

*Unconscious Bias: The Unconscious Conscious Affect*

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**Abstract**

This article will look at Unconscious bias or implicit bias in the workplace, particularly 'Affinity' biases in recruitment and selection processes, and the lack of staff recognition. Several scientific types of research have argued that unconscious bias in recruitment and organisational politics affect work and daily living, and are detrimental to people's health and well-being. The negative consequences of unconscious bias are low work morale, increased absenteeism, turnover intention, and reduced organisational productivity. This paper suggests that the only way to solve unconscious or conscious bias challenges in the workplace is to be truly aware of our biases.

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Femi Otitoju, as cited by CBC Tapestry blog post states that "If you have a brain, you have a bias".

Unconscious bias or implicit bias is a huge topic and have been seldom neglected by Talent Acquisition Managers, Leaders and Managers alike. Unconscious bias according to Gordon (2018) is the attitudes or stereotypes that influence our views, actions, and our decision-making abilities. This attitude ranges from being familiar with the organization, the management, and the employees which create room for favouritism, and cloud our judgment of making a reasoned decision. The unconscious bias type practised in most organizations is Affinity bias. Affinity bias as described by Burton (2017) is unconsciously attaching importance to people who share some certain qualities with you or someone you like. Many organizations tend to show favouritism toward family, friends, and colleagues. This affects

work commitment and truncates an organization's recruiting process. Many organizations recruit people because they have or share certain qualities such as (religious belief, friendship, co-workers, or family values). The challenge (affinity bias) may pose in several organizations is low organizational productivity, poor work commitments, increased employee and organizational turnover, and a high rate of absenteeism. Unconscious bias affects people's lives, health and wellbeing, work and daily living.

Scientific research has shown that unconscious bias (such as the lack of recognition, reward, or incentives on the job, can inflict both psychological and physical stress, which in turn, lead to reduced organizational commitment, job dissatisfaction and turnover intentions (Aksu, 2015).

Lack of employee recognition is a number one element of organizational political, unconscious or conscious bias practices. Loyal and committed employees leave when they feel undervalued and unappreciated for their work due to the lack of managerial foresight, low organization support and poor human relations.

Every employee wants appreciation for their work. People require reward, congratulatory messages, and recognition for their work. The more frequent an employee gets recognized on the job, the better it is to increase organizational performance. Employees' who feel recognized are more productive about themselves and their ability to make a meaningful contribution to company goals. Being recognized for accomplishing a rewarding task makes people feel good about themselves, making sure to improve employee/employer relation and loyalty.

A survey conducted by Accenture, an Ireland company, as cited by (Aguenza & Ahmad, 2012) purports that 63% of employees who report they are satisfied with their job shows they are recognized in their workplace; 24% implied they are not satisfied with the recognition policy of their employers. Lack of recognition on the job translates to employees as the lack of success. All staff want to be recognized for a job well done. It goes beyond the traditional standard pay and benefits packages and retention plans, people consider recognition as a kind of motivation and feedback for their accomplishment.

In brief, the frustration employees experience when they believe they are treated unfairly can have critical consequences on organizations. Unfairness perceptions might be salient in relations to employees' belief about how their employer appraises their performance. A poor quality relationship with organizational leaders brings about low employee-employer trust and bonding. This unfair treatment, conscious or unconscious evokes stress because they constitute negative work circumstances.

Unconscious bias or favouritism practices is mostly found in a working environment with bad bosses/leadership and poor management, with limited organizational support. Job dissatisfaction, job turnover intention, employee absence, etc. are caused due to limited job

resources which affect organizations effectiveness (competencies).

Organizations should recognize not just the elite but value and respect all employees for their work. Having a positive work environment that well considers recognition programmes to encourage and award workers exceptional work has a greater chance of retaining employees and enhancing job productivity.

In conclusion, the (University of South Carolina Executive Leadership Training Program), as cited by Gordon (2018) explained that the only way to tackle unconscious bias, especially Affinity bias is to be aware of our own biases. Everyone big or small tends to be biased. Carl Jung quote, as cited by the Mind Potential Power website posits that “Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate. Organizations’ leaders and managers need to counter unconscious bias by taking their time in making effective decisions. To solve unconscious bias problems, leaders and managers in organizations must be willing to make an effective decision and to curb their biases for the good of the organization’s productivity, sustainability and survival.

## References

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