

**Salem State University  
School of Graduate Studies  
Department of Psychology**

**Effect of Socioeconomic Status on Job Hiring Potential**

**A Thesis in Industrial/Organizational Psychology**

**by**

**Jack Troyer**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Science**

**May 2026**

## Abstract

Despite federal anti-discrimination protections covering many marginalized populations, socioeconomic status (SES) remains legally unprotected and understudied as a source of bias. Drawing on social signaling theory, status characteristics theory, and implicit bias theory, this study examined whether SES signals embedded in fabricated resumes influenced perceived hireability across the business, computer science, and nursing fields. A community sample ( $n = 96$ ) completed a 2 (SES: High, Low) x 3 (Field) within-subjects survey evaluating three matched resume pairs (six resumes total) on hireability and perceived SES. More participants correctly identified the SES of each resume than not, although two resumes had “Can’t Tell” as the highest frequency response. Paired-sample t-tests revealed a significant hiring advantage for high-SES business resumes ( $t(95) = 2.01, p < 0.05, d = 0.21$ ) with no significant differences in computer science or nursing. A large main effect of field was observed ( $F(2,190) = 38.92, p < .001$ ), while the SES x Field interaction was not significant. McNemar tests revealed directional differences in SES perception accuracy, with low-SES signals more recognizable in business ( $p < .05$ ) and high-SES more recognizable in nursing ( $p < .05$ ). A mixed-effects regression found no significant association between conscious SES perceptions and hireability, suggesting that the bias operates implicitly. These findings extend theory to SES-based hiring evaluations and established field contexts as a moderator of class signal legibility. These findings underscore the need for further research on SES-based discrimination and structural hiring interventions to protect against discrimination based on socioeconomic background.

## **Effect of Socioeconomic Status on Job Hiring Potential**

Members of the workforce are faced with increasing employment uncertainty during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For recent college graduates, for example, the transition from the classroom to the workforce has become a period of persistent unpredictability rather than a standard milestone. While entering a career has required time and patience in the past, there is a rising trend in underemployment and joblessness among new graduates. In 2019, approximately 59.7% of graduates found full-time roles within half a year (NACE, 2020), but these numbers have since declined. Success rates fell to 57.2% for the Class of 2023 (NACE, 2024) and reached a low of 54.8% for the Class of 2024 (NACE, 2025). Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS; 2025) supports this instability, noting a 4.3% unemployment rate in March 2026. This statistic represents nearly 7.4 million Americans, a sharp climb from reports just two years prior. These statistics highlight a systemic issue in the American job market, which is increasingly divided by socioeconomic disparities. With competition on the rise, it is vital to examine who is truly protected by objective hiring systems and what hidden prejudices persist during candidate selection.

Despite anti-discrimination legislation enforced by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC, 1978) to protect applicants based on sex, race, religion, disability, and other factors, discriminatory hiring practices remain a persistent issue. The EEOC's efforts to ensure equal rights and fair hiring practices are often negated, and discrimination remains concealed behind seemingly objective selection protocols (Krause & Park, 2022; Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019; Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004). Typical methods for exploring workplace discrimination often overlook bias and limit how well we can evaluate labor discrimination (Callus & Devetag, 2024), largely because modern hiring protocols rely on digital

screening (Elias et al., 2016) and AI (Hosain et al., 2025). While considerable literature has investigated discriminatory hiring practices against other identifiers, including gender and race (Galos & Coppock, 2023; Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004), the role of socioeconomic status (SES) and the barriers against those of lower status remain significantly understudied.

My hypotheses are informed by four interconnected bodies of literature. First, the theoretical mechanisms through which SES is communicated and perceived as a signal are examined through social signaling theory and status characteristics theory. Second, the psychological processes by which those signals translate into evaluative bias are examined through the lens of implicit bias theory. Third, the review of these theoretical mechanisms guides an examination of modern, empirical studies documenting discrimination across multiple social categories, establishing the methodological tradition that this study contributes to. Finally, the moderating role of occupational field context is evaluated, with attention to how field-level expectations may shape the legibility and impact of SES signals.

This study investigates whether socioeconomic background and historical signals in applicant resumes influence perceptions of hireability among evaluators, and whether this effect varies as a function of occupational field.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Defining and Measuring SES**

Scholars take one of two approaches to evaluating SES: objective SES – where income, education, and occupation define a social categorization of one’s socioeconomic standing– and subjective SES – where social comparison formulates a perception of standing relative to others (Tan et al., 2020). Because people apply their own understanding of SES through subjective evaluation, they create frequent and spontaneous social comparisons, both upward and downward (Bardwell et al., 2026). This shift in subjective rank plays a significant role in

psychological functioning and even health-related factors (Adler et al., 2000). These effects are not always linear, however, and context is essential to understanding them. While SES considerations may not have as significant an effect on those of high SES, who have more positive outlooks on their futures and access to health resources, it is a significant factor for those of low SES, whose basic needs are unmet. However, the interaction between objective SES evaluation and subjective comparison remains a vital component of self- and others' socioeconomic perceptions.

A moderate correlation between objective and subjective SES exists ( $r = 0.30-0.60$ ; Tan et al., 2020), suggesting they are related but distinct constructs that may be linked to different outcomes. Objective SES is traditionally evaluated through reviews of income and comparison to the means of socioeconomic success – including parental occupation and income, living circumstances and neighborhood, occupation, education attainment, and financial resources (Bullock & Limbert, 2003). Conversely, subjective SES is often assessed using the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status, a single-item measure that assesses perceived SES rank relative to others by having participants place themselves on a drawn 10-rung ladder (Adler et al., 2000). Importantly, subjective SES is a stronger predictor of life outcomes than objective SES (Adler et al., 2000; Tan et al., 2020), demonstrating the importance of and value of social comparison and perspective in socioeconomic evaluation. Subjective self-evaluations of SES have the potential to translate to resumes through less explicit language and experiences highlighted. Because resume screening involves forming subjective impressions by the evaluator, SES cues of candidates are essential to understanding the objective-to-subjective translation, or vice versa.

## **Social Signaling Theory**

Social signaling theory is fundamental to understanding how socioeconomic status (SES) is assessed. According to this framework, individuals rapidly assess an applicant's social class by interpreting minor details or explicitly listed markers in their documentation (Kraus et al., 2017). These signals are commonly derived from broad variables, such as income, education, occupation, and residential data (e.g., address or zip code).

Kraus et al. (2017) noted three core predictions of social class signaling theory. The first posits that class signals occur frequently, rapidly, and accurately. With just thin slices of observable information (e.g., photographs, living spaces, and spoken words), people can evaluate and engage in social comparison on economic dimensions. The second prediction is that class signals augment group boundaries, whereby class signals facilitate the sorting of individuals into social class categories and activate stereotypes in which the rich are competent but low in warmth, and the poor are low in both (Fiske, 2018). Finally, class signals perpetuate inequality by eliciting dehumanizing judgments of the poor and overcoming cognitive dissonance through the justification of ideologies that rationalize existing hierarchies. This framework plays an essential role in explaining the mechanisms behind SES perception. As interpersonal or discreet interactions occur, SES cues develop through small details that grow into a larger perception of socioeconomic backgrounds and the stereotypes and justifications we use in those evaluations.

The role of social class signaling is complex in the hiring process, with significant correlations found between low-SES parental income and reduced job acceptance rates. Specifically, for every single-unit increase of parental income, there was a six percent increase in accepting a full-time job position at any given time (DeOrtentiss et al., 2021). These effects have significant implications, including how applicants from more prestigious academic institutions

secure higher-status employment more steadily than those with a less distinguished educational background (Rider & Negro, 2015).

Culture matching is another important mechanism. Culture matching is defined as employers preferring applicants who they perceive as culturally similar to themselves (Rivera, 2012). For example, in the elite law sector, higher-class men received significantly higher callbacks for job applicants (16.25%) compared to the 1.3% for lower-class men (Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016).

This disparity in the elite law sector highlights the use of culture matching and class-based lifestyle markers in evaluating role fitness and suitability in these elite work environments. In elite sectors, like law or client-facing careers in business, hiring managers are more likely to prioritize hierarchical standing and prestige over standardized, transferable skills. In the same study analyzing the elite law sector, surveys and interviews with lawyers at large firms indicated that high-SES individuals were perceived as more qualified than their low-SES counterparts (Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016). The process of culture matching leads to potentially increased discrimination in business contexts where more value is placed on the prestige and aesthetic value one provides to an organization.

While elite work environments are a key concern for discrimination, lower-level or less prestigious job opportunities are not immune to such practices. Recent research has found that students from lower-SES backgrounds participate in internship experiences less frequently than those from their high-SES counterparts (Hora et al., 2019). Barriers, including time conflicts, financial and sociocultural factors, and limited institutional support, create challenges for finding and securing internship opportunities, which disproportionately affect those from low SES backgrounds and circumstances. This disparity is compounded by unpaid internship

opportunities, which further benefit those of higher SES backgrounds who can meet organizational commitments without the supportive income more often than those of lower SES circumstances (Hora et al., 2019; Perna, 2010). These findings directly connect to social signaling theory, demonstrating how people with less opportunity and access to resources like academic support and internship availability face inequality from the start. This difference is critical for applicants and the signals they explicitly or implicitly include on their resumes during their job search.

### **Status Characteristics Theory**

Social signaling theory explains how SES is communicated by status signals or cues, but the cognitive mechanisms by which those signals translate into evaluative judgements about competence and performance are explained through a different framework. Status Characteristics Theory (SCT) states that when people evaluate others in task-focused settings, they unconsciously form expectations about another person's capabilities (Webster & Walker, 2016). These expectations are known as performance expectation states, and they develop from observable status cues derived from culturally learned meanings. While these states are not consciously available, they function as a powerful guide to behavior. Once formed, performance expectation states create a self-fulfilling prophecy where a candidate expected to perform well will be evaluated more favorably than a candidate expected to do poorly. These inherent biases play a potentially significant role in the resume screening process, as evaluators shape impressions of applicants based on status information before any substantial evaluations take place.

If these performance expectation states are so ingrained in the discriminatory actions of evaluators, there remains the question of how they usually form. In status generalization

processes, research argues that there are two types of status characteristics to differentiate: specific status characteristics and diffuse status characteristics. Specific status characteristics refer to the attributes with differentially evaluated states that imply relevant, specific assumptions of competence for a limited scope of situations (Webster & Walker, 2016). Some examples of specific status characteristics include mathematical skill or legal training, where expectations are relevant in only a limited range of situations (Barnum et al., 2016). In contrast, diffuse status characteristics refer to the specific and general expectations of competence in a broader range of situations (Webster & Walker, 2016). Examples of diffuse status characteristics include race, gender, and education, and more associations with behavioral expectations regardless of their logical relevance (Barnum et al., 2016). Relating status characteristics to the Stereotype Content Model (Fiske, 2018), lower-class stereotypes correlate being poor with being low in competence and warmth. SCT provides a structure for explaining why these perceptions occur, as low SES signals trigger the formation of lower performance expectations, leading to evaluations based on stereotypes rather than merit.

