Unconscious Bias: Definition and Significance

Bilinçsiz Önyargı: Tanımı ve Önemi

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to address current developments and debates on unconscious bias, depending on the psychology, social psychology and partly sociology literature on the concept of unconscious bias. As the concept's name suggests, unconscious bias is a negative concept that most people are unaware of. This aspect has negative effects on interpersonal relationships and relationships in social life. Therefore, this study also aims to raise awareness of unconscious bias and contribute to more objective views. Unconscious bias is defined as the systematic error experienced in decision-making. In most cases, one may become biased as they try to make sense of the available information. Besides, some people are oblivious of their bias. It is referred to as unconscious bias, which has prevailed despite the fast-changing environment. In the current complex world, human beings are exposed to a lot of information they cannot process at once. Therefore, they are naturally inclined to take mental shortcuts when making decisions. Implicit bias is explained in different theoretical explanations. System 1 and 2 show how the brain makes slow and fast decisions. On the other hand, the model of dual attitudes shows how people develop both implicit and explicit attitudes on the same issue. Lastly, the social identity theory shows how individuals associate positive traits with their in-groups and link negative stereotypes with out-groups. Unconscious bias is evident in different sectors. The discussion shows how the negative associations and stereotypes purport discrimination in schools, workplaces, healthcare, politics, and the legal sector.

Keywords: Unconscious bias, implicit bias, prejudice, stereotype, discrimination

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, 'bilinçsiz önyargı' kavramına ilişkin psikoloji, sosyal psikoloji ve kısmen sosyolojideki literatüre bağlı olarak bilinçsiz önyargı olgusu ve kavramı hakkında güncel gelişme ve tartışmaları ele almayı amaçlamaktadır. Bilinçsiz önyargı, kavramın adının da açıkça işaret ettiği üzere insanların önemli bir kısmının farkında olmadığı olumsuz bir kavram ve olgudur. Bu yanıyla da insanlar arası ilişkiler ve toplumsal yaşamdaki ilişkilere olumsuz etkileri bulunmaktadır. Bu nedenle bu çalışma bilinçsiz önyargı hakkında farkındalık oluşturmaya ve insanların daha nesnel görüşlere sahip olabilmelerine katkıda bulunmayı da amaçlanmaktadır. Bilinçsiz önyargı, karar vermede yaşanan sistematik hata olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Çoğu durumda, kişi mevcut bilgileri anlamlandırmaya çalışırken önyargılı hale gelebilir. İnsanların bazılarının önyargılarından habersiz olduğu söylenebilir. Günümüzün karmaşık dünyasında, insanlar aynı anda işleyemeyeceği birçok bilgiye maruz kalmaktadır. Bu nedenle, karar verirken doğal olarak zihinsel kısa yollara başvurmaya eğilimlidir. Bilinçsiz veya örtük önyargı, farklı teorik yaklaşımlar etrafında açıklanmıştır. Sistem 1 ve 2, beynin nasıl yavaş ve hızlı kararlar aldığını gösterir. İkili tutum modeli ise, insanların aynı konuda hem örtük hem de açık tutumlarını nasıl geliştirdiklerini göstermektedir. Son olarak, sosyal kimlik teorisi, bireylerin olumlu özellikleri kendi iç gruplarıyla nasıl ilişkilendirdiğini ve olumsuz kalıp yargılarını da dış gruplarla nasıl ilişkilendirdiğini göstermektedir. Bilinçsiz önyargılar, toplumsal yaşamın farklı alanlarında kendisini dışavurabilmektedir. Kavram hakkındaki araştırma ve tartışmalar, olumsuz çağrışımların ve klişelerin okullarda, işyerlerinde, sağlık hizmetlerinde, siyasette ve hukuk alanında nasıl ve ne biçimlerde ayrımcılığa işaret ettiğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Bilinçsiz önyargı, örtülü önyargı, önyargı, kalıpyargı, ayrımcılık

Introduction

This study aims to address current developments and debates on unconscious bias, depending on the psychology, sociology, and other social sciences literature on the concept of unconscious bias. As the concept's name suggests, unconscious bias is a negative concept that most people are unaware of. This aspect has adverse effects on interpersonal relationships and relationships in social life. Therefore, this study also aims to raise awareness of unconscious bias and contribute to more objective views.

