Performance Bias Examples--APAC

When identical resumes for a faculty position were reviewed, 79% of applicants with a man’s name were deemed “worthy of hire. Only 49% of applicants with a woman’s name received a similar rating.

In Singapore, a 2013 survey found 48% of Malay and 41% of Indian respondents said they faced discrimination when applying for a job. Just 16% of Chinese respondents said the same.

Additional Findings

Gender

• China bans discrimination in both hiring and job advertising, but 55% of jobs advertised by the Ministry of Public Security in 2017 specified “men only.”

• Gender bias is as prevalent in women as in men—even when applied to other women. Mothers systematically overestimate their sons’ crawling compared to their daughters’.

• A study found that by using a blind-audition process, US orchestras increased the chances of women making it past the first round of auditions by 50%. European studies have found similar results with the use of anonymous applications. A French study found this increased women’s odds of getting a call back by 12%, and a Swedish study found it increased the chances that a woman would get offered an interview by 8%.

• A recent World Bank study of over 800,000 ads on online job portals in India revealed that 60% of the advertisements explicitly stated that male candidates are preferred for hiring over females.

Race/Ethnicity/National Origin

• An Indian study conducted by Economic and Political Weekly showed upper-caste sounding names had a better call back rate—with identical qualifications—than Muslim or Dalit sounding names.

• Resumes in Australia with Anglo-Saxon versus Indigenous, Italian, Chinese, and Middle Eastern-sounding names were favored with higher call-back rates: 35% Anglo-Saxon, 32% Italian, 26% Indigenous, 25% Chinese, and 22% Middle Eastern. To get as many interviews as someone with an Anglo-Saxon name, Middle Eastern candidates had to send 64% more applications and Chinese candidates, 68% more.
Managing Bias
Participant Guide (US)

- In the Chinese city of Kashgar, roughly 50% of the positions posted on the Civil Servant Examination website specified only Han Chinese or native Mandarin speakers—Kashgar’s population is 90% Uighur and the Chinese constitution bans discrimination.

Sexuality
- A study by the Williams Institute reports that gay men earn 10%-32% less than similarly qualified heterosexual men.

Ability
- According to the US census bureau people with severe disabilities working full-time earn approximately $1,000.00 less per month than non-disabled workers.
- 13.3 million people with disabilities age 16-64 have experienced difficulty finding employment because of their disability.
Performance Attribution Bias Example

At Facebook, there’s the perception by some that underrepresented groups got jobs because of our commitment to diversity and affirmative action laws, not because of their qualifications.

In a survey of 850 Chinese professionals, men rated themselves more capable than women on almost every aspect of leadership. Women rated themselves, and those of other women, lower than men did.

Additional Findings

- Research shows that when men and women work together on tasks, women are given less credit for a successful outcome, viewed as having made smaller contributions to it, and blamed more for failure.
- Mumbai university students were more likely to attribute organizational success to male managers’ personal leadership, and failure to other causes. In contrast, organizational failure was attributed to female managers’ personal leadership and successes to other causes.
- New Zealand 14- and 15-year-old female students more often attributed their best marks to “effort” than did males, and their worst marks to “lack of ability” and “task difficulty”—more than their male peers.
- A study of 985,937 men and women over 10 years across 48 countries showed that across all nations, males scored on average 1.85 T-score points higher on self-esteem than did females.
- UN Women reports that although women make up 49.6% of the world’s population, only 11 women served as heads of state in 2015, while 10 served as heads of government.
Competence/Likeability Tradeoff Example

Cross-cultural studies of over 30 countries find that men are thought to possess the characteristics perceived to be associated with more successful leaders: self-confidence, ambition, and competitiveness.

In research across Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Kuala Lumpur female executives felt stereotypes mocking female leaders as bossy, or aggressive “iron ladies” may repel young women from aspiring to senior roles.

Additional Findings

- Students in China and Japan believe that successful middle managers possess characteristics, behaviors, and attitudes more commonly associated with men than with women. There’s a saying, “think manager, think male.”
- Male management students in Australia, Germany, and India are much more likely to imagine a male executive when answering questions about leadership.
- According to research in the Harvard Business Review women are 1.4 times more likely to receive critical subjective feedback (as opposed to either positive feedback or critical objective feedback).
- Catalyst reports that in 2011 women constituted only 2.2% of Fortune 500 CEOs and about 15% of these companies’ board seats and corporate officer positions. The gap widened for women of color, who accounted for about 12% of the managerial and professional labor force, but a scant 3% of the 500 CEOs.
Maternal Bias Findings

Additional Findings

• A 2017 survey of 1500 female managers showed that 31.3% would be reluctant to hire women who have children up from 25.3% in 2014, while 27.9% said they would be reluctant to employ women of a child bearing age.

