Stigma and Take-Up of Labor Market Assistance: Evidence from Three Experiments*

Adam Osman† Jamin D. Speer‡

July 25, 2020

Abstract

Aversion to "stigma" may contribute to low utilization of social programs, but empirical evidence of its importance is scarce. Using three randomized field experiments to recruit young people to labor market assistance programs, we show that stigma affects consequential decisions. Alluding to stigmas surrounding entry-level jobs leads to lower application rates to job training programs and lower participation in job fairs, but these impacts are heterogeneous: maturity and work experience mitigate the negative effects of stigma. On the other hand, "welfare stigma" does not reduce take-up. We discuss how these insights can help programs target those with the highest returns.

*The authors thank Sarah Wahby, Abdelrahman Nagy, Mohamed Yousef, Mohsen Nagy, Mohamed Omar, Norhan Muhab, Eslam Serrag, Mahmoud Shehata, and Noha Fadl from J-PAL; Ismail Habrouk, Nora Abou El Seoud, Farah Osman, Theo Wilson, Julie DeSoto and Hana El Fekky from EFE; Iris Boutros, Arjan De Haan, Rania Fazah and Flaubert Mbiekop from IDRC; Mohamed El Komi and Ebaa El Sayed from AUC; Mahmoud El Bably from DevGate; Hesham El Badawy from JobMaster; and the participants in the study. Kareem Haggag and Joaquin Lopez provided valuable comments. UIUC IRB Approval #16766, Memphis IRB Approval #4166, AEA Trial Registry AEARCTR-0006131. We are thankful for financial support from the International Development Research Centre. Authors retained full intellectual freedom to design, analyze and interpret results. All errors are our own.

†University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Email: aosman@illinois.edu

‡University of Memphis. Email: jspeer@memphis.edu

1 Introduction

Take-up of social programs is often low despite large expected benefits (Currie, 2006) and is known to vary across demographic groups (Heckman and Smith, 2004). This is true in both high and low income countries (Rinehart and McGuire, 2017). There are many potential explanations, including lack of information, costs of applying for benefits, and stigma (e.g., Bhargava and Manoli (2015), Friedrichsen et al. (2018)). Stigma – a disutility associated with participating in a program or activity – is widely believed to be a major factor in low take-up of programs (Moffitt, 1983), but there is limited empirical evidence of its effects.

Job assistance programs suffer from similar take-up issues, but also need to contend with the uncertain returns associated with these types of programs. There is both uncertainty about the average treatment effect of programs – with some finding positive effects (Attanasio et al., 2017, 2011; Bandiera et al., 2017) and others no effect (Groh et al., 2016; Hirshleifer et al., 2016) – as well as uncertainty regarding important heterogeneity in who benefits (Acevedo et al., 2018; Card et al., 2018; Kluve et al., 2019; McKenzie, 2017). Given this heterogeneity, it is essential for academics, policymakers, and practitioners to understand how people select into these programs (World Bank Group, 2018). This requires knowledge of how recruitment practices affect the size and makeup of the applicant pool.

This paper uses three randomized experiments in Cairo, Egypt, to study the effects of information provision – specifically, information about stigma[1] – on take-up of labor market assistance programs. The first two experiments recruit unemployed youth to a job training program via Facebook advertising and street-level marketing, respectively. The third recruits for a job fair using door-to-door outreach. These programs focused on trying to help unemployed and underemployed youth find ways to get a job in the formal sector, usually in entry-level positions.

In our three experiments, we randomly vary the "pitch" delivered to individual jobseekers. These messages are meant to encourage them to utilize free or highly subsidized

[1]The term "stigma" is used broadly in the literature. It includes "social stigma"- disutility due to what other people think of one's participation (Major et al., 1998); "personal stigma"- disutility due to how one feels about oneself (Manchester and Mumford, 2010); "ability stigma"- being seen as less able; and "free-rider stigma"- being seen as willing to live off others (Friedrichsen et al., 2018).

job assistance programs. While the control groups receive basic information about the program, treatment groups receive information that tries to help individuals overcome worries about any perceived stigma associated with taking entry-level jobs in low-skill professions. We consider issues like "social stigma", an individual's worry that friends, family and individuals in the marriage market may look down on them if they work in these occupations, and "professional stigma", an individual's worry that working in a low-skill occupation will hinder future advancement. We provide testimonials from earlier beneficiaries from these programs about how working in these jobs did not lead to the negative outcomes or perceptions people may worry about.

In all three experiments, we find that any allusion to stigma leads to *lower* levels of take-up on average. These treatments seemed to only make stigmas associated with these programs more salient for the recruits, even when we explicitly attempt to dispel the stigmas. This is the first experimental evidence that fear of stigma associated with labor-market decisions is an important determinant of take-up of social programs. It also shows that these worries can be so strong that they are difficult to dispel.

However, the effects of stigma are heterogeneous. We examine several sources of heterogeneity and hypothesize underlying mechanisms for them. Maturity (age) reduces the negative effects of stigma, possibly because older individuals face a lower utility cost to stigma as they age (e.g., due to marriage market concerns being less important). Work experience also reduces the negative effects of stigma; more experienced workers may have more accurate beliefs about entry-level jobs and thus are not moved by the recruiting pitches about stigma. Professional aspirations, family background, and peer group do not seem to affect a person's sensitivity to stigma. These results showcase how different recruiting methods affect not only the level of take-up, but also the composition of the applicant pool.

At the same time, we find no evidence for the existence of "welfare stigma", the disutility associated with participating in a program that is meant for the poor. Welfare stigma is perhaps the most commonly mentioned type of stigma in public policy research and discussions, but evidence on its importance is scarce (e.g., Currie (2006)). In our study, telling recruits that the program is subsidized "to help those in financial hardship" has no significant effect on application rates, and we can reject any substantial negative effect.

We make several important contributions. First, we show that social image concerns affect labor market decisions. The literature on social image (surveyed in Bursztyn and Jensen (2017)) studies how people's self-perception and society's perception of them can influence their behavior, both for good and for ill. There is evidence that people will pay to project a certain image to others (e.g., Bursztyn et al. (2016); Cruces et al. (2013)) and that willingness to do so is heterogeneous (Friedrichsen and Engelmann, 2018). While a worker's work history can affect how he is viewed by future employers Cohn et al. (Forthcoming), we are not aware of experimental evidence on how concerns about *social* image affect labor market choices.

In an influential randomized experiment studying take-up of the EITC, Bhargava and Manoli (2015) find that an intervention aimed at overcoming social stigma negatively affects take-up. They suggest that social stigma with the EITC is likely minimal, given that take-up is not visible to others, and that their intervention probably just increased the perceived complexity of the program. This is the only other field experiment that we are aware of that considers the impact of stigma on decision-making. Our context may be better suited to test for the effects of stigma since the programs, and associated entry-level jobs, are highly visible outcomes that are associated with socioeconomic status.