Decision-making is part and parcel of human life. People make both minor and significant choices daily that directly impact their lives. The decisions also have a secondary impact on those close to us and the society generally. The importance

of adopting practical decision-making skills is asserted. The area has attracted immense attention from scholars with the aim of understanding and facilitating the improvement of the process. One area that has attracted scholarly interest is the influence of personal bias that affects thought processing in decision-making. Biasness is loosely defined as the systematic error experienced in decision-making. In most cases, one may become biased as one tries to make sense of the available information.

It is argued that biases help people make decisions quickly by listening to their guts. Moreover, some people are oblivious of their bias. This is referred to as unconscious bias, and it has prevailed despite the fast-changing environment. In the current complex world, human beings are exposed to much information they cannot process at once. Therefore, they are naturally inclined to take mental shortcuts when making decisions. It amplifies the role of unconscious bias in the process. Although it may sound ideal, it gets in the way of deliberate reasoning and results in misguided decision-making. This article takes a deep dive into the concept of unconscious bias by focusing on its manifestation and effects and how it is managed.

History of Unconscious Bias

Unconscious bias is also commonly referred to as implicit bias, as noted by Lopez (2018). The term was first coined in 1995 by Mazarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald in their article on implicit social cognition. The two psychologists argued that social behavior was significantly affected by unconscious associations and judgments. They defined implicit bias as the unconscious attitudes and stereotypes that impact our understanding, actions, and decisions in an oblivious way. Typically, the implicit attitude is directed towards a specific social group. According to the pioneers, it explains why people often attribute definite attributes to a particular group. They also referred to this concept as stereotyping. However, they emphasized that this kind of process is not intentional or controllable (Sander et al., 2020). Therefore, there is a clear distinction between unconscious bias and explicit prejudices. Although most people may assume that they are not susceptible to biases and stereotypes, they cannot avoid engaging in them. It simply means that the brain is working in a manner that creates associations and generalizations.

The pioneers of the implicit bias theory also identify reasons why human beings are susceptible to these tendencies. First, they noted that the human brain naturally seeks out patterns and associations in information processing (Weber and Wiersema, 2017). This argument asserts that the human ability to store, process, and apply information significantly depends on forming associations. Secondly, the brain strives to take shortcuts to simplify the world. Usually, the brain is fed with more information to process. Through mental shortcuts, it becomes easier and faster for the brain to process all the data. Lastly, the two scholars argued that the human experience and social conditioning facilitate implicit bias. In this case, factors like cultural conditioning, media portrayals, and family upbringing shape our unconscious attitudes. Greenwald and Banaji called for more research to facilitate a better understanding of the issue.

Since the mid-90s, different scholars have extensively researched implicit biases. One study has proved that all human beings possess implicit biases that affect how we reason, make decisions and treat other people (Payne et al., 2017). They have also noted that avoiding this tendency is often challenging since many people do not know that they are engaging in it. The following theories have been used to explain different aspects of unconscious bias.

Theories on Unconscious Thinking

The theories and approaches referred to in this text are the most prominent in the relevant literature. Among these theories, Kahneman's "System 1 and System 2" approach focuses on the operational processes of the brain and its effects on decision mechanisms. The "Dual Attitudes" model is quite similar to Kahneman's model. However, this model differs from Kahneman's model in that it gives more weight to cultural and social factors in the formation of unconscious biases. "Social Identity Theory" focuses on social group dynamics to a great extent. This theory focuses on in-group and out-group social and cultural belonging and their cognitive effects in forming prejudices and biases. In our opinion, considering that the theoretical developments and discussions in the relevant field are relatively new and still ongoing, discussing the similarities and differences between these theories requires specific expertise, effort, and debate. This study's primary purpose and motivation are not to have such a discussion. In this context, this study aims to draw attention to the importance of unconscious and/or implicit bias, which has not been adequately addressed scientifically in our country, to ensure that this concept is discussed and encourages the production of applied interdisciplinary studies. However, one can consult the following studies for the differences and discussions between these theories (Brownstein 2019, 2020, Johnson 2020, Wilson et al. 2020).