Webster and Walker (2016) provide five propositions that may explain how status characteristics influence performance expectations: salience, burden of proof, sequencing, combining, and power/prestige. While all five play important roles in collecting status information and making assumptions from it, the first two are essential in understanding discrimination during the hiring process. Salient status information is information that differentiates one person from another, or that is perceived as specifically linked to tasks. In the context of job applicants, resume cues that distinguish candidates through education, job history, zip code, or scholarship category become salient information (Rivera & Tilscik, 2016). Even subtle cues can be salient when being evaluated in comparison to other job applicants due to the

accessibility of information from all potential employees. For example, community college attendance becomes immediately salient on a resume when compared to the four-year university background of other candidates.

Most significant, however, is the burden of proof. All information on a resume can be viewed as relevant and can factor into performance expectations (Webster & Walker, 2016). Resume evaluators may not consciously believe that the prestige of one's education or the attractiveness of the neighborhood in which one resides affects competence; however, their judgments may still be skewed, given that their default response is to treat all information as relevant. These factors also relate directly to another of the five propositions, combining, which states that all status information is combined to form aggregate expectations. This proposition is directly related to the burden of proof in that the combined signals lead to lower aggregate expectations than just a single cue. For example, studies have found evidence of a "motherhood penalty," where the status of mother (i.e., woman, child-bearing age, and other signals connected to motherhood) correlated with requiring more evidence of competence to overcome lower performance expectations (Corell et al., 2007). SES cues on a resume may inherently influence hireability judgments based on their prominence in the resume and be treated as relevant information by the screener.

### ***Status Generalization and Hiring Discrimination***

Status generalization defines the "imports" of societal inequalities into task groups through specific and diffuse status characteristics (Webster & Walker, 2016). In hiring contexts, the evaluator uses status characteristics to form performance expectations without any performance being observed. This inequality is not created but rather drawn from signals directly from a resume. Research on juries has found that foreperson selection based on gender, age,

education, and experience occurs before deliberation (Strodtbeck et al., 1957). Before any performance credentials can form, status characteristics still lead to one who can dominate the discussion and influence the final verdict. Expectation before performance is consistent with the self-fulfilling prophecy of SCT and its impact on decision-making.

Such self-fulfilling prophecies are evident in any situation where performance is evaluated, such as sports. For example, the ethnic status of Israeli soccer players demonstrated subtle effects on the coaches' evaluations. Although players leaving high school were divided almost evenly between Sephardic (46%) and Ashkenazi (54%) backgrounds, ethnic bias against Ashkenazi Israelis resulted in diminished performance expectations (Yuchtman-Yaar et al., 1979). This prejudice manifested in discrimination in junior leagues, where the composition shifted to 69% Sephardic and 31% Ashkenazi. While the focus was solely on winning matches, expectation states influenced the coaches' decision-making, given the higher performance expectations of Ashkenazi Israelis. This directly relates to other occupations outside the sports realm, as performance expectations based on differing signals, including SES, come before any performance evaluations occur. Those expectations then frame how ambiguous information is interpreted and the effects it may have on perceived hireability and role fitness.

### ***Field Contexts***

SCT predicts that the influence of diffuse status characteristics depends in part on their salience in the greater context (Webster & Walker, 2016). This provides insight into a different domain of discrimination hiring regarding how different field contexts weigh status characteristics differently. When a status characteristic is made irrelevant to the desired task, its influence on performance expectations is reduced. For example, business contexts place more explicit importance on cultural fit, and elite business employers actively use class signals for

evaluation of compatibility in the organization (Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016). SES signals become salient and task-relevant, and the burden of proof proposition predicts they will have a significant effect on performance expectations. The nursing field, conversely, is widely understood as a field entered through commitment and vocational identity as opposed to social capital and prestige (e.g., Chmielewski et al., 2025; Teresa-Morles et al., 2022), potentially reducing the salience of SES signals.

There is an important distinction to make here regarding society's modern hiring practices. Current propositions for SCT predict these effects in collectively oriented settings where consideration is given to everyone's ideas to complete a task (Webster & Walker, 2016). Modern hiring practices largely involve submitting resumes and application information online, separated from the collective environment. This consideration may expand the scope of the theory and lead to questions regarding how SCT affects perceptions of those we only know by name and who otherwise exist behind a screen. It is possible that without the greater social dynamics of group interaction, status generalization may be less reliable or behave differently. Nonetheless, status generalization remains and operates in individual evaluations even when face-to-face social dynamics are absent.

### **Implicit Bias and Stereotyping**

The final framework, Implicit Bias Theory, is applied to the evaluators responsible for assessing resumes and making callback decisions. This theory posits that those discriminatory judgments stem from implicit attitudes, specifically implicit stereotypes (Greenwald & Krieger, 2006). Implicit biases are unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that affect how we understand, act toward, and make decisions about others. The impact of these biases, particularly racial and gender profiling, has been thoroughly documented in hiring contexts (Holroyd et al., 2017).

Implicit bias in hiring decisions can lead to non-meritocratic outcomes. For example, Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004) found that job applicants with names perceived as "African American" received 50% fewer callbacks than those with "White" names, a disparity equivalent to eight years of work experience (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004). Furthermore, implicit biases contribute to occupational segregation, with male-dominated fields discriminating against women and vice versa (Callus & Devetag, 2024). A meta-reanalysis of 57 audit studies found that women received lower callbacks in higher-paying, male-dominated fields, with the opposite effect on men in female-dominated industries (Galos & Coppock, 2023). Age bias also significantly impacts applicants; callback rates begin to decline for individuals in their early 40s and reach very low rates as they approach retirement age (Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019).

Subtle cues on a resume, even if implicit, can trigger negative stereotyping in screeners, thereby influencing the evaluation process. Meta-analytic data indicate that even small levels of bias in hiring led to significant discrimination rates and loss of productivity (Hardy et al., 2021). Additionally, social networking sites (SNSs), primarily LinkedIn and secondarily community sites like Facebook and X (formerly Twitter), are utilized to gather information on potential employees. In a previous study, 68% of hiring professionals hired based on positive SNS impressions, while 69% rejected candidates due to "red flags", such as inappropriate comments or poor communication skills (Elias et al., 2016). The risk of unconscious stereotypes influencing evaluator judgment is demonstrated in their responses to these SNS impressions. The third-person effect refers to hiring managers admitting others may be biased by demographic and other identifying information while downplaying their own susceptibility. Given that SNS profiles share similar markers of socioeconomic backgrounds, like educational institutions and

extracurricular activities, implicit bias triggered by these digital signals may add to existing SES-based inequalities.

### **Manipulating Perceived SES**

Experimental designs for analyzing discrimination in hiring can be difficult because the third-person effect often clouds biases in the hiring process. While hiring managers will admit that others are biased in their judgements of applicants, they often downplay or negate their own susceptibility (Elias et al., 2016). Because biases in hiring are inherently implicit, it is challenging for conventional experimental or survey-based research to distinguish between conclusions drawn from objective assessments and those influenced by evaluative cues.

To properly explore discrimination and the biases in place without risking data integrity, correspondence experiments, known as resume audits, have been identified as the gold standard for evaluating the labor market (Callus & Devetag, 2024). Resume audit methodologies, a systematic evaluation process that uses fictitious resumes to real job posts with one characteristic experimentally controlled and varied, utilizes realism by carefully incorporating deception and provides genuine insight into the signals that affect potential applicants. However, when using complex or subtle manipulations, as in the current study, research is needed to develop and test their effectiveness. To ensure these manipulations are valid for SES evaluations, prior research regarding resume audit methodologies was utilized to inform and validate them (See Appendix G).

### **Hypotheses**

Although a robust amount of literature has explored the discriminatory hiring practices on racial, gender, and age-based variables, other social group biases have remained largely unexplored. Particularly, SES and socioeconomic background remain comparatively

understudied, especially with direct experimental methods. The literature on socioeconomic discrimination is mostly observational and restricted to elite professional sectors like law (Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016) or drawn from an international scope based on address-based discrimination (Callus & Devetag, 2024). Additionally, while some gender audit research has established that occupational field moderates bias magnitude (Galos & Coppock, 2023), little literature has examined the similarities or differences for SES effects across fields. Given that class-based cultural fit may be more salient in some fields than others (Rivera, 2012), this is an essential research gap to explore.

This research leads to the central question: Does an individual from a low-class SES background face a perception bias that undermines their qualifications or fitness for a role compared to an individual from a high-SES background, or are they viewed as equally hireable? The present study seeks to address these gaps by examining the following hypotheses:

*H<sub>1a</sub>*: Participants will perceive applicants as lower SES based on which universities they attended, their home address, previous employers and job titles, and extracurricular activities they were involved in during university. Specifically, those who attended less prestigious universities, have lower-income addresses, reference work experience in lower hourly wage positions, and participated in extracurricular activities will be perceived as lower-SES than those who attended more prestigious universities.

*H<sub>1b</sub>*: The perceived SES of the nursing applicants will be lower than that of the applicants in business and computer science.

*H<sub>1c</sub>*: Applicants with resumes embedded with low-SES signals will be perceived as less hireable than applicants with high-SES signals embedded in their resumes.

By experimentally controlling resumes with SES signals and equally matched knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOs), biases can be explored across a range of occupational fields: business, computer science (CS), and nursing. Additionally, this study explores whether individual raters' subjective perceptions of a candidate's SES independently predict hireability ratings above the objective resume content. This design allows for a direct test of SES signals and their influence as a hireability penalty or boost, if an existing penalty/boost exists across fields, and if individual subjective SES perceptions have a mediating relationship between content and judgments.

*H<sub>2a</sub>*: SES-based discrimination will be greater in business jobs than in CS and nursing applicants.

*H<sub>2b</sub>*: SES-based discrimination will be greater in CS than in nursing applicants.

*H<sub>2c</sub>*: SES-based discrimination for nursing will be the least prominent of the three job sectors studied.

## **Method**

The hypotheses are designed to validate how specific textual cues are perceived by a sample of the general population. Hypothesis 1 (*H<sub>1a</sub>*, *H<sub>1b</sub>*, *H<sub>1c</sub>*) and hypothesis 2 (*H<sub>2a</sub>*, *H<sub>2b</sub>*, *H<sub>2c</sub>*) are explored. This study investigated how general perceptions of SES and hireability translate into the occupational applicant screening process and how biases are/are not accounted for from personal to professional lenses. Additionally, the findings of this study set up future research on the real-world impact of such cues within occupational sectors.

