Equality in research assessment and recruitment

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Programme

Short introduction: equality in higher education, research

Inequality in recruitment –research results

The risks of bias in recrutiment processes

Short film on implicit associations in assessment (ERC)

Interview techniques in practice, "doing" equality

Questions and discussion

Equality in higher education

Challenges and possibilities in education and research
– from a KTH perspective

Gender equality, equal conditions: different factors

Quantitative Structures in the organisation

- ✓ Number of women and men
- ✓ Statistics
- ✓ *Measurable* indicators

Qualitative Cultures of the workplace

- ✓ Implicit associations, behavioral patterns
- ✓ Power dimensions in social interaction etc.
- ✓ The "*unmeasurable*"

Inequality in the academic system?

Studies have shown that a wide range of aspects in higher education across Europe risk a lack of equal conditions, for example regarding:

- research careers
- research funding
- salaries
- conditions of employment
- career paths
- levels of sick leave among employees
- educational choices
- awareness in research

These issues affect the quality of universities' output.

Examples of research development that risks recreating inequality

- Facial recognition software
- Crash test dummies
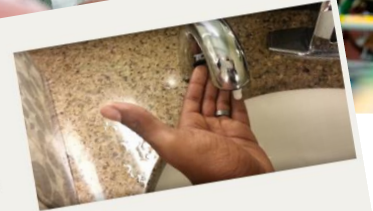- Knee replacements

Questions to ask

Who develops technology?

For whom is technology developed?

Who benefits, who is disadvantaged?

The Reason This "Racist Soap Dispenser" Doesn't Work on Black Skin

Medicintekniska hjälpmedel inte alltid anpassade för kvinnor

Olikheterna uppmärksammas i Stockholm idag på konferensen Sex, drugs and medical devices.

PUBLICERINGSDATUM

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SKRIVET AV

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Att läkemedel ofta bara är utprovade på män är ett känt fenomen som diskuterats i många år. Mer okänt är att samma sak egentligen gäller för

DELA

En knäprotes som bara provats på män kanske inte är anpassad för kvinnors fysiologi. Arkivbild: Mostphotos

mängder av olika medicintekniska hjälpmedel som knäproteser, stentar och andra produkter som används som reservdelar i människokroppen.

Precis som med läkemedel är det därför inte säkert att det tekniska hjälpmedlet passar för de kvinnor som får dem inopererade.

Konferensinfo

Konferensen Sex, dr
medical devices håll

Studie visar: Ansiktsigenkänning funkar bra – så länge du är vit och man

2018-02-12 09:21   Av: Simon Campanello   7 kommentarer

Felfrekvensen är mycket lägre hos vita män än hos kvinnor och mörkhyade personer. Det visar en ny studie där forskarna testat flera system för ansiktsigenkänning.

Research based signs of structural/cultural problems

- Despite the fact that there are considerably more female than male students in higher education in many European countries, men are generally overrepresented among professors. Women leave at Ph D-level and onward, while men tend to stay.

- Research careers tend to be impacted negatively for young female researchers in relation to parental leave (work/life-balance).

- Some areas in academia are dominated by women, while others are dominated by men (STEM among the latter).

- Bias in defining *excellence*?

- Several occurrences of harassment and sexual harassment reported yearly on a national level in Sweden
  Survey Study on gender-based vulnerability and sexual harassment in the Swedish higher education sector (2022);
  Double discrimination against women. A report on gender-based violence in the form of incivility and sexual harassment
  at KTH (2024).

- University-level occurences of ethnic-, age- and disability discrimination (grey zone)

Benefits of equality and equal conditions

✓ Contributions to high quality of education and research

✓ Competence provision: recruiting the best and most talented, not overlooking qualified candidates

✓ Effectiveness, resource management

✓ A well-functioning and safe work and study environment

✓ Competitiveness/attractiveness

✓ Representation of the surrounding community

Democracy and human rights

Research-based success factors for sustainable equality/diversity results

- Support by the organisation's leadership/management

- Status of the issue

- Central coordination and a structure with common goals

- Systematization, avoiding separate side-projects

- Sufficient resources (financial and personell)

- Active and supportive staff/awareness in the organization

- Inclusion of both structures and cultures (quantitative as well as qualitative factors)

How can we "do" equality in practise?