System 1 and System 2 Model of Thinking

This model of thinking was introduced in 2011 by Daniel Kahneman. This study was published in Turkish in 2018 (Kahneman 2018).It is widely adopted due to its simplicity and intuitive nature. The theory gives an analogy explaining how the human mind processes information. The brain is fast, automatic, and intuitive in the first system, as Oberai and Anand (2018) noted. In this state, the mind engages in innate mental activities that human beings were born with. They include mental activities meant to perceive the immediate

surroundings, recognize objects, and read facial expressions, among others. Payne et al. (2017) emphasized that system 1 operates automatically and quickly, with no effort or voluntary control. On the other hand, system 2 gives attention to the mental processes that demand it. It includes cognitive processes on complex computations (Mariani 2019). This brain system is often associated with subjective experiences of choice.

Most people resonate with system 2 of thinking. They assume that their decision-making is characterized by making intentional choices on what to think about and do. Furthermore, Sander et al. (2020) note that this system can construct thoughts in orderly steps. In this case, one can resist processing some information. On the other hand, system 1 mode of thinking is entirely involuntary. It is directly related to implicit biases that occur with little effort (Mariani 2019). When using this theory, it is noted that the implicit biases can differ amongst neighbors, friends, or even family members.

A Model of Dual Attitudes

According to Fitzgerald and Hurst (2017), the concept of dual attitudes is widely adopted in social psychology. It explains the idea that one can have two different attitudes about the same thing. These are both implicit and explicit attitudes. The implicit attitude entails the intuitive response, which is often unconscious and uncontrolled. On the other hand, Weber and Wiersema (2017) note that the explicit attitude is conscious and controlled. These attitudes coexist in the individual's mind, although the subject may not be aware of it. This theory is popularly used to explain unconscious bias. In this case, the implicit attitudes include the oblivious stereotype that subjects hold towards members of a particular social group.

The concept can be easily explained through the examination of racial prejudice. According to Weber and Wiersema (2017), individuals cultivate their views on race based on their immediate environment when growing up. For instance, their upbringing has a significant impact on the development of racial prejudice. Other influencing factors include the regional and ethnic background of an individual.

Early exposure to prejudiced attitudes shapes their implicit views about members of other ethnic groups. However, when they grow up, they are bound to create different perspectives. For instance, with age, education, and exposure, individuals may shift their social attitudes to embrace an explicit attitude (Zheng 2016). In most cases, the secondary attitudes are non-prejudicial to avoid any social judgments from other people. In such situations, the subject is said to have dual attitudes towards race. Glasgow (2016) notes that the subject would have to engage in an intensive self-examination to acknowledge the duality. In unconscious bias, this theory explains why people are not aware of the oblivious views that influence their decision-making and perspectives towards other people.

Social Identity Theory

The social identity theory was developed after a series of studies conducted by Henri Tajfel. Tajfel is a renowned British social psychologist who invested in minimal-group studies. The participants in these studies were assigned to groups that were designed to be as arbitrary as possible. When the people were told to transfer points to other participants, they gave more points to in-group members than out-group members. The studies were interpreted as showing that categorizing people in groups is a good factor influencing their thinking. As Howard and Bornstein (2018) note, they are more prone to think of themselves as a group and not separate individuals. The theory was coined to explain how group membership can influence a person's attitudes in social settings. Therefore, group membership helps people define who they are and relate with members of other groups. The theory has significantly influenced scholarly research as it reveals the connection between cognitive processes and behavioral motivation.

Initially, the focus of the theory was to explain intergroup conflict and relations in a broader perspective. As Lopez (2018) notes, later elaborations by Tajfel's student, John Turner, and his colleagues expanded the application of the theory in explaining how people interpret their positions in a social setting. The theory was also used to elaborate on how social groups affect their perceptions of others. Some of these perceptions include social stereotypes, which are indicators of unconscious bias. The theory also gives three cognitive processes that shape how unconscious bias is formed in the group context. The first mental process is social categorization. According to Howard and Bornstein (2018), social categorization refers to the tendency of individuals to perceive themselves and others based on constructed social categories. In this case, the subject is viewed as an interchangeable group instead of individuals with unique qualities. Here, one may hold implicit attitudes towards those that fall within a specific social category.

Glasgow (2016) identifies the second and third cognitive processes as social comparison and social identification. Social comparison refers to the process used by people to determine the value or social position of a group and its members. For instance, school teachers are implicitly perceived to have a higher social standing compared to garbage collectors. Lastly, Faucher (2016) notes that social identification reveals that people perceive themselves as active observers in social situations. Therefore, their sense of self and how they relate with others shape their attitudes towards other individuals and group members. Social identity is a result of these three factors. Zheng (2016) defines the concept as an individual's knowledge of belonging to a particular social group and the valuation of its membership.

