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How Widespread is Graphology in Personnel Selection Practice? A case study of a job market myth

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Abstract: Graphology is allegedly widely used in personnel selection in Europe. This is a myth: a widespread but false belief. We explored this myth in five studies. Study 1 established that job ads rarely require handwritten letters. Study 2 showed that handwritten letters serve multiple purposes but are seldom used for handwriting analysis. In Study 3, job market actors overestimated the frequency with which handwritten letters are subjected to graphological analysis. In Study 4, we showed experimentally that people expect graphology to be used when job ads require submission of a handwritten letter. Study 5 showed that advice books may transmit the myth. The myth may foster tolerant attitudes toward graphology, thereby facilitating its persistence in selection practice.