## **Participants**

Participants were recruited through convenience and snowball sampling to obtain as large and diverse a sample as possible. The survey, created in SurveyMonkey, was distributed through

word-of-mouth, fliers posted around Salem State University, social media posts (Instagram and LinkedIn), and through participation on the survey-sharing website *SurveyCircle*. No specific population was targeted beyond the requirement that participants be at least 18 years of age. Participants were required to provide informed consent presented at the onset of the survey, confirming they had reviewed the study information and met the age requirement for participation.

### **Design**

A within-subjects experimental design was utilized in which each participant evaluated six fabricated resumes. The design was structured as a 2 (SES: High, Low) x 3 (Occupational Field: Business, Computer Science, Nursing) fully within-subjects factorial, yielding six unique resume conditions. The order of resume viewing across the survey was fixed across all participants: low-SES business, high-SES CS, high-SES nursing, low-SES CS, high-SES business, and low-SES nursing.

### ***Resume Stimuli***

Six resumes were constructed for use as experimental stimuli. For each of the three occupational fields, a pair of resumes were created, with one representing a low-SES applicant and the other a high-SES applicant. Each matched the other in objective qualification, including level of degree attainment, GPA, work experience, and overall KSAOs. These variables were all held constant to ensure that the hireability rating could be attributed to SES-related signals, either directly or indirectly, rather than differences in candidate fitness. To keep all variables constant, the applicants were given names traditionally associated with white men: Jay Smith for low-SES resumes and Brad Johnson for high-SES resumes. Contact information (email and phone numbers) was blacked out to prevent any attempts at contact from the anonymous participants.

SES signals were altered in the individual resumes through a combination of established markers drawn from the literature regarding social stratification and organizational behavior. Low SES indicators included attendance at community college for an associate's degree before transferring to Salem State University (a public state university), employment in service industries (e.g., grocery store clerk, car detailer, and cashier), receipt of a full tuition scholarship without specification of merit basis, and involvement in programs serving first-generation college students (e.g., first-gen coaching). High-SES applicants had similar but distinct signals, including enrollment at Boston College (a private university), employment in higher socioeconomic environments (e.g., yacht club dockhand), receipt of merit-based full tuition scholarship, and extracurricular involvement consistent with greater access to social and cultural capital (e.g. club involvement; See Appendices A-F).

Each resume was designed to reflect a plausible, entry-level applicant in the respective field. Business resumes emphasized leadership roles and prior work experience relevant to business functions. CS resumes emphasize technical skills and participation in relevant academic clubs and teams. Nursing resumes emphasized clinical experience, certifications, and patient care roles. All resumes were presented in a standardized, Harvard format to minimize the influence of formatting differences.

### ***Measures***

After they were presented with each resume, participants were asked to respond to questions about perceived hireability and perceived SES. Perceived hireability was measured with a single item with response options on a 7-point Likert Scale (“On a scale 1 [*Not at All Hireable*] to 7 [*Extremely Hireable*], how hireable is this candidate for an entry-level role?”). Perceived SES was measured with the single item “Socioeconomic status (SES) refers to an

individual's or family's social and economic standing, largely based on factors such as education, income, and occupation history. With this in mind, what would you say is this individual's socioeconomic background?" Response options were: Low, High, Can't Tell. Participants also provided open-ended written justifications for their perceptions of SES after rating each resume on the primary and secondary dependent variables. An attention check was included to confirm participation was earnest ("Select 'Low' from the multiple-choice options below").

After completing the evaluations for all six resumes, participants completed a demographic questionnaire assessing age, gender identity, racial and ethnic backgrounds, highest level of educational attainment, and current employment status.

### ***Procedure***

After recruitment, participants were required to acknowledge the disclosure statement, confirming that all participation was voluntary and confidential. Additionally, a CAPTCHA response was included at the beginning of the survey to prevent bot participation. SurveyMonkey included features that allowed all participant data to remain hidden, and this option was turned on for the entirety of the survey. Acceptance of survey terms also included verification that all participants were 18 years of age or older. Only participants who agreed to these terms were permitted to continue. If they did not agree to the terms or were not 18 years or older, they were immediately disqualified and taken to the exit page.

After verifying the disclosure statement, each participant then viewed all six resumes in the fixed sequence. Each resume was displayed on the participant's screen, followed immediately by the three-part response justification. No time limit was imposed on any individual item or on the survey. Upon completion of the evaluation portion, participants were

redirected to the demographic questionnaire. Completion time was estimated to be approximately 5 to 10 minutes, but they were encouraged to take their time and review their answers before submission.

### **Analyses**

Upon closing the survey, all responses were reviewed using SurveyMonkey's internal programs for quality responses and manual review. Additionally, all responses were reviewed by the lead researcher to confirm that proper time was given to the survey and that responses came from genuine decision-making rather than a quick selection to complete the survey.

All quantitative analyses were conducted in R (Version 4.4.2; R Core Team, 2024) using tidyverse, psych, lme4, lmerTest, emmeans, effectsize, and rstatix packages. The alpha level was at  $p < .05$  for all inferential tests.

Descriptive statistics were computed for all hireability ratings and SES perception variables. This analysis included mean scores for all hireability ratings and totals for SES perception responses. Difference scores for hireability ratings were computed for each field pair by subtracting the low-SES rating from the high-SES rating. Because high-SES hireability scores were hypothesized to be greater than their low-SES pair, the difference scores with positive values indicated higher hireability attributed to the high-SES resume. To assess normality of the difference scores, Shapiro-Wilk tests were used, and visual inspection of quantile-quantile (Q-Q) plots confirmed participant responses maintained linearity without significant deviation.

Paired-sample t-tests were the primary analysis of resume manipulations on perceived SES and hireability within each occupational field pair. Given the non-normal distribution of difference scores, Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were utilized. A 2(SES)x3(Occupational Field) repeated-measure analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine effects and the SES

x Field interaction. Estimated marginal means were computed, as well as pairwise comparisons, and Bonferroni-corrected for multiple comparisons.

Chi-square goodness-of-fit tests were used for SES perceptions to evaluate if observed perception distributions differed from chance, within-field crosstab chi-square tests to assess whether participants perceived the resumes differently from one another within each field, and McNemar tests to examine if SES perception accuracy differed between the paired resumes.

Finally, the relationship between SES perception and hireability ratings across all resumes was examined using a mixed-effects regression model with perceived SES used as the fixed effect, resume as a fixed effect to control for between-resume content differences, and a random intercept per participant to control for non-independent participant decision making of the six repeated responses.

## **Results**

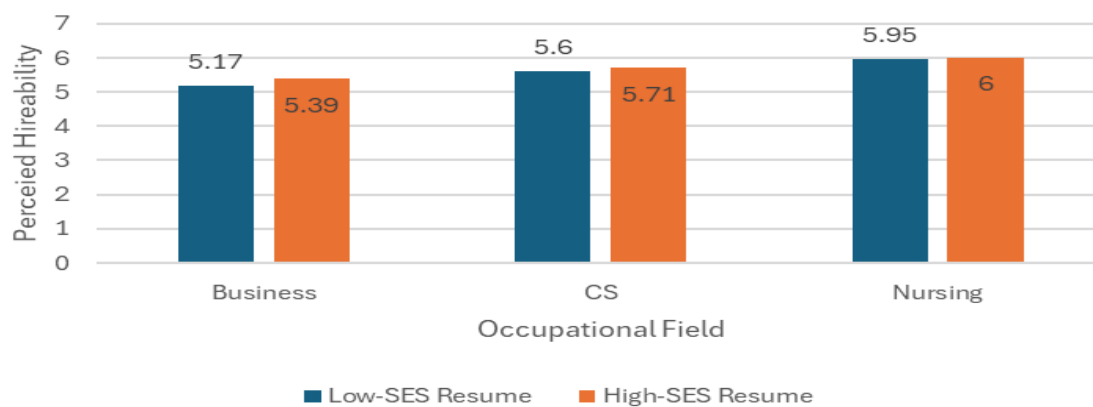
The first set of hypotheses state that the resumes containing low-SES signals would be rated as less hireable than their high-SES counterparts. This composite hypothesis was consistent with social signaling theory's prediction that SES or class cues triggered differential competence attributions (Kraus et al., 2017). Additionally, a second hypothesis proposed that the effects of SES signals on hireability would be moderated by occupational field. Specifically, the hierarchical structure of the business sector would have the highest hireability gap compared to CS and nursing, where technical credentials and field-specific expectations may reduce the salience of SES signals.

To ensure data integrity, survey responses were validated through a combination of SurveyMonkey's built-in analytic tools and an independent, manual review process of responses to confirm participant effort. Out of 204 initial responses, 108 were excluded due to incomplete

submissions, failed CAPTCHA or attention checks, completing the survey in less than 4 minutes, or lack of sufficient justification for their answers (e.g., selecting "Can't Tell" for all SES items without support in the free response portion). This rigorous screening process left a final sample of 96 completed responses for the primary analysis.

### **Preliminary Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were calculated for all variables regarding SES perceptions and hireability ratings across the six resume variants. Perceived hireability was assessed on a 7-Point Likert Scale. Mean scores for hireability ranged from 5.17 (SD=1.10) for the low-SES business resume to 6.00 (SD=1.03) for the high-SES nursing resume (see Figure 1). To compare ratings within each field, difference scores were derived by subtracting low-SES ratings from high-SES ratings, resulting in mean differences of 0.22 (SD=1.07) for business, 0.10 (SD=0.95) for CS, and 0.05 (SD=0.96) for nursing. These findings indicated that while high-SES resumes consistently outperformed their low-SES counterparts across all three professional domains, the magnitude of these differences was not substantial. While the Shapiro-Wilk tests suggested that the distribution of difference scores for business ( $W=0.92$ ,  $p<.001$ ), CS ( $W=0.89$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and nursing ( $W=0.90$ ,  $p<.001$ ) deviated from a normal distribution, the sample ( $n=96$ ) was sufficiently large to support parametric analysis based on the Central Limit Theorem (Kwak & Kim, 2017). In addition, a visual inspection of Q-Q plots verified that there were no significant outliers from normality.

**Figure 1***Mean Perceived Hireability by Occupational Field****SES Perception***

To determine whether participants' SES perceptions differed significantly for each resume, a chi-square test was conducted across the three response categories (Low, High, Can't Tell). The significant chi-square tests indicated that all six resumes produced distributions that differed significantly from chance ( $p < .05$ ; see Table 1). These results confirm that participants were not responding at random, and the resume manipulations produced different responses.