The motivation of social behavior explains how individuals develop unconscious bias based on social groups. According to

the theory, people generally prefer to identify with the positive traits of the groups that they belong to. In addition, they are inclined to seek out the positive qualities and attitudes from their in-group members. This inclination facilitates unconscious bias as they may focus more on the negative characteristics of out-group members. Many people do so to downplay the importance of positive qualities in other groups. It increases the risk of identity threats where members of a group feel like their competence devalues (Howard and Bornstein 2018). Additionally, it may result in inter-group conflicts, which are among the consequences of unconscious bias.

Manifestations of Unconscious Bias

As Buetow (2019) notes, identifying unconscious bias requires a high level of introspection. Moreover, it is the critical factor in determining ways to overcome oblivious prejudice. Knowing how implicit bias manifests will facilitate effective reflection at an individual level. It will also help identify instances when the individual or someone else is a victim of bias. Faucher (2016) also notes that understanding the manifestation of prejudice can help cultivate the confidence to speak up against any negative behavior. Consequently, it facilitates the creation of an inclusive environment where all individuals are treated as equals. This section explores some of the common manifestations of unconscious bias.

Gender Bias

According to Fitzgerald and Hurst (2017), gender bias refers to preferring one gender over the other. It is often referred to as sexism. Gender bias is often manifested when someone unconsciously associates certain stereotypes with different genders. In these situations, someone may be treated differently simply because of their sex. Here, the skills, capabilities, and qualities that the subject possesses are not considered. According to gender studies in the United States, 90% of the participants were biased against women (Como et al. 2019). Since it falls under explicit attitudes, the number of people with an unconscious bias against women is assumed to be higher. According to Como et al. (2019), 50% of men said they had more job rights than women. The results of the study further assert the continued prevalence of gender bias in society.

A study by Oberai and Anand (2018) focused on why the issue of gender bias still occurs in modern society. First, he notes that the problem stems from the prevailing societal beliefs about men and women. For instance, society has continually taught that men are assertive, decisive, and strong. On the other hand, women are expected to be warm, caring, and sympathetic. These assumptions are commonly used to give generalized qualities to members of either group. Faucher (2016) also noted that many people possess a dual attitude on the issue. In this case, many people were raised

in environments where women were considered inferior to men. However, when they grow up, they embrace the concept of gender equality, where both genders are treated as equals. However, their implicit attitudes continue to affect them unknowingly.

Ageism

According to Holroyd et al. (2017), ageism refers to discriminating against others based on their age. They also note that the issue may be causal or systematic. The term was first introduced by Robert Neil Butler when explaining how seniors are discriminated against based on their age. In his explanation, Butler defined ageism as a combination of three factors. He asserted that older adults were discriminated against based on their old age and the aging process. As a result, other people perceived them to have less capacity to match the performance of younger people. Discrimination against older people was mostly experienced in the workplace. It was one of the reasons why workers over the age of 40 are covered under the age discrimination act. Regardless, employers are purporting ageism in the workplace.

From a different perspective, ageism is also used to explain the discrimination against young people. This theory was first used in the United Kingdom by Councilor Richard Thomas in May 1983. He used the term when addressing the prejudice against adolescents and children. Buetow (2019) argued that the two groups were denied certain rights based solely on their age as they were reserved for adults. It included the rights to vote, run for office, buy a gun, and sign a contract, among others. Sukhera and Watling (2018) also specified that this argument explains why some ideas from young people are ignored as they are perceived to be naïve and inexperienced. Based on this ideology, the elderly are prime candidates for practicing ageism (Como et al. 2019). It is based on the fact that they have internalized a lifetime of negative stereotypes about aging. Therefore, they are more prone to being unconsciously biased.

Appearance Bias

This type of unconscious bias is demonstrated when a person is judged based on their physical appearance. According to a review by Howard and Bornstein (2018), there are different examples of appearance-based biases. The most prominent is beauty bias, where individuals who are considered to be more attractive are given favorable treatment. They are also subject to positive stereotypes. This type of appearance bias led to the rise of "lookism", which refers to discrimination based on physical appearance (Sukhera and Watling 2018). An example is when a hiring manager is more inclined to hire candidates that they think are good-looking. It is inappropriate since hiring decisions should be based on skills and experience as opposed to appearance.

