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A Review Examining Biases in Workplace Hiring and Promotion Processes

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A REVIEW EXAMINING BIASES

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Abstract

This review examined three different types of workplace biases: racial, gender, and unconscious biases. First, the review studied how these biases affect the hiring process and found that even though there have been marginal improvements for some minority groups, racial biases still exist in the workplace. Certain minorities, such as African Americans, experienced the same amount of hiring discrimination since the 1990s. Second, the review looked at how these biases influence the promotion process and inhibit marginalized groups from reaching higher paying jobs. Despite Asian Americans experiencing fewer struggles with the hiring process, they are the least likely race to be promoted in the workplace. Finally, the review suggested a combination of awareness training and unconscious bias training to make concrete change within an organization's hiring and promoting process. This methodology should help companies prioritize diversity and inclusion through creating a transparent and fair environment.

Keywords: racial bias, gender bias, unconscious bias, hiring, promotion

Introduction

This review aims to explore the different types of biases that can influence workplace hiring and promotion processes. Corporate recruiters often select people who they believe will succeed; however, the choices could be influenced by different and unrelated factors to competence or potential.

The purpose of this paper also focuses on the current impact of racial bias, gender bias, and unconscious bias in the workplace. In present times, these different factors affect underrepresented peoples, both in terms of ethnicity and gender, abilities to succeed and progress in the workplace. This issue leads to an over-representation of White men in higher positions and does not provide minority people the opportunity to improve their life situation. Therefore, this paper will begin by defining and reviewing the different biases and then it will describe the overall effects of these biases in the workplace.

Racial Bias

Racial biases lead to minority races having fewer opportunities to be hired and promoted. Despite the illegality of discriminating against someone on the basis of their race, this form of bias still happens frequently (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 1964). This discrimination can manifest in employers treating employees differently because of personal characteristics associated with their race and applies to any aspect of their employment, including hiring, promotion, compensation, hourly wages, job assignments, training, benefits, or firing. For instance, African Americans are twice as likely to be unemployed as whites (Pager & Shepard, 2008). In a study by Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004), researchers tested whether White racially identifiable names received more callbacks for a job; indeed, White names

received a 50 percent higher callback rate than equally qualified Black applicants. Furthermore, underrepresented minorities also experience occupational segregation, with many minorities in lower levels of job stability and fewer opportunities for promotions in their jobs (Parcel & Mueller, 1983; Smith, 2002). The lack of opportunities leads to an overall lower satisfaction in life and prevents minorities from reaching higher brackets of wealth and success in an unjust manner.

Gender Bias

Gender bias remains a controversial topic in the workplace, specifically within human resources practices, such as hiring, training, pay, and promotion, because some people do not believe that it exists (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). This type of bias is defined as when a job applicant is discriminated against or treated differently because of their sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation (Equal Rights Advocates, 2022). Some employers hold biases against women when they hire for male dominated roles. Female applicants receive fewer call backs and are given fewer interviews in comparison to male applicants, due to employers viewing them as less capable (McIntyre et al., 1980; Firth, 1982).

In a study that evaluated professors' preferences in choosing a laboratory manager, the male applicant was rated as more competent and hirable and was offered a higher starting salary than the female applicant (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012). These examples illustrate the gender bias among employers and the unfairness that minorities experience when attempting to find a job or a promotion. Additionally, women are often discriminated against because employers assume they will start families at some point in their careers (Lee, 2021). Even though this form of discrimination is illegal according to the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, employers

refuse to promote women or provide them with lower-level tasks because of the motherhood assumption. Women also face disadvantages when they ask for more flexible schedules and feel inclined to deny motherhood or their families to receive a better chance of employment or promotion (Lee, 2021).

Unconscious Bias

Employers' unconscious biases can lead to decisions that benefit the stereotypical employee, White and male, and harm employees who do not fit that majority-based stereotype. The human brain tends to categorize things together in order to grasp and understand occurrences in the world (McCormick, 2016). These categories can be as simple as "good" versus "bad", which could lead to potential issues when choosing employees to hire. One bad experience with a minority individual, and one's brain could generalize that experience on how they view other people from that same minority group. This generalization detrimentally affects minority individuals' abilities to acquire a high-paying job, if the hiring part of the organization has these unconscious biases. Furthermore, one specific aspect of unconscious bias is the similar-to-me bias. This type of bias is defined as a tendency to prefer people who look and think like us (The Decision Lab, 2022). Similar-to-me bias occurs due to a form of trust-building when one believes that they share similar characteristics with a stranger. It can cause people to favor others in regards to gender, race, and age (Greenberg, 2010). In the workplace, this bias can cause employers to hire people who look like them and who have similar thought processes, which can lead to a very homogenous group (Psych 424, 2015).

In-group bias is also related to the similar-to-me bias. This type of bias is defined as favoritism or prioritization toward groups where an individual shares one or more identities

(Baumeister & Vohs, 2007). People tend to identify with certain social groups, whether they are based on race, gender, religion, personality characteristics, physical looks, occupation or even common interests (Grant, 2018). People who are not viewed as a part of the group are in the out-group and can fall victim to in-group bias. If an employer believes they share a group with the candidate they are interviewing, then they will be more likely to give that candidate a job. If an employer believes the candidate to be a part of the out-group, then the candidate is less likely to be given a job offer unless they show they are highly skilled and can contribute to the company (Grant, 2018).