SES perception accuracy (correctly identifying the intended SES of each resume) varied. Sixty-six-point seven percent of participants correctly identified the low-SES business resume as low-SES, 58.3% identified the high-SES CS resume as high-SES, and 51% identified the high-SES nursing resume as high-SES. The three remaining resumes were markedly lower in accuracy, with 47.9% of participants identifying the low-SES CS as low-SES, 43.8% identifying the high-SES resume as high-SES, and 35.4% identifying the low-SES nursing resume as low-SES. Notably, there were substantial "Can't Tell" responses for the high-SES business resume (44.8%), low-SES nursing resume (42.7%), low-SES CS resume (40.6%), and high-SES nursing resume (37.5%). These results suggest that SES signals were more ambiguous for a substantial number of raters, with CS and nursing resumes being particularly vulnerable to these responses.

**Table 1***Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Results and SES Perception Accuracy by Resume Condition*

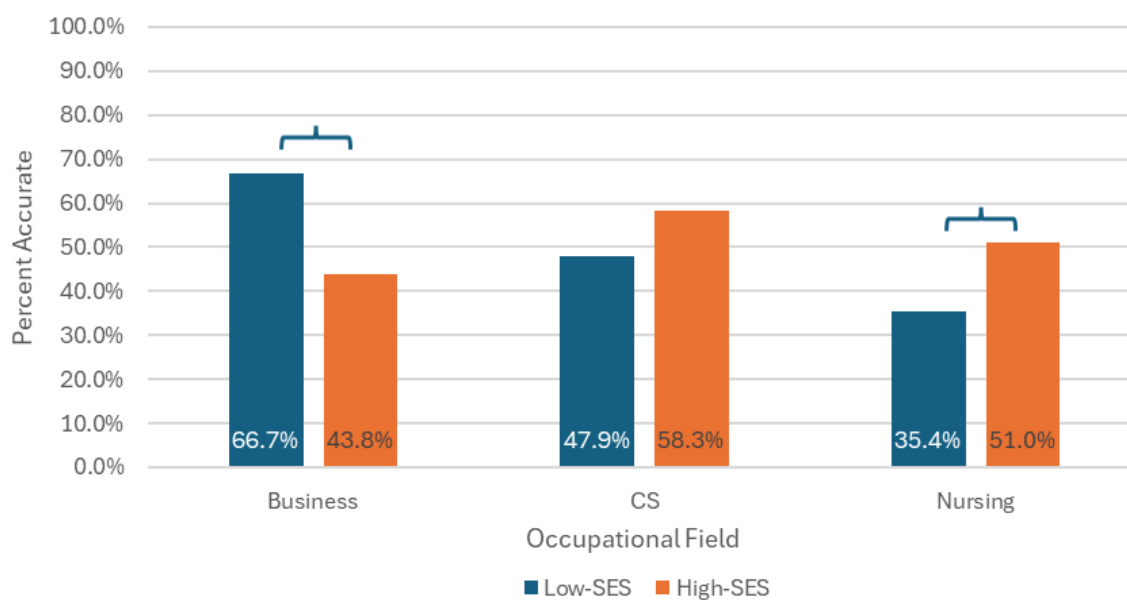
Resume Condition	Perceived SES			$\chi^2$	df	p	Accuracy (%)
	Low (%)	High (%)	Can't Tell (%)				
Low SES Business	66.7	10.4	22.9	50.25	2	<.001	66.7
High SES CS	13.5	58.3	28.1	30.06	2	<.001	58.3
High SES Nursing	11.5	51	37.5	23.31	2	<.001	51.0
Low SES CS	47.9	11.5	40.6	21.44	2	<.001	47.9
High SES Business	11.5	43.8	44.8	20.69	2	<.001	43.8
Low SES Nursing	35.4	21.9	42.7	6.44	2	0.04	35.4

*Note.* Perceived SES columns show the percentage of participants selecting each category.  $X^2$  values reflect goodness-of-fit tests against an equal distribution across three categories (df = 2). Accuracy (%) reflects the proportion of participants who correctly identified the intended SES of each resume.

Within-field crosstab chi-square tests were used to determine if participants perceived the high- and low-SES resumes differently within each field pairing (see Figure 2). Across the three fields of business, CS, and nursing, statistical significance was not reached. Using McNemar tests to examine whether the accuracy differed between the two resumes in each field, the results suggested that accuracy was significantly higher for the low-SES business resume than for its high-SES pair,  $\chi^2(1) = 8.82$ ,  $p = .003$ , indicating that low-SES signals were more reliably detected than high SES signals in the business context. For the nursing pair, the high-SES nursing resume had significantly higher accuracy than for the low-SES nursing resume,  $\chi^2(1) = 4.78$ ,  $p = .029$ . No significant accuracy differences were found for the CS pair.

**Figure 2**

*Percentage of Correct SES Perception by Occupational Field*



*Note. Brackets above Business and Nursing perceptions indicate that these results were significant. No significance was found in the CS sector.*

### **Primary Analyses: Effect of SES on Hireability**

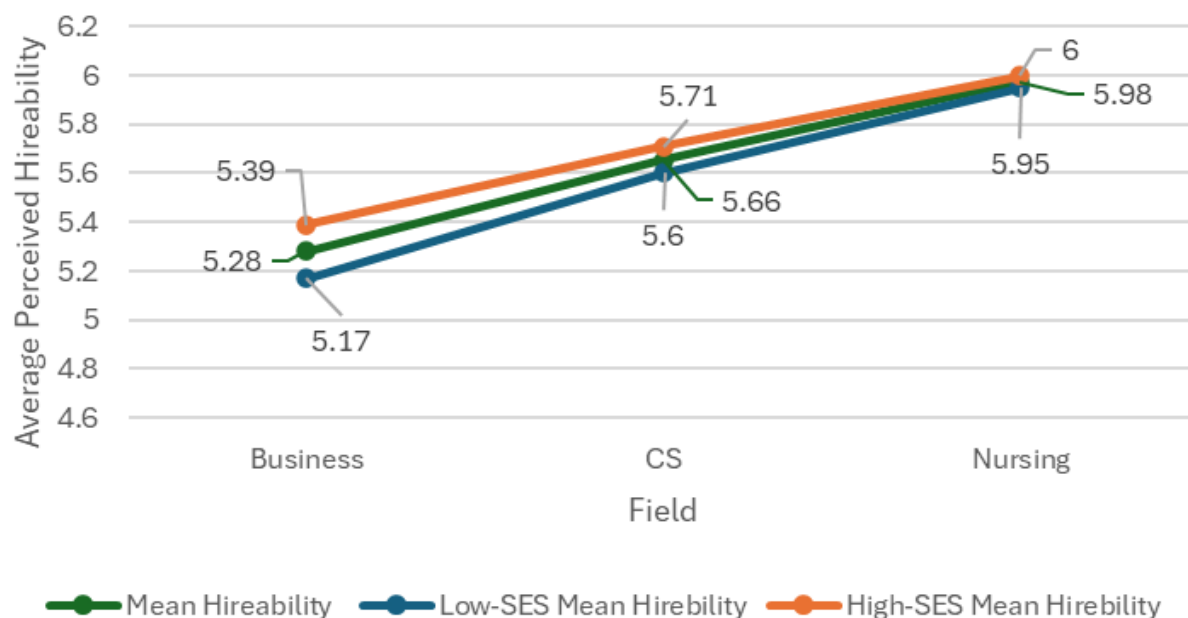
Paired-sampled t-tests were conducted to examine hireability ratings and their difference between high- and low-SES resumes within each field. For the business resume pairs, a statistically significant difference,  $t(95) = 2.01$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = 0.21$ , 95% CI[0.002, 0.435], was found with the high-SES business resume ( $M=5.39$ ,  $SD=1.08$ ) rated significantly higher than the low-SES business resume ( $M = 5.17$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ). Neither the CS pair nor the nursing pair reached statistical significance.

Nonparametric Wilcoxon signed-rank tests mirrored the patterns found in analyses (Business:  $Z = -2.02$ ,  $p = .043$ ; CS:  $p = .281$ ; Nursing:  $p = .579$ ). Despite the non-normal difference score distributions, this finding reinforced confidence in the analysis of the business resumes specifically. Further, this demonstrates that the non-significant results for CS and nursing were not artifacts of distributional assumptions.

Additionally, a 2 (SES: High, Low) x 3 (Field: Business, CS, Nursing) repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of SES and field on hireability ratings (see Figure 3). The main effect of SES was not significant. In contrast, the main effect of field was statistically significant,  $F(2, 190) = 38.92, p < .001$ , suggesting that the three fields differed substantially in hireability ratings regardless of SES condition. For post hoc analysis, Bonferroni-corrected pairwise comparison revealed that nursing resumes were rated significantly higher than business resumes (low SES:  $p < .001$ ; high SES:  $p < .001$ ) and CS resumes (low SES:  $p = .003$ ; high SES:  $p < .05$ ). CS resumes rated higher than business resumes (low SES:  $p < .01$ ; high SES:  $p < .01$ ; see Figure 3). The SES x Field interaction was not statistically significant, indicating that the effect of SES signals on hireability did not significantly vary across fields.

**Figure 3**

*Hireability Scores Across Occupational Fields*



*Note.* Estimated marginal means from the repeated-measures ANOVA with total field means added. The main effect of field was significant,  $F(2, 190) = 38.92, p < .01$ . The main effect of SES and the SES x Field interaction were not significant.

### *Perceptions of SES as a Predictor of Hireability*

Three regression analyses were conducted to determine if a participant's subjective perception of a candidate's social class influenced their subjective hireability ratings. In the first regression model, perceived SES (low and high) was used as the only predictor of hireability. Neither perceived low-SES nor perceived high-SES significantly predicted hireability. This initial model explained <1% of the total variance ( $R^2 = .007$ ), indicating that class perceptions did not play a significant role in hireability decision-making.

In regression model 2, resume fixed effects were included to control quality differences between resumes. This modification improved the model fit significantly,  $F(5, 568) = 9.33$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .076$ . However, even with quality control accounted for, perceptions of SES remained non-significant predictors of hireability for both perceived low-SES ( $\beta = 0.19$ ,  $p = .085$ ) and perceived high-SES ( $\beta = 0.16$ ,  $p = .134$ ).

Regression model 3, the preferred mixed-effects regression model, was more robust in its approach, accounting for the non-independence of the six repeated observations across the survey. Results remained consistent again, with neither Perceived Low SES ( $\beta = 0.09$ ,  $p = .335$ ) nor Perceived High SES ( $\beta = 0.17$ ,  $p = .063$ ) being significant predictors of hireability. In contrast, resume-level fixed effects were significant for four of the five resume contrasts (all  $p < .001$ ). These findings confirm that participants primarily based their hiring decisions on the qualifications of the candidates rather than perceived SES.