• A survey by the Human Rights Commission in Australia found that almost one in two women reported experiencing discrimination in the workplace at some point during pregnancy, parental leave, or when they returned to work.

• A number of studies, including one by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, and reported on by The Washington Post, show that working mothers are “a lucrative asset for companies.” These women are more productive than their peers over the course of their careers.
Affinity Bias

The “mini-me syndrome” causes managers to hire employees who are similar to themselves in age, style, experience, gender, and race. They also supervise their own gender more frequently. Men have 68.5% male reports. Women have 63.8% women reports.

In a survey of 100 top Asian HR leaders by Workday, almost 60% felt their companies weren’t doing enough to support people with disabilities.

Additional Findings

- Culture fit is the likelihood that someone will reflect and be able to adapt to the core beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that make up your organization. The problem with a hiring process built around “culture fit” is that it facilitates bias and leads to a homogeneous culture.

- A Singaporean complains that a foreign manager in her IT firm prefers his own countrymen to qualified Singaporeans. Management tells Tafep that it had trouble finding suitable local candidates, but later admits some departments have seen an increased representation from a particular country in recent years. The company then agrees to hire and develop Singaporeans as its workforce core.

- According to the Workplace Diversity Report 2018 of 175,000 employees across 1,000 industries, both male and female managers supervise employees of their own gender more often than those of a different gender—63.8% for women and 68.5% for men.

- In a study of top investment banks, management consultancies, and law firms, Professor Lauren Rivera at Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management found that job offers were strongly influenced by interviewers’ perception of fit, as they hired candidates who they’d most enjoy having a beer with or being stuck with in an airport. By seeking “playmates,” they overlooked more skilled professionals with greater long-term potential at the company.

- While diversity discussions often focus on gender, any number of other personal traits can also impact work place experiences. Forbes’ findings reveal that inclusive workplace culture and policies benefit everyone, including anyone whose personal traits differ from the majority.
Managing Bias
Participant Guide (US)

Vignettes—What would you do?

Each of these vignettes may be interpreted as more than one type of bias. As you read through a scenario, note the type of bias you’re identifying.

1. Melissa, a long-time Facebooker, is hosting a fundraiser at her home for a Democratic presidential candidate. Over lunch, she shares with a couple colleagues that she felt moved to do this because the Republican candidate is “a misogynist and racist and anyone who supports him is complicit in continuing the oppression of women and minorities in this country.” You know Elisha worked on the previous Republican president’s campaign, and notice him tense up at these remarks, but not say anything.

   A. What type of unconscious bias is potentially happening?
   B. What are the impacts?
   C. What might you be able to say to Elisha and/or Melissa?

2. You’re a manager at Facebook reviewing feedback on Robert, a black product manager with a past career in professional football. Feedback from Robert’s coworkers is that he’s competent but intimidating, and “doesn’t seem that approachable.” When you ask for details on Robert’s intimidating actions, you find it hard to get specifics from those who gave this feedback, but they feel it very strongly.

   A. What type of unconscious bias is potentially happening?
   B. What assumptions do you find yourself making about Robert, and about his teammates?
   C. As Robert’s manager, what should you do or say?
   D. What kind of conversation is needed to help the team be more inclusive?

3. Sally informs her manager, Kimberly, that she’s pregnant. Kimberly is very happy for Sally and lets her know that. Kimberly suggests that Sally will probably want to start reducing her workload because she’s going to have to deal with morning sickness and being tired all of the time. Kimberly tells Sally, “When I had my son, I took the full four months off, and even before that, I had to slow way down to deal with all of the doctors’ appointments and other pregnancy stuff.” After this conversation, Sally notices that Kimberly immediately starts to give the most desirable projects to other team members.

   A. What type of unconscious bias is potentially happening?
   B. How are intent and impact not aligned here for this manager?
   C. If you’re Sally’s teammate noticing Kimberly’s decision-making on projects, what would you say to interrupt this bias?
4. You’re a member of a team that recently launched a very successful campaign for advertisers. Agnes, one of your teammates, was instrumental in driving key features of the launch. At the GMS All Hands, a group of you on this team are speaking to the org’s VP who is interested in the details of the launch. When he asks, “How on earth did you guys pull this off so smoothly?” Eduardo, another team member, says, “We considered all kinds of approaches, chose one, and, basically, got lucky that it worked.” Agnes says nothing, and no one acknowledges her role in the project.

