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Proof or Pedigree: Prestige of Men's but not Women's PhD Program Predicts Top Placements in Business Schools

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There continues to be a gap between men and women in academia even when controlling for academic performance. It is important to understand the factors that maintain biases if we are going to eliminate them. I will share the results of one study showing that status differences in PhD programs help men but not women attain positions in top ranked business schools. Using a qualitative study of current PhD students on the job market, we theorize that the glass ceiling in academia is, in part, reinforced because prestige of PhD program is used as a hiring criteria for men but not women. We test our conceptual model in a retrospective study of 195 professors in well-ranked management departments. Receiving a PhD from a prestigious business school was positively related to the rank of men's (but not women's) first position and current position with tenure. Finally, I share a case study in which job applicants' sex and PhD program were blinded in applications for a position in a well-ranked management department. The implications of this study and gender bias more broadly will be discussed.