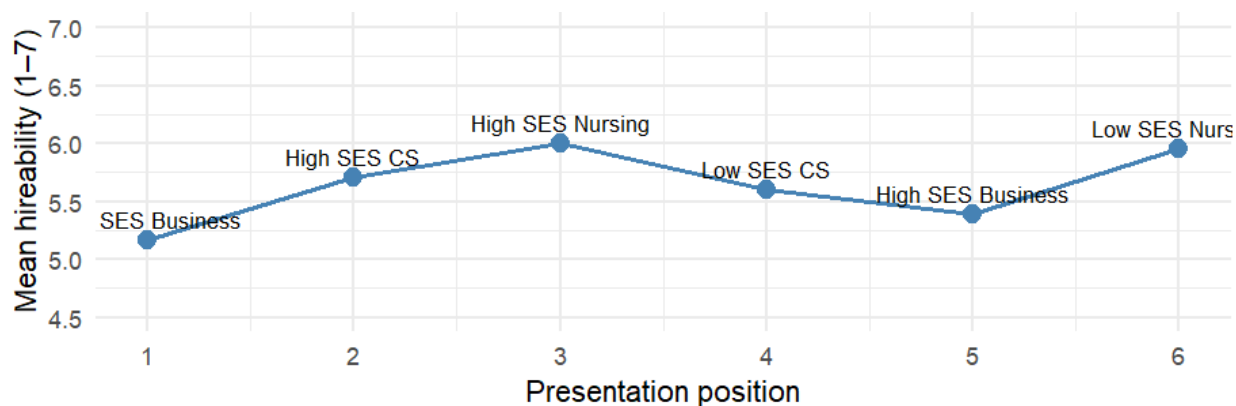
### *Analysis of Order Effects*

Presentations of the resumes were fixed for all participants, with the order randomized by SES level and occupational field (low-SES business, high-SES CS, high-SES nursing, low-SES CS, high-SES business, and low-SES nursing; in order). To evaluate if the sequence of resume

viewing affected results, a regression of hireability ratings on presentation position (1-6) was conducted. This analysis revealed a small but statistically significant positive trend ( $\beta = 0.07$ ,  $p = .005$ ), suggesting that there was a slight ratings increase across the survey. However, this order effect explained only 1.3% of the total variance ( $R^2 = .013$ ). Because the order of the resume presentation was fixed across all participants and differed in content, it cannot be determined if the position or content resulted in the score increase.

**Figure 4**

*Mean Hireability Scores in Fixed Order*



## Discussion

The goal of this study was to gather evidence regarding the effect of SES signals on hiring opportunities and to determine if discrimination affects those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The findings suggest partial support for the hypothesis that SES affects evaluators' perceived hireability, but the effects were more nuanced than a simple yes/no evaluation. While perceived hireability means were higher in applicants from a high-SES background, the degree to which they differed was based on the job sector, with business being the only one to reach significance.

In examining whether SES signals embedded in otherwise equivalent resumes influenced hireability perceptions in a community sample. This study used pairs of resumes across the business, CS, and nursing sectors, with one low-SES and one high-SES resume evaluated in each. Participants were asked to rate the perceived hireability of each applicant in all three sectors (six resumes total), as well as to provide their interpretation of the applicant's SES. The within-subjects design allowed them to serve as their own control, providing a sensitive assessment of SES-based bias.

This study was guided by  $H_{1a}$ - $H_{1c}$  and  $H_{2a}$ - $H_{2c}$ . The first hypothesis, which predicted that participants would perceive an applicant's resume with low-SES signals as lower class ( $H_{1a}$ ), received partial support. All six resumes received a higher percentage of correct "Low" or "High" responses than the direct inverse option. However, low-SES nursing (42.7%,  $p = .04$ ) and high-SES business (44.8%,  $p < .001$ ) applicants received more "Can't Tell" responses than correct SES identifications. These findings suggest that SES signals were less universally recognizable than  $H_{1a}$  predicted, particularly when embedded in field contexts where class signals carried less cultural salience.

Hypothesis  $H_{1b}$ , which predicted that resumes with low-SES signals would be rated as less hireable than those with high-SES signals, received partial support. While small, a statistically significant hireability perception was found for the high-SES business resume over the low-SES business resume,  $t(95) = 2.01$ ,  $p = .048$ . No statistically significant differences were noted for the CS or nursing pairs.

Hypothesis  $H_{1c}$  predicted that SES perceptions of nursing applicants would be lower than the perceptions of business and CS applicants. Within-field crosstab chi-square tests found no significance in SES perceptions across the occupational domains. The nursing field produced the

highest “Can’t Tell” rating overall, rather than a systematically lower SES attribution, requiring more analysis for understanding this disparity.

The second set of hypotheses, which stated that hireability would be moderated by occupational field, yielded no significant interaction.  $H_{2a}$  predicted that SES-based discrimination would be greatest in business, while  $H_{2b}$  predicted that it would be greater in CS than in nursing, and  $H_{2c}$  predicted it would be least prominent in nursing. The descriptive patterns were directionally consistent with this ordering, but the SES x Field interaction did not reach statistical significance. While the effects of this study were modest, they remained consistent with patterns identified in the literature and carry implications that require further analysis.

The findings were also directionally consistent with previous theories in bias literature and signaling theory. The effect of SES signaling was relevant and perceivable in at least one field, and while the cross-field patterns were not all significant, they followed the ordering predicted by SCT and cultural fit research. In the broader context of SES signaling and discrimination, the question is not whether bias against this population exists, but under what conditions it is most pronounced, impactful, and consequential.

### **SES Effect on Hireability Ratings**

Hypothesis 1’s stance on low-SES individuals being perceived as lower in hireability was confirmed in the business sector but was not found to be significant in either the CS or nursing fields. Even in those sectors where significance was not found beyond descriptive statistics, perceived hireability means remained higher for high-SES resumes than their low-SES counterparts in all three. The significant hireability advantage for high-SES business ( $d = 0.21$ , a small effect; Hedges, 2024) is consistent with the findings of Rivera & Tilcsik (2016) on class-

based signals and their use as proxies for cultural fit in professional and business environments. These business sectors were also consistent with the Stereotype Content Model and the implications of low-SES signals, indicating lower competence by evaluators (Kraus et al., 2017). Class signals were most salient in these contexts where hierarchical structures impact the cultural makeup and aesthetics of the field.

Additionally, these results were consistent with SCT and how the burden of proof predicts that SES signals will influence performance expectations (Webster & Walker, 2016). During resume screenings, the absence of explicit instruction resulted in greater reliance on these cues. Even with a smaller effect size, the practical consequences are important as hundreds or thousands of applicants can compound this effect and contribute to a hireability penalty (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004), resulting in reduced callback or hiring opportunities for candidates from low-SES backgrounds.

### ***Non-Significance of CS Field on Hireability Perceptions***

The lack of significance in the non-business fields also provides theoretical implications despite their lack of statistical impact. The near-zero difference for CS is consistent with the prediction that technical fields reduce the salience of diffuse status characteristics (Webster & Walker, 2016). Regarding CS as a field, specific status characteristics of technical skills and experience may function as competing, task-relevant information that partially overrides the diffuse SES signals. The lack of significance and low effect may be attributed to the absence of hierarchical mechanisms in the field compared to those of the business sector.

This lack of significance is further evident in the perception data collected. The Low SES CS resume had a 40.6% “Can’t Tell” SES perception response rating, suggesting the SES signals were less recognized in this context, regardless of their direction. Although research

indicates that the technology industry often prioritizes industrial and organizational alignment in ways that perpetuate class-based bias (Callus & Devetag, 2024), the present study's results indicate that technical qualifications might serve as a protective layer against evaluations based on socioeconomic background.

### ***Non-Significance of Nursing Sector on Hireability Perceptions***

Of the three fields investigated, the nursing pair was the closest to zero ( $d = 0.06$ ,  $p = .595$ ). Nursing is also the field that is culturally coded as demanding occupational commitment, not known for prestige and social capital, potentially reducing the penalty for low-SES signals and reducing the advantage of high-SES ones. Additionally, the low-SES nursing resume had the highest "Can't Tell" SES perception response rating (42.7%), indicating that evaluators were less able to discern the signals in this field context. Another important note is the demographic makeup of the nursing field. Just as gender bias in hiring is moderated by the gender composition of the occupation (Galos & Coppock, 2023), SES bias may be moderated by the class associations of the nursing field, which is more varied than that of the business or technology sectors (Snee, 2020). The smaller gap between hireability ratings in low- and high-SES groups may be attributed, at least in part, to cultural perceptions of nursing.

### **Interaction Between SES and Occupational Field**

The SES x Field interaction did not reach statistical significance, indicating insufficient power to confirm that the SES effect differed across fields at the group level. Of note, the descriptive pattern of discrimination was consistent with  $H_2$ , with business having the largest difference between low and high perceptions ( $\Delta = 0.22$ ) while CS ( $\Delta = 0.10$ ) maintained a larger difference than nursing ( $\Delta = 0.05$ ). Effect sizes were also small for individual field pairs ( $d <$

0.25). The sample size, while sufficiently large for parametric analysis, contributed to this result as a larger sample would more likely produce sufficient power (Cohen, 1992).

Although the study's power and significance may have been constrained by the small sample size, the results offer meaningful insights. The observed trend of narrowing gaps in SES perceptions as one moves from business to CS and finally to nursing aligns with the theoretical frameworks of Status Characteristics Theory (SCT) and cultural fit. A significant main effect for field was observed,  $F(2, 190) = 38.92, p < .001$ , indicating that hireability ratings varied substantially across domains, with nursing receiving the highest scores and business the lowest. Just as prior research has identified varying degrees of gender bias across different occupational fields (Galos & Coppock, 2023), the non-significant findings here regarding SES suggest a similar contextual dependency. These results indicate that vocational field and associated performance expectations are dominant factors in hireability perceptions, and how these factors interact with SES markers remain a critical area for investigation in higher-powered future studies.

### **SES and Signal Perception**

Hypothesis  $H_{1a}$  predicted that participants would perceive the SES of applicants based on the embedded signals manipulated in the resumes (university prestige, address, work experience, etc.). Across all six resumes, non-random perception distributions (all  $\leq .05$ ) in the chi-square goodness of fit results were found. Accuracy varied across applicants, with low-SES business resumes being the highest (66.7%) and low-SES nursing resumes being the lowest (35.4%). These findings indicate that SES signals are not uniform, but rather the field in which an applicant is being evaluated affects how clearly class backgrounds are communicated. While previous research has demonstrated that class signals are perceived rapidly and accurately

through thin slicing (Kraus et al., 2017), other contexts, such as an occupational field, may function as a moderator for signal legibility at an individual level.