A subsection of similar-to-me bias is the halo effect. This effect changes employers' perception when evaluating potential employees or people to promote. The definition of the halo effect is a tendency to give a high rating based on a general impression from a previous positive interaction (Thorndike, 1920). The positive impression creates a "halo" that biases ratings of specific attributes, characteristics, or dimensions of job performance. As shown by a study by Yustina and Gudono (2017), the halo effect has a high correlation with performance measurement. People who are viewed in a positive light due to the halo effect may be given an advantage over their peers, even if they only completed one good thing; if their work thereafter worsened, their employers may give them the benefit of the doubt. This belief could detrimentally affect minority candidates if they feel less comfortable in a predominantly White environment and provide a mediocre first impression. In one interaction, some people of equal ability could ruin their chances of achieving the job, and their White peers could receive the benefit of the doubt from feeling safe within the interview space and giving a good first impression.

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Overall Effects

All of these factors must be explored further in order to grasp a better understanding of the dynamics in the workplace. As minority individuals tend to be discriminated against and prevented from pursuing higher level opportunities more frequently than non-minority individuals, it is crucial to learn why employers make certain hiring decisions and whether these innate biases change an employers' promotion choice. To increase equality in the workplace, organizations must prioritize a variety of candidates through training their employees to be aware of their biases and to choose candidates based on merit and diversity.

Different types of decision-making biases infiltrate the corporate workforce and affect its hiring and promotion processes. The most prominent forms of bias observed during these processes are racial bias, gender bias, and unconscious bias. Racial bias includes an unreasoned judgment based purely on an individual's race (Williams, 2011). Quillian and Midtbøen (2021) examined racial bias to better understand hiring discrimination and reasoning behind employer decision-making. They found that the current standards regarding race influence the discrimination in hiring employees in the workplace. Gender bias is defined as prioritizing one gender over another (Rothchild, 2014). In the workplace, it is commonly used as men are chosen over women for the sole reason of their different gender. Unconscious bias stems from the attitudes and stereotypes that can affect our perception of others (Staats, 2016). Specifically, when making hiring decisions, employers can have unconscious bias when they assess candidates (Dalton & Villagran, 2018). The similar-to-me bias influences employers to choose candidates who share similar characteristics and interests (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007). Employers will choose applicants who think like them, which creates a homogeneous organization. The halo effect describes a scenario in which a person projects one single positive quality of another

person onto the individual's other qualities (Mondy & Martocchio, 2016). When hiring

employees, an interviewer may see one positive quality in an interviewee and blanket that

positivity onto the rest of the traits of the interviewee even though the person may not pass other

qualifications (Thomas & Reimann, 2022). These biases create unjust practices within the

corporate ladder whether it be through hiring decisions or promoting decisions. Some factors

also prevent minority groups from climbing the corporate ladder. These factors include: a lack of

accountability in affirmative action programs, outreach and recruitment barriers, and a lack of

mentoring for minority individuals (Johns, 2013). In order to eliminate these factors,

organizations must participate in bias awareness training, unconscious bias training, and

incorporate accountability to hire and promote diverse candidates. This paper will further address

biases within the workforce and how they detrimentally affect underrepresented minorities and

explore the promotion process to suggest ways in which an organization can eliminate biases to

create a more open minded and safe workplace.

In order to analyze this question, this paper will review what is currently understood

about racial bias, gender bias, and unconscious bias and how these biases influence employers.

The paper will then examine the research gap of how the leadership promotion process is

affected by these biases. Finally, this paper will suggest solutions to educate organizations about

potential biases and how to avoid them when considering new employees or people to promote

to leadership positions.

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Methods

Articles

I identified and reviewed 67 articles related to the core topic of this thesis. Articles were located in several databases including: Google Scholar, PsycInfo, PubMed, and the Annual Review of Psychology. First, I read through other reviews of workplace biases to gain a better understanding of which types of bias generate more influence. Then, I selected racial, gender, and unconscious biases. These biases seemed to have the most tangible effect on employers' hiring and promotion decisions. To ensure the credibility of the articles, I chose sources that were cited by many other researchers and examined sources within the papers themselves.

The results section will first outline the effects of race, gender, and unconscious bias on the hiring process. Then, it will discuss the effects of race, gender, and unconscious bias on the promotion process. Afterwards, the results will speak toward mitigating the effects of these different types of biases. Finally, the section will consider a version of awareness training in combination with unconscious bias training to make a difference in the workplace.

Results

Hiring Process

Different minority groups experience different levels of discrimination within the hiring process. Noted differences in the unemployment rates by ethnicities (see Figure 1) could reflect higher levels of discrimination faced by certain groups, as well as other factors.
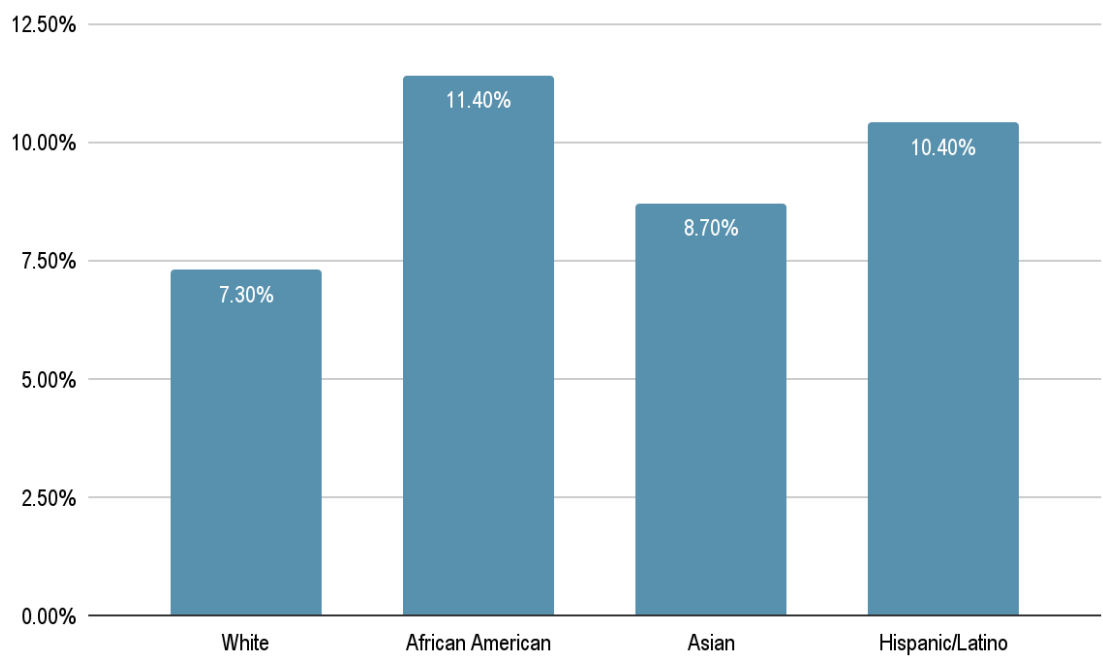