Second, we show that there is substantial heterogeneity in how stigma affects people's labor market decisions. Maturity and work experience seem to mitigate the negative effects of stigma, while other factors like education do not. Thus, recruiting methods aimed at overcoming stigma will affect not only take-up but also the composition of the participant pool and potentially the average effectiveness of the program.

Finally, we show clear evidence that welfare stigma is not important in this context. While welfare stigma is often assumed to exist (e.g., Besley and Coate (1995); Moffitt (1983); Stuber and Schlesinger (2006)), it is difficult to distinguish from transactions costs (Currie, 2006), and there is little empirical evidence of its importance (e.g., Currie (2003); Remler and Glied (2003); Schofield et al. (2019); Stuber and Schlesinger (2006)). A recent lab experiment by Friedrichsen et al. (2018) finds that stigma reduces take-up of a welfare-like benefit. On the other hand, the interventions by Bhargava and Manoli (2015) aimed at overcoming welfare stigma are ineffective. Our results provide clean evidence that welfare stigma has minimal effects on take-up.

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 discusses the local context of the experiments. Sections 3-5 detail the design and results for the three experiments on labor market stigmas. Section 6 discusses our results on welfare stigma, and Section 7 concludes.

2 Local Context

Our study takes place in the greater Cairo area of Egypt, a middle-income country with a PPP-adjusted GDP per capita of about $12,000. In 2016, Egypt faced a 33.4% unemployment rate among workers age 15-24, among the highest of any country (ILO, 2016).

There are many possible supply-side and demand-side explanations for Egypt's labor market woes, which predate the political instability of the last decade. It is not our purpose to test all of these explanations. We focus on the negative stigma surrounding available entry-level positions. Unemployed youth may prefer to remain unemployed rather than work in the jobs that are available, perhaps because the jobs are looked down upon in society or professionally unappealing (Groh et al., 2015). Anecdotally, policymakers, NGOs, and job seekers in Egypt expressed to us that this is important for understanding the Egyptian labor market.

We partnered with the Egypt office of a well-known job matching and training NGO called Education for Employment (EFE). EFE focuses on providing "demand-driven" training by partnering with employers who are looking to hire and they train people in line with the skills needed for those jobs. The majority of their training is focused on preparing young, college-educated individuals for entry-level jobs in the service sector including at hotels, restaurants, and retail shops.

We worked with EFE to design different methods to recruit individuals for these training programs, which we outline in our experiments below. While EFE was successful in filling most of their training classes, doing so was a regular challenge despite providing a highly subsidized (often free) training program. In line with others working in this area, they thought that part of the problem was the stigma associated with working in these entry level jobs. In Experiment 3, we worked with "JobMaster", a human resource company that hosted a job fair for several large companies, and they

shared similar concerns about perceived stigmas.

Based on these discussions, we decided to explore four main types of stigma. The first is what we call "social stigma", a sense that entry-level jobs are looked down upon by society, family, and potential marriage partners. This idea came up frequently in our discussions with our Egyptian partners. The second is "professional stigma", the belief that entry-level jobs are looked down on by future employers, hindering future career progress. The third is "personal stigma", the internal sense of disappointment associated with performing a job that is not rewarding (e.g., Major et al. (1998)). We were sometimes told that people are kept from attending a training program or job fair because they do not believe the outcome will be enjoyable or fulfilling. The fourth stigma is "welfare stigma", the disutility that comes from participating in a program meant for the poor or disadvantaged (Moffitt, 1983).

In the following experiments, we explore different aspects of these stigmas with slightly different strategies. Each experiment showcases in its own way the power and importance of stigma, each with their own strengths and limitations. We present the three experiments in ascending order of their complexity.

3 Experiment 1: Job Training Recruitment on Facebook

Experimental Design

Experiment 1 was run on Facebook in late 2018. Facebook is very popular in Egypt, with about 42 million users as of 2020 (Kemp, 2020), and has been used extensively for recruiting trainees by EFE. We tested three main ads. The control ad simply informed people about the training program, including the content, length, and format. We then adjusted the ad to include additional information about "social stigma" and "professional stigma". In both cases, we collected testimonials from previous graduates of the training program that described how the types of stigma we thought people would be worried about were in fact not as important as the potential job-seekers may have thought.

The exact content of the ads and messages from each experiment can be found in the Appendix. Each treatment was meant to acknowledge the existence of those stigmas and to try to dispel them. For example, in the "social stigma" treatment,

we included: "Although some people might think that these types of jobs might be looked down on in society, graduates of EFE who have taken these jobs report that their families and communities hold them in higher regard. For example, one alumnus recently said about his experience, '[My father] now supports me and encourages me to excel a lot more than he did in the past.' Another alumnus said, 'My parents have always been very supportive of me, but they are definitely proud of me now.' "

Experimenting with Facebook has its benefits and drawbacks. We used their "split test" feature to test the ads against each other. They do this with minimal input from the researcher and provide access to large samples for low cost. Our experiment reached 767,768 young people who lived in the greater Cairo area. Individuals were able to click on the ads and sign up for training directly on the Facebook platform. Signing up is our main outcome of interest in this case.

On the other hand, Facebook ads are not a very powerful intervention. Most people ignore the ads, reducing the expected impact of the ads and requiring large sample sizes. Other drawbacks include the inability to oversee the randomization itself, as ad placement is a black box for the user. There are also only two binary covariates that are available for those in the sample: gender and age range (18-24 and 25-34). Unfortunately, even these two covariates are enough to make us question how successful Facebook's algorithm is at randomizing ad delivery. As Table A1 shows, the treatments are not balanced by either covariate, so we must be cautious when we interpret the results from this experiment.

Results

The analysis is straightforward; we regress a binary outcome variable (whether the individual signed up for the training on the Facebook platform) on binary variables for each treatment, one for "social stigma" and another for "professional stigma". The control group is the excluded category. We present these results in Table 1. Column 1 provides several notable results. First, the sign-up rate in the control condition is quite low: only 0.12% of individuals served an ad signed up for the training. Despite the low sign-up rates, we can still learn from the relative effectiveness of the different ads. We multiply the sign up rate by 100 in this table to make it easier to read the coefficients.

Second, we find that both ads that attempt to overcome the fear of stigma in fact have a *negative* impact on take up rates. The professional stigma treatment leads to a decrease of 0.032 percentage points, a 26% decrease relative to the control group, and the social stigma treatment leads to a decrease of 0.047, a 38.9% decrease relative to control. The social stigma effect is larger than the professional stigma effect, and this difference is significant at the 5% level, suggesting that these two stigmas are distinct phenomenon.