An area that did not receive attention in the literature was directional asymmetry across all occupational fields. For business applicants, low-SES signals were more accurately identified than their high-SES counterparts,  $\chi^2(1) = 8.82$ ,  $p = .003$ , demonstrating how low-SES cues were more recognizable than high-SES cues. Conversely, participants were more accurate for resumes of the high-SES nursing applicant than the low-SES counterpart,  $\chi^2(1) = 4.78$ ,  $p = .029$ . No significant differences were noted for the CS applicants.

These findings can potentially be interpreted through culture matching contexts, as low-SES signals, including community college attendance and working as a grocery clerk, are recognized as lower-class indicators. High-SES signals, such as work experience at yacht clubs or private college attendance, are less universally recognized or associated with higher-class affiliations. In occupational spaces that place more value in culture matching, there is potential for a hiring penalty when low-SES signals are communicated. This finding remains theoretically consistent with signaling theory and how working-class signals are more culturally visible in professional contexts (Kraus et al., 2017). For nursing applicants, high-SES markers stand out as atypical, while low-SES signals blend into field expectations due to the lack of culture matching requirements that the business sector utilizes. This study's findings demonstrate how occupational contexts and expectations shape the class signals and how cues carry different meanings in different contexts, supporting previous research findings (Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016).

Perceptions of signals and their interpretations of social class are essential not just for confirmation of study effectiveness and validity but also hold theoretical importance. The business pair had both the highest low-SES signal accuracy (67%) and the only significant

hireability gap. This data implies that SES bias may only occur when signal clarity exists in the broader field contexts. CS and nursing had lower accuracy and higher rates of ambiguity, consistent with the implication that perception penalties were less likely to occur when SES is not fully communicated. In preventing SES bias, interventions may consider limiting clear low-SES signals from applications (e.g., community college attendance or history in the service industry) to hinder perception biases. However, this practice also raises equity concerns for applicants from low-SES backgrounds who are already disadvantaged in the hiring process (Fangs & Saks, 2021; Rivera, 2012) by requiring them to mask backgrounds and credentials associated with them.

The current study investigated how general perceptions of SES and hireability translate into the occupational applicant screening process and how biases are/are not accounted for from personal to professional lenses. In conjunction with the survey study, a preliminary resume audit study was completed (see Appendix G), which paves the way for a larger study that will analyze SES bias across occupational sectors in non-interventional contexts. The study is intended to be expanded, utilizing the results of the survey impressions from the current study, and analyzed for exploratory insights.

### **Theoretical Contributions**

This study was guided by the literature contributions of four theoretical fields: SCT, social signaling theory, implicit bias theory, and discrimination/hiring processes. The findings provide significant insight for all and raise additional areas of study to explore.

#### ***Social Signaling Theory***

Perceptions of social class have been noted as being rapid and accurate through thin slicing (Kraus et al., 2017) without acknowledgement of other prominent information available.

This study's results demonstrate how these perceptions can be confounded by occupational contexts and impressions of the field in conjunction with the SES signals. While the business sector had the highest low-SES accuracy, it also yielded the lowest high-SES accuracy rate. The opposite effect was seen in nursing. High rates of ambiguity were also noted, with the high-SES business and low-SES nursing having "Can't Tell" as their highest SES perception response. These findings add context-dependent implications to occupational fields and how they moderate the clarity of class signals being communicated.

### ***Status Characteristics Theory***

Of the five propositions of SCT (Webster & Walker, 2016), salience and burden of proof were noted as the most significant concerning bias in hiring for/against SES background. For the latter, the results extend the burden of proof beyond face-to-face group interaction to virtual surveys and resume evaluation. These asynchronous environments were still viable contexts for SES signals to shape hireability perceptions and demonstrate how the cognitive mechanisms of status generalization operate in different settings than where the theory originated.

Salience was also demonstrated as a key component of signal legibility but did not extend equivalently to all fields. Salient low-SES business signals yielded higher accuracy than their high-SES counterpart, while the nursing applicants had the inverse effect. While effective, salient signals of one applicant were not equal to those of their counterpart, and different status signals were perceived more accurately in some contexts than others.

### ***Implicit Bias Theory***

Several findings also contribute to the theoretical frameworks of Implicit Bias Theory and its relevance to hiring discrimination. Experimental evidence of SES-based bias across occupational fields was completed with a U.S. community sample, of which little research has been conducted. Prior studies completed outside of North American contexts (Callus & Devetag,

2020) focused on only specific signals like address. The results demonstrate how a composite of signals contributes to biases and discrimination through the perspective of those in the United States to build upon the findings of previous literature.

This study fills a gap previously unaddressed in most of the existing literature. While previous studies explored elite sectors that utilized professional evaluators (Rivera & Tilcsik, 2016), the procedures of this study incorporated insights from a general pool and were not restricted to one professional setting. This perspective is valuable in that it provides perspectives not just to hiring managers and professional employees but also demonstrates how signals are detectable by those in the general community. Their evaluations demonstrate how bias is culturally widespread and not confined to occupational contexts. Additionally, the multi-field design allows for observation across different sectors and how occupational sectors moderate SES signal perceptions and their impact on hireability.

### **Limitations**

While insights regarding SES signaling and discrimination have been noted, several limitations are inherent in the design and results of this study. The final sample of 96 participants limits the generalizability of these findings and limits the power of the study's design. Taken from a convenience sampling procedure, the sample skewed young (45.8% aged 18-24), was predominantly female (60.4%), and highly educated (~86% having earned a bachelor's degree). While this demographic spread provides a fairly broad range of perspectives, these characteristics may not represent the broader population of resume screeners or hiring managers in organizational settings. Additionally, to support the anonymity of participants who were recruited through my personal and social networks, no information regarding occupational field or job identification was included. This anonymity prevented any analyses that could be

performed comparing their impressions to those of the general sample not in the HR/hiring sector. Therefore, these findings may not directly generalize to professional screening contexts where concerns of cultural fit may be more or less salient.

The fixed presentation order of resumes presents additional limitations to the design of this study. All participants viewed the resumes in the same order, so the presentation position of each resume may have been confounded with the resume content. Several implications arise from this fixed order, as order effects cannot be discerned from genuine resume impressions. Other complications, including participant fatigue, may have had unequal implications for the accuracy of SES and hireability perceptions for the resumes at the end compared to those at the front. These effects may be the reason for the negative relationship between accuracy and presentation order (see table 1). Future studies should prioritize randomized presentation to address the potential effects of the fixed order.

While the within-subjects design increased statistical power for SES comparisons, demand characteristics also became more prominent. Participants were more likely to notice that their evaluations were for similar resumes, as KSAOs remained constant for paired field resumes. Discerning these characteristics of the applicants may have cued more than just SES, but also the ultimate hypotheses of this study. Although the alternating High/Low SES order was used to reduce this likelihood, observant participants were more likely to notice the details and discern the objectives of their involvement – potentially affecting responses. Future studies should consider random assignments to different surveys where these characteristics cannot be easily noticed.

## **Future Directions**

Given the small scale of this study, a larger replication should be conducted to verify the results. Adjustments to the design should also be implemented. First, recruitment procedures should focus on getting a sufficiently large sample ( $N \geq 200$ ) that is more demographically diverse. The presentation order of resumes should be addressed as well, focusing on randomized order and potentially splitting participation in separate resumes to reduce fatigue, provide greater insights into order effects, and reduce the likelihood of demand characteristics being available to evaluators. The increased sample also promotes the statistical power necessary for testing the entirety of  $H_2$ 's predictions. A pilot study assessing resume stimuli would also increase validity and allow for verification that the SES signals are equally salient across occupational sectors before testing their impact on perceived hireability. Finally, including hiring professionals as a distinct participant group would also allow for increased analysis of general and professional perspectives on SES signaling and hiring biases.

Additionally, the scope of the resume audit methodology piloted in this research should act as a launching point for a larger-scale study. Thirty job postings were responded to within the business sector to draw comparisons to the findings of the survey study. Building on this foundation to include a larger number of job postings across multiple field domains can translate these findings into real-world contexts and gather insights on how current biases and theories translate into the screening process.

## **Conclusion**

The modern hiring landscape aims to protect vulnerable populations, but decreases in graduation to full-time work rates, along with increases in unemployment, make the impact of biases even more important to examine. The present study provides experimental evidence that

SES signals in applicant resumes have the potential to influence hireability perceptions. A significant hireability advantage for candidates from high-SES backgrounds in the business field, while the CS and nursing fields did not reach statistical significance to support this claim despite their mean scores and field effects indicating a similar trend. The sample size and current design likely led to insignificant effects in this study, yet the data still demonstrated consistency of the results across analyses. These findings raise more questions and emphasize the need to further examine hiring penalties for low-SES and other understudied populations, including those individuals from low-SES backgrounds.

## References

- Adler, N. E., Epel, E. S., Castellazzo, G., & Ickovics, J. R. (2000). Relationship of subjective and objective social status with psychological and physiological functioning: Preliminary data in healthy White women. *Health Psychology, 19*(6), 586–592
- Bardwell, T.A., Walker, L.S., Heggstad, E.D., (2026). A qualitative study on financial stress and relative deprivation [poster presentation]. Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, New Orleans, LA.
- Barnum, C., McLeer, J., & Markovsky, B. (2016). Status characteristics and self-categorization: A bridge across theoretical traditions. *Current Research in Social Psychology, 24*(5), 49-58.
- Bertrand, M., & Mullainathan, S. (2004). Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field experiment on labor market discrimination. *American Economic Review, 94*(4), 991-1013
- Bullock, H. E., & Limbert, W. M. (2003). Scaling the socioeconomic ladder: Low-Income Women's Perceptions of Class Status and Opportunity. *Journal of Social Issues, 59*(4), 693-709. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.0022-4537.2003.00085.x>
- Callus, C., & Devetag, M. G. (2024). Discrimination in the hiring process - State of the art and implications for policymakers. *Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion: An International Journal, 43*(9), 103-121. <https://doi.10.1108/EDI-10-2023-0340>.
- Carlsson, M., & Eriksson, S. (2019). Age discrimination in hiring decisions: Evidence from a field experiment in the labor market. *Labor Economics, 59*, 173-183. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2019.03.002>

- Chmielewski, A., Przymuszała, P., & Marciniak, R. (2025). Why do young people choose nursing as their future profession?—a qualitative study on polish nursing students' motivating factors to apply to nursing and work in the profession after graduation. *BMC Medical Education*, 25(1), 343. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-025-06899-0>
- Cohen, J. (1992). Statistical power analysis. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 1(3), 98-101.
- Correll, S. J., Benard, S., & Paik, I. (2007). Getting a job: Is there a motherhood penalty? *American Journal of Sociology*, 112(5), 1297-1338. <https://doi.org/10.1086/511799>
- DeOrtentiss, P. S., Iddekinge, C. H. V., & Wanberg, C. R. (2021). Different starting lines, different finish times: The role of social class in the job search process. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 1-14. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/apl0000915>
- Elias, T., Honda, L. P., Kimmel, M., & Chun, J. (2016). A mixed methods examination of 21st century hiring processes, social networking sites, and implicit bias. *The Journal of Social Media in Society*, 5(1), 189-228.
- Fang, R. T., & Saks, A. M. (2021). Class advantage in the white-collar labor market: An investigation of social class backgrounds, job search strategies, and job search success. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 106(11), 1695-1713. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/apl0000842>
- Fiske, S. T. (2018). Stereotype content: Warmth and competence endure. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 27(2), 67-73. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721417738825>
- Galos, D. R., & Coppock, A. (2023). Gender composition predicts gender bias: A meta-reanalysis of hiring discrimination audit experiments. *Science Advances*, 9, 1-11.

