FOCAL ARTICLE

What We Know and Don’t: Eradicating Employment Discrimination 50 Years After the Civil Rights Act

ALEX LINDSEY, EDEN KING, TRACY MCCAUSSLAND, AND KRISTEN JONES
George Mason University

ERIC DUNLEAVY
DCI Consulting Group

Abstract
Although nearly 50 years have passed since the Civil Rights Act, employment discrimination persists. Thus, this focal article raises and addresses critical issues regarding a yet unanswered question: how can organizational researchers and practitioners contribute to the ultimate goal of eradicating employment discrimination? This article will push previous work a step forward by considering discrimination reduction tactics spanning the attraction, selection, inclusion, and retention phases of the employment cycle. Additionally, we expand our discussion of strategies to reduce discrimination beyond classically studied racial, ethnic, and gender differences. Our synthesis of this literature will inform organizational psychologists on how to address discrimination, but will also highlight the lack of evidence regarding important aspects of these strategies.

The year 2014 marks the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act. In the nearly 50 years since this legislation was codified, organizational scholars, and practitioners have been among those working to ensure that the tenets of Title VII—which prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin—are implemented effectively. Despite substantial efforts over 5 decades, employment discrimination persists. Indeed, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) resolved 42,545 charges in 2012 alone, excluding cases where no reasonable cause was found or the case was closed due to administrative reasons (EEOC, 2013). This focal article raises and addresses critical issues regarding a yet unanswered question: How can organizational researchers and practitioners contribute to the ultimate goal—articulated by EEOC Chair Berrien in her 2012 SIOP keynote—of eradicating employment discrimination?

This article will push previous work—which has considered strategies for reducing subgroup differences in selection decisions (Ployhart & Holtz, 2008) and how to appropriately use affirmative action policies (Kravitz, 2008)—a step forward by considering discrimination reduction tactics spanning from the attraction phase to the retention stage of employment. The purpose of this focal article was to initiate discussion and debate on the topic of employment discrimination and various prevention strategies.
Tables 1 through 4). In addition, we do not limit our discussion of strategies to reduce discrimination to classically studied racial, ethnic, and gender differences. Instead, we broaden our scope to consider all types of marginalized groups. In the attraction section we discuss strategies that can be used to effectively recruit minorities to apply for positions in a given organization. In the selection section we discuss strategies to reduce both disparate impact and disparate treatment—and to resolve the “diversity–validity dilemma” (Pyburn, Ployhart, & Kravitz, 2008)—through the use of balanced and fair selection procedures. In the inclusion section, we discuss organizational and individual strategies that can be used to make marginalized groups feel both welcome and respected on the job. Finally, in the retention section we discuss discrimination reduction strategies designed to help organizations to effectively maintain marginalized group members. To conclude, we provide concrete recommendations to both scientists and practitioners within each employment phase regarding (a) what we should keep doing, (b) what we should stop doing, and (c) what we need to know more about.

Our synthesis of this literature will inform industrial—organizational (I–O) psychologists on how to address discrimination but will also highlight the lack of evidence regarding important aspects of these strategies. Overall, these descriptions will underscore the shortage of evidenced-based strategies for reducing discrimination across the employment cycle, as well as the lack of connection between efforts to address these intertwined challenges. In so doing, we will move our field beyond simply assessing challenges that arise in an increasingly diverse workforce toward providing actionable solutions. We do not claim to have perfect answers; indeed, the views shared here do not even represent consensus among the authors of this article.

Instead, we intend to spark dialogue among academic and applied communities regarding work that remains in order to fulfill the original goals of civil rights legislation; the past 50 years have helped us to better understand discrimination, but our objective must now be aimed at its eradication.

Attraction

Although much research in the discrimination reduction domain has focused on selection practices, the fact remains that minorities can only be hired if they actually apply for positions. Thus, any discrimination reduction effort must begin with how to effectively attract minority employees to apply for jobs while reducing the potential for discrimination in the attraction process. Our review suggests there are several strategies organizations can implement to attract employees who are diverse with regard to visible characteristics (e.g., ethnicity and gender) as well as invisible characteristics (e.g., religious identity and parental status). These approaches can be organized by the following four themes: (a) targeted recruitment, (b) authentic commitment, (c) explicit communication of diversity-related recruitment efforts, and (d) facilitation of the application process (see Table 1). What follows is an elaboration of each theme describing how they can be used to reduce discrimination in the attraction process.

First, organizations can engage in targeted recruitment of diverse applicants in order to enhance the diversity of the applicant pool and reduce discrimination in the attraction phase (Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006; Kravitz, 2008). This strategy can be implemented through various means, such as dedicating efforts to cultivate and maintain relationships with educational institutions, minority organizations, and/or professional groups whose members reflect the type of diversity the organization is seeking (Digh, 1999). For instance, organizations aiming to boost the number of young individuals in its applicant pool may reach out to college placement centers. Similarly, organizations seeking to hire...
Table 1. *Strategies to Reduce Discrimination in the Attraction Phase*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Targeted recruitment</td>
<td>Regularly contact college placement centers for ideal applicants.</td>
<td>Can attract minorities without repelling nonminorities</td>
<td>Limited research on the effectiveness of these strategies</td>
<td>These strategies are promising, but more research is critical to determine the effectiveness in terms of increasing the diversity of the applicant pool as well as applicant and perceptions. Furthermore, other recruitment strategies should not be overlooked.</td>
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<td>Develop and maintain relationships with organizations that have diverse individuals of interest</td>
<td>Utilizing minority recruiters</td>
<td>Reinforces commitment to diversity</td>
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<td>Project diversity to the public</td>
<td>Portraying diverse individuals in marketing materials</td>
<td>Benefits can be increased if the individual being portrayed is in a supervisory role</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Some are simple and cost-effective to implement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish a reputation for commitment to diversity</td>
<td>Receiving awards such as <em>Best Companies for Diversity</em></td>
<td>Will increase legitimacy of attraction efforts</td>
<td>Very difficult to create because it takes time and genuine change including top management support.</td>
<td>Authenticity is a critical and we believe to be the foundation for which the other strategies must build upon.</td>
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<td>Explicit communication about diversity recruitment efforts</td>
<td>Hosting company meetings to explain the purpose of diversity and recruitment efforts</td>
<td>May boost perceptions of fairness and reduce backlash</td>
<td>Some reservations about preferential treatment may linger</td>
<td>This strategy appears to be a necessary supplement to more focused diversity attraction strategies in order to manage perceptions of justice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitate the application process</td>
<td>Hosting virtual job fairs</td>
<td>Can eliminate unnecessary barriers for individuals regardless of their current circumstances</td>
<td>Could create resentment among other applicants</td>
<td>Considering today’s economic climate, this strategy is likely to benefit all applicants; however, aid should not only be limited to target groups, but available to all.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ensuring application materials are easily accessible</td>
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more African Americans may consider focusing their recruitment efforts on universities that have larger populations of Black students. In addition, organizations may target certain media outlets (e.g., radio announcements, community newsletters, newspapers, magazines, and/or social media pages) that are traditionally frequented by desired populations.

