

PROPOSAL: “THE EFFECTS OF PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES ON HIRING DECISIONS FOR MIGRANT LABORERS”

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Entities selecting migrant laborers, whether direct employers, intermediary labor agencies, or government offices, often make hiring decisions with minimal information about each candidate. Distance and technological constraints limit the selecting party to data that can be reliably transferred in an application or dossier. As long as hiring managers can eventually verify the identification of an applicant, the least falsifiable data is most likely a photograph of a candidate. This is a good explanation for why hiring managers often use photographs of candidates during the hiring process, especially in migratory contexts. It is unclear, however, what hiring managers prefer to see in these photographs, and even if these preferences are conscious. Based on a body of research demonstrating that wages correlate with physical attributes, we aim to empirically estimate the importance of physical attributes and biometric measures on the decision making process for hiring managers in the Bangladesh-Malaysia G2G (government-to-government) migration program.

This SRO will require the research assistant to identify a set of important biometric measures and extract this information from the photographs included in each applicant’s application. The first portion of this SRO will require the RA to expand on an existing literature review on: (i) the effect of physical attributes on work-related outcomes and (ii) biometric measures of symmetry, proportionality, etc. The second portion of this SRO will require creating a dataset of biometric measures that we will use to estimate the importance of various physical attributes on hiring outcomes in this context.

Candidates should have a basic understanding of Stata and an interest in learning more independently. Experience with Matlab is a plus. Experience with the Image Processing Toolbox within Matlab is a huge plus.

The RA will sit at the Yale School of Management in shared office space with another full-time research assistant. Depending on the progress of the SRO, the research assistant may be involved in other projects on migration and development.