- Greenwald, A. G., & Krieger, L. H. (2006). Implicit bias: Scientific foundations. *California law review*, 94(4), 945-967
- Hedges, L. V. (2024). Interpretation of the standardized mean difference effect size when distributions are not normal or homoscedastic. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 85(2), 245-257. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00131644241278928>
- Holroyd, J., Scaife, R., & Stafford, T. (2017). What is implicit bias? *Philosophy Compass*, 12(10), e12437.
- Hora, M. T., Wolfgram, M., & Chen, Z. (2019). Closing the doors of opportunity: How financial, sociocultural, and institutional barriers intersect to inhibit participation in college internships. *Wisconsin Center for Education Research*, 2019(8), 1-37.
- Hosain, M. S., Amin, M. B., Debnath, G. C., & Rahaman, M. A. (2025). The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the hiring process: Job applicants' perceptions of procedural justice. *Computers in Human Behavior Reports*, 19, 100713. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbr.2025.100713>
- Krause, G. A., & Park, J. (2023). How status-group power differentials shape age discrimination within US federal agencies: Evidence from EEOC formal complaint filings, 2010–2019. *Public Administration Review*, 83(1), 51-64. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13532>
- Kraus, M. W., Park, J. W., & Tan, J. J. (2017). Signs of social class: The experience of economic inequality in everyday life. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 12(3), 422-435
- Kwak, S. G., Kim, J. H. (2017). Central limit theorem: The cornerstone of modern statistics. *Korean Journal of Anesthesiology*, 70(2), 144-156. <https://doi.org/kjae.2017.70.2.144>

National Association of Colleges and Employers. (2020). *First-destination survey: Class of 2019*. <https://www.naceweb.org/uploadedfiles/files/2021/publication/free-report/first-destinations-for-the-class-of-2019.pdf>

National Association of Colleges and Employers. (2024). *First-destination survey: Class of 2023*. [https://www.naceweb.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2024/publication/free-report/nace-first-destinations-for-the-class-of-2023.pdf?Status=Master&sfvrsn=a3e347d6\\_3](https://www.naceweb.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2024/publication/free-report/nace-first-destinations-for-the-class-of-2023.pdf?Status=Master&sfvrsn=a3e347d6_3)

National Association of Colleges and Employers. (2025). *First-destination survey: Class of 2024*. [https://www.naceweb.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2025/publication/free-report/nace-first-destinations-college-class-of-2024.pdf?sfvrsn=f4bd5f6a\\_6](https://www.naceweb.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2025/publication/free-report/nace-first-destinations-college-class-of-2024.pdf?sfvrsn=f4bd5f6a_6)

Perna, L. (2010). *Understanding the working college student: New research and its implications for policy and practice*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Rider, C. I., & Negro, G. (2015). Organizational failure and intraprofessional status loss. *Organization Science*, 26, 633-649. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2014.0953>

Rivera, L. A. (2012). Hiring as cultural matching: The case of elite professional service firms. *American Sociological Review*, 77(6), 999-1022

Rivera, L. A., & Tilcsik, A. (2016). Class advantage, commitment penalty: The Gendered Effect of Social Class Signals in an Elite Labor Market. *American Sociological Review*, 81(6), 1097-1131. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122416668154>

Snee, H. (2020). Who cares? Social mobility and the 'class ceiling' in nursing. *Sociological Research Online*, 26(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1360780420971657>

- Strodtbeck, F. L., James, R. M., Hawkins, C. (1957). Social status in jury deliberations. *American Sociological Review*, 22(6), 713-719. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2089202>
- Tan, J. J. X., Kraus, M. W., Carpenter, N. C., & Adler, N. E. (2020). Association between objective and subjective socioeconomic status and subjective well-being: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 146(11), 970-1020. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/bul0000258>
- Teresa-Morales, C., Rodríguez-Pérez, M., Araujo-Hernández, M., & Feria-Ramírez, C. (2022). Current stereotypes associated with nursing and nursing professionals: An integrative review. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 19(13), 7640. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19137640>
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2026, April 3). *The employment situation — March 2026* (USDLE-25-1344). U.S. Department of Labor. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empisit.pdf>
- Webster, M., Jr., & Walker, L. S. (2016). The theories of status characteristics and expectation states. In S. Abrutyn (Ed.), *Handbook of contemporary sociological theory* (pp. 321–342). Springer
- Yuchtman-Yaar, E., & Semyonov, M. (1979). Ethnic inequality in Israeli schools and sports: An expectation-states approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, 85(3), 576-590.

## Appendix A

### Low-SES Business Resume

**Jay Smith**

Chelsea, MA 02150

#### Education

##### **Bachelor of Science in Business Administration**

Salem State University

3.84 GPA

May 2025

Salem, MA

##### **Associate of Arts in Business Administration**

North Shore Community College

4.0 GPA

Danvers, MA

#### Relevant Experience

##### **First Generation Student Success Mentor**

Salem State University

- Coaching services for first-generation college students
- Provided personal and professional insights into the lives of students to promote retention

September 2023-May 2025

Salem, MA

##### **Store Clerk**

Shaw's Supermarket

- Processed checkout transactions and bagged grocery items
- Stored and stocked items, maintaining inventory records

January 2021-February 2022

Medfield, MA

##### **Private Tutor**

- Tutoring services in math and science for middle school to high school-aged children

May 2021-June 2025

Dover, MA

##### **Car Detailer and Cashier**

Wilson Toyota

- Managed customer money and questions
- Cleaned and waxed vehicles to pristine conditions

May 2020-December 2020

Dover, MA

#### Certifications and Awards

##### **Jack Welch Scholarship**

Salem State University

- Full tuition scholarship as a student in the Bertolon School of Business.

Sep 2023-May 2025

##### **Dean's List**

North Shore Community College

- Maintained above 3.30 GPA throughout my time at NSCC

January 2022-May 2023

#### Leadership

##### **Business Club Secretary**

Salem State University

- Handled finances and financial planning for grant proposals, group trips, and more

September 2024-May 2025

##### **Day of Service Leader**

- Lead student groups to support community initiatives, including elderly support and agriculture service

September 2024

#### Skills

Communication (verbal, oral, and written), problem-solving, time management, computer applications (Microsoft Office, Google Drive), data analysis (SPSS and Excel), customer service, and team collaboration

## Appendix B

### High-SES Business Resume

**Brad Johnson**

Chestnut Hill, MA 02467

---

#### Education

##### **Bachelor of Science in Business Administration**

Boston College  
3.84 GPA

May 2025  
Chestnut Hill, MA

---

#### Relevant Experience

##### **Peer Career Coach**

Boston College

**September 2023-May 2025**

Chestnut Hill, MA

- Provide resources from the campus career center to undergraduate students
- Used personal experience to connect and support the post-graduate careers of peers

##### **Dockhand**

Sherborn Yacht Club

**June 2022-July 2023**

Boston, MA

- Maintained optimal dock conditions through diligent groundskeeping, including cleaning, waxing, and general yard maintenance.
- Assisted members with docking, fueling, and the proper disposal of vessel waste.

##### **Elementary and Middle School Tutor**

Kumon Math and Reading Center

**February 2021-June 2022**

Somerville, MA

- Math and reading tutoring for middle school children to elementary and middle school aged children

##### **Detailer and Representative**

Camping World

**June 2020- January 2021**

Berkely, MA

- Cleaned and detailed the RVs for display
- Provided knowledge of the products and checked out customers

---

#### Certifications and Awards

##### **Distinguished Young Man**

Lexington Christian Academy

**May 2021**

- Acknowledgement for academia, service, and community

##### **Cum Laude**

Boston College

**January 2022- May 2025**

- Maintained above a 3.667 GPA

---

#### Leadership

##### **Student Business Consortium Secretary**

Boston College

**January 2025-May 2025**

- Handled finances and financial planning for grant proposals, group trips, and more

##### **Stride Lead**

Supported sophomore students' transition into upperclassmen

**September 2023-December 2023**

---

#### Skills

Communication (verbal, oral, and written), problem-solving, time management, computer applications (Microsoft Office, Google Drive), data analysis (SPSS and Excel), customer service, and team collaboration

## Appendix C

### Low-SES CS Resume

Jay Smith

Dover, MA 03820

---

#### Education

##### Bachelor of Science in Computer Science

Salem State University  
3.84 GPA

May 2025

Salem, MA

##### Associate of Science in Computer Applications

North Shore Community College  
4.0 GPA

---

#### Relevant Experience

##### IT Student Tech Support

Salem State University

September 2023-May 2025

Salem, MA

- Work with students to troubleshoot basic hardware, software, and network issues
- Provide technology guidance to faculty, guest speakers, and other members of the campus
- Manage case assignments, create and close tickets, and report on all steps taken as part of the process

##### Salem State Computer Science Tutor

Salem State University

January 2022-May 2023

Salem, MA

- Peer tutoring for CS, including courses such as Survey of CS, Software Design and Programming, and Software Engineering
- Implemented my successful completion of the courses to provide clarity and understanding for students
- Craft detailed reports of topics discussed and methods used during tutoring sessions

##### Store Clerk

Shaw's Supermarket

January 2021-August 2022

Medfield, MA

- Processed checkout transactions and bagged grocery items
- Stored and stocked items, maintaining inventory records

##### Car Detailer and Cashier

Wilson Toyota

May 2020-December 2020

Dover, MA

- Managed customer money and questions
- Cleaned and waxed vehicles to pristine conditions

---

#### Certifications and Awards

##### Jack Welch Scholarship

Salem State University

Sep 2023-May 2025

- Full tuition scholarship as a student in the Bertolon School of Business.