Although these effects are small in absolute terms, they are large in relative terms and are precisely estimated due to the large sample. We combine the two in column 3 to improve power and find that any allusion to stigma leads to a decrease in sign-up of 0.039, or 32% relative to control.

Table 1: Facebook Sign Up Rates (x100) (Experiment 1)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Professional Stigma	-0.032***	-0.038***		
	(0.009)	(0.011)		
Social Stigma	-0.047***	-0.049***		
	(0.009)	(0.011)		
Professional Stigma*Old		0.026		
		(0.020)		
Social Stigma*Old		0.011		
		(0.019)		
Any Stigma			-0.039***	-0.044***
			(0.008)	(0.010)
Any Stigma*Old				0.019
				(0.017)
Mean of Control Group	0.121	0.121	0.121	0.121
Mean of Control for Interacted Group		0.128		0.128
N	767,768	767,768	767,768	767,768

Notes: This table reports how each Facebook treatment ad affected the proportion of the sample who signed up for the job training program. The dependent variable is multiplied by 100 to make the coefficients easier to read since sign up rates were so low. Columns 2 and 4 include an interaction for "old" which is a binary variable for individuals aged 25-34. 28% of the sample are within that age range. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance * .10; ** .05; *** .01.

Because we only have two binary covariates to work with, we are restricted in our

ability to dig into mechanisms and potential heterogeneous impacts. Columns 2 and 4 find no significant differential impact by age or gender, though the point estimates suggest the stigma treatments have a stronger effect on younger people.[2]

The negative effect of any mention of stigma was initially surprising to us, but we find this result in all three experiments. While we hoped to dispel the negative stigmas with our treatments, it seems that instead we made them more salient. The positive information we gave did not dispel the stigmas. We provide more support for this interpretation in Experiment 3.

Recall that our outcome here is sign-ups and not the proportion of individuals who ended up enrolling in the training program. This is because only a handful of individuals who signed up enrolled in the program. Nonetheless, we believe that stigma is able to affect sign-ups is an important result, since sign-ups necessarily precede enrollment. Experiment 3 below allows us to overcome this limitation by observing attendance to a Job Fair.

4 Experiment 2: Street Level Job Training Recruitment

Experimental Design

Our second experiment used in-person, street-level marketing in different areas of Cairo. Young adults were approached on the street by a surveyor and asked if they were interested in hearing about a training program being offered for youth interested in finding jobs. If they answered yes, we collected basic eligibility information. If the person was eligible for the training program (as defined by the NGO), more information was collected and they received a randomized recruitment pitch from the surveyor.[3]

As in Experiment 1, we gave pitches aimed at professional and social stigma. Individuals in the control arm were given information about the program's purpose, location, timing, etc. They were also provided information about the income of individuals who graduated 1 year and 5 years ago. Those in the stigma treatment groups

[2]We reproduce our tables split by gender in Tables A2 and A3.

[3]This experiment was implemented from August 2016-February 2017. Eligibility was determined by asking if the respondent is unemployed or underemployed; how old they are; their educational attainment; whether they attended public or private school; and their military status.

got the same information plus text that was almost identical to experiment 1 (exact wording can be found in the Appendix).

We also added a third stigma treatment arm focused on "personal stigma". As with the other two arms we included at the end of the pitch the following statement: "Note that although some people might think that these types of jobs are not very enjoyable, there is actually high satisfaction among graduates of EFE who have taken these jobs. For example, one alumnus recently said, 'I definitely enjoyed my first job because the workplace was very positive, and I got to know new people.' And our records indicate that about 80% of EFE alumni stayed in their first job for more than 1 year."[4]

After hearing the pitch, individuals were invited to sign up for the training on the spot. Conditional on agreeing to apply, they were then asked more detailed questions related to their prior work history and family background.

The street-level recruitment strategy had several advantages, and some limitations, relative to the Facebook recruitment in Experiment 1. It is much more intense than online ads, allowing for what we expected to be a stronger treatment effect. Speaking to people in person also allows for better screening of individuals, as well as collecting additional information about people's backgrounds. We were particularly interested in collecting data on income, as one theory we heard often was that stigma concerns are primarily relevant for those of higher socioeconomic status (SES). To try to get a proxy for SES, we included a question before the information pitches about the type of transport people primarily take. We classify individuals who take private car or mobility on demand services (e.g., Uber) as "relatively rich". The chief limitation is that because of the intensive nature of face-to-face interactions, our sample in this experiment is much smaller (2,900 individuals) than in Experiment 1.

As with Experiment 1, our outcome of interest is applying for the program. Application rates are orders of magnitude larger, with the control group applying for the program 43% of the time. Unfortunately only a handful of applicants ended up participating in the training, leading to insufficient power to detect effects on enrollment.

[4]The testimonial and the 80% figure were based on a phone survey of EFE alumni.

Results

Table 2 reports the results from Experiment 2. On average, our stigma treatments had little effect on take-up, though professional and social stigmas again had negative point estimates. This is weaker evidence of the existence of stigma relative to Experiment 1.[5]

However, the average results mask considerable heterogeneity, as seen in columns 2 and 3. There are no clear patterns by age (column 2), but when we check by SES, as roxied by their main mode of transportation, we find large differences. The stigma messages have a negative impact for those of lower SES but a strongly *positive* impact on those of higher SES. This showcases that stigma can work differently depending on an individual's background.

In the final three columns, we aggregate our stigma treatments to improve power, and we find the same overall results. While on average the treatments decrease application rates by 1.5 percentage points, they decrease application rates by 4.3 percentage points for those of lower SES (a 10% decrease) and *increase* application rates by those of higher SES by 10.2 percentage points (or 24%). This is an increase of 14.5 percentage points relative to those of lower SES.

Combined with the results from Experiment 1, these results help confirm that stigma is an important factor in application behavior of job seekers. Moreover, they showcase that stigma is not a uni-dimensional force and can have different effects on different types of people. We attempt to interpret this heterogeneity in Section 5 below. Unfortunately, despite high application rates, enrollment rates were very low, limiting our ability to consider these results as definitive. Experiment 3 overcomes this challenge.

[5]We also cross-randomized the cost of the program from a small free of 200 EGP, or about $25 (the actual cost was around 4500EGP), to an incentive payment of $12.50. We found that application rates decrease with price but do not increase with the incentive. We control for this cross randomization in our analysis.