Another method to reduce potential discrimination via targeted recruiting relates to a diverse image, which embodies the notion that organizational agents should represent individuals from various backgrounds. Agents can include recruiters who are often the first representatives of an organization with whom applicants have any meaningful interaction. Indeed, scholars suggest that diverse applicants’ initial attraction to an organization may be enhanced through the employment of diverse recruiters (Kravitz, 2008; Rynes & Barber, 1990). However, preliminary research suggests that this message must be consistent with the organization’s previously established reputation for managing diversity (Avery & McKay, 2006). Another method of signaling this message is to portray diverse individuals in marketing materials and advertisements. This strategy appears to be most appealing to target group members when diverse individuals are depicted in supervisory roles (Avery, 2003; Avery, Hernandez, & Hebl, 2004; Avery & McKay, 2006). In addition, the wording of employment advertisements can affect the likelihood that minorities will apply (Born & Taris, 2010). Specifically, women have been found to be more inclined than men to apply for jobs when the profile corresponds to their gender (i.e., contained more prototypically feminine characteristics).

Third, organizations may foster attraction from target group members by establishing a public reputation that reflects an authentic commitment to diversity. According to Cox’s (1993) conceptualization of the varying levels of understanding and awareness of diversity in organizations, the ideal organization should not only reflect diversity in terms of numerical representation but should also convey a sincere commitment to multiculturalism in their approach to diversity management. Research on organizational diversity supports the notion that solely providing individuals with numbers and statistics about an organization’s demographic diversity is not sufficient to promote positive perceptions about that organization’s commitment to diversity. Along with demographic heterogeneity, organizations must portray an authentic commitment to diversity within the organization as well as genuine dedication for the inclusion and incorporation of diverse groups that exceeds superficial attempts (Smith, Botsford Morgan, King, Knight, & Hebl, in press). Importantly, Rynes, Bretz, and Gerhart (1991) found that some candidates interpreted the number of women and minorities encountered during their on-site visit to indicate organizational attitudes towards diversity, suggesting both numerical representation and a sincere commitment to diversity are critical in the attraction of minority applicants. Given this finding, organizations may want to ensure that applicants from diverse populations see and interact with diverse employees in the attraction phase. However, we caution that this effort should not be overly forced to avoid the organization being perceived as fake or manipulative.

Although targeted recruitment and authentic commitment to diversity can be effective to increase the number of target group members in the applicant pool, organizations must pair these strategies with efforts to attenuate resentment from nonminorities. One way to prevent such backlash is by openly communicating with both applicants and current employees about affirmative action programs (AAPs) and making it exceedingly clear that AAPs do not involve preference or quotes at the selection stage and thus are only aiding in expanding the pool of applicants (Kravitz, 2008). This is especially important given that Whites and other majority group members tend to assume AAPs are preferential
Discrimination eradication

in the absence of clarifying information (Golden, Hinkle, & Crosby, 2001). Indeed, extant empirical research suggests that members of target groups at whom APPs are directed are evaluated as less competent when AAPs are believed to be preferential or when they are not adequately explained (Garcia, Erskine, Hawn, & Casmay, 1981; Heilman, Battle, Keller, & Lee, 1998). However, clarity about the lack of preferential treatment eliminates such stigmatization against target group members (Evans & Oh, 1996). Another strategy for attenuating backlash from nontarget group members is to justify the use of APPs. In doing so, organizations should focus on the purpose of AAPs in redressing past discrimination (the moral case) while also emphasizing the practical value of diversity (the business case). Indeed, meta-analytic evidence suggests incentivizing AAPs solely based on underrepresentation is likely to be perceived negatively by nonminorities (Harrison, Kravitz, Mayer, Leslie, & Lev-Arey, 2006).

Finally, organizations can expand the applicant pool by providing options to facilitate the application process for target group members (Kravitz, 2008). For example, an organization could leverage technology to allow applicants from disadvantaged populations to apply from home rather than having them incur traveling costs from having to physically visit the organization. Other illustrations of facilitation include hosting virtual job fairs, ensuring application materials are easily accessible, and reducing the quantity of required information. Although field research is limited, social psychological research strongly supports the conclusion that removing barriers will increase the likelihood of a given behavior, such as applying for a job.

What Should We Keep Doing?

We suggest continuing to implement any and all of the strategies reviewed above. To date, the research suggests that these attraction efforts are beneficial, and some are quite simple and cost effective to employ (e.g., portraying diverse individuals in marketing materials). Furthermore, White individuals generally do not react negatively to these marketing materials (Avery, 2003). Other strategies are likely to be more difficult to implement (e.g., establishing a public reputation of authentic commitment to diversity). Regardless, attraction of applicants from underrepresented groups requires integrity and communication to ensure clarity of purpose, acceptance of such initiatives, and to limit misperceptions of preference.

What Should We Stop Doing?

At this juncture, there are no attraction strategies that we would discourage. However, a critical caveat to this statement is that organizations should only actively pursue diversity attraction tactics if they are genuinely committed to diversity (Avery & McKay, 2006). It is not enough to portray minorities in advertising materials if attraction of diverse applicants is not part of a larger organizational initiative. If the organization does not truly value diversity, then diversity attraction efforts will be misaligned with the organization’s core values. This misalignment can eventually foster resentment and perceived psychological contract breach because applicants turned employees are not getting what the organization “sold” them during the attraction process. Thus, we recommend that organizations strive to develop a culture that reflects a genuine commitment to diversity prior to implementing these strategies.

What Do We Need to Know More About?

This is an area ripe for investigation. Empirical evidence has only recently become available for many of these strategies. Future research could investigate the effectiveness of facilitating the application process for specific minority groups. Although this strategy shows promise, empirical work is needed to investigate how effective this strategy can be, as well as how others may react to it. Future work should
also replicate previous findings. In addition, we need to know more about how to reduce discrimination in the attraction phase for individuals with invisible stigmas (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered individuals, people with disabilities). Indeed, existing research generally focuses on attracting individuals based on visible aspects of their identity, such as race and gender. Thus, a complex but important question that remains is how to communicate support for people with invisible identities during the recruitment process. For instance, how do we effectively recruit individuals that have differing and stigmatized religious beliefs? That being said, it is important to remember that attraction is only the first opportunity to reduce discrimination against marginalized populations. Once marginalized group members have submitted job applications, a balanced and fair selection system must also be in place.