##### Dean's List

North Shore Community College

January 2022- May 2023

- Maintained above a 3.30 throughout my Associate's degree

---

#### Leadership

##### Datathon Club Vice President

Salem State University

September 2024-May 2025

- Lead a group of Data Science students to explore modern, industry-relevant tools to analyze data sets and explore AI utility

##### Day of Service Leader

September 2024

- Lead student groups to support community initiatives, including elderly support and agricultural services

---

#### Skills

**Computer Science:** Computer applications (Microsoft Office, Google Drive), data analysis software (SPSS and Excel), programming language (Python, Java, JavaScript), Web Programming, Database management

**Soft Skills:** customer service, team collaboration, Communication (verbal, oral, and written), problem-solving, time management

## Appendix D

### High-SES CS Resume

**Brad Johnson**

Sommerville, MA 03820

#### Education

##### Bachelor of Science in Computer Science

Boston College  
3.84 GPA

May 2025  
Chestnut Hill, MA

#### Relevant Experience

##### Technology Consultant

Boston College

September 2023-May 2025

Chestnut Hill, MA

- Worked with several buildings and groups to assist and troubleshoot technology use
- Supported research and implementation of technology systems on BSU campus
- Provided in-depth notes on projects completed and systems utilized

##### Connors Family Learning Center CS Tutor

Boston College

January 2022-July 2023

Chestnut Hill, MA

- Peer tutoring for computer science students, primarily in CS 101, Data Ethics and Society, and Data Visualization
- Maintained intricate records of study sessions and goals set during meetings

##### Dockhand

Sherborn Yacht Club

June 2021-August 2022

Boston, MA

- Maintained dock conditions through groundskeeping duties such as cleaning, waxing, and yard maintenance
- Helped members dock, fuel, and remove waste from the vessels

##### Detailer and Representative

Camping World

June 2020- January 2021

Berkely, MA

- Cleaned and detailed the RVs for display
- Provided knowledge of the products and checked out customers

#### Certifications and Awards

##### National Merit

Sommerville High School

May 2021

- Acknowledgement for academia, service, and community

##### Cum Laude

Boston College |

January 2022- May 2025

- Maintained above a 3.67 throughout my degree

#### Leadership

##### Boston College Computer Science Society Member

Sommerville High School

September 2022-May 2025

- Attended hackathon groups and group speaker events
- Supported underclass students in their coursework and extracurricular activities
- Gained skills in entrepreneurship and technology focus

##### Stride Lead

- Supported sophomore students' transition into upperclassmen

September 2023-December 2023

#### Skills

**Computer Science:** Computer applications (Microsoft Office, Google Drive), data analysis software (SPSS and Excel), programming language (Python, Java, JavaScript), Web Programming, Database management

**Soft Skills:** customer service, team collaboration, Communication (verbal, oral, and written), problem-solving, time management

## Appendix E

### Low-SES Nursing Resume

Jay Smith

Lowell, MA

---

#### Education

<b>Bachelor of Science in Nursing</b>	May 2025
Salem State University	Salem, MA
3.84 GPA	
<b>Associate of Science in Biology</b>	
North Shore Community College	
4.0 GPA	

---

#### Relevant Experience

<b>Certified Nursing Assistant</b>	September 2023–May 2025
Benchmark Senior Living	Danvers, MA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivered direct patient care to a fluctuating population of 8–19 residents.</li> <li>• Assisted with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs), including bathing, dressing, and grooming.</li> <li>• Maintained and ensured a safe, sanitary, and organized patient environment.</li> </ul>	
<b>Salem State Biology Tutor</b>	January 2022–May 2023
Salem State University	Salem, MA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided peer tutoring for undergraduate Biology courses, specifically focusing on Introduction to Cells, Anatomy and Physiology, and Botany.</li> <li>• Leveraged successful completion of relevant coursework to enhance student comprehension of complex subject matter.</li> <li>• Maintained detailed session reports documenting topics reviewed and pedagogical methods employed.</li> </ul>	
<b>Guest Service Team Member</b>	January 2021–August 2022
Target	Salem, MA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processed daily financial transactions for customers and collaborated effectively with team members.</li> <li>• Managed inventory through systematic storage, stocking of merchandise, and accurate record-keeping.</li> <li>• Conducted training sessions for new personnel on Point-of-Sale (POS) systems and professional customer communication techniques.</li> </ul>	
<b>Automotive Detailer and Cashier</b>	May 2020–December 2020
CitySide Subaru	Lowell, MA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managed customer transactions and responded to inquiries.</li> <li>• Performed meticulous detailing and waxing of vehicles to ensure pristine conditions.</li> </ul>	

---

#### Certifications and Awards

<b>Elizabeth Smieth Nursing Scholarship</b>	Sep 2023–May 2025
Salem State University	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awarded to a nursing student who maintains a high GPA and achievement.</li> </ul>	
<b>Dean's List</b>	January 2022– May 2023
North Shore Community College	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintained above 3.30 GP throughout my Associate's degree</li> </ul>	

---

#### Leadership

<b>Student Nurses Association Treasurer</b>	September 2024–May 2025
Salem State University	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helped plan and execute events for nursing students to discuss updates to the curriculum, complete service projects, CPR certifications, clothing drives, and more.</li> </ul>	
<b>Day of Service Leader</b>	September 2024
Salem State University	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead student groups to support community initiatives, including elderly support and agricultural services</li> </ul>	

---

#### Skills

**Nursing:** Comprehensive patient evaluation, triage methodologies, pharmaceutical delivery, wound management, CPR certified, infection prevention strategies, and adherence to personal protective equipment (PPE) and safety guidelines.

**Soft Skills:** Proficiencies encompass collaborative teamwork, analytical and critical reasoning, professional communication (both verbal and written, including oral presentation), complex problem resolution, effective time management, and robust client and customer relations.

## Appendix F

### High-SES Nursing Resume

**Brad Johnson**

Lexington, MA 03820

---

#### Education

##### **Bachelor of Science in Nursing**

Boston College  
3.84 GPA

May 2025  
Chestnut Hill, MA

---

#### Relevant Experience

##### **Nursing Assistant**

Sevita

**September 2023-May 2025**

Boston, MA

- Administered essential clinical procedures, including the measurement of vital signs and the monitoring of blood glucose levels.
- Collaborated with multidisciplinary care teams (Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, therapists, etc.) to support comprehensive resident care objectives and enhance the quality of life for residents.

##### **Connors Family Learning Center Anatomy Tutor**

Boston College

**January 2022-July 2023**

Chestnut Hill, MA

- Provided peer tutoring for anatomy and physiology courses.
- Maintained detailed records of study sessions and documented established goals during meetings.

##### **Dockhand**

Sherborn Yacht Club

**June 2022-July 2023**

Boston, MA

- Maintained optimal dock conditions through diligent groundskeeping, including cleaning, waxing, and general yard maintenance.
- Assisted members with docking, fueling, and the proper disposal of vessel waste.

##### **Detailer and Representative**

Camping World

**June 2020- January 2021**

Berkely, MA

- Thoroughly cleaned and prepared the recreational vehicles (RVs) for presentation and display.
- Provided product knowledge and processed customer transactions.

---

#### Certifications and Awards

##### **Academic Excellence Award**

- Full tuition scholarship

May 2021

##### **Cum Laude**

Boston College

- Maintained above a 3.67 GPA

January 2022- May 2025

---

#### Leadership

##### **Student Nurses Association**

- Organize and conduct a Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) workshop, adhering to the guidelines set forth by the American Red Cross.
- Co-direct a donation drive for medical scrubs to benefit students experiencing financial hardship.

**September 2022-May 2025**

##### **Stride Lead**

- Supported sophomore students' transition into upperclassmen

**September 2023-December 2023**

---

#### Skills

**Nursing:** Comprehensive patient evaluation, triage methodologies, pharmaceutical delivery, CPR certified, wound management, infection prevention strategies, and adherence to personal protective equipment (PPE) and safety guidelines.

**Soft Skills:** Proficiencies encompass collaborative teamwork, analytical and critical reasoning, professional communication (both verbal and written, including oral presentation), complex problem resolution, effective time management, and robust client and customer relations.

## **Appendix G**

### **Resume Audit Pilot**

A supplemental resume audit was conducted alongside the survey study to determine whether the survey results would mirror real hiring evaluations. The power of these experiments has provided significant data on discriminatory practices in the workforce. The validity of the resume audit methodology was demonstrated by Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004), who found racial disparities in callback rates regardless of resume quality or the employer's Equal Opportunity Employer status. Other resume audits investigating gender discrimination (Galos & Coppock, 2023), age discrimination (Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019), and disability and religious discrimination (Callus & Devetag, 2024) have also demonstrated the validity and applicability of this methodology.

While beneficial, resume audits have largely not investigated communities beyond those already protected by the EEOC. Most audit studies focus on established marginalized communities while avoiding those of social and cultural status (Callus & Devetag, 2024). Recent studies have made progress, including investigating how applicant addresses affect callback rates in Jamaica (Spencer et al., 2020, as cited in Callus & Devetag, 2020) and France (Bunel et al., 2016, as cited in Callus & Devetag, 2020). The scope of these social group studies has yet to be studied inside the U.S. context, leading to gaps in the research and a need for further exploration to determine additional biases affecting social communities in the United States. Still, the framework of altering specific signals scattered throughout resumes provides an avenue to explore the biases imposed on those of differing SES.

For the current preliminary SES-centered audit, 30 entry-level business jobs made up the sample, with the business resumes used in the survey study as the stimuli and contact information included at the top. The requirements were that the job had to be listed as entry

level, require a business bachelor's degree, and be listed as full-time with at least 30 hours required. The lead researcher and two undergraduate research assistants (RAs) at Salem State University were trained on the proper protocols for applying to the job postings. One RA was tasked with submitting low-SES applications while the other submitted the high-SES applications. A 24-hour gap between submissions was required before the second application could be submitted. The lead researcher answered any additional application questions to maintain consistency. Results were logged in a shared online document, and callback opportunities, rejections, or no additional outreach were coded accordingly.

Applications were submitted to job postings over five weeks, and the file was left open for an additional week for outreach attempts. Of the 30 job postings, six responded to the high-SES applicant (30%), and four responded to the low-SES applicant (20%) requesting interviews. Three (15%) of the postings responded to both applicants requesting interviews. Two job postings declined the high-SES applicant (10%), and three declined the low-SES applicant. Of the rejections, two were rejections for the low-SES applicants, while also requesting interviews for the high-SES applicants. 21 job postings did not respond to either applicant (70%).

The small sample does not produce enough power for this pilot to warrant significant analysis, but it does demonstrate that this may be an effective method for studying how SES signals affect real callback rates. Early data suggest there is a small hiring advantage for high-SES applicants as noted in the survey study, but significance could not be evaluated due to the small sample size.