Table 2: Job Training Application Rates (Experiment 2)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Personal Stigma	0.005	0.033	-0.015			
	(0.026)	(0.033)	(0.029)			
Professional Stigma	-0.030	-0.030	-0.062**			
	(0.026)	(0.033)	(0.029)			
Social Stigma	-0.020	-0.008	-0.050*			
	(0.026)	(0.033)	(0.029)			
Personal Stigma*Old		-0.069				
		(0.053)				
Professional Stigma*Old		0.005				
		(0.053)				
Social Stigma*Old		-0.027				
		(0.053)				
Personal Stigma*Rich			0.109*			
			(0.064)			
Professional Stigma*Rich			0.165***			
			(0.063)			
Social Stigma*Rich			0.162**			
			(0.065)			
Any Stigma				-0.015	-0.002	-0.043*
				(0.021)	(0.026)	(0.023)
Any Stigma*Old					-0.030	
					(0.043)	
Any Stigma*Rich						0.145***
						(0.051)
Mean of Control Group	0.430	0.430	0.430	0.430	0.430	0.430
Mean of Control of Interacted Group		0.443	0.455		0.443	0.455
N	2900	2900	2900	2900	2900	2900

Notes: This table reports how each treatment pitch affected the proportion of the sample who signed up for the job training program. Columns 2 & 5 include an interaction for "old" which is a binary variable for individuals aged 25-34. 38% of the sample are within that age range.Columns 3 & 6 include an interaction for "rich" which is a binary for individuals who travel using private transport. 19% of the sample do so. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance * .10; ** .05; *** .01

5 Experiment 3: Door-to-Door Recruitment for a Job Fair

Experimental Design

In Experiment 3, our focus changes slightly. Instead of recruiting individuals to attend a multi-week job training program, which is a large commitment of time and effort, we implemented a door-to-door information campaign in December 2019 that aimed to encourage people to attend a upcoming free job fair. The job fair was focused on the same types of entry-level service sector jobs as the training program. We thought the job fair would prove that these results extend beyond application rates since the likelihood that individuals can commit to a one time event would be higher than committing to multi-week training program.

The process was similar to the street-level recruitment in Experiment 2. Surveyors would go from apartment to apartment, asking if there was anyone in the household who was looking for a job. If yes, they would check to see if that individual was in the same age range as the training (18 to 35). They would then collect some basic demographic information and read a randomized informational message about the job fair.[6]

In this experiment, the control group received a message that provided information about the time and location of the job fair, and the firms and types of jobs that would be available there. We changed our two treatment groups to explictly test the importance of the salience of social stigma and our ability to dispel it.[7] Treatment 1 was meant to make social stigma salient: we included the statement, "Although some people might think these types of jobs might be looked down on in society, it's important to start somewhere." Treatment 2 was meant to bring up the stigma *and* dispel it, replacing "it's important to to start somewhere" with, "actually people in these types of jobs report that their families respect and encourage them more than before they had a job." We also included some of the testimonials from Experiment 2. The full script can be found in the Appendix.

[6]To decrease the potential for information spillovers the randomization was implemented at the building level. We cluster all of our results in experiment 3 by building.

[7]Recall that social and professional stigma had similar effects in past experiments, so focusing on social stigma here does not mark a major break with the other experiments.

Although it has the smallest sample size, Experiment 3 is the most informative of the experiments for two reasons. First, our outcome is actual attendance of the job fair, rather than just an application. About 6% of the control group showed up to the job fair, allowing us to test if stigma affects actual labor market behavior. Second, we know more about the recruits than we did in the other experiments, including their education, work status, and job aspirations. We will use much of this information in Section5 below to try to understand why stigma has heterogeneous effects.

Results

Table 3 reports results with attendance as the outcome. Again, merely alluding to stigma decreases attendance by 1.4 percentage points. Attempting to dispel it makes it *worse*, decreasing attendance by 2.7 percentage points. While small in nominal terms and not statistically significant, these effects are large in relative terms, since only 5.9% of the control group attended the fair.

Our results may be an example of "ironic rebound", where the mention of stigma increases its salience (Wegner et al., 1987). Another possibility is that our pitch tries "too hard" to dispel stigma, thus making the recruit update their beliefs about how bad the stigma is.

When we replicate the age and SES definitions from Experiment 2, the heterogeneity in results is striking. Any mention of stigma has a strong negative effect on younger people (5.3 percentage points in column 5, or a 90% decrease), while there is no negative effect (or even a slight positive effect) on older people. We do not see heterogeneity by SES. We explore these results in more detail below.

Interpreting Heterogeneity in Stigma

As we have seen in all three experiments, the stigma treatments seem to have heterogeneous effects. While the treatments suppress take-up overall, older and/or wealthier recruits seem less sensitive to stigma. However, we had limited information about recruits in Experiments 1 and 2, so these characteristics may proxy for others that we do not observe. Using our detailed information about the recruits in Experiment 3, we are able to dig into potential mechanisms. We hypothesize four underlying mechanisms

Table 3: Job Fair Attendance Rates (Experiment 3)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Salient Stigma	-0.014	-0.052**	-0.015			
	(0.015)	(0.021)	(0.015)			
Dispelling Stigma	-0.027	-0.053**	-0.027			
	(0.017)	(0.026)	(0.017)			
Salient Stigma*Old		0.085***				
		(0.027)				
Dispelling Stigma*Old		0.057*				
		(0.033)				
Salient Stigma*Rich			0.015			
			(0.047)			
Dispelling Stigma*Rich			0.000			
			(0.040)			
Any Stigma				-0.020	-0.053**	-0.021
				(0.014)	(0.021)	(0.014)
Any Stigma*Old					0.071**	
					(0.027)	
Any Stigma*Rich						0.007
						(0.038)
Mean of Control Group	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059
Mean of Control for Interacted Group		0.091	0.60		0.091	0.60
N	1170	1170	1170	1170	1170	1170

Notes: This table reports how each treatment pitch affected the proportion of the sample who attended the job fair. Columns 2 & 5 include an interaction for "old" which is a binary variable for individuals aged 25-34. 44% of the sample are within that age range.Columns 3 & 6 include an interaction for "rich" which is a binary for individuals who travel using private transport. 12% of the sample do so. Standard errors clustered at the building level in parentheses. Significance * .10; ** .05; *** .01

that could explain our results.

Our first hypothesis is that more mature people have a lower utility cost to stigma (i.e., they care less about what others think of them and their job), perhaps because marriage market concerns are less important to them. This would predict that age – to the degree that it captures maturity – should have a positive interaction with the stigma treatments.

The second hypothesis is that sensitivity to stigma depends on one's peer group (e.g., Bursztyn and Jensen (2017)). Those with more educated, successful peers or wealthier families will care more about stigma. This makes sense if one measures oneself against one's peers and takes their opinions seriously. Someone whose peers work in higher-paying jobs may be especially sensitive to the idea that entry-level jobs are looked down upon in society. This hypothesis predicts that more educated recruits and those from wealthier families should have a stronger (more negative) reaction to the stigma treatments.

Our third hypothesis is that work experience reduces sensitivity to stigma. If an individual has not worked in an entry-level job, they may be especially sensitive to concerns about its professional prospects or social image. For one who has already worked these jobs, our treatments should provide no new information and thus should have zero impact. We know if our recruits are currently working, so we can use this as a proxy for work experience.