Figure 1: Unemployment rate by ethnicity in the U.S. in 2020. Adapted from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (Report 1095, 2021).

Although every minority ethnic group has higher unemployment rates than the White group, some groups experience this discrimination more than others. Women also experience higher levels of discrimination in the workplace relative to men. As the minority group in comparison to men, women often find challenges in being hired over their male counterparts.

Unconscious biases against minority groups lead employers to hire the same types of people (i.e.,

White men). Specifically, similar-to-me bias and ingroup bias create a tendency in which

employers choose people who think like them, look like them, and share similar interests.

Finally, the halo effect creates disadvantages for minority groups, as their White counterparts

could be making a positive first impression. Cultural differences, such as different greeting

methods or societal norms, may cause minority groups' first impressions to be less positive, and

the halo effect causes employers to give the positive first impressions the benefit of the doubt.

Even though Asian American candidates experience less discrimination in the workplace

compared to other ethnicity groups, they are still undervalued when compared to White

candidates (Lai & Babcock, 2012). Their purported deficits in social skills leads employers to

hold their stereotype against them. Despite Asian Americans performing as, if not more,

competently than their White competition, they tend to be ranked worse in interviews due to

social interactions and differences. Whitening an Asian American person's name has also been

shown to increase their hiring odds (Kang et al., 2016). As displayed by Figure 2, the callback

rate increased when the Asian American participants changed their name from being ethnically
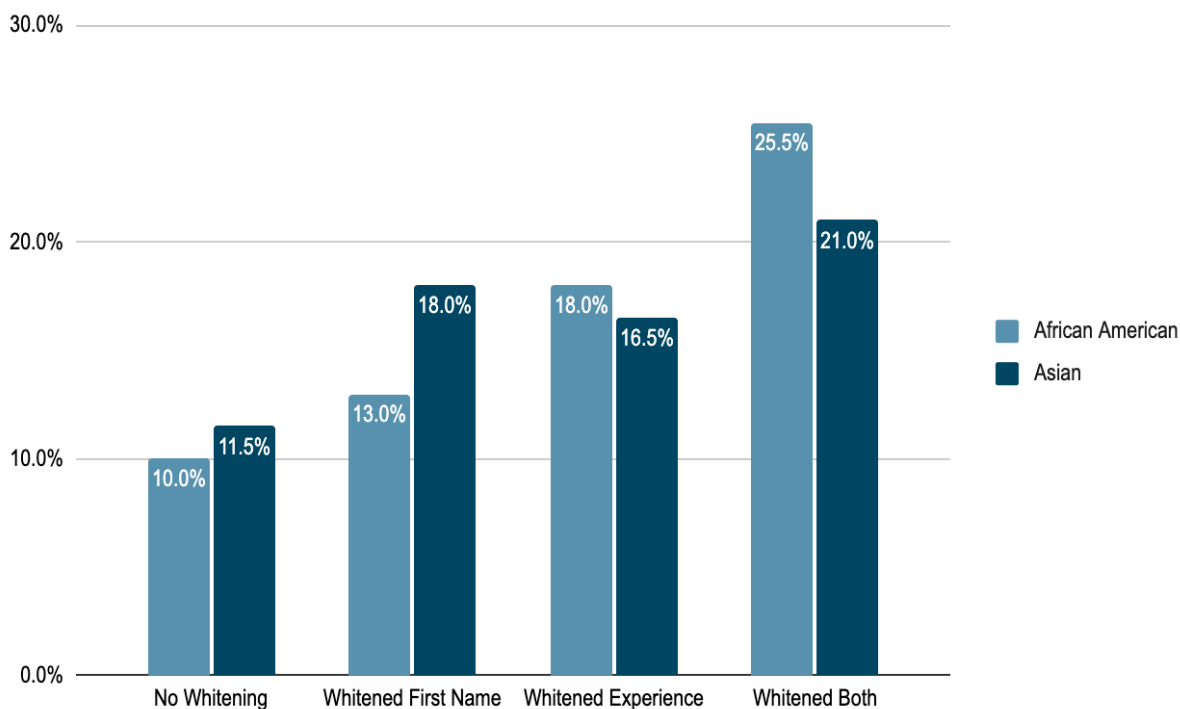
distinct to a White name.

Figure 2: Callback rates of Asian and African American job applicants with their original resumes versus when they whiten their resumes (Kang et al., 2016).

The discrimination Asian Americans face is a combination of racial and unconscious biases. Before Asian American candidates step into an interview, their interviewers already have a predisposition to believe that they are socially incompetent due to existing stereotypes. One mistake in the interview, and the Asian American candidate is already at a large disadvantage. A job interview is similar to a friend-screening process; most times an employer wants to enjoy working with their employees. Choosing a friend is similar to hiring an employee because one is likely to spend a decent amount of time with the individual. Thus, one will want to appreciate the individual's company. If an employer believes a potential candidate will be not enjoyable to work with, then they are less likely to hire them.