**Selection**

Selection strategies to minimize discrimination and enhance diversity have long been a focus of diversity researchers and industrial–organizational psychologists more generally. There are two general forms of discrimination that present themselves at the selection phase: disparate impact and disparate treatment. Disparate impact refers to unintentional forms of discrimination (e.g., using a selection measure that unintentionally selects substantially more individuals from one protected class than individuals from another), whereas disparate treatment refers to intentional forms of discrimination (e.g., deliberately not hiring an individual because they belong to a particular protected class). Efforts to reduce these forms of discrimination are generally considered independently, likely because the presumed underlying mechanisms of intentional and unintentional discrimination (and their legal standards) differ substantially. What follows is a discussion of selection strategies that can be utilized to reduce each of these important manifestations of discrimination throughout the selection process (see Table 2, which contains some strategies not included in the text due to space limitations).

**Strategies for Minimizing Disparate Impact in Selection**

We conceptualize disparate impact reduction strategies during in the selection process in terms of three categories that organizations can utilize. The first category involves consideration of what constructs to measure, the second focuses on how to measure those constructs, and the third emphasizes how to use our selection tools to make employment decisions. Importantly, we acknowledge that subgroup differences in the selection context do not necessarily reflect discrimination, provided that measures are job related and alternative methods have been considered. However, in this section we will discuss strategies to reduce subgroup differences, which should in turn reduce the likelihood that substantial disparate impact will exist.

*What constructs to measure.* One discrimination-reducing measurement strategy is simply to use predictors that have smaller subgroup differences than those created by cognitive ability tests. Indeed, although cognitive ability tests are among the best predictors of workplace success, they also produce the largest subgroup differences between racial and ethnic groups (Hough, Oswald, & Ployhart, 2001). Thus, to the degree that other selection methods (e.g., interviews, work samples, biodata, personality measures) can be used reliability, we should observe a reduction in these subgroup differences and thus a reduction in adverse impact overall (Ployhart & Holtz, 2008; Schmitt & Quinn, 2009).

One common concern related to this approach is that of a "validity tradeoff" wherein using alternative measurement strategies reduces adverse impact but also weakens prediction. One way to mitigate this concern is to use multiple
Table 2. Strategies to Reduce Discrimination in the Selection Phase

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use predictors with smaller subgroup differences</td>
<td>Use interviews, work samples, or assessment centers instead of cognitive ability tests. Minimize reading requirements to the degree allowable by the job.</td>
<td>Generally effective in reducing subgroup differences. May allow for more specific measurement of a broad range of KSAOs.</td>
<td>Subgroup difference reduction varies by selection method. Many alternative predictors come with a “validity tradeoff.”</td>
<td>Using this strategy is essentially a balancing act between minimizing subgroup differences and avoiding too much of a “validity tradeoff.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assess a full range of KSAOs</td>
<td>Use a full selection battery rather than relying on cognitive ability tests alone. Can still include cognitive ability tests if desired.</td>
<td>May actually increase the validity of personnel decisions (i.e., this strategy may not come with a “validity tradeoff”).</td>
<td>May increase cost as the number of predictors goes up.</td>
<td>This is a strategy that most selection personnel should be using anyway, so it is a bonus that it also has the potential to reduce adverse impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider how to use predictor scores</td>
<td>Consider how to use (e.g., rank order, cut score setting, banding) selection tools to make employment decisions.</td>
<td>Subgroup difference reduction can be sizeable for women and racial minorities. Acknowledges inherently unreliability in our selection measures.</td>
<td>Subgroup difference reduction not as sizeable for other marginalized groups (i.e., not women or racial minorities). May create ethical issues of using preferences within bands.</td>
<td>Important to remember that using preferences is usually illegal, so we must be cautious when using these techniques.</td>
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<td>Strategy</td>
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<td>Differential weighting of predictor/criterion dimensions</td>
<td>Give more weight to predictors that have been shown to have less adverse impact than others. Can use the same method to weight our criterion measures as well.</td>
<td>Can result in up to moderate subgroup difference reduction. May not require any changes in a given selection battery as it currently stands.</td>
<td>Validity may be lowered if weighting is based exclusively on adverse impact of measures. Applicant faking may be an issue.</td>
<td>This strategy, like using predictors with smaller subgroup differences, is a balancing act between weighting predictors/criteria that show small subgroup differences but are still valid predictors/criteria.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative modes of test stimuli presentation</td>
<td>Video-based measure administrations. Computer simulations. Open-ended tests.</td>
<td>Can show large subgroup difference reductions, especially between racial groups.</td>
<td>Difficult to separate impact of the construct and the method of presentation.</td>
<td>This strategy seems to show some promise, but we need to know more about how it works and for which groups it is an effective technique.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and remove biased items</td>
<td>Identify and remove test items that seem to benefit a majority group or penalize a minority group.</td>
<td>Eliminates unnecessary information and unnecessary reading requirements. Increases the face validity of the measure.</td>
<td>May not have a practically meaningful effect on reducing subgroup differences.</td>
<td>We believe this should always be done, but the practical value of this strategy may be limited by the fact that the number of items “for” and “against” a given group likely balance each other out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted staffing</td>
<td>Identify internal/external candidates and assess qualifications using valid selection methods.</td>
<td>Allows organizations to target specific groups for their open positions.</td>
<td>No apparent downfall to this approach, as long as preferences are avoided.</td>
<td>This is what organizations should be doing anyway, so this is a recommended practice as long as preferences are avoided.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Examples</td>
<td>Strengths</td>
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<td>Coaching</td>
<td>Coach all test takers prior to their participation in the selection battery</td>
<td>Appears to be beneficial for everyone (e.g., all selection scores seem to go up), even majority group members</td>
<td>May not result in a practically significant reduction in adverse impact as it improves all selection scores</td>
<td>This strategy may improve reactions to the selection battery but it is not likely to have a significant effect on reducing adverse impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjust amount of time available</td>
<td>If speed is not a component of the ability that we are measuring, we can eliminate this component by giving individuals unlimited time to finish a given test</td>
<td>Removes irrelevant information from the predictor domain May improve reactions to a given selection measure</td>
<td>Has thus far been largely unsuccessful in reducing subgroup differences</td>
<td>Relatively few studies have been conducted on this strategy, so more work needs to be done before we can fairly evaluate its effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train decision makers</td>
<td>Compliance training Inform people of their potential biases</td>
<td>Keeps the selection process consistent and fair over time</td>
<td>Some people may still harbor bias that they allow to affect even seemingly objective decisions</td>
<td>All organizations should really be doing this already, and this is one of the few strategies we list to reduce disparate treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce subjectivity from the selection process</td>
<td>Use structured as opposed to unstructured interviews Evaluate selection scores blindly when possible Only select decision makers who are low in explicit and implicit bias</td>
<td>Should limit bias in selection decision making Likely leads to greater perceived fairness of the selection process</td>
<td>Some people may still harbor bias that they allow to affect even seemingly objective decisions, unless the third example is utilized</td>
<td>All organizations should be doing this already, and this is one of the few strategies we list to reduce disparate treatment</td>
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measurements in an effort to assess a full range of KSAOs. Indeed, this strategy may be one of the few (if not the only) that may reduce adverse impact and improve validity (Ployhart & Holtz, 2008; Schmitt, Clause, & Pulakos, 1996). In addition, this strategy may be particularly attractive because it allows selection decision makers to include measures of cognitive ability along with other job-related metrics using both scientific- and values-based considerations.