Finally, our fourth hypothesis is that those with greater professional aspirations will be most sensitive to the stigma of low-ranking jobs. If one's aspiration is for a higher-status, white-collar job, the stigma treatments should have an especially large negative effect. Those with lower aspirations should be less sensitive to the treatments. We ask recruits in this experiment about their job aspirations, so we can test this.

We test these four hypotheses in Table 4. We combine the two stigma treatments to increase power, as they had similar impacts. Columns 1 and 2 look at the first hypothesis, that maturity reduces a person's sensitivity to stigma. Consistent with this hypothesis, the negative effect of stigma declines significantly with age. The recruits in our sample range from age 16 to 38 (mostly 17 to 35), and column 2 shows that stigma has no negative effect for those age 25-29, with a slight positive effect for those 30 and over. We view this as strong evidence for the first hypothesis.

Table 4: Heterogeneity in Stigma (Experiment 3)

	Maturity		Peers	Work Exp	Aspirations	All
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Any Stigma	-0.149**	-0.061*	-0.017	-0.042*	-0.046*	-0.098**
	(0.067)	(0.031)	(0.015)	(0.022)	(0.025)	(0.044)
Stigma*Age	0.005**					
	(0.002)					
Stigma*Age 20-24		0.016				0.003
		(0.039)				(0.036)
Stigma*Age 25-29		0.069*				0.069*
		(0.040)				(0.040)
Stigma*Age 30+		0.090**				0.085**
		(0.040)				(0.039)
Stigma*College grad			-0.015			-0.055
			(0.038)			(0.044)
Stigma*Rich			-0.004			-0.018
			(0.034)			(0.035)
Stigma*Currently working				0.050*		0.052*
				(0.027)		(0.029)
Stigma*White collar expectation					0.039	0.066
					(0.035)	(0.043)
Stigma*High salary expectation					0.029	0.011
					(0.025)	(0.026)
Constant	0.196***	0.098***	0.054***	0.085***	0.076***	0.129***
	(0.058)	(0.028)	(0.014)	(0.019)	(0.022)	(0.037)
Observations	1,170	1,170	1,170	1,170	1,170	1,170
R-squared	0.010	0.012	0.005	0.009	0.007	0.026

Notes: This table reports how bringing up stigma affected the proportion of the sample who attended the job fair. We combine the two treatments into a single treatment variable to improve statistical power. Columns 2-5 explore how the impacts differ by groups characterized by their baseline characteristics. Column 6 includes all such characteristics together. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance * .10; ** .05; *** .01

Column 3 looks at the second hypothesis, which says that those with more accomplished, higher-SES peers will be more sensitive to stigma. We do not find support for this hypothesis, finding no significant difference in sensitivity to stigma by education or SES.

In column 4, we investigate whether work experience reduces sensitivity to stigma. Our best measure of work experience is whether the person is currently working. Here, we do find some support for our hypothesis. Those not currently working react negatively to the stigma treatment, while those currently working do not, with the difference significant at the 10% level.

Column 5 looks at the hypothesis concerning a person's professional aspirations. In our survey, we asked what type of job the person aspired to and the salary a person expected. We divided the job expectations into "blue collar" and "white collar", where white collar includes administrative, professional, and supervisory jobs. We also asked for a person's salary expectations, and defined "high expectations" as answering 4,000 EGP or higher (approximately the top 20% of answers). Our resuls show that, if anything, high aspirations and expectations *reduce* the influence of stigma. Our hypothesis had predicted the opposite.

Finally, column 6 includes all of these interactions together. The results are consistent with those in the previous columns: the characteristics associated with a lack of sensitivity to stigma are age and current work experience. We thus have strong evidence for hypothesis 1, some evidence for hypothesis 3, and no good evidence for hypotheses 2 and 4. Of course, there are other possible reasons that these characteristics would be associated with a lower effect of the stigma treatments. For example, older people with more life experience may have more accurate beliefs about the costs of stigma. Whatever the underlying mechanisms, it is clear that stigma is an important factor preventing take-up of the job fair, but that this is mitigated by work experience and especially by age.

This provides an important contribution to the literature on stigma and take-up of programs. Stigma matters, but its importance depends heavily on the context and who is being targeted. The recruiting method will also affect the composition of the applicant pool. In this case, allusion to stigma will repel younger applicants with less work experience. This could be optimal if the impacts of the program are lower for

that segment of the population, but they may also be the ones who need the program most.

6 Testing for Welfare Stigma

The most familiar type of stigma to many economists is welfare stigma. Welfare stigma is the stigma associated with participating in a program intended for the poor or less fortunate (e.g., Moffitt (1983)). While welfare stigma is a common feature of discussions about take-up of social programs, evidence of its importance is rare (Currie, 2006). In the only two experimental treatments we are aware of, Bhargava and Manoli (2015) find little evidence of welfare stigma for the EITC in the US, while Friedrichsen et al. (2018) find evidence for it in a lab setting.[8] There is no evidence we are aware of on welfare stigma in developing countries.

In Experiment 2, the street-level recruitment for job training, we also tested for the presence and importance of welfare stigma. After telling recruits the price they would pay for the training program, we randomly told some of them that the "true cost" of the program is usually higher but has been reduced through donations from organizations. Within those who get the "true cost" treatment, a random subset were also told that the price had been reduced "to help those in financial hardship". The latter is the "welfare stigma" treatment. If welfare stigma is relevant here, those getting the welfare stigma treatment should have lower application rates than those who get only the true cost treatment.[9]

Unlike receipt of government benefits, attending job training and the subsequent outcomes are very visible, so we might expect welfare stigma to be especially relevant here. On the other hand, job training and other assistance programs are common in Egypt, so there may be little social stigma associated with taking part in one. This specific training program is not widely known, which might also reduce the stigma. Even if there is not this type of social stigma, though, there could be a personal

[8]Take-up of the EITC may have minimal stigma (at least social stigma) because it is not visible to others. Attending a training program is more visible, so our setting may be better for finding an effect of welfare stigma.

[9]Though our primary interest here is in welfare stigma, we expect the true cost treatment to have a positive impact on application rates, as people might now think that the subsidized training program is a good deal.

welfare stigma associated with taking any assistance intended for the poor.

Table 5 shows the results. We can soundly reject any negative effect of welfare stigma. Column 1 shows that, compared to not hearing anything about a discount, the true cost treatment has a positive but statistically insignificant effect on take up. The welfare stigma treatment has a significant positive effect. In column 2, we restrict only to those who got the true cost treatment. Welfare stigma shows an insignificant positive effect, and we can reject any substantial negative effect of welfare stigma on take-up of this program.

