



Fostering a Corporate Culture of **Accountability** and **Transparency**



Outcome Report

## Break the Bias Series – Being Conscious of Unconscious Gender Bias

Diversity in Business Leadership Programme &  
Student Engagement

In Collaboration with SABIC

Date: Monday, 19 September 2022

Location: Zoom Platform

## Facilitated by:

Shatha Al Shammari - Senior HR Business Partner at SABIC

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## Delivered to:

Prince Sultan University (PSU) – Riyadh, Kingdom Saudi of Arabia.

*The session had over 260 undergraduate students.*

## Main objective:

The Pearl Initiative in collaboration with SABIC had the 2<sup>nd</sup> session of the “Break the Bias” initiative, focused on ‘Conscious and Unconscious Gender Bias’. SABIC is PI’s corporate partner & project funder. Today’s topic was “Being Conscious of Unconscious Gender Bias,” Bias, specifically gender bias, is something that almost each one of us has faced one way or another. The main aim of this session is to enhance student’s understanding of the different biases and ways of preventing them and how they can apply some of the practical tips and tools.

## Key takeaways:

The speakers shared the different types and levels of biases with examples. They also provided tools and tips to deal with those biases.

A few identified and explained biases were:

### 1- Ageism

Age discrimination is based on the belief that older employees aren't as competent or capable of performing a job as younger employees. This idea could be a result of a person's belief that a person's age is related to their work abilities, knowledge, or skill. The bias tends to favor young driven employees.

While ageism affects everyone since everyone grows older by the day, there are certain groups that are affected more than others. Women and minority groups are particularly affected as they already face multiple biases against them.

**How to Avoid:** Management can combat ageism by including younger and older employees together in a group to have them interact and form positive relationships. This allows the value of the experience and know-how of the older employees to be observed by the younger employees.

### 2 - Gender Bias

Gender bias is slightly different from sexual harassment, which includes [verbal, physical, and visual harassment](#). Individuals are protected from gender discrimination and sexual harassment under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

Gender bias is when one gender is treated more favorably than the other sex. This means that a person can receive better treatment in the form of hiring, getting promotions, or other work perks without involving harassment like [quid pro quo](#).

Gender bias notably affects women more than men. Despite having the same capabilities, women are typically treated less favorably resulting in an imbalance in the workforce.

**How to Avoid:** Gender bias can be avoided by determining whether a gender swap would matter in that role. For example, if employees are being considered for a promotion, an employer should think about whether it would make a difference if a male or female were in those positions.

### 3 - Name Bias

Name bias happens when a person forms prejudgments about another person based solely on their name. A person's name can give unconscious hints to another about their race or gender. This can negatively affect the hiring process since it introduces other biases from a person's name.

Name bias occurs most during the hiring stage when going through resumes. For example, if an employer sees the names Tyler Smith and Alejandro Rodríguez, the employer may be more willing to interview Tyler Smith if the name Alejandro Rodríguez gives hints of the person's race which can trigger a bias the employer may have against people of that background.

**How to Avoid:** Name bias can be avoided by blocking out the names of applicants when reviewing resumes. This allows you to focus on if they are the best person for the job based on qualifications and experience.

Some of the statistics shared on the topic was:

SAUDI workforce and workplace are changing into a more diverse culture.

- Vision 2030 sets target of increasing women's participation in the workforce from 19.7 (in 2018) to 30%.
- According to the Ministry of Education, Saudi women constitute 51.8% of the country's university students.
- With far-reaching social and economic goals including increasing women's economic participation rate from **17% to 25%** this year.

### Testimonials:

"This webinar was very informative and important since we will be joining the workforce soon."

"I learned that everyone has biases, but the negative biases can be fixed by becoming an active bystander."

"I always heard about bias in workplace and know when they talked about it, I learned more."

"Impressive how the Stakeholders are trying to bridge the Gap with the Academia."