A. What type of unconscious bias is potentially happening?
B. What are the impacts?
C. As Agnes’s teammate, what could you do or say to the VP, Eduardo, or the team?
D. If you were counseling Agnes on what she could do—to get people to acknowledge her role without coming across as self-promotional—what would you suggest?

5. In the course of a four-person interview loop for a community operations job, Peter, one of the interviewers, gives a candidate a “No Hire” rating, stating the reason as, “Jamil is not a good culture fit.” Damian, a peer of Peter’s, feels uncomfortable about Peter’s feedback but isn’t sure what to do, as he has frequently heard people use this phrase to reject candidates since he joined last year.

A. What negative impacts could result from Peter’s assessment of Jamil?
B. What can Damian say or ask Peter to mitigate this potential bias?

6. Your colleague, Brendan, stands up at his desk and asks the others around him, “Hey, does anyone speak Spanish? I’m looking at the website of a potential client in Mexico City, and want to check the Bing translation.” Manuela, who sits next to Brendan, has grandparents who emigrated from Mexico. But before you have a chance to suggest her, Colin from a few desks over says, “I bet one of the guys from Housekeeping would be able to read it. Ask one of them.”

A. What type of unconscious bias or implicit association is potentially happening?
B. What are the potential negative impacts that could result from this kind of implicit association?
C. What would you do if you overheard this exchange?

7. Sebastien is a senior lead on your team, based in MPK. He’s a non-native English speaker and communicates very well, although his English is heavily accented. You’ve noticed in weekly team meetings that people disconnect when he speaks. On more than one occasion, team members have either spoken over him, or continued the discussion without any acknowledgement of his contribution. You overhear him complaining to a colleague, who tells him, “You need to learn to speak better English as it’s hard for people to understand you.”

A. What would you do as Sebastien’s teammate, after overhearing this?
B. What would you do as Sebastien’s manager?
Managing Bias
Participant Guide (US)

8. You’re eating at your desk and overhear two of your teammates talking about the newest member of your team, who just transferred from another team last week. One of them mentions viewing the new teammate’s public FB page and says, “I discovered that she’s liked [political figure]’s FB page since last year. I can’t help but wonder if she’s going to be a good fit with this team.”

A. What negative impacts may result because of this bias?
B. What would you do and say to interrupt the potential bias happening here?

9. Hadiya is Muslim and wears a traditional headscarf to work every day. She works on a team where most of her colleagues are good friends who share stories about their personal lives. Whenever Hadiya joins her colleagues for lunch or enters an area where they’re talking, they seem to change the subject or grow quiet. Her colleagues all like Hadiya and enjoy having her on the team, but they worry that some of their personal stories about their dating and social lives, which often involve drinking, might be inappropriate to share in her presence.

A. What type of unconscious bias is potentially happening? What are the impacts?
B. What assumptions do you find yourself making about Hadiya, and about her teammates?
C. What, if anything, could her team do differently?
D. What could Hadiya do?

10. Edward is a top performer who consistently makes impact through his individual contributions and how he supports his cross functional partners and colleagues. He mentioned to you some months ago that he has a history of clinical depression. He’s been kind of quiet lately and hasn’t come to the last few informal team lunches. You hear him mention to another colleague that he hasn’t sleep well for weeks. There is a new project coming to the team that he’d be perfect for, but you’re worried he can’t handle it right now.

A. What type of unconscious bias is potentially happening? What are the impacts?
B. What would you do?
C. What might you say to Edward?

11. All communication between the recruiter and the candidate has been via email to date. During the first phone screening the candidate presents with a significant speech impediment and it is very difficult to understand the candidate. This takes the recruiter by surprise. The main concern is that the hiring manager could have issues during the candidate interview. Other concerns are that the speech impediment could be deemed an indicator of performance; or the candidate could have communication issues with the team in general, if hired. For these reasons the recruiter is leaning towards not advancing the candidate even though the candidate is qualified.

A. What type of unconscious bias is potentially happening?
B. What is the possible impact in this situation?
C. What possible action can be taken?
D. To whom would you speak and what would you say?