Hiring discrimination against Latinos has seemingly decreased over time (Quillian et al., 2017). In 1990, researchers found that Whites received 30 percent more callbacks than Latinos, but in 2010, whites received only 15 percent more callbacks than Latino individuals. It is important to note that these observations do not take into account that Latinos can be White-passing in terms of color-wise (i.e., skin tone) and name. These differences would be more difficult to measure but would provide clarify if the racial discrimination against Latinos has actually decreased. In a 2021 study, 59 percent of Latinos believed that lighter skin enabled them to get ahead in the workplace (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2021). Furthermore, 62 percent of Latino adults believe that darker skin inhibits their ability to move forward in the job world. These statistics convey a scenario where White-passing Latinos may face less discrimination in hiring situations, but Latinos in general do not receive this fortune (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2021).

African Americans experience systematic forms of racism and discrimination in the workplace hiring process. For example, in the hiring process, candidates are often evaluated on their professionalism. African American candidates are at a disadvantage when it comes to the evaluation of professionalism based solely on appearance. Companies typically ban certain hairstyles for workers, including braids or dreadlocks, which negatively targets Black individuals (Wingfield and Chavez, 2020). If African American individuals are not permitted to express their individuality and culture within a corporate workplace, they will likely not feel as comfortable in corporate jobs compared to White employees. A combination of a psychologically unsafe environment where there is low trust to take an interpersonal risk (Wingfield and Chavez, 2020) and workplace discrimination discourages diverse groups from applying to certain jobs. Additionally, overall hiring rates for African Americans still illustrates similar levels of

discrimination over the last 25 years (Quillian et al., 2017). Compensatory policies that

companies instill to mitigate racial bias have little effect on hiring discrimination (Quillian et al.,

2018). Even though this discrimination is not uniform across organizations, some companies

show measurable bias, which highlights the problem with corporate America (Porter, 2021).

Women also face prejudice in workplace hiring processes, as they are often

underestimated by male employers. Male hirers are typically influenced by similar-to-me bias, as

they believe that other men will do a better job than their female counterparts (Grant, 2018). This

bias leads them to undervalue the skills of women because they overlook their potential. A study

found some companies believe that a sexist work environment does not detrimentally affect its

female employees (Faniko, Ellemers, & Derks, 2022). Even though participants admitted the

atmosphere was sexist, they did not understand that a hostile environment would adversely

impact women's careers. Additionally, companies try to be future-oriented by assuming that the

woman interviewee has or will have children at a later time and be unable to work. Figure 3

shows this bias, because women's callback rate is more than two percent lower than men's when
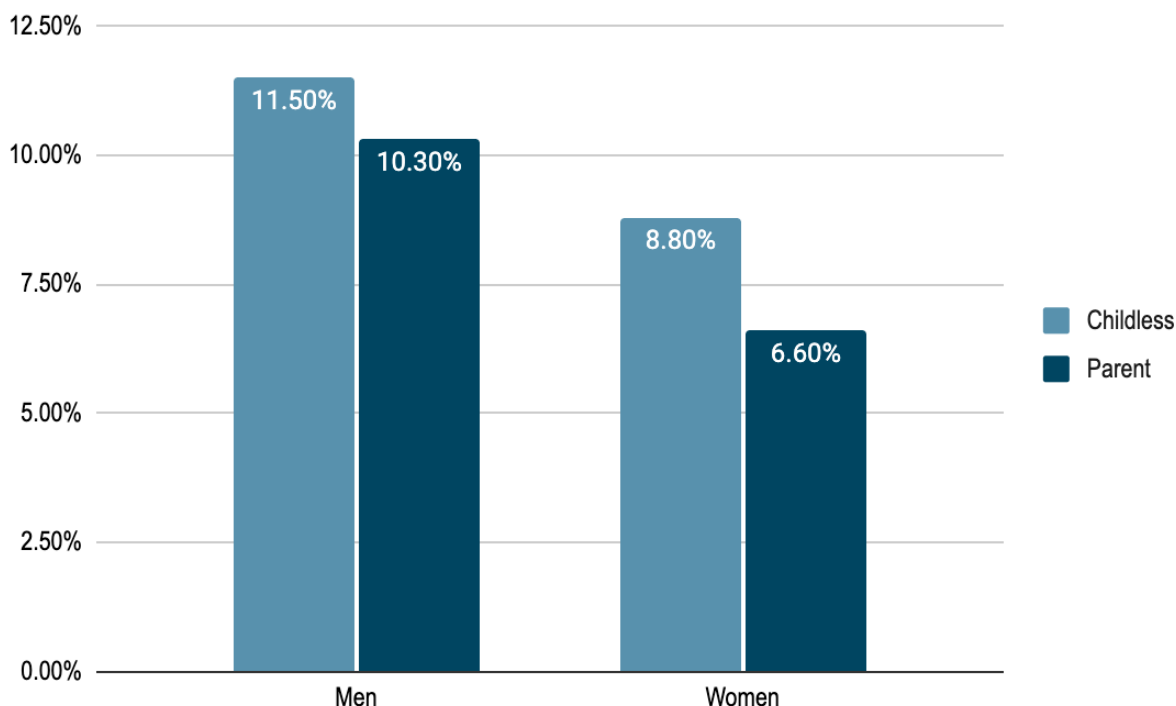
both parties have children.

Figure 3: Probability of getting a job callback by gender and parent status (Caccavale, 2021).

This assumption is an illegal decision because employers cannot use the factor of gender to make

hiring decisions; however, this rule does not prevent organizations from subconsciously using

this criteria to make specific choices (U.S. Department of Labor, 2022) as it is difficult to prove

that being rejected for a job was directly due to issues of pregnancy or motherhood. Finally,

some people believe a false myth that women are less academically-oriented or want to achieve

lower jobs than men. Researchers found no merit for this stereotype, and both women and men

reported similar motivations for achieving academic jobs (Faniko et al., 2022).