Key factors for result-oriented successful gender mainstreaming and increased equality overall:

- "Seeing" and adressing the problems
- Responsibility of govn. bodies/managers: status, resources
- Role models etc.
- Genuine involvement of staff/employees or at the very least awareness in the organization/group
- Education and raising knowledge
- Information, measurable objectives and dialogue
- Experts and coordination, "best practices"

- CONSTRUCTIVISM: what we actually do, not what we **say** we do.
- PRACTICAL AND SYSTEMATIC IMPLEMENTATION
- DAILY WORK AND INTERACTION

Equality at KTH

- The government task of **gender mainstreaming in higher education** (2016 and onwards).

- The demands of the **Swedish Discrimination Act** and the work with **active measures** against discrimination. (*The Work Environment Act*).

- **Recruitment goals** for women among newly recruited professors (1997 and onwards). *Other assignments in Letter of Regulations.*

- **Broadened recruitment and broadened participation** among students according to the Higher Education Act.

- **Global sustainability goals** (*sub-goals 5, 10, 16*)

- **KTH's internal goals and values,** steering documents

"KTH's working and study environment shall be attractive, inclusive and equal."

"We shall be an international, development oriented university characterised by **gender equality, diversity**, and **equal opportunities**."

Source: *Vision and overall goals for KTH 2024-2028*

Seven judicial grounds for discrimination

- Gender
- Transgender identity or expression
- Ethnicity
- Religion or other belief
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age

Inequality in recruitment

Research on unequal processes

Research regarding meritocracy, excellence and gendered bias in higher education recrutiment processes

Meritocracy - meaning

- What counts as merit is linked to a certain special institutional and organizational context.

- Everyone should have the opportunity to demonstrate their merits and be judged according to the same standards. In addition, the same opportunities for rewards and promotion.

- Everyone should also have the same opportunities to acquire qualifications and also the same opportunities to move in the hierarchy.

Meritocracy in practice?

✓ Research shows that limited use of formalized criteria is problematic for women (Acker et al, 2016; Aiston and Jung, 2015; Misra et al, 2011; Park, 1996)

✓ Vaguely defined criteria problematic for individuals with limited insider support (Fox, 2015; Long and Fox, 1995)

✓ Inclusion of explicit criteria for teaching and administrative skills is important for overall assessment (van den Brink and Benschop, 2012)

✓ - Systematic undervaluation of women's credentials compared to men in terms of research funding (Lamont, 2009; Wennerås and would, 1997), recruitment (van den Brink and Benschop 2012) and promotions (Acker et al 2016; Roos and Gatta, 2009; Svedberg Helgesson and Sjöberg, 2019).

✓ Prevalence of gendered ideal image in HE that has to do with excellence and publications (Lund, 2012)

Structured characteristics and cultural processes in criteria and assessment

- Refraining from valuing teaching or administrative skill – men are less likely to take on such tasks and are not expected to do so. (Acker and Feuerverger, 1996; Acker et al, 2016; Aiston and Jung, 2015; Misra et al, 2011).

- Stereotype that emotional responsibility rests on women and when women take on such tasks, it is judged to be more to do with personal preference than professional competence (Fletcher, 1999; Kark and Waismel-Manor, 2005).

- Research also shows that when assessing the potential for leadership, tendencies to overvalues men's potential and undervalues women's (van den Brink et al. 2016).

- Senior academics as formal and informal gatekeepers (Husu, 2004; van den Brink et al, 2010)

Study at a Swedish higher education institution of the construction of excellence and gender

- When assessing the potential for leadership, a stereotype risks developing.

- Results showed that without explicit standards, one cannot be said to have failed in teaching and administrative work.

- If you are judged to be excellent in research but have weak qualifications in terms of teaching and administrative work, you will still be promoted.

(Svedberg Helgesson and Sjögren, 2019)

Short summary

- Construction of excellence is constantly done in different (academic) rooms

- Important how to assess merit, and clear criteria helps objectivity

- Awareness of how to create images of the ideal academic

- Awareness of possible gendered images of leadership

- Objectivity and independence can be seen as "myths"

- What can we do as *academic citizens*?

The risks of bias in recrutiment processes

Profiles, assessing scientific production, interviewing candidates

The importance of the requirement profile

- The basis for a successful recruitment and the main theme that continues to be the stearing documents through out the process

- The competencies selected in the recruitment profile are assessed during the whole recruitment process from telephone interviews, in-depth interviews to references

- Common definition of competences in the recruitment profile

A failed recruitment can result in a variety of negative consequences

- **Loss of productivity** -Effects in the work, such as inadequate delivery, incorrect decisions, etc. This leads to short- and long-term, qualitative and quantitative effects in the organization.