Table 5: Testing for Welfare Stigma (Experiment 2)

	Control Group:			
	No Cost Info	True Cost Info		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Welfare Stigma	0.051***	0.024	0.005	0.015
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.023)	(0.020)
True Cost	0.027			
	(0.018)			
Welfare Stigma*Old			0.050	
			(0.037)	
Welfare Stigma*Rich				0.042
				(0.046)
Mean of Control Group	0.407	0.432	0.432	0.432
Mean of Control of Interacted Group			0.458	0.444
P-Value for Combined Effect of Interaction			0.059	0.173
N	4390	2950	2950	2950

Notes: This table reports on the impact of discussing the cost of the program, and the differential impact of mentioning that the cost is subsidize to help the poor. Columns 3 includes a binary for "old" which characterizes 38% of our sample. Column 4 includes a binary for "rich" which characterizes 19% of our sample. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance * .10; ** .05; *** .01

One might expect that welfare stigma is a stronger disincentive for the wealthy. In columns 3-4, we find that if anything, older and wealthier recruits respond positively to the welfare stigma treatment. The effect of the welfare stigma treatment for older recruits is positive and significant at the 10% level. Thus, in an experimental setup, we find no evidence for welfare stigma as an important factor in take-up of job training.

7 Discussion and Conclusion

In three randomized experiments in Egypt, we provide clean evidence on the impacts of several types of stigma on the take-up and composition of labor market assistance programs. Negative stigma associated with the prospects and social image of entry-level jobs is clearly an important factor in labor market decisions.

Attempts to counteract the stigma associated with entry-level jobs have heterogeneous effects. For younger people and those with less work experience, even alluding to negative stigma leads to lower rates of take-up. Maturity and work experience mitigate this effect. This means that attempts to overcome stigma can affect not only the rate of take-up but also the composition of who participates. On the other hand, we find no evidence that welfare stigma affects take-up of these programs.

For policymakers, our results showcase that messaging around programs is of first-order importance. Stigma concerns are real and well founded, but also not simple to fix. The same message aimed at dispelling stigma could help some groups and hurt others. Additional research on stigma is needed. Carefully testing out messages can help inform strategies for targeting the groups best suited for the program and new multi-arm bandit approaches could help in combing through the large space of potential solutions for these issues.

References

Acevedo, P., G. Cruces, P. Gertler, and S. Martinez (2018): "Living Up to Expectations: How Vocational Education Made Females Better Off but Left Males Behind," Working Paper.

Attanasio, O., A. Guarin, C. Medina, and C. Meghir (2017): "Vocational Training for Disadvantaged Youth in Colombia: A Long-Term Follow Up," American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 9, 131–143.

Attanasio, O., A. Kugler, and C. Meghir (2011): "Subsidizing Vocational Training for Disadvantaged Youth in Colombia: Evidence from a Randomized Trial," American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 3, 188–220.

Bandiera, O., R. Burgess, N. Das, S. Gulesci, I. Rasul, and M. Sulaiman (2017): "Labor markets and poverty in village economies," The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 132, 811–870.

Besley, T. and S. Coate (1995): "Group lending, repayment incentives and social collateral," Journal of Development Economics, 46, 1–18.

Bhargava, S. and D. Manoli (2015): "Psychological frictions and the incomplete take-up of social benefits: Evidence from an IRS field experiment," American Economic Review, 105, 3489–3529.

Bursztyn, L., M. Callen, B. Ferman, S. Gulzar, A. Hasanain, and N. Yuchtman (2016): "Political identity: Experimental evidence on anti-Americanism in Pakistan," Journal of the European Economic Association.

Bursztyn, L. and R. Jensen (2017): "Social image and economic behavior in the field: Identifying, understanding, and shaping social pressure," Annual Review of Economics, 9, 131–153.

Card, D., J. Kluve, and A. Weber (2018): "What works? A meta analysis of recent active labor market program evaluations," Journal of the European Economic Association, 16, 894–931.

Cohn, A., M. A. Marechal, F. Schneider, and R. A. Weber (Forthcoming): "Frequent Job Changes can Signal Poor Work Attitude and Reduce Employability," Journal of the European Economic Association.

Cruces, G., R. Perez-Truglia, and M. Tetaz (2013): "Biased perceptions of income distribution and preferences for redistribution: Evidence from a survey experiment," Journal of Public Economics, 98, 100–112.

Currie, J. (2003): "U.S. Food and Nutrition Programs," in Means-Tested Welfare Programs in the United States, ed. by R. Moffitt, University of Chicago Press for NBER.

——— (2006): "The Take-Up of Social Benefits," in Poverty, the Distribution of Income, and Public Policy, ed. by D. C. Alan Auerbach and J. Quigley, Russell Sage.

Friedrichsen, J. and D. Engelmann (2018): "Who cares about social image?" European Economic Review, 110, 61–77.

Friedrichsen, J., T. König, and R. Schmacker (2018): "Social image concerns and welfare take-up," Journal of Public Economics, 168, 174–192.

Groh, M., N. Krishnan, D. McKenzie, and T. Vishwanath (2016): "Do wage subsidies provide a stepping-stone to employment for recent college graduates? Evidence from a randomized experiment in Jordan," Review of Economics and Statistics, 98, 488–502.

Groh, M., D. McKenzie, N. Shammout, and T. Vishwanath (2015): "Testing the importance of search frictions and matching through a randomized experiment in Jordan," IZA Journal of Labor Economics, 4, 7.

Heckman, J. J. and J. A. Smith (2004): "The determinants of participation in a social program: Evidence from a prototypical job training program," Journal of Labor Economics, 22, 243–298.

Hirshleifer, S., D. McKenzie, R. Almeida, and C. Ridao-Cano (2016): "The Impact of Vocational Training for the Unemployed: Experimental Evidence from Turkey," Economic Journal, 127, 2115–2146.

ILO (2016): "Employent by Sex and Age – ILO Modelled Estimates," ILOSTAT. Accessed 02-14-2020. https://ilostat.ilo.org/data.

Kemp, S. (2020): "Digital 2020: Egypt," Retrieved from https://https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-egypt on 2020-06-19.

Kluve, J., S. Puerto, D. Robalino, J. M. Romero, F. Rother, J. Stöterau, F. Weidenkaff, and M. Witte (2019): "Do youth employment programs improve labor market outcomes? A quantitative review," World Development, 114, 237–253.

Major, B., S. Spencer, T. Schmader, C. Wolfe, and J. Crocker (1998): "Coping with negative stereotypes about intellectual performance: The role of psychological disengagement," Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 24, 34–50.

Manchester, C. F. and K. J. Mumford (2010): "Welfare stigma due to public disapproval," University of Minnesota and Purdue University, unpublished working paper.

McKenzie, D. (2017): "How effective are active labor market policies in developing countries? a critical review of recent evidence," The World Bank Research Observer, 32, 127–154.

