



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on February 2, 2024

Creeping Communism? American Psychological Association Study: Merit-based Hiring Is UNFAIR

As if Harvard's problem with quota-hire plagiarists, United Airlines' vow to prioritize "diversity" when retaining pilots, and today's prevalent affirmative-action mentality aren't enough, now there's this:

The American Psychological Association (APA) is claiming, based on a study, that merit-based hiring is unfair.

Of course, it's easier making this accusation stick when you confuse merit with credentials — which the APA apparently does.

The *Daily Mail* [reports](#) on the story:



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Most employers hire individuals based on their qualifications — but a new study has claimed the process may be unfair.

Researchers at the American Psychological Association are now claiming that socioeconomic disparities should be the focus when seeking potential employees.

The team conducted five experiments where participants were given background information about the two types of candidates, revealing those who learned about merit-based hiring perceived it as less fair.

Researchers concluded that merit-based hiring fuels racial inequality as 'members of marginalized racial groups tend to experience socioeconomic disadvantages more often than members of privileged racial groups.'

Merit-based hiring is when an employer hires a candidate solely on their resume, achievements including higher education, and their past career advancement.

People who suffer from socioeconomic disparities include those who come from low income areas, didn't have access to higher education, and therefore weren't able to advance their career.

Researchers conducted five experiments, and in the first two experiments, the groups read about merit-based hiring but one group wasn't given additional information about the candidates.

In the second group, researchers informed the participants about the candidate's socioeconomic disadvantages and the advantages of another candidate.

Researchers said the second group found that merit-based hiring or promotion is less fair and has less equal opportunity for candidates.



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One problem here is that what the researchers define as “merit” is largely not merit, but a perversion of it. That is, the *Mail* relates, “Merit-based hiring is when an employer hires a candidate solely on their resume, achievements including higher education, and their past career advancement.” Is it, really?

Let’s analogize it by considering a true meritocracy: sports in which results are quantitatively measured. In tennis, for example, you earn a ranking only by winning matches. So if you’re in the game’s upper echelons, you have undeniably demonstrated that you’re superior to most of the other players.

But now let’s say that instead of this system, we established “tennis schools” — some of which over time became “prestigious” — and accorded people spots on the professional tour based on the degrees and honors won therein. Sure, given that testing and training would be part of the education, there might be *some* correlation between possessing the relevant credentials and tennis ability. But you wouldn’t even come close to getting the absolute best, and only the absolute best, on tour. For there’s no substitute for quantitatively determining who excels with the actual skills in question.

This is essentially the system we have with the job market: In a great measure, people are judged based on pieces of paper saying they’re qualified — given to them by other people who got such pieces of paper. These were bestowed, too, by institutions that not only have usually strayed from their more noble foundations and have descended into demented doltishness, but that might have been instituted centuries ago by people who didn’t have the given pieces of paper.

A truly merit-based system was what a brilliant but non-degreed man I know encountered when seeking a job some years back: He was given a test that measured proficiency in the skills relevant to the position. He told me afterwards (I’m paraphrasing), “This is how hiring decisions *should* be made.”

This is why the final APA experiment showing, relates Website EurekAlert!, “that knowledge about socioeconomic disparities increased support for hiring programs that seek to foster social class diversity” is not surprising. After all, these “remedies” involve things “such as removing the names of prestigious universities or companies from resumes and making prior internships a lesser requirement for being hired,” the site continued. In other words, what was being measured were reactions to “pseudo-meritocratic” elements — not *real* ones.

Commentator Tucker Carlson addressed in a compelling 2019 opinion segment (below) the epitome of this pseudo-meritocracy: left-wing politicians’ children attending Ivy League schools on “legacy admission” bases, which is just part of membership in the old-(soy)boys network.

Unfortunately, not only does the APA study misdefine “merit,” but it also tacitly carries water for the “equity” (officially sanctioned, institutionalized discrimination) agenda; this, seeking to achieve equal outcomes via politically correct discrimination, is essentially just dressed-up communism.

“‘Socioeconomic disadvantages early in life can undermine educational achievement, test scores and work experiences. In this way, inequality can undermine equal opportunity,’ said lead researcher Daniela Goya-Tocchetto, PhD, an assistant professor of organization and human resources at the University at Buffalo-State University of New York,” EurekAlert! also informs.

The researchers illustrate this phenomenon with the fictional examples of wealthy “Jim” and poorer “Tom” ([page 4, Box 2](#)). Among the specified differences between them is that while Jim’s parents “made sure to spend time playing with him while he was growing up,” Tom’s parents lacked the time to do so.

Now, it’s obvious that people have different upbringings and that some types of child formation are



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more conducive to academic and career success than others. But where do you go with this? Must employers, for example, attempt to assess how much a prospective hire's parents "played with him" and how this might have affected his development? Is it a job interview or a therapy session?

Also note that the study's Jim-Tom example is simplistic, listing only a handful of realities in the individuals' lives. In truth, however, a multitude (perhaps thousands) of factors come together to mold and influence a developing young person. For instance, what if Tom's parents, though poor, did a splendid job of instilling virtue in their son while Jim's parents spoiled theirs and undermined his character? What if Jim was psychologically scarred by social-media bullying whereas Tom wasn't? All this, not to mention that people are born with different innate gifts and IQ potential. Life is not fair.

Of course, if we were God and had complete knowledge and understanding, we could perfectly assess the thousands of factors that make a person who he is. But we're not God. All we can do is test people's abilities and knowledge and judge, as best as humanly possible, whether they're fit for a given role.

That's where the rubber meets the road, too: Can the prospective pilot, doctor, or auto mechanic competently fly the plane, perform the operation, or fix the car? Assessing that is difficult enough without considering the candidate's play opportunities when he was seven.

More could be said, but the fundamental mistake the APA researchers make is accepting the common supposition that "equality" is a desirable goal. But is it? Consider an example I often use:

There are two tennis centers training children. After a certain period of time at the first, all the kids are advanced beginners. After the same period at the second, some are advanced beginners; two other large groups constitute, respectively, low intermediates and intermediates; there's a small group of advanced players; and a handful are approaching tournament caliber. At which center is there more equality?

Okay, now, at which are the children doing far better on average?

The lesson: Equality tells you nothing about quality. It's irrelevant.

With regard to the employment and income arena, all that matters is that people can provide for themselves, act responsibly, and that they're encouraged to fulfill their potential. Of course, this is more likely if we actually learn what merit is — and stop demonizing it by confusing it with credentialism.



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