How to measure those constructs. Another potential discrimination-reducing strategy is to consider using alternative modes of test stimuli presentation (Schmitt & Quinn, 2009). For example, we might consider using video-based measure administrations or computer simulations as opposed to traditional paper-and-pencil selection measures. Research suggests this is an effective method for reducing adverse impact against Blacks and Hispanics, but more work needs to be done to examine the potential for this strategy to benefit other marginalized groups (Pulakos & Schmitt, 1996).

Another strategy is to identify and remove items that appear to be biased against any marginalized group. We believe this is an intuitive strategy that can accomplish multiple goals, including increasing the face validity of a given selection measure for marginalized groups (Schmitt & Quinn, 2009). Thus, although we need to know more about this strategy in terms of the degree to which it actually reduces adverse impact, it may be reasonable to consider this strategy on the basis of improving the perceptions of marginalized group members who are participating in the selection procedure.

How to use selection tools. There are also considerations that focus on how employment decisions are made based on assessment information. These strategies serve as alternatives to traditional rank-order decision making, which typically lead to more adverse impact. One such strategy involves banding assessment scores together into psychometrically similar groupings. Banding is a strategy that acknowledges the unreliability of measures by creating bands within which scores are not differentiated or treated as meaningfully different from one another (Aguinis, 2004). Research indicates that banding can be an effective way of reducing subgroup differences in selection rates. However, the largest reductions in adverse impact are found when subgroup (i.e., race, gender, etc.) preferences are used within bands, which is illegal in the vast majority of scenarios (Ployhart & Holtz, 2008). For this reason there continues to be substantial controversy surrounding the practice of banding (Pyburn et al., 2008).

A related tactic is to strategically place cut scores for predictor measures in ways that reduce adverse impact without having a meaningful impact on prediction. Similarly to banding, scores above a given cut score are not treated as meaningfully different from one another in selection decisions when this strategy is being utilized. When using this strategy, it is important that the cut score is not arbitrary and is instead placed based on subject matter experts’ judgments and the relationship between the criterion and the predictor in question (see Kehoe, 2009). Indeed, previous research has demonstrated that adjusting cut scores can be an effective way to reduce adverse impact in selection decisions (e.g., Hoffman & Thornton, 1997).

Another strategy relates to the weighting of predictors and/or criterion measures. The idea behind this strategy is that we can assign more weight to predictor and/or criterion measures that demonstrate the least adverse impact. By using this strategy, we should be able to reap the validity benefits of using multiple predictors while also avoiding adverse impact by weighting predictors and/or criterion measures that have the lowest subgroup differences. Research suggests this can be a moderately effective strategy for reducing adverse impact (e.g., DeCorte, 1999; Hattrup, Rock, & Scalia, 1997). Thus, this is certainly a strategy to consider for use in selection decisions. However, it is important to
remember that this strategy will only be effective to the extent that there are already predictors that do not demonstrate considerable subgroup differences in the selection battery.

Strategies for Minimizing Disparate Treatment in Selection

In terms of reducing intentional discrimination, we contend that there are two key strategies that should be utilized. One strategy is to train human resources personnel and decision makers in management on avoiding discrimination in employment decisions. For example, employees could receive some sort of compliance training to ensure that they are following rules and regulations regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action (Kravitz, 2008). In addition, training these individuals to follow a consistent and standardized procedure should minimize the opportunity for bias to affect employment decisions. A more extensive method of eliminating this bias would involve having a “middle person” who could screen out all potentially stigmatizing information from application materials before passing them on to organizational decision makers. However, this strategy would only be useful if no face-to-face selection procedures (e.g., interviews) are used in the selection process.

The second key strategy is to design selection procedures that emphasize standardization and consistency while also minimizing subjectivity when making employment decisions. For example, the use of a structured interview designed for objectivity and consistency will likely be more job related and less susceptible to biased subjectivity and exception making as compared to an unstructured interview where bias is uncontrolled. Indeed, there is a wealth of research indicating that both conscious and unconscious biases can have an impact on subjective decision making (e.g., Aguinis, Culpepper, & Pierce, 2010). Thus, to the degree that we can minimize this subjectivity, we should also be able to minimize the effect that bias can have on employment decisions. For example, one study found that behavioral scripts can be used to reduce discomfort that is often present in Black–White interactions (Avery, Richeson, Hebl, & Ambady, 2009). Thus, organizations may be able to reduce interpersonal discrimination by using a strategy such as behavior scripting to reduce the ambiguity associated with interracial interactions. This is very similar to the difference between structured and unstructured interviews, where adding structure is thought to remove potential bias from selection decisions. One way to extend this idea even further would be to only appoint people to hiring committees who are low in both explicit and implicit expressions of bias. This could be accomplished through the use of explicit measures of prejudice, such as the Modern Racism Scale (McConahay, 1986) as well as implicit measures of prejudice, such as the Implicit Associations Test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998). Another way to deal with this bias in interviews would be to simply remove interviews from the selection process altogether, as many I–O graduate programs do. We acknowledge that these are controversial strategies, but they could be effective in that the potential for individual biases would be reduced from the selection system.

What Should We Keep Doing?