- **Employees' work situation-**Employees are forced to do more or rectify mistakes made by the incorrectly hired individual. This can lead to demotivation, irritation, conflicts, sick leave, and employees leaving the organization

- **The managers work situation -**The majority of the time spent on employees is used to solve problems rather than coaching, empowering, and developing them. This has indirect costs, as perhaps the most important motivation factor for people is attention

- **The well-being of the new employee-**The employee who was incorrectly recruited is likely not doing well either.

- **Costs for the organization-** Costs when ending an employment, new recruitment, training, etc
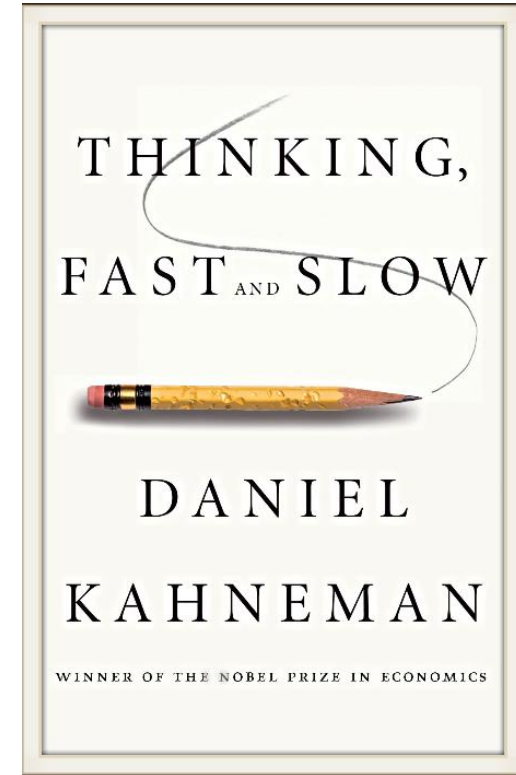
Decision Making Theories

System 1 – Fast Thinking

Intuitive, automatic, effortless and no conscious control.

System 2 – Slow Thinking

Demands attention and time, connected to being in control and making conscious decisions.

THINKING, FAST AND SLOW

DANIEL KAHNEMAN

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE IN ECONOMICS

Kahneman, D. (2011). Thinking, fast and slow. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Decision Making Theories

- ## Do I like the candidate?

Easy question that can be answered quickly through System 1

- ## Should I hire the candidate?

Difficult question, demanding System 2 thinking

Interviewing candidates

Two purposes:

- Provide information, promote the organization, and the job

- Gather information about the candidate

Recruitment Bias in Research Institutes
European Research Council (2016)

Interview effects

- Halo-effect
- Horns´ effect
- Similarity-effect /Affinity effect
- State of mind
- Contrast-effect
- Fundamental error of attribution

Andersson G, Hallén N & Smith P (2016), Rekrytering och urval – Teori och praktik. Lund: Studentlitteratur

Interview techniques
in practise

Structured interview technique

- Structured interviews where one seeks to concretely evaluate a candidate's ability in relation to a number of specific skills and competences in the recruitment profile

- An interview template with behavioral interview questions, the same questions are asked to all the candidatets. The follow up questions might vary.

- The purpose is to find out and evaluate the extent to which the candidate has previously demonstrated the competencies, skills and attitudes that the current employment requires.

- Past performance with examples from specific situations helps to forecast/predict future performance

Types of questions

- Behavior-oriented (competency-based recruitment)

- Hypothetical

- Also avoid leading, multiple-choice, and double questions.

- Ask short, direct, and simple questions—avoid ambiguities.

Behavioural Interview Questions

CAR (example competence - Structured)

Context - Tell me about a larger project or task you have been responsible for.

Action - How did you plan your work?

Result - What was the outcome?

Assess and evaluate the candidates answers

- Rate the answers according to the set-rating scales

- Determine your own rating before discussing with others

- Make sure you could give relevant feedback to the candidate

- If you have the possibility let the decision take time

The 8 most important things to remember as an assessor and interviewer:

1. You are not always objective - be alert to your feelings and impressions

2. Understand and relate to the candidate's situation

3. Be present and show interest in the candidate

4. Work in a structured way throughout the entire recruitment process and base it on the job requirements profile

5. Keep in mind that you convey your university's employer brand

6. Do not be satisfied with the first answers you get- always ask follow up questions

7. Do not be afraid of silence or letting the candidate talk about personal qualities

8. End the interview with information about the next step in the recruitment process

Questions and discussion

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