

Managing Bias impedes productivity of Women of Color in the tech workplace

SUMMARY

Despite efforts to encourage more Women of Color (WOC) to pursue STEM majors including initiatives to address pipeline issues and create internship opportunities, WOC remain underrepresented in STEM careers. While mentorship has largely been touted as a leading strategy for retaining minorities in tech, understanding the distinct experiences of WOC in the workplace may lead to better, more targeted interventions to increase career satisfaction and retention. Emerging data from a new study by researchers at University of California Hastings highlights specific ways WOC in computing experience the tech workplace and disaggregates these experiences by race and ethnicity. WOC in tech are spending more time and effort just navigating the workplace and are less likely to report being able to do their best work (3.44 for WOC vs 4.63 for White women, on a 6 point Likert scale). Additional patterns of bias, such as having to put in more work and effort to be respected and to succeed in the workplace and needing to change their appearance to fit in, were reported by all WOC in the study but experiences differed by racial and ethnic group. Managing biases are detrimental for WOC and employers alike, with disengaged employees costing employers 34% of their annual salaries. The research team recommends that organizations address these issues by using Bias Interrupters to create more equitable workplace experiences. Productivity thrives in environments where all employees feel welcome and are able to contribute their talents without hindrance.

Study data includes 12 in-depth interviews and a survey of 215 women, 186 WOC

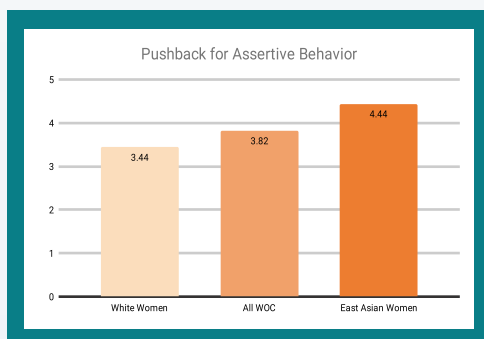
PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- During interviews, WOC expressed feeling invisible and isolated at work, being under-leveled, and pushed into management rather than technical positions

“I’ve constantly been **slotted into admin roles** even though I have a Master’s degree and have been **physically looked past** SO many times.”

~ South Asian Woman

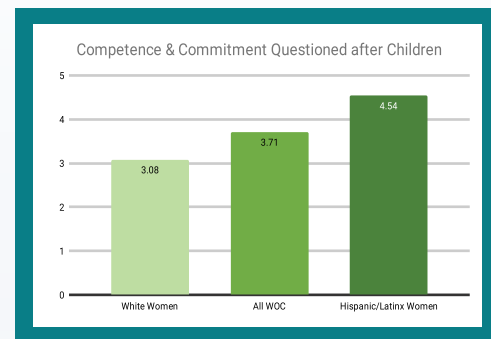
- WOC also spoke about extra, often unpaid, labor they are expected to do like mentoring and Diversity and Inclusion work.
- Likert Scale data shows:
 - East Asian women reported more pushback for assertive behavior than other WOC



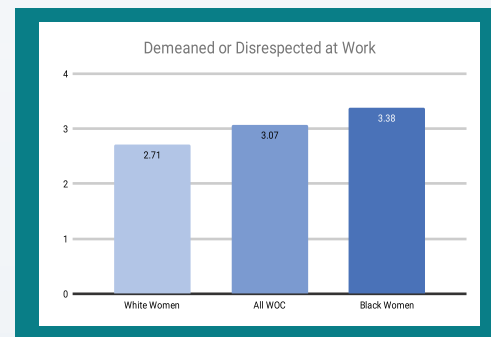
“We’re always looked at as, ‘**Why did you deserve it?**’ Not because I have the brain power to support me being in the role. It doesn’t matter how well I perform; **I feel like I have to go above and beyond.**”

~ African American Woman

- Hispanic and Latinx women stated that after having children, their commitment and competence were questioned in the workplace to a higher degree than other WOC



- Black women reported being demeaned or disrespected at work more than other WOC



East Asian women reported the highest average levels of bias