We suggest that attempting to assess a broad range of job-relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities within a selection system that is designed to minimize subjectivity of decision making is an EEO best practice. This approach would likely minimize both disparate treatment and disparate impact. Indeed, assessing a broad range of KSAsOs appears to be the only strategy for reducing adverse impact that does not inherently have a corresponding “validity tradeoff” (Ployhart & Holtz, 2008). In addition, removing subjectivity from the selection decision-making process appears to be one of the few foolproof ways to avoid bias that could lead to disparate treatment within the selection process. Finally, organizations
should think strategically about how they use assessments to make employment decisions and verify that policies (a) are not arbitrary, (b) are based in research, and (c) consider adverse impact as an important factor.

What Should We Stop Doing?

We should stop attempting to use minority preferences within our selection strategies for two primary reasons. First, unless preferences are being used for remedial purposes or to satisfy a significant government interest, they have often been deemed illegal by the courts (Pyburn et al., 2008). Second, if minorities are selected using preferential treatment then they may also suffer from (a) backlash from fellow employees and/or (b) feelings of illegitimacy regarding the means with which they obtained their job (Heilman & Haynes, 2006). Thus, we believe that minority preferences should only be utilized in extreme circumstances, usually court ordered. One important exception to consider is when the diversity of an applicant is considered as one of many factors that might influence selection outcomes. In these scenarios, minority preference may actually be deemed legal (see Grutter v. Bollinger, 2003). In line with this exception, we think organizations should make more of an effort to reframe diversity as a job-related demand. In doing so, we recommend taking a holistic approach as these approaches are both beneficial and deemed to be legal by the courts. For instance, in the Grutter v. Bollinger case, the University of Michigan argued that diversity could facilitate learning in higher education. Similarly, employers could argue that diversity likely facilitates organizational effectiveness in contexts where support for diversity is high (see Avery, McKay, Tonidandel, Volpone, & Morris, 2012).

What Do We Need to Know More About?

In general, it appears that we need to know more about which strategies can provide support to which specific marginalized groups in the selection context. Indeed, most of the work to this point seems to focus on more classic conceptualizations of diversity related to race, ethnicity, and gender differences. However, as the workplace continues to evolve and diversify, these conceptualizations of diversity are no longer as adequate as they once were. For instance, we need to know more about whether or not each of these discrimination reduction tactics would be equally effective for other marginalized groups such as religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) individuals; individuals with disabilities; and protected veterans. Furthermore, we would encourage scholars and practitioners to use current discrimination reduction tactics in the selection process while also pushing further and innovating with relatively new techniques. We believe the recent development of multimedia presentations of selection batteries is an excellent example of this type of innovation. In short, we believe that scholars should not be afraid to aggressivly pursue new ideas, theory, and initial evidence to guide selection practices. As is always the case, these goals can only be accomplished through continued and rigorous research.

Inclusion

It is not enough to fairly attract and select individuals from marginalized populations if this effort for fairness and equality wanes once they are a part of our organizations. Indeed, we must strive for inclusion if our goal for the eradication of discrimination is to be perceived as legitimate. By striving for inclusion we mean striving to create a workplace environment where underrepresented groups feel they are welcome and respected on the job (Thomas & Ely, 1996). Inclusion is often conflated with retention or ignored altogether in favor of diversity initiatives that instead focus on attracting and selecting individuals from marginalized populations. In this article, we differentiate between inclusion strategies, which focus on the creation of an equitable diversity climate, and retention strategies, which
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity training</td>
<td>Lectures&lt;br&gt;Roleplaying&lt;br&gt;For both managers and employees</td>
<td>Most organizations are already doing this&lt;br&gt;Can aid in compliance and general appreciation for diversity</td>
<td>Extreme variability in the design and implementation of diversity training&lt;br&gt;Mixed support from studies that typically focus on immediate reaction criteria</td>
<td>Diversity training is here to stay, so we should continue using this strategy while focusing more on why it is effective when it is and why it is not effective when it is not</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide benefits of</td>
<td>Providing a daycare center of special interest to working mothers&lt;br&gt;Granting days off for holidays of nontraditional religions</td>
<td>Shifts focus to total compensation rather than just focusing on pay equality</td>
<td>Has the potential to create resentment and backlash among majority employees</td>
<td>This strategy seems to be beneficial as long as backlash is avoided; benefits should be provided to all employees, not just minority group members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interest for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marginalized groups</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Impression</td>
<td>Acknowledgement&lt;br&gt;Individuation&lt;br&gt;Prejudice confrontation</td>
<td>Simple and effective strategies&lt;br&gt;Can be used at the individual level by targets in organizations</td>
<td>Not studied with regard to all stigmatized groups&lt;br&gt;May shift the burden too much to targets of prejudice</td>
<td>These strategies are of particular use to stigmatized individuals who are not yet protected by law, but more work needs to be done to see which strategies will work for which groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prejudice</td>
<td>Telling someone to stop making prejudiced jokes&lt;br&gt;Pointing out that a comment made by a coworker was prejudiced</td>
<td>Can be effectively used by anyone&lt;br&gt;Leads to less expressions of prejudice in future interactions</td>
<td>May cause contentious situations to arise in the workplace&lt;br&gt;People may not be entirely comfortable with confrontation</td>
<td>This strategy is useful in that it perpetuates egalitarian norms over time, but the challenge lies in training individuals to confront and creating a work environment where it is common to do so</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Strategies to Reduce Discrimination in the Inclusion Phase
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identity management</td>
<td>Signaling</td>
<td>Simple and potentially effective strategies for managing an invisible identity</td>
<td>Limited research on the effectiveness of these strategies</td>
<td>These strategies may be of particular interest to individuals possessing invisible stigmas that are largely unprotected in today's workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Differentiating</td>
<td>Can be used at the individual level by targets in organizations</td>
<td>May shift the burden too much to targets of prejudice</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Normalizing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem resolution</td>
<td>Have an established method for investigating and resolving diversity-related employee complaints</td>
<td>Communicates that the organization takes diversity seriously</td>
<td>May be difficult to convince organizations to invest the time and money necessary for this initiative</td>
<td>This strategy seems to show some promise early on, but we need to know more about how it works and for which groups it is an effective technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity learning and strategy</td>
<td>Ongoing diversity awareness and education programs Promote diversity policy</td>
<td>Communicates that the organization takes diversity seriously This is probably what diversity training should be evolving to become</td>
<td>May be difficult to convince organizations to invest the time and money necessary for this initiative</td>
<td>Diversity learning and strategy is ultimately where we think diversity training should go, so this is a strategy we would recommend using through its continued development. However, we consider this to be more of a macro-strategy when compared to smaller scale diversity initiatives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
focus on the creation of equitable objective outcomes for differing groups. In keeping these processes separate from one another, we assert that inclusion does not necessarily lead to retention in all cases. For example, a target could feel included and respected in an organization as a result of diversity training (an inclusion effort) but still ultimately leave that organization if it cannot provide development and advancement opportunities (conceptualized here as retention efforts). Thus, what follows is an elaboration of discrimination reduction tactics at both of these levels throughout the inclusion process (see Table 3, which contains some strategies not included in the text due to space limitations).