Moffitt, R. (1983): "An economic model of welfare stigma," The American Economic Review, 73, 1023–1035.

Remler, D. K. and S. A. Glied (2003): "What other programs can teach us: Increasing participation in health insurance programs," American Journal of Public Health, 93, 67–74.

Rinehart, C. S. and J. W. McGuire (2017): "Obstacles to Takeup: Ecuador's Conditional Cash Transfer Program, The Bono de Desarrollo Humano," World Development, 97, 165–177.

Schofield, T. P., N. Haslam, and P. Butterworth (2019): "The persistence of welfare stigma: Does the passing of time and subsequent employment moderate the negative perceptions associated with unemployment benefit receipt?" Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 49, 563–574.

Stuber, J. and M. Schlesinger (2006): "Sources of stigma for means-tested government programs," Social Science & Medicine, 63, 933–945.

Wegner, D. M., D. J. Schneider, S. R. Carter, and T. L. White (1987): "Psychological Effects of Thought Suppression," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 53.

World Bank Group (2018): World development report 2019: The changing nature of work, World Bank.

Table A1: Balance Table

Panel A: Facebook and Job Fair Experiments								
	FB Experiment				Job Fair Experiment			
	Control	Professional Stigma	Social Stigma	Combined Stigma	Control	Salient Stigma	Dispelling Stigma	Combined Stigma
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Female	0.53	-0.03***	-0.01***	-0.05***	0.37	0.03	0.05	0.04
	{0.50}	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	{0.03}	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Old/Age	0.28	0.03***	0.01***	0.04***	25.42	-0.48	-0.42	-0.45
	{0.02}	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	{0.34}	(0.43)	(0.46)	(0.40)
University					0.20	0.02	0.00	0.01
					{0.02}	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Rich					0.10	0.00	0.02	0.01
					{0.02}	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Working					0.45	0.00	-0.01	0.00
					{0.03}	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
P-value		0.00	0.00	0.00		0.47	0.522	0.445
Panel B: Street Level Experiment								
	Control	Personal Stigma	Professional Stigma	Social Stigma	Combined Stigma	Control	Welfare Stigma	True Cost
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Female	0.64	-0.02	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.63	0.02	0.04*
	{0.48}	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	{0.48}	(0.02)	(0.02)
Age	24.70	0.13	0.18	0.20	0.17	24.70	0.07	0.01
	{2.43}	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.10)	{2.45}	(0.09)	(0.09)
University	0.66	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	0.62	0.02	0.02
	{0.48}	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	{0.49}	(0.02)	(0.02)
Rich	0.19	0.01	0.037	0.00	0.01	0.22	-0.04**	-0.01
	{0.39}	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	{0.41}	(0.01)	(0.02)
Working	0.34	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.34	0.02	0.02
	{0.47}	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	{0.47}	(0.02)	(0.02)
P-Value		0.630	0.552	0.435	0.648		0.0747	0.217

Notes: This table reports how baseline characteristics differ by group. Columns 1-4 of Panel A report differences for Experiment 1 (Facebook Ads), and Columns 5-8 report differences for Experiment 3 (Job Fair Recruitment). Panel B reports differences for Experiment 2 (Street Level Recruitment). The tables also report p-values for the joint test of all reported baseline covariates on treatment assignment relative to control. Standard deviations for the control group in brackets. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance * .10; ** .05; *** .01

Table A2: Results for Women

Panel A: Facebook and Job Fair Experiments					
	FB Experiment Sign Up Rates(x100)		Job Fair Experiment Attendance		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Any Stigma	-0.04***	-0.04***	-0.03	-0.07*	-0.03
	(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Any Stigma*Old		-0.02		0.08*	
		(0.03)		(0.03)	
Any Stigma*Rich					0.01
					(0.07)
Mean of Control Group	0.105	0.105	0.053	0.053	0.053
Mean of Control for Interacted Group		0.239		0.086	0.054
N	358,318	358,318	465	465	465

Panel B: Street Level Experiment						
	Labor Market Stigma			Welfare Stigma		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Any Stigma	-0.023	-0.001	-0.046			
	(0.026)	(0.035)	(0.028)			
Any Stigma*Old		-0.046				
		(0.052)				
Any Stigma*Rich			0.151**			
			(0.070)			
Welfare Stigma				0.019	-0.014	0.005
				(0.023)	(0.031)	(0.025)
Welfare Stigma*Old					0.072	
					(0.045)	
Welfare Stigma*Rich						0.078
						(0.060)
Mean of Control Group	0.445	0.445	0.445	0.445	0.445	0.445
Mean of Control for Interacted Group		0.467	0.466		0.481	0.455
N	1895	1895	1895	1937	1937	1937

Notes: This table reports the impact of any stigma treatment on outcomes restricting the sample to women. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance * .10; ** .05; *** .01

Table A3: Results for Men

Panel A: Facebook and Job Fair Experiments					
	FB Experiment Sign Up Rates(x100)		Job Fair Experiment Attendance		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Combined Stigma	-0.03***	-0.05***	-0.01	-0.04	-0.01
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Combined Stigma*Old		0.05**		0.06	
		(0.02)		(0.04)	
Combined Stigma*Rich					0.00
					(0.06)
Mean of Control Group	0.082	0.082	0.063	0.063	0.063
Mean of Control for Interacted Group		0.233		0.324	0.064
N	409,450	409,450	705	705	705
Panel B: Street Level Experiment					
	Labor Market Stigma			Welfare Stigma	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Combined Stigma	0.006	0.002	-0.028			
	(0.035)	(0.040)	(0.041)			
Combined Stigma*Old		0.015				
		(0.080)				
Combined Stigma*Rich			0.130*			
			(0.079)			
Welfare Stigma				0.037	0.038	0.037
				(0.031)	(0.036)	(0.036)
Welfare Stigma*Old					0.002	
					(0.071)	
Welfare Stigma*Rich						-0.007
						(0.073)
Mean of Control Group	0.403	0.403	0.403	0.407	0.407	0.407
Mean of Control for Interacted Group		0.409	0.431		0.427	0.421
N	1005	1005	1005	1013	1013	1013

Notes: This table reports the impact of any stigma treatment on outcomes restricting the sample to men. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance * .10; ** .05; *** .01

Appendix 1: Scripts used in each Experiment

Experiment 1: Facebook

- **Control:** "Are you looking for a job but you don't know where to start? EFE will help you take the first step in your professional career through the "Job Placement Training Program". EFE works with private sector companies to ensure that the skills that you will acquire from the program are the skills that the job market really needs and we help you obtain job interviews with well-known companies before you graduate. We are starting a JPTP program now. The program is grant supported so you can get it at no cost. You must commit to the full scholarship period (every day from Sunday to Thursday from 9 am to 5:30 pm for 3 weeks). Apply!"

