Reviewer(s)' Comments to Author:  
  
Reviewer: 1  
  
Comments to the Author  
The authors raise some interesting issues raised here. I'm afraid I do have some rather serious concerns with the manuscript though, and suggest a pretty major reframing.  
  
**Comment** > The first is that the measure of academic performance the authors use is the H index. For many years now the academic community has been arguing that such matrices of academic 'quality' are meaningless at best, detrimental at worst. The H index does not, for example, take into account the citation rates of different disciplines - I realise this study focuses on one field which cancels out that issue to an extent, however even within the subdisciplines of ecology and evolution there are differences. How does one compare an applied ecologist with someone who studies spider behaviour? The H index also illustrates a very narrow view of what might constitute academic success; how do we capture the other impacts and contributions of scientists that could be seen as success measure? At the very least, the authors should try to justify their use of the H index in the wider context of the debates the community is currently having about it.

**Response** > Yes, I agree that h-index is just one of the many aspects of a researcher’s academic success. There are other important parts like teaching, mentoring, and social outreach. However, given its convenience and wide use in academia, I think h-index still provides a tool for evaluating academic success in terms of research performance, which our study focuses on. Indeed, h-index, albeit imperfect, is already a better measure compared to the number of citations or publications alone. I have added a few sentences in the last paragraph of discussion to address the limitations of h-index.

Regarding the comparability of h-index among sub-disciplines in EEB, since we do point out that we focus our attention on the field of EEB, some degree of variations within the field should be fine. In fact, a quick check of the figures shows that the majority of PIs’ “Before” h-index for recruitment lies in the range of 0 to 10, which I think is acceptable.

**Comment** > I think the authors also, largely, disregard the broader inclusivity context, also a widespread conversation in the academic sector right now. For example, they incorporate gender into the analysis, and find that males perform better than females suggesting 'standards are higher for males'. Yet there is no consideration of the barriers faced by underrepresented groups, including women, at all. I would expect to see at least some discussion of inclusivity issues in a careers piece such as this.

**Response** > Yes, I agree that we can probably discuss the gender issues in academia more. There could be many factors contributing to the observed lower h-index for females during recruitment. Besides the one already mentioned in the discussion, another possibility is that female applicants are given some “preferential” treatment as a way to enhance gender equity (e.g., the employment institutes may consider recruiting female applicants despite their having lower research performance compared to their male competitors). I have added a few sentences to our discussion talking about this.

**Comment** > I'm also surprised there is no consideration of ethics. I appreciate the data is openly available so consent is probably not required, but ethics should at least be mentioned I feel. Also, although it would be onerous and unlikely that someone would do so, given the small numbers, someone could potentially identify individuals from the information, which would most definitely therefore be an ethical issue.

**Response** > Thanks for pointing out this important thing. Yes, there could be some ethical issues regarding personal privacy; however, I do not think they are of serious concern. All the information we collected is already available online, and these PIs’ would have been willing to disclose their personal information to the public. Otherwise, we would not have been able to collect or find it. Maybe during our next submission, we could explicitly mention that we have considered this potential issue and we have taken action by making our data list anonymous and removing the university/institute information of the PIs.

**Comment** > Finally, is there not a possibility that the sample is biased? Not all CVs contain all possible elements, and perhaps there is a self-selecting group that are more likely to publish their CVs?

**Response** > Yes, it is possible that not every CV online has all the information shown. However, the data we collected and used in our analyses were arguably the most basic ones (e.g., PhD university, the year of starting as a new PI, and the year of becoming a full professor) and are unlikely to be selectively reported. Therefore, I think the potential data bias from CVs may not be a great concern of our study.

**Comment** > The authors raise some important issues, but the manuscript needs to be much better contextualised given the broader conversations the community is having regarding access, retention, and success in the academy.

**Response** > Totally, we should put our study in a broader context and discuss some other aspects of academic success. I think I have touched on this a bit in the last paragraph of discussion. Please add some further thoughts to it if you have any!