Perhaps the most commonly used diversity initiative related to inclusion is diversity training, which can be defined as any initiative designed to facilitate positive group interaction while also reducing prejudice and discrimination against marginalized groups (Pendry, Driscoll, & Field, 2007). It is important to note that these diversity training initiatives are meaningfully different from the aforementioned compliance training in two important ways. First, whereas compliance training focuses on organizational decision makers, diversity training is more inclusive in that it can (and probably should) be used for individuals at all levels of employment within an organization. Second, whereas compliance training is primarily concerned with ensuring decision makers are following the law, diversity training has broader goals in that it focuses on the quality of interpersonal interactions and the reduction of prejudice, not just discrimination.

Despite the fact that two thirds of human resource managers report using diversity training in their companies (Esen, 2005), there are arguably still more questions than answers when it comes to what makes diversity training effective and why some strategies are more effective than others. Indeed, a recent qualitative review concluded that standard diversity training programs (i.e., a stand-alone, 1-hour lecture program that focuses only on race) may not be effective in accomplishing the goals of various diversity initiatives (Bezrukova, Jehn, & Spell, 2012). Further complicating the evaluation of these programs is the fact that many diversity training researchers have failed to assess whether the presumed goal of diversity training programs (i.e., a reduction in prejudice and discrimination against marginalized groups) has actually been met. Indeed, a separate review article concluded that although diversity training may have a beneficial effect on attitudes, there is simply not enough quality research to aid us in understanding if diversity training programs can also have a beneficial effect on skill acquisition and behavior change (Kulik & Roberson, 2008), which should reflect what is ultimately of the most interest to diversity trainers and researchers. It is important to note that both of these reviews also include exemplars of effective diversity training programs. However, more work needs to be done before general recommendations can be advanced for what makes diversity training programs effective.

Another strategy that can be implemented to promote inclusion of marginalized group members is the provision of benefits that are of particular interest to a given group (Kravitz, 2008). For instance, having a day care center at the workplace may be of particular importance for women as they often function as primary caregivers in addition to full-time employees. When using this strategy, it is important to promote the idea that all individuals (i.e., not just individuals from marginalized groups) can take part in these additional benefits. Framing the benefits in this manner will hopefully avoid (a) potential resentment from other employees in the workplace as well as (b) feelings of guilt on the part of the marginalized group members for utilizing these benefits to their advantage (see Heilman & Haynes, 2006).

Inclusion may also be supported by efforts on the part of targets of discrimination and their allies. Research on impression management, which encompasses simple strategies that individuals with visible stigmas (e.g., race, obesity) use to create positive interpersonal impressions,
can enhance inclusion in the workplace. One such strategy is acknowledgement, which can be defined as simply recognizing and accepting a given stigmatized identity outright when targets are interacting with others. This form of prejudice reduction has been shown to be effective for individuals with disabilities, with earlier acknowledgement being associated with less prejudice experienced when compared with later acknowledgement or no acknowledgement at all (Hebl & Skorinko, 2005). Importantly, acknowledgement’s prejudice reducing effect has been shown to interact with the perceived controllability of the stigma (Hebl & Kleck, 2002). Specifically, while this strategy may be effective for those with certain disabilities that are perceived to be uncontrollable (e.g., genetic diseases), it may not be as beneficial for individuals burdened by visible stigmas generally assumed to be controllable. For example, acknowledgement may not be helpful for obese individuals due to the pervasive belief that obesity is a controllable condition.

Another impression management strategy that can be used by individuals with stigmas that are visible and perceived as controllable (e.g., obesity) is called individuation (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Singletary & Hebl, 2009). The basic logic underlying this strategy is that (a) visible, controllable stigmas evoke stereotypes and prejudice, (b) stereotypes are most likely to manifest in discrimination when information about targets is limited, and (c) positive, counterstereotypic information can distinguish and separate a particular individual from negative beliefs and attitudes about their stigma. Research generally supports this rationale and suggests that individuals with visible and controllable stigmas can benefit from providing counterstereotypic information. For example, results of a field experiment in shopping malls showed that ostensibly obese targets received less discrimination when they refuted the stereotype that they are lazy (King, Shapiro, Hebl, Singletary, & Turner, 2006). In another study, female leaders were evaluated more positively when described not only as great leaders (conveying agency) but also as mothers (counteracting stereotypes of low communality; Heilman & Okimoto, 2007). Finally, when participants in an FMRI scanner were instructed to look for unique information about racial outgroup targets (thereby individuating targets), they tended to engage in more deliberative (rather than automatic) processing of information (i.e., amygdala activation; Wheeler & Fiske, 2005). In other words, individuation promoted more thoughtful and thus less biased cognitive processing of target-related information.

An important shortcoming of the aforementioned impression management strategies is that they can only be used by targets of discrimination, leaving allies to wonder what they can do to help. One strategy that allies can employ is prejudice confrontation, which is defined as “verbally or nonverbally expressing one’s dissatisfaction with prejudicial and discriminatory treatment to the person who is responsible for the remark or behavior” (Shelton, Richeson, & Vorauer, 2006, p. 67). Importantly, confrontation has been shown to be an effective method of reducing subsequent expressions of prejudice when used by targets and allies alike (Czopp, Monteith, & Mark, 2006). However, not surprisingly, both targets and allies report not confronting as often as they believe they should. The confronting prejudiced responses (CPR) model describes several potential barriers that might prevent people from confronting, even when they feel that some form of action should be taken (Ashburn-Nardo, Morris, & Goodwin, 2008). According to the model, a failure to overcome any potential barriers may result in an individual not confronting prejudice, even when he or she feels that such action is appropriate. Thus, in order to remove these barriers and promote confrontation, the authors argue that organizations and individuals should strive to (a) increase the detection of discrimination, (b) help people understand that discrimination is serious and needs to be dealt with immediately, (c) empower individuals to increase perceptions of personal responsibility, and (d) teach people how to
confront through practice (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2008). If these conditions are
met, confrontation should be an effective method of prejudice reduction for both
allies and targets in organizations.

What Should We Keep Doing?