- **Professional Stigma:** "Are you looking for a job but you don't know where to start? EFE will help you take the first step in your professional career through the "Job Placement Training Program". EFE works with private sector companies to ensure that the skills that you will acquire from the program are the skills that the job market really needs and we help you obtain job interviews with well-known companies before you graduate. Note that although some people might think that these types of jobs might be a professional dead-end, graduates of the program who started in these jobs often end up climbing the professional ladder to become managers and directors. Overall there is a high rate of professional development amongst graduates of EFE who have taken these jobs. For example, one EFE alumnus started as a content associate and 5 years later he is currently a senior content supervisor managing a team of over 60 employees. We also interviewed some recent alumni who said "I definitely felt like there was scope to grow in my first job", and "There was definitely room to grow professionally, 100%. We are starting a JPTP program now. The program is grant supported so you can get it at no cost. You must commit to the full scholarship period (every day from Sunday to Thursday from 9 am to 5:30 pm for 3 weeks). Apply!"

- **Social Stigma:** "Are you looking for a job but you don't know where to start? EFE will help you take the first step in your professional career through the

"Job Placement Training Program". EFE works with private sector companies to ensure that the skills that you will acquire from the program are the skills that the job market really needs and we help you obtain job interviews with well-known companies before you graduate.Note that although some people might think that these types of jobs might be looked down on in society, graduates of EFE who have taken these jobs report that their families and communities hold them in higher regard. For example, one alumnus recently said about his experience, "[My father] now supports me and encourages me to excel a lot more than he did in the past." Another alumnus said, "My parents have always been very supportive of me, but they are definitely proud of me now. We are starting a JPTP program now. The program is grant supported so you can get it at no cost. You must commit to the full scholarship period (every day from Sunday to Thursday from 9 am to 5:30 pm for 3 weeks). Apply!"

Experiment 2: Job Training

- **Control:** "I am from Education for Employment| Egypt. We are an organization that specializes in youth training and employment and focuses on improving the skills of graduates to support them in securing job opportunities through developing some of their skills such as presentation, communication, CV writing skills, computer skills, and the English language skills needed by the labor market.

  The training program normally takes about 3-4 weeks, and is located at [NGO Address]. It takes place six days a week from 9am-5.30pm, and is usually conducted in classes of 25 or so students, who all work together on a variety of topics to help them learn more about the skills that are needed in the labor market. The training takes on an interactive and practical approach and ensures that students learn how to utilize those skills to turn them into fruitful employment opportunities after graduation. We provide certificates of completion and help you find jobs after you finish the program. We also provide access to a large network of over 2000 graduates with similar profiles, and a variety of ongoing professional development courses after graduation.

  We ensure that all programs are market-driven and based on the needs of the

local labor market. When implementing programs, we establish partnerships with private sector employers that have a demand for new high-quality employees. We are funded by a variety of sources and our phone number is [NGO Phone Number].

This training program aims to help individuals find employment opportunities that will help them grow professionally in the future. In the past, our graduates have gotten jobs like waiters, retailers, marketers, sales associates, call center agents, and e-commerce associates, etc. Average starting salaries for employed graduates are 1450 LE per month, and after 3 years the average employed person is making about 3400 LE per month."

- **Professional Stigma:** Control Pitch + "Note that although some people might think that these types of jobs might be a professional dead-end, graduates of the program who started in these jobs often end up climbing the professional ladder to become managers and directors. Overall there is a high rate of professional development amongst graduates of EFE who have taken these jobs. For example, one EFE alumnus started as a content associate and 5 years later he is currently a senior content supervisor managing a team of over 60 employees. We also interviewed some recent alumni who said "I definitely felt like there was scope to grow in my first job", and "There was definitely room to grow professionally, 100%."

- **Social Stigma:** Control Pitch + "Note that although some people might think that these types of jobs might be looked down on in society, graduates of EFE who have taken these jobs report that their families and communities hold them in higher regard. For example, one alumnus recently said about his experience, "[My father] now supports me and encourages me to excel a lot more than he did in the past." Another alumnus said, "My parents have always been very supportive of me, but they are definitely proud of me now."

- **Personal Stigma:** Control Pitch + "Note that although some people might think that these types of jobs are not very enjoyable, there is actually high satisfaction among graduates of EFE who have taken these jobs. For example, one alumnus recently said, 'I definitely enjoyed my first job because the workplace

was very positive, and I got to know new people.' And our records indicate that about 80% of EFE alumni stayed in their first job for more than 1 year."

- **True Cost:** Control Pitch + Stigma Pitch + "The true cost of the program is usually around 4000 LE, but many organizations have donated to EFE Egypt so that we can provide this at a much lower cost."

- **Welfare Stigma:** Control Pitch + Stigma Pitch + "The true cost of the program is usually around 4000 LE, but many organizations have donated to EFE Egypt so that we can provide this at a much lower cost. These funds are meant to help those in financial hardship."

Experiment 3: Job Fair

- **Info Pitch (Control):** "Job Master is holding a job fair on December 14th at Ard El-Maared. A job fair is a group of companies offering different jobs for job seekers to apply on the spot. Many companies will be attending such as [5 well known employers] and others. They are trying to hire nearly 400 jobs including entry level positions in sales, drivers, security, electrical/mechanical maintenance technicians, warehouse workers, etc. Salaries range between 1900 and 4000, and could reach up to 8000 for certain specializations and supervisory functions. Attendance is free."

- **Salient Stigma:** "Job Master is holding a job fair on December 14th at Ard El-Maared. A job fair is a group of companies offering different jobs for job seekers to apply on the spot. Many companies will be attending such as [5 well known employers] and others. They are trying to hire nearly 400 jobs including entry level positions in sales, drivers, security, electrical/mechanical maintenance technicians, warehouse workers, etc. Salaries range between 1900 and 4000, and could reach up to 8000 for certain specializations and supervisory functions. Attendance is free. Although some people might think some of these entry level jobs are looked down on in society, it's important to start somewhere."

- **Dispelling Stigma:** "Job Master is holding a job fair on December 14th at Ard El-Maared. A job fair is a group of companies offering different jobs for

job seekers to apply on the spot. Many companies will be attending such as [5 well known employers] and others. They are trying to hire nearly 400 jobs including entry level positions in sales, drivers, security, electrical/mechanical maintenance technicians, warehouse workers, etc. Salaries range between 1900 and 4000, and could reach up to 8000 for certain specializations and supervisory functions. Attendance is free. Although some people might think some of these entry level jobs are looked down on in society, people in these types of jobs report that their families respect and encourage them more than before they had a job. For example, one person we recently talked to who took an entry-level position said about his experience, "[My father] now supports me and encourages me to excel a lot more than he did in the past." Another person we talked to said, "My parents have always been very supportive of me, but they are definitely proud of me now."