Not only do women face discrimination from their male peers, but they also tend to act

prejudicially against themselves. In a United Nations report of 75 countries, researchers found

that 90 percent of both men and women hold biases against women (Eaton, 2022). These

numbers are somewhat surprising given that discrimination on the basis of gender was outlawed

by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Women are 25 to 46 percent more likely to be hired

in applications and interviews where personal information is kept anonymous, which illustrates

that women are not hired because of their gender as opposed to their merit. Nowadays,

companies often use artificial intelligence to sort through resumes. This newer technology is also

hindering women's careers (Huet, 2022). If a user was female, the algorithm would show the

user fewer ads of high-paying jobs. Even though the user could have a better skill set and

resume, the algorithm could still provide her with lower-level jobs.

Similar-to-me bias also occurs in the hiring process. A study on the similar-to-me bias in

employer interviews found that employer-applicant similarity significantly influenced job

suitability evaluations (Sears & Rowe, 2003). Employers tend to choose job candidates who are

similar to them, whether it is in terms of looks or personality traits. Similarities among people

foster trust and relationships, so people are inclined to choose others who are like them (Grant,

2018). In another study of simulated employee interviews, researchers presented several Black

and White candidates with biographical information that was either similar or dissimilar to the

interviewers (Rand & Wexley, 1975). They found that the applicants with similar biographies to

the interviewers were given more positive reviews and higher ratings for the job. This discovery

emphasizes that similar-to-me bias does influence employers and their hiring decisions. If

employers can find any interest or characteristic that they relate to, then they will be more likely

to hire the candidate. Similarities among personality characteristics also make a difference in

employers' hiring choices. In a study that evaluated the personality characteristics of

extraversion and conscientiousness, researchers found that people tended to choose applicants

whose perceived personalities were similar (Türetgen et al., 2009). If the employer believed that they had a similar level of extraversion and conscientiousness to the interviewee, then the interviewee tended to receive a higher rating and the job.

Overall, race, gender, and various unconscious biases can occur throughout the hiring process. Different minority ethnic groups experience different levels of discrimination. Whereas Asian American candidates experience less discrimination than Latinos and African Americans, they are still undervalued in comparison to White applicants. Even if Asian American applicants have more skills and experience on their resumes, they could be looked over for a White person because employers believe they have less social competence. Latinos seem to face less discrimination than decades ago, but this difference could be due to some Latino individuals passing as White, whether it is due to their skin tone or their name. African American applicants still receive a lot of discrimination, whether it is explicit or through implicit biases against their physical characteristics. Critiques in regards to the concept of professionalism tend to disproportionately affect African American candidates. Women are typically overlooked in favor of their male counterparts because of bias related to pregnancy or motherhood, which some employers believe would prevent them from being as available as a man to devote time to their work. Additionally, women tend to discriminate against themselves when they have the power to hire people, and even artificial intelligence algorithms display less high-paying jobs to women, which decreases their opportunities. Finally, similar-to-me bias influences employers to choose people who resonate with them. If the candidate shows more similarities with the interviewer, then the employer will be more likely to hire them.

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Promotion Process

      Minority ethnicity groups tend to have bigger challenges in attaining higher level

positions. As White men tend to dominate the current leadership positions, it makes it more

difficult for minority groups to reach such similar levels in organizations, creating an unjust

system. Racial biases, gender bias, and unconscious biases all influence the current leadership in

ways that undercut any attempts to build greater diversity in their other leadership positions. As

depicted by Figure 4, White people dominate managerial positions, which shows the inequity of
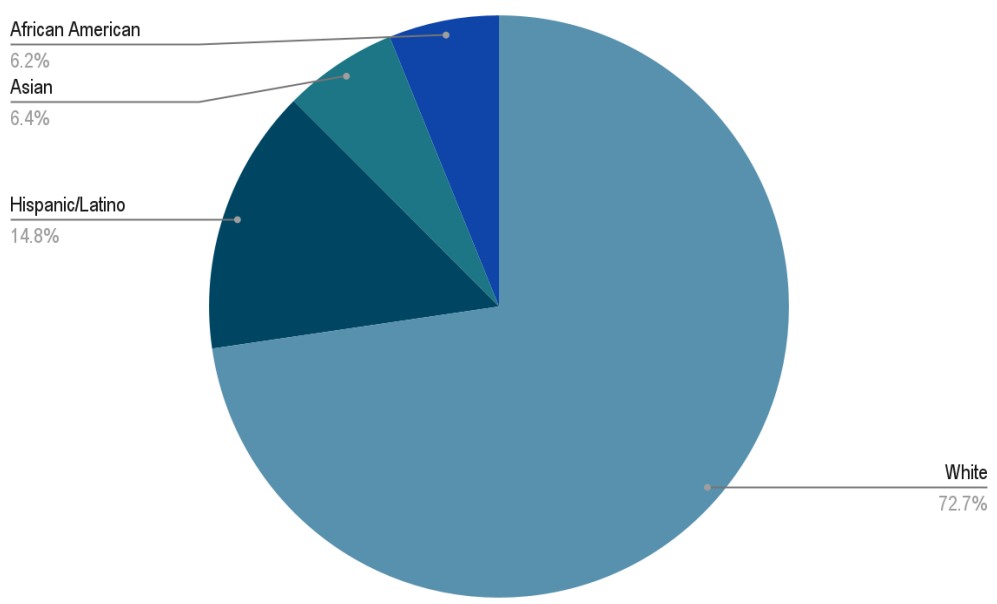
leadership positions among minority groups.

Figure 4: Breakdown of race in managerial positions in the U.S. Adapted from Zippia:

https://www.zippia.com/manager-jobs/demographics/.