Organizations should keep providing benefits to individuals from marginalized
populations while emphasizing through open and clear communication that anyone
in the organization (i.e., not just minorities) can take part in these benefits to avoid back-
lash. This seems like a relatively effective way to promote the inclusion of marginal-
ized groups in organizations, although it may prove costly depending on the ben-
efits provided. In addition, although there are certainly flaws associated with the way
diversity training is currently carried out, organizations should continue their efforts
developing and executing diversity training initiatives. Training is the primary mech-
anism through which organizations can help employees gain new knowledge and skills.
Thus, it stands to reason that this mechanism would also apply to diversity-related
knowledge and skills. Indeed, as mentioned before, a majority of organizations use
diversity training in their efforts to reduce discrimination (Esen, 2005). The question
then becomes how diversity training should be executed to foster maximum effective-
ness, which we turn our attention to next.

What Should We Stop Doing?

We should stop conducting one-time diver-
sity training programs for the sole purpose
of satisfying employees’ diversity training
requirements. This likely occurs under the
assumption that “something is better than
nothing” but the potential for backlash
refutes this belief. Genuine inclusion efforts
must be extended throughout the organiza-
tion and supported by top management in
order to be effective and even perceived as
legitimate. In other words, diversity training
should be considered an ongoing part of
a larger diversity initiative to maximize
the chance of obtaining successful results
(Bezrukova et al., 2012). In addition, we
believe we should stop treating immediate
reaction outcomes as viable criteria by
which to judge the effectiveness of diversity
training programs. Although these are not
entirely trivial outcomes, they are also
not perfectly aligned with the goal of
most diversity training programs, which
is discrimination reduction (Bendick,
Egan, & Lothjelm, 2001). Thus, the out-
comes typically measured in diversity
training projects need to be expanded to
include both diversity-related skills and
actual discrimination reduction within orga-
nizations. Finally, we should stop ignoring
strategies that individuals can use to reduce
discrimination in the I–O literature. These
strategies are of particular importance for
a few reasons. First, not all target groups
are legally protected from discrimination to
the same extent. For instance, many LGBT
individuals work in environments where
they are not legally protected from discrim-
ination based on their sexual orientation
(Herrschaft & Mills, 2002). In lieu of such
legal protections, it is important to consider
what targets and allies can do to protect
certain stigmatized groups in the organiza-
tional context. It is important to note that
we are not advocating that the burden of
prejudice reduction be placed on target
members. However, we do believe that we
should be empowering targets and allies to
enact positive changes when they choose
to do so. In addition, the aforementioned
shortcomings of diversity training efforts
could potentially be addressed by the inclu-
sion of some strategies that individuals can
use themselves to reduce discrimination
in the workplace. Finally, discrimination
reduction strategies that can be used by
individuals do not receive as much cover-
age in the I–O literature as they do in other
domains (e.g., social psychology). Thus, we
believe these strategies can be enlightening
for individuals and organizations alike.

What Do We Need to Know More About?

We need to know more about inclusion
strategies that can be used at the individual
level by both targets and allies within organizations. We have discussed some promising strategies in this article such as acknowledgement and individuation, but more work needs to be done to determine (a) whether these are viable strategies to teach targets in the workplace and (b) if there is something that allies can be doing to facilitate these potentially difficult impression management processes. In addition, we need to know if the effectiveness of different individual strategies varies as a function of type of stigma. For instance, although confrontation has been shown to be an effective method of reducing racism and sexism, we know little about the effectiveness of this strategy for individuals with other types of stigmas. We want our diversity initiatives to promote the inclusion of individuals with a wide variety of stigmatized identities. However, we know significantly less about how to include individuals with invisible stigmas (e.g., gay and lesbian workers) as opposed to visible stigmas (e.g., race, gender; see Clair, Beatty, & MacLean, 2005). Thus, we need to continue conducting rigorous research to fill this gap in the literature.

Retention

Retention has traditionally been viewed as a direct result of inclusion. Indeed, scholars who identify increased voluntary withdrawal and turnover rates among women and minorities in the early stages of employment (Hom, Roberson, & Ellis, 2008) often attribute such findings to the culture or climate of the organization (McKay et al., 2007). Given this lens, discussion of efforts to improve inclusion and retention tend to be grouped together. We do not dispute a strong relationship between these constructs but contend that this conflation has caused important retention features to be overlooked. So the rarely considered question is: How can discrimination be reduced in the retention process?

Our review of the literature yielded five categories of potential options that may be helpful in retaining employees in general and minority employees in particular (see Table 4). The first involves performance management, which Goldstein and Lundquist (2010) argued should include not only systematic appraisals of performance but also the ongoing procedures used to communicate expectations and feedback. Creating a standardized system for performance feedback may overcome tendencies to “soften” negative feedback for women and other employees who are perceived as needing protection (King et al., 2012). In addition, creating diversity-related, incentivized performance goals that include core competencies or staffing objectives could potentially motivate these behaviors (Kalev et al., 2006).

Compensation systems offer a second strategy for increasing retention of minority employees. Pay (which can include bonuses, stock options, etc.) is a central driver of decisions to leave organizations (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000). Thus, systems that ensure women and minorities receive fair pay—by tying compensation to actual performance or results—are critical to retention. Organizations might also devote resources to creating persuasive packages for targeted group members to directly address problems with retention. Indeed, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), which oversees government personnel, suggests that agencies should “consider paying retention allowances when challenged to keep particular skills available” but cautions that “agencies should continually monitor the use of such allowances to check for any evidence of discrimination” (2012).

