close to the marginalised societies, we worked for them, went to different old homes, fountain house etc.

Coca Cola Jul 1, 2018 - Jan 1, 2018
Intern
• I was in Public affairs and Communication (PAC) department. I was asked to make different research reports, look into different matters like, placing LEDs, planning and managing Independence Day and Tree Plantation ceremony.

Sana Fazal
Female, Lahore, Punjab

EDUCATION

Government College University Jan 1, 2018
Bachelor of Commerce
(Cost Accounting, Financial Accounting, Business Taxation)
Grade: A

Government Degree College Jan 18, 2016
Intermediate
(Mathematics, Physics Computer)
Grade: B

EXPERIENCE

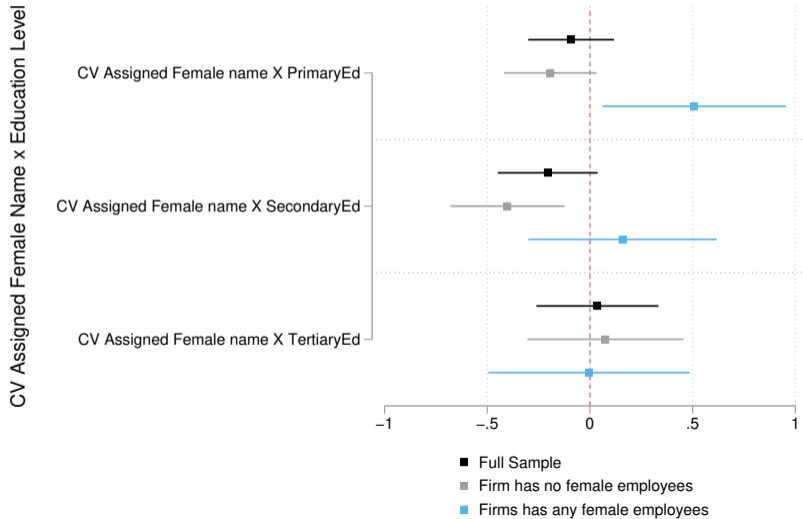
Al Karim mall, Karim Block, Lahore Jun 18, 2016 - Jan 18, 2016
Salesperson
• worked in a team of 7 member,
• responsible for Tagging the cloths.

Al-Kareem Mall, Kareem Block, Lahore Jul 1, 2018 -
Store In-charge, Accountant
• Worked in a team of 15 members
• Achieved daily basis target
• Make weekly debit note report, credit note report, ledger report and good restrict note report and submitted to the team in-charge
• Promoted from Salesperson to store in-charge

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

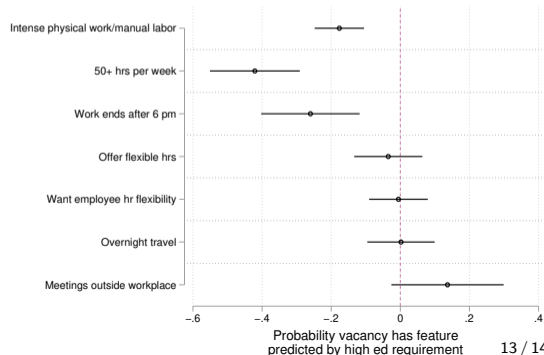
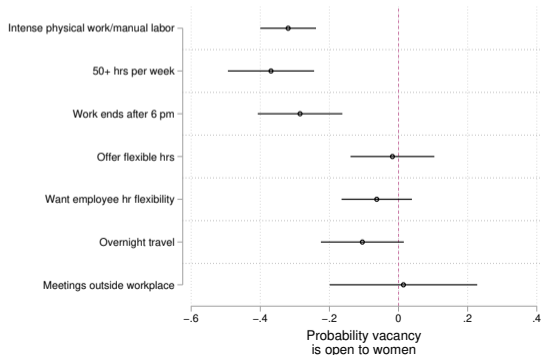
• Languages: English, Urdu, Punjabi

Firm decisions in CV experiment show similar patterns to admin data



White collar job characteristics may explain the pattern

- ▶ Sector and occupation explain only about 40% of variation in opening jobs to women
- ▶ **White collar** job characteristics, including lower levels of manual labor and shorter hours, are correlated with both openness to women and higher education requirements



Conclusions

- ▶ Matched representative survey, administrative and experimental data from Lahore, Pakistan, show that **demand-side constraints - gender criteria from firms - are the key barrier driving gender gap**
- ▶ Barriers **drop with higher education levels**
- ▶ Ongoing work **experimentally encourages firms to open ads to women**, to understand which firms comply and which women respond by applying