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Furthermore, as seen in Figure 5, as positions within a company increase in leadership, the

proportion of women decrease. Women start in almost half of support staff positions and end in

five percent of the top one percent earners. This disparity illustrates the lack of women in
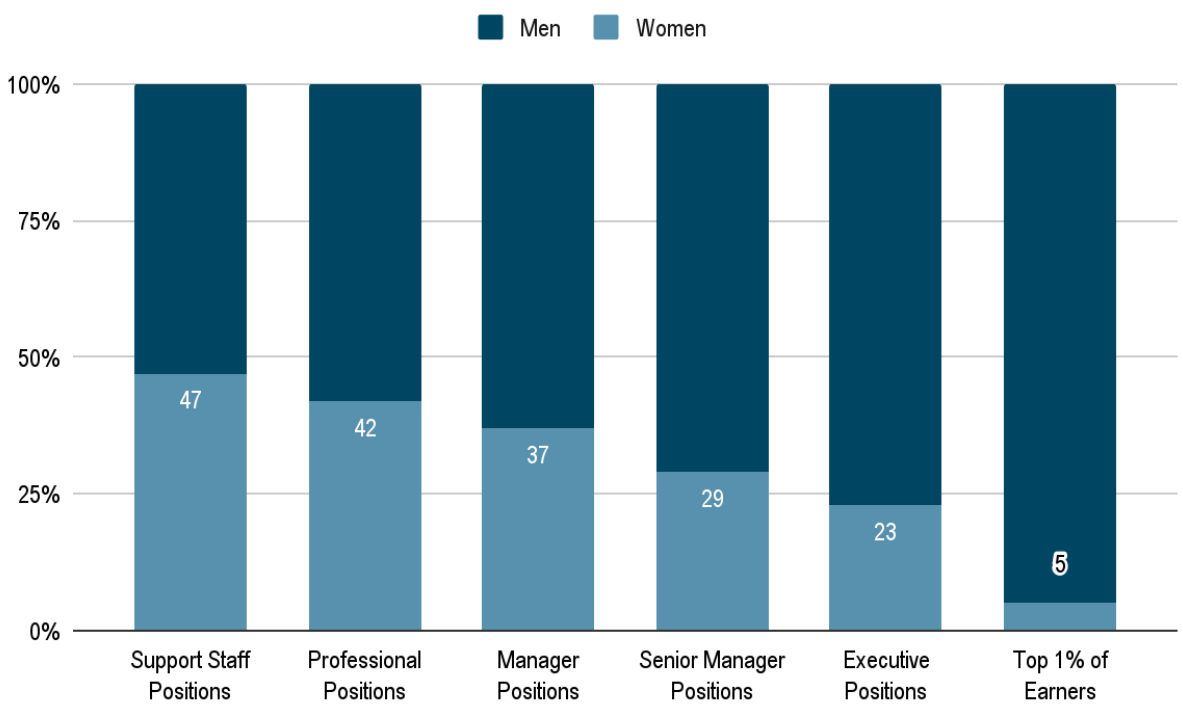
leadership positions and high paying positions.

Figure 5: Proportion of women in types of workplace positions globally (Ariella, 2022). Adapted from

Zippia:

https://www.zippia.com/advice/women-in-leadership-statistics/#:~:text=What%20percentage%20of%20exe

cutives%20are,positions%20are%20held%20by%20women.

Even though Asian Americans are considered the model minority, they still struggle to reach leadership positions within companies. Asian American individuals tend to have higher levels of education compared to other ethnicity groups, but despite this advantage, there is underrepresentation of Asian Americans in leadership positions within companies (Lai & Babcock, 2012). Part of this reason comes from a collective culture style, where many Asians are taught to stay within the group majority and to not stand out (Chen, 2015). However, a bigger reason perhaps stems from subjectivity of evaluation systems, racial biases, and unfair treatment of Asian Americans (Lai & Babcock, 2012). Oftentimes, employers have evaluated Asian Americans lower on social skills, perceiving them as awkward and lacking mainstream sociability. This perception leads to a more negative impression of Asians, even if they are competent in non-behavioral skills.

More specifically, in a study conducted in the Silicon Valley, Asian Americans were the most likely to be hired into technology-related jobs, but the least likely to be promoted into higher management positions (Gee & Peck, 2017). Qualified Asian candidates are half as likely to be promoted as their White counterparts. Many leaders may assume that Asian Americans are not underrepresented minorities, as they make up 12 percent of the professional workforce despite making up only 5.6 percent of the US population (Gee & Peck, 2018). Thus, when companies hold diversity programs to hire or promote diverse candidates, Asians do not benefit. Whereas other diversity programs tend to focus on both inclusion and diversifying the company's management, the diversity programs for Asian Americans only focus on cultural inclusion.

As Hispanic individuals already make up a small proportion of the workforce, their participation in the leadership of organizations is even smaller. A report on Hispanic employment

found that Latinos were 7.79 percent of the permanent federal workforce but only 4.5 percent of

those individuals reached senior level positions (Federal Hispanic Work Group, 2008). This

small proportion could be due to a combination of a lack of proper training and discrimination in

the promotion process. As the company's leadership team usually is dominated by White people,

they may be less inclined to branch out and select people from minority groups such as Latino

populations. Furthermore, in STEM-related jobs (jobs that appear to be more difficult and require

levels of higher education), 42 percent of surveyed Latino individuals believe that they