Fitzgerald and Hurst (2017) identify weight bias and height bias as other examples of apparent bias. In this case, society

has purported certain stereotypes based on body weight and height. According to studies, plus-size people are associated with negative stereotypes. For instance, they may be perceived as lazy and undisciplined based on their weight. On the other hand, taller people are perceived to be more authoritative and leader-like when compared to shorter people. It shows how people can be discriminated against based on their physical looks.

Halo Effect

Psychologist Edward Thorndike coined the term in the 1920s in his article titled "The Constant Error in Psychological Ratings." To assert his hypothesis, Thorndike asked commanding officers in the military to evaluate the characteristics of officers serving under them. The commanding officers' qualities were expected to evaluate included leadership, intelligence, loyalty, dependability, and others (Payne et al. 2017). His primary goal was to determine how the ratings of one quality influenced the assessment of other qualities. He concluded that high ratings in one quality correlated to high ratings in other characteristics and vice versa.

According to the pioneer, the halo effect occurs when one develops an overall positive impression of someone based on their qualities. He used the halo analogy to explain how this prejudice can affect perceptions (Sukhera and Watling 2018). The analogy is borrowed from religious art, where a halo is often portrayed over a saint's head. It bathes the saint in glorious light, which insinuates that the person is good. It depicts the assumption that one feature covers all.

For instance, if one perceives another as excellent after meeting them, they are more inclined to assume that they are intelligent, social, and generous. As Holroyd et al. (2017) note, it is not ideal since one construct an image of another person based on limited information. Therefore, there is an increased risk of making a misinformed decision. In addition, by focusing too much on one positive trait, one may overlook negative behavior and vice versa. Faucher (2016) also indicates that this aspect can affect our perceptions of others based on their appearance. In this case, one can be unconsciously inclined to assume that attractiveness reflects good character. It explains why physically appealing people are assumed to be likable and intelligent, which is not always the case.

Affinity Bias

Affinity bias is also commonly referred to as similarity bias. It involves the tendency to favor people of similar interests, backgrounds, and experiences, as Buetow (2019) highlighted. It explains why people may choose those that attended the same college as they did or that reminded them of someone they know and like. He argued that people feel more comfortable around people like them and are more likely to gravitate towards them. Based on this reasoning, people may unintentionally exclude those who are different from them.

In addition, it requires more effort to bridge the gap and interact freely with people who appreciate different things. Affinity bias is making one's views or perceptions of the world error-prone. It may also hinder objectivity in decision-making (Como et al. 2019). In personal life, affinity bias directly impacts the people one chooses to build relations with and those they choose to assume about. Therefore, it has a direct impact on the quality of relationships formed with others

Conformity Bias

According to Consul et al. (2021), conformity bias is commonly used to explain how human beings tend to process information in an illogical and biased way. Proponents of this concept argue that people are more likely to have difficulties processing information logically if they have gained an opinion on the issue. On the other hand, logical thoughts are more probable when one is emotionally distant from the issue. Conformity bias is defined by Kallman (2017) as the tendency to process information by narrowing it down to the information that asserts our pre-established beliefs. The approach is considered to be unintentional. Some of the preexisting beliefs included in this approach include one's expectations in a specific situation. The susceptibility to this kind of bias increases with the assumed importance of the issue at hand.

According to psychological research, human beings are prone to confirmation bias as it enhances the efficiency of the cognitive information process. It is emphasized that humans are bombarded with a lot of information in the social world. It may take considerable time to process all the information logically and make an unbiased decision. Therefore, they are pushed to decide about their viewpoint. To support this chain of thought, Kallman (2017) noted that the need to process the information first is a result of adaptation. It is a result of the instinctive human nature that uses automatic reflexes to protect people from harm. Secondly, people engage in confirmation bias to guard their self-esteem (Maina et al. 2018). In this case, people are determined to prove that what they believe and highly value is correct. By doing so, they avoid any backlash from those holding different views. Consul et al. (2021) identify accuracy as yet another motive for confirmation bias. In this case, individuals want to prove that they are intelligent. Thus, they ignore any information that proves the belief one holds is incorrect as it reflects a lack of intelligence.

