

Carpooling websites discriminate against Turkish men

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An experiment conducted by the University of Cologne has found that there is clear discrimination based on gender and ethnicity in terms of acceptance rates and order at which carpooling users receive a response.

Carried out in Germany, the researchers revealed that women with German sounding names had an advantage over their male and especially Turkish male counterparts with 71 per cent of women with German sounding names and only 44 per cent of Turkish men receiving a response.

The joint study conducted by, Sarah Carol, Daniel Eich, Michèle Keller, Friederike Steiner and Katharina Storz analysed a total of 952 contacts, including the probability of the potential passengers being accepted, the response time and the order of answers.

Driving with a passenger exposes the driver to a higher level of proximity and insecurity and the research suggests that the drivers, who were all male, might have less trust and hold fewer positive attitudes towards male passengers.

Unlike employers making a decision about employees, drivers face a personal risk of robbery or assault if they make the wrong decision about whom to accept as a passenger.

“We are confident that our field experiment using online websites is highly suitable to estimate the potential amount of discrimination, because anonymity lowers the barriers for rejection. It highlights the relevance of the topic due to the increasing importance of carpooling and car sharing,” – says Dr. Sarah Carol.

In order to avoid discrimination on the basis of ethnicity and gender, the researchers urge carpooling services to make requests from potential passengers more anonymous.

The study entitled ‘Who can ride along?’ was published in the journal Population, Space and Place.

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