

## Dismantling Bias Conference Series

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# AI-Supported Promotion Decisions – Would it Help to Dismantle Bias in Organizations?

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## **AI-Supported Promotion Decisions – Would it Help to Dismantle Bias in Organizations?**

This proposal focuses on one specific aspect of dismantling bias in Organizations of the Future; artificial intelligence (AI) supported promotion decisions. The actual appointment of a decision-making algorithm to the board of directors of Deep Knowledge Ventures – a Hong Kong venture capital – is one example to suggest that such a future may not be too distant.

The introduction of AI has changed the nature of work in wide variety of jobs and occupations and AI has been increasingly used to perform such functions (Harms & Han, 2019) as recruitment, performance management, training advice, and termination (Baum & Haveman, 2020; Garg et al., 2021; Gloor et al., 2020; Parent-Rochelleau & Parker, 2021; Tambe, Cappelli, & Yakubovich, 2019). However, research has thus far overlooked how this paradigm-shifting disruption will affect decision-makers themselves and their subsequent responses to algorithm-made choices. Although algorithmic appreciation exists in certain judgment contexts (Logg, Minson, & Moore, 2019), there is no existing research to inform our understanding of how decision-makers will respond to imposed advice from non-humans (Ma, Kor, & Seidl, 2020) in a personnel management context.

This study is driven by the understanding that promotability inferences, like other organizational decisions involving people, are subject to biases. On the other hand, it has been argued that technological advancements can make personnel decisions "*more systematic by reducing the likelihood of recruiters' biases or applicants' influence tactics*" (Sajjadi et al, 2019, p. 15, emphasis added). While advanced analytical solutions have been gaining increasing traction as a means of making fairer decisions, whether their use is sufficient to help level the playing field for chosen candidates remains unknown.

This study then is framed around and considers the possibility that a promising remedy that is in some ways ideally suited to help make better, fairer decisions, if implemented in isolation without proper organizational norms, may not suffice to eliminate subsequent biases. Thus, the study seeks to explore whether candidates chosen by the support of AI are scrutinized more, especially if they are not the preferred candidate of gatekeeper and if their subsequent performance is ambiguous and involves negative signals.

This study focuses on a specific scenario in which AI recommendations are imposed on gatekeepers. Drawing on a robust phenomenon known as ego-centric advice discounting and research on algorithmic aversion, this study seeks to examine whether AI imposed recommendations have downstream consequences for the performance evaluation of chosen candidates. It examines whether candidates chosen with the support of AI experience more scrutiny from gatekeepers, especially if they are not the preferred candidate of the gatekeeper and if their subsequent performance includes negative signals. In particular, we formulate the following:

Hypothesis 1: Gatekeepers scrutinize AI-promoted candidates more if their promotion decision diverges from, rather than converges with, their own preferences.

Hypothesis 2: Such performance bias will be stronger a) if subsequent performance of the promoted candidate involves negative signals and b) for women than for men.

This study will use an experimental design. Findings will contribute to the literature on responses to AI integration by shedding light on the impact of AI-gatekeeper preference divergence on gatekeeper performance evaluation. It will also contribute to non-existing research on the interface between strategic leaders and AI. The study will further extend micro-level research on advice-seeking by explicating how powerful individuals respond to imposed advice, especially from non-human sources.

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