Eliminating Discrimination In Hiring Isn't Enough

Dr. Mackenzie Alston and Jack Mills
Department of Economics, College of Social Sciences and Public Policy, Florida State University, Tallahassee

Abstract

Many companies have implemented policies that ensure there is no discrimination in the hiring process. While these policies are a good thing for businesses to implement, we reviewed literature that shows how the hardships and discrimination that a diverse workforce face may go overlooked. There can be differences in things like tasks given to different groups of individuals, which can lead to differences in standards and promotability for different groups of individuals. These aspects can cause workers to be unhappy in the workplace, causing them to leave and voiding the positives that are gained from hiring policies designed to create a diverse workforce. Support systems, as well as randomizing assignments for different tasks, are ways to reduce disparities in the workplace.

Introduction

Research within workplace discrimination in hiring practices has been heavily produced and looked into, however, once a more diverse workforce is established, the workplace environment can still be seen as highly exclusionary. Workers who belong to minority groups may have unfair workplace tasks and receive different treatment based on their minority status, which can lead to lower promotability, a more hostile workplace environment, and different assessment standards just to name a few. This study looks to explore these specific workplace climate aspects once a diverse workplace is cultivated, and what the implications of these topics are for a company. From this research we see that minority workers are treated differently based upon their minority status and because of this there need to be new policies implemented in companies to resolve whatever workplace issue there is specific to the company, some of these policies include mentoring, and increasing minority representation, especially in leadership positions.

Methods

We conducted a literature review looking at workplace discrimination and the impacts within the workplace. We looked for articles discussing the terms, workplace performance, workplace bias, labor discrimination, and work climate.

Results

The results of this study show that workplace discrimination does not end with eliminating biases in the hiring practices of companies. We found that the work climate is different depending upon an employee's minority status. For example, it was seen that LGBTQ+ scientists faced a more hostile workplace environment than straight scientists in the same sector, in this case science. It was also found that this workplace hostility can lead to employees leaving their job (Dyer et al., 2019). It was found that black managers that believe the company they work for values diversity has a negative effect on their intention to quit. This is because black managers feel more attached emotionally to a company that they believe values diversity. White managers also felt less likely to quit if their company values diversity (McKay et al., 2007). Even if employees stay at a firm that they believe does not value diversity, their performance may be affected. In a study conducted in France, researchers examined cashiers. Managers' biases were measured using implicit association tests. It was then looked at to measure how managers assess employees based upon their biases. It was seen that biased managers score minority employees lower than white employees. (Glover et al., 2017).

There is also a difference in promotion and raises for minority workers. When promotions and raises are determined by an individual basis it is possible for the manager's personal bias to influence their decision for promotions and raises. Previous research shows that promotional rates differ depending upon a persons' race or gender. This promotional difference remains consistent, even when worker performance is the same. A specific study looked at newly hired employees and their promotional rates. It was found that men are more likely than women to be promoted even when the employee's age, tenure, education level, occupation, and performance evaluation scores are the same (Blau et al., 2007).

There is also a difference in assessment and evaluations for minority workers. One study looked at publications for professors in the United States. This study showed that the number of co-authored papers had more of a positive effect for men being promoted rather than women, even when the number of publications and quality of publications are controlled to remain the same (Sarsons et al., 2021). Another study was outlined looking at the difference in employee evaluation ratings based upon race. Supervisors rated how well salespeople performed in the company. The results showed that black employees received lower ratings than white employees even when they are equally as productive. The study also looked at how white supervisors measured white and black employees and it was found that white employees were still judged better even when objective performance was measured by added controls. Furthermore, black supervisors rated white employees lower than the white employees that white supervisors measured (Elvira et al., 2001).

Conclusion

- Hiring equality doesn't equate to workplace equality.
- Minority workers face clear disadvantages and overt discrimination.
- Employee perceptions of the company can lead to employees leaving their jobs. It is important for workers to view their firm's diversity and inclusivity highly as it leads to loyalty and emotional connection to the company.
- Biases against minority workers in the workplace can lead to a change in employee behavior that can be detrimental to the workplace and the individual.
- Workplace policies must be reformed in order to promote equality within the workplace
- Minority worker retention would be increased with new policies to promote equality within the workplace.
- Policies can include mentor- mentee programs to promote equality between worker and boss, as well as establishing networks for minority workers.
- Randomizing workplace tasks can lead to equality.

References

Blau, F. D., & DeVaro, J. (2007). New evidence on gender differences in promotion rates: An empirical analysis of a sample of new hires. Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society, 46(3), 511-550.

Dyer, J.,Farley, S., Kanani, S., Matthews, P., Palermo, A., Thorley, C., & Townsend, A.(2019). Exploring the workplace for LGBT+ Physical Scientists. https://www.rsc.org/globalassets/04-campaigning-outreach/campaigning/lgbt-report/lgbt-report_web.pdf

Glover, D., Pallais, A., & Pariente, W. (2017). Discrimination as a self-fulfilling prophecy: Evidence from French grocery stores. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 132(3), 1219-1260.

Elvira, M., & Town, R. (2001). The effects of race and worker productivity on performance evaluations. Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society , 40 (4), 571 - 590.

McKay, P. F., Avery, D. R., Tonidandel, S., Morris, M. A., Hernandez, M., & Hebl, M. R.(2007). Racial differences in employee retention: Are diversity climate perceptions the key?. Personnel psychology, 60(1), 35-62.

Sarsons, H., Gërxhani, K., Reuben, E., & Schram, A. (2021). Gender differences in recognition for group work. Journal of Political Economy, 129(1), 101-147.

Acknowledgments