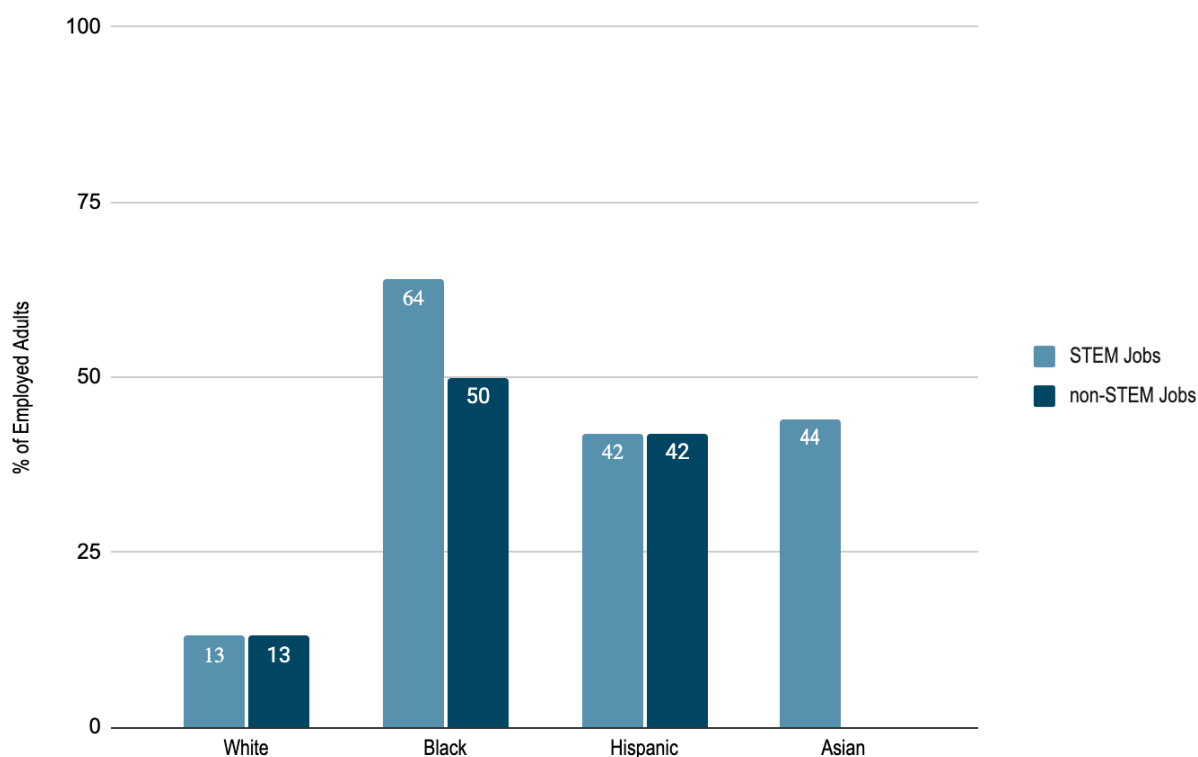experience discrimination due to their race as illustrated in Figure 6 (Funk & Parker, 2018).

Figure 6: Proportion of employed adults who have experienced racial workplace discrimination broken down by race. Adapted from Funk and Parker (2018). Note: there were insufficient numbers of Asian respondents in the study who work in non-STEM jobs to accurately display on the figure.

This statistic illustrates the difficulty that Hispanic people face when trying to achieve higher

level and higher paying jobs. They are not given the same opportunities to be promoted and to

reach a leadership position. Another study stated that 33 percent of Latinos living in America

believe that they've been discriminated against throughout the promotion process (Neel, 2017).

Latino people believe that they do not receive equal opportunity to be paid or promoted equal to

their White peers. If the workplace system harbors such prejudice, Latino individuals will be

inhibited from reaching higher levels in their organizations. The lack of promotions prevents

people from getting ahead in organizations and in improving their quality of life.

Black employees often find it difficult to reach higher-level positions. African American

individuals find themselves pushed into lower-level racialized jobs (e.g., minimum wage jobs,

entry-level jobs, etc, janitorial staff), instead of jobs that allow them the trajectory (Collins,

2016). Furthermore, due to the halo effect and unconscious biases, White employers tend to

promote and advocate for White employees instead of equally qualified African American

employees (Wingfield & Chavez, 2020). White employers may have predispositions against

African American employees, whether these biases stem from past experiences or assumptions.

If African American employees are not being chosen for reasons they cannot control, such as

their race, they are at a serious disadvantage. The majority of employers in higher positions are

White, and if they continue to choose employees who appear similar to them either by race,

gender, or culture, then the workplace will continue its homogeneity and discrimination against

marginalized groups.

Women also face challenges while trying to attain higher positions in the workplace. A

UN report found that almost 50 percent of the respondents believe that men make better business

executives and political leaders (Eaton, 2022). Not only do women find it more difficult to move

up in their careers, but they are also paid less for the same job as a man. 25 percent of women say they have earned less than a man for the same job (Eaton, 2022), despite this being illegal based on the Equal Pay Act of 1963 (Equal Pay Act of 1963, 1963). The 2020 Global Gender Gap Report emphasizes this study because it found that a 31.4 percent gender gap continues to remain (Global Development Commons, 2020). Furthermore, women's skills are often evaluated as soft skills, which are valued less than hard skills (Huet, 2022). This social bias continues to emphasize the gender pay gap and puts women at a big disadvantage.

Mitigation of these Effects

In order to make the workplace a fairer environment, these biases must be mitigated through thinking more creatively and in an open-minded fashion. Research suggests that employers often create shortlists when evaluating candidates for positions (Lucas et al., 2021). One study found that when participants were asked to create longer shortlists (six names instead of three names), they selected 33 percent more women than the original lists (Lucas et al., 2021). The longer list seems to promote more diversity, because when people spend more time pondering about a problem, they tend to generate more creative solutions. Companies can also make their applications anonymous (no names, school names, or other personal information) to eliminate potential unconscious biases that may relate to race and gender (Hirsch, 2018). By removing any identifiers that determine people's race and gender, employers can make fairer, less biased decisions. Organizations should prioritize educating their employees through awareness training that teaches people about the different types of biases, how to acknowledge such biases, and how to consciously combat them (Ruiz, 2021). Furthermore, transparency within the hiring and promotion process is key to unbiased practices. If people must think about

and be honest about their choices, then they will likely be more open to making fairer, less biased decisions. Finally, asking for feedback and actually implementing constructive criticism demonstrates to employees that the companies care (Ruiz, 2021). Through compassion, companies can show their minority group individuals that they are willing to make changes in their hiring and promoting process.

