

Behavioral Experiments in the Online Setting and Studying Gender as a Status Characteristic

This project examines the methods used to test status characteristics and expectation states theory (SC-EST). Specifically, this project examines two things: (1) if the classic SC-EST laboratory experiment can be moved online; (2) if the tasks used in SC-EST experiments are equivalent at measuring gender-based discrimination. We find that the SC-EST education manipulation produces equivalent results in the online and laboratory environment, suggesting the online setting may be appropriate for SC-EST experiments. We also find, however, that the three tasks used in SC-EST experiments are equally sensitive to status differences. Additionally, we do not find evidence of gender discrimination. Importantly, we do not suggest that this is evidence for a lack of gender-based discrimination. Rather, we suggest that gender may operate as a status characteristic due to third (aka generalized second) rather than first-order stereotypes. As such, we suggest next steps for status research and provide general guidance on how to move vital aspects of laboratory studies, such as debriefing, suspicion checks, and scope condition checks, to the online setting.

Bianca Manago is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Vanderbilt University. Her research examines the factors that shape two related forms of inequality: stigma, a measure of social exclusion, and status, the extent to which one is perceived as respected and competent. She also studies the methods used to examine these processes. Her website is www.biancamanago.com.

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