Third, organizations should ensure that women and minorities have equal access to learning and development opportunities. OPM suggests that organizations should provide training opportunities for all employees, use tuition reimbursement programs, publicize developmental opportunities, and use a variety of training and development methods to enhance retention of diverse workers (2012). When stated as such, this seems a straightforward process. However, research suggests that access
**Table 4. Strategies to Reduce Discrimination in the Retention Phase**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance management</td>
<td>Include cultural competence in performance management</td>
<td>May overcome biases in feedback giving</td>
<td>Doesn’t necessarily overcome bias in performance appraisal</td>
<td>Care must be taken to ensure that discrimination toward White men does not emerge</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide direct feedback to protected group members</td>
<td>Communicates value of diversity</td>
<td>Problems with measurement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Monetary incentives for diversity staffing goals</td>
<td></td>
<td>Potential backlash</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Equitable compensation packages</td>
<td>Ensure merit/results drive rewards</td>
<td>May reduce pay gaps</td>
<td>Difficult to quantify “merit” or “results”</td>
<td>Many of the best practices in creating fair selection systems (e.g., job analyses) likely transfer to compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use targeted retention allowances</td>
<td>Could directly address turnover</td>
<td>Targeted retention programs can be perceived as unfair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and development opportunities</td>
<td>Provide training opportunities for all employees</td>
<td>Learning programs could overcome initial differences in skill, knowledge, or access to education</td>
<td>Training may not be of the same quality for all employees</td>
<td>Care should be taken to ensure that the quantity and quality of learning opportunities are the same for dominant and marginalized group members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establish mentoring programs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Only some types of mentoring programs are effective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use tuition reimbursement programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career development programs</td>
<td>Establish clear advancement pathways</td>
<td>Implies transparency and fairness in decision-making processes</td>
<td>Advancement decisions may still be subject to biases</td>
<td>Development of future leaders will ensure their ultimate effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify and develop qualified protected group members for management positions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuous monitoring</td>
<td>Examine promotion, compensation, development opportunities for disparate impact</td>
<td>Complies with federal and state laws/regulations</td>
<td>Problems can be difficult to detect</td>
<td>Some form is generally required, but it is up to organizations to use the data to create change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exit interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td>Does not ensure accountability for results</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Turnover analyses</td>
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to training itself may be insufficient; it may be necessary to go further in ensuring that the quality of training programs is the same for all employees (see King et al., 2012; Shapiro, King, & Quinones, 2007).

A fourth and related strategy for enhancing retention would be to institute career development programs that assist employees at all levels in the organization to define career objectives, assess their existing skills, and develop the additional skills required for their desired career path (Goldstein & Lundquist, 2010). The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) further suggests that individual development plans can be used to ensure that candidate pools for senior positions comprise diverse, qualified candidates. Unfortunately, however, research suggests that even when women and minorities make it into such candidate pools they are not ultimately chosen for the high status position (see Valian, 1999).

Fifth and finally, continuous monitoring has been recommended as a method through which to identify problems underlying turnover (2012; OPM, 2012). Although many organizations are attuned to the need to conduct adverse impact analyses in staffing decisions and compensation, fewer seem to recognize the importance of tracking subgroup differences in training opportunities or turnover itself. Establishing a formal monitoring system through turnover analyses, exit interviews, and broader indicators of determinants of turnover could allow detection of problems as they arise.

What Should We Keep Doing?

Part of the explanation for differential rates of retention of protected and nonprotected group members lies in human resource processes and decisions (Ali, Metz, & Kulik, 2010). That is, one reason why people leave their jobs is that they do not get access to career opportunities (Griffeth et al., 2000). This can happen in formal decisions such as reduced access to training programs, promotions, and bonus compensation. In addition, access may vary across social identities with regard to less formal aspects of human resource management such as the quantity and quality of feedback received and developmental work assignments provided (King et al., 2012). Thus, it is clear that strategies to reduce differential rates of turnover should address these areas of concern. What is less clear from the limited extant research, however, is which strategies will be most helpful in retaining diverse workers.

In one study of EEO-1 reports and survey data from 708 organizations between 1971 and 2002, Kalev et al. (2006) found that few programs consistently increased the proportion of White women and African Americans in management positions. Indeed, formal personnel policies slightly reduced the proportion of African American men and women in management, and diversity training programs reduced the proportion of African American women managers. However, formal structures of organizational responsibility—including diversity committees and staff dedicated to diversity issues, and Title VII lawsuits—did increase the representation of White women and African Americans in managerial positions over time. Moreover, diversity training programs, performance management systems that included diversity assessments, networking, and mentoring programs were more effective in organizations in which these formal structures of responsibility were present. These findings suggest that organizations should ensure that formal structures of responsibility for diversity, such as a chief diversity officer or a diversity management office, exist when implementing retention oriented programs.

In addition to the role of formal structures of responsibility, Goldstein and Lundquist’s (2010) case study of transforming diversity management at Coca-Cola points to the importance communicating an ongoing and long-standing commitment to diversity and inclusion. Minority employees of Coca-Cola—particularly those who had been at the company for more than 3 years—doubted the authenticity of the organization’s efforts in its early stages. Together, these points underscore
the importance of—in the language of the EEOC’s suggestions for enhancing retention—demonstrating “leadership commitment and accountability” and integrating the “EEO director in strategic planning” (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2012).

It is, of course, impossible to ignore the additional importance of monitoring personnel data throughout the employment cycle. This makes common sense, is consistent with EEO expectations, and is the only place to start understanding whether retention is even an issue of concern for a particular organization. It is similarly impossible to ignore that simply collecting data does not itself solve any problem.

What Should We Stop Doing?

As discussed in previous sections, programs that are perceived to benefit protected group members more than majority group members likely result in two related problems (see Heilman & Haynes, 2006). The first is that nonbeneficiaries likely perceive procedural injustice or more general unfairness. The second is that beneficiaries may themselves feel that they do not deserve the positions or outcomes they achieve. Thus, we contend that targeted programs may do more harm than good. This critique would apply to strategies like targeted retention packages, targeted career development pools, and perhaps even targeted mentoring programs. Such opportunities should be available for all employees to ensure actual and perceived fairness while avoiding backlash from nonminority groups.

What Do We Need to Know More About?

Everything, in discussions of diversity, retention is often conflated with inclusion. It follows that we have very little evidence that directly addresses reducing discrimination in drivers of retention such as development and advancement opportunities. For example, we need to know more about how to develop unbiased performance management systems that do not also result in “reverse discrimination” by instead favoring minorities. In addition, we need to know more about how to leverage career development programs so that they translate into minority promotions rather than promotions into a never-ending pipeline. The EEOC, OPM, and Coca-Cola cases offer examples of strategies that might help, but it is up to organizational psychologists to determine which ones work, under what circumstances, and for what kinds of employees.

Conclusion

The strategies summarized here provide organizations, targets, and allies with methods for reducing discrimination throughout the employment cycle. We further contend that not only individual I–O psychologists, but also the Society for I–O Psychology (SIOP) as a whole, has much to offer in the way of informing the EEO community on strategies for reducing discrimination. Toward that end, we suggest enhancing the relationships between SIOP as an organization, individual I–O psychologists (both scientists and practitioners), and federal agencies involved in employment discrimination reduction such as the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). Only through working together and leveraging all of our resources can we possibly reach the ambitious goal of ending discrimination in our organizations. Precisely how those relationships can be enhanced is also a conversation worth having. Only through rigorous research and practice can we improve and refine strategies that support the ultimate goal of eliminating discrimination in the workplace. We welcome debate and hope this article sparks meaningful conversation on the best ways to eliminate discrimination in the workplace.

References


Discrimination eradication