Awareness Training

Learning about biases is the first step in awareness training. Implicit biases can be recognized once they are consciously recognized by the individuals (Hui, et al., 2020). Once employees and employers are educated on implicit biases, they can recognize negative influence in the workplace and attempt to mitigate it. Awareness of innate biases also encourages people to change their behavior (Sabin, et al., 2022). Researchers found that regardless of the strength of people's biases, awareness training still enabled them to reduce the effects of these beliefs. Companies should also contribute through policy changes and leadership support through transparent evaluations and providing support if individuals feel discriminated against (Hui et al., 2020).

Unconscious bias training must be modified in order to be effective. This training must teach both awareness and strategies to mitigate biases, change individuals' behavior, and track each attendee's progress (Gino & Coffman, 2021). To educate its participants on awareness, the training defines different types of biases and the emotional detriment biases have on marginalized groups of people. It includes structural changes to the hiring and promotion processes and long-term commitment to diversity training that continues over time. In order to be effective, this form of training focuses on potential for growth and concrete ways to positively

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change one's behavior (Forscher et al., 2017). As people change more easily with smaller, tangible actions (Devine et al., 2012), these concrete examples help people move away from discrimination and stereotypes. This style of unconscious bias training displayed success in a study, whose participants stated that they had a heightened awareness of their biases, and they showed less bias and discrimination weeks after the training (Gino & Coffman, 2021). Marginalized groups of people, such as women and minorities, also reported that they felt safer in the environment and a greater sense of belonging post training. The training also focuses on fostering empathy and friendships between employees. Positive interactions between different groups of people leads to decreased anxiety when working together which in turn reduces prejudice (Devine et al., 2012).

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Discussion and Conclusions

After reading numerous articles on different types of biases, this review found several main findings. Within the hiring process, there are race, gender, and unconscious biases in the form of similar-to-me bias. Minority groups experience different levels of discrimination but all seem to be valued less than White candidates. Women face bias from hiring algorithms and for having the potential chance of being a mother. The similar-to-me bias detrimentally affects minority groups, as employers tend to choose people with similar characteristics and interests. This means that if the interviewers are White, then they will be more likely to choose a White candidate as they will find more things in common. Furthermore, the promotion process is also influenced by race, gender, and unconscious biases. These biases can be overcome, but there needs to be conscious attention paid to doing so. Even if some minority groups face fewer hiring problems, they can still face promotion issues. As women are a minority group in promotion positions, they face issues because men believe they are more oriented toward leadership. Women also experience difficulties with higher pay, as they tend to be paid less than men for the same jobs.

These biases create a more negative and non-inclusive work environment. In order to mitigate these issues, employers must do a better job of creating awareness and making a conscious effort to fight these biases. Companies should also invest in awareness and unconscious bias training to educate their employees and help them make a concrete action plan to change their biases. When making a hiring or promotion decision, employers need to question their rationale for choosing a candidate and make sure it is skill-based and merit-based. They also need to consciously choose candidates with different backgrounds, ethnicities,

characteristics, and ways of thinking. Diverse perspectives lead to more successful teams, so organizations should make this effort.

This review had several limitations and strengths. Even though many sources were used to write this review, there is still the need for more research on the promotion processes of companies. Organizations tend to not disclose details regarding their promotions, which makes it difficult for researchers to analyze their decision making. Hiring and promotions processes are not transparent to outsiders. Different types of studies about promoting marginalized groups also seem scarce. The halo effect and unconscious bias have received less research attention, which made this review unevenly distributed between types of biases. Despite these challenges, this review addressed racial and gender biases adequately and combined literature about hiring and promoting processes. In order to grasp a better understanding of the inequities within the workplace, several graphs were imputed to highlight the disparities. These statistics emphasized the lack of equality and reaffirmed the problems with the current hiring and promoting practices.

The section on awareness training provides examples of how companies can properly educate their employees to mitigate their innate biases. A combination of these strategies can create an effective methodology to increase teamwork and compassion and decrease prejudice. Awareness training is the first step to conscious behavioral change to make concrete progress. Organizations, who prioritize diversity and inclusion, can create step-by-step small action plans to help their employees mitigate biases against one another. By continuing to emphasize diversity and bias training, instead of simply checking off a box, companies can foster real change to make marginalized employees feel safe.

In the future, researchers should study the efficacy of this combination of awareness training and unconscious bias training within other companies. The study should include

different types of corporations, such as technology-related companies, law firms, medical-related fields, education workplace, and the entrepreneurial start-up world. People can learn whether certain fields suffer more from different implicit biases and how to use these trainings to prevent further biases. Researchers should also study multiple firms within each field to see if corporate leadership makes a difference and which individual companies prioritize a diverse leadership board. They should see whether a diverse board of leadership affects the amount the company emphasizes a safe and fair space for minority groups.

In conclusion, this review contributes to the research gap of different types of biases (racial, gender, and unconscious) in both the hiring and promotion processes. It also adds to the literature about unconscious bias training, specifically the modification of such training to include structural changes to the hiring and promotion processes and long-term commitment to diversity and inclusion training. If employers learn to control their biases, then the workplace may become a more diverse and safe space for every minority group. Research shows that diverse groups outperform homogeneous groups by creating an inclusive space, which leads to a 76 percent increase in employee engagement and a 20 percent increase in team innovation (Alexander, 2021). Companies and organizations will focus more on equality while simultaneously performing better.

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