Multiple studies have focused on finding evidence that asserts the influence of confirmation bias on information processing. It is achieved by exploring the manifestation of this prejudice in a different context. First, Lopez (2018) posits that this approach is prevalent in the context of decision-making. Individuals tend to seek information that aligns with and supports the decision they have already made. Any information that contradicts their decision may cause discomfort. Therefore, it should be ignored or given little

consideration. To assert this argument, researchers invited people to participate in a study to examine their views on a controversial issue (White et al. 2018). They noted that the participants remembered more reasons for supporting the use and fewer reasons why they opposed it.

The second context in which confirmation bias was explored was research. McClellan et al. (2012) claimed that researchers focus on points that support their hypothesis or expectations. Therefore, they seek evidence that supports their argument, which may unintentionally stop them from evaluating all the available information. Lastly, Lopez (2018) notes that confirmation bias is prevalent when forming an impression of other people, places, and things. Here, people are more inclined to focus on information that supports their expectations. For instance, if they are told that someone is intelligent, they are likely to seek the data that support this assumption. When interacting with others, one is more likely to ask questions that align with the perception the subject supposedly holds. This instance is yet another manifestation of confirmation bias.

Name Bias

Pacella and Guyette (2021) outline that name bias is rarely addressed, although it happens all the time. The authors also stress that the impact of this implicit bias can be enormous. In most cases, this kind of prejudice is associated with race, gender, religion, and ethnic group. For instance, if a name sounds Asian, some assumptions will be related to the subject. This is a highly problematic issue that has been experienced in several areas. In the social sector, for instance, people are prone to judge others based on their names' negative or positive associations. These experiences have been mirrored in the workplace. The findings from a study by the British Academy confirmed the argument. According to the research, an average of 24% of the white applicants of British origin got a positive response. It was considerably high compared to the 15% of minority ethnic applicants who got similar answers (Kallman 2017). The findings explained why many agencies representing candidates prefer to take names off the application letters when seeking jobs. Lopez (2018) also indicated that small-sized businesses are more reluctant to interview candidates with foreign names. It reflects the pervasiveness of name bias in the hiring process.

Non-verbal Bias

Stephens and Baskerville (2020) argue that nonverbal bias occurs when people show negative or positive nonverbal behavior towards specific social groups. It is different from other unconscious actions and verbal behavior. These behaviors are loosely defined as nonlinguistic behaviors without any physically instrumental purpose. Shore et al. (2011) noted that the bias in attitudes and beliefs could be reliably detected and measured through body language.

A social experiment by Tate and Page (2018) aimed at investigating racial bias by analyzing racial discrimination by exploring nonverbal behaviors when describing suspects who were manipulated to be black or white. According to the results, the participants were significantly more uncertain when describing white suspects than black suspects. In this case, an 'open' posture was used to denote uncertainty, while a 'crossed' posture showed that the participants were sure of what they were saying. It is one of the studies that has been commonly used to prove that nonverbal behaviors can reflect subtle forms of prejudice.

Effect and Importance of Unconscious Bias

Unconscious bias has adverse effects that play an important role in understanding the nature of people and institutions in societies. This section explores the said impacts in the industry selected.

In Schools

According to Maina et al. (2018), experiences of implicit bias are often related to racial differences. Disparities in how school-going children are treated start at an early age. A study by the University of Wales notes that preschool teachers were more inclined to focus on black male students when implementing measures to prevent behavioral problems. It is one of the instances where implicit bias against students of color has been noted. In this case, both gender and name biases are involuntarily used to target members of the black community. A study by Stephens and Baskerville (2020) highlighted the impacts of implicit bias on students of color. They noted that the prejudice led to excessive discipline, which adversely affected the teaching and learning experience for the students. The study also indicated that black students received suspensions and expulsions more than students from other races. Statistically, suspension rates were 3.8 times higher among black students (Kallman 2017). It also shaped teachers' expectations of the students. The teachers expected the students to misbehave and cause trouble in the classroom. Therefore, it made the teachers view and treat the students differently.

Another study by Toribio (2021) noted that unconscious bias in schools resulted in over-critical grading procedures and increased dropout rates. Racial discrimination is directly linked to grading disparities where white students are given better marks in the first case. Since the students feel targeted by their teachers, they are more likely to drop out of school. It causes a ripple effect that dictates the quality of life that the student will have. Maina et al. (2018) noted that students who had dropped out had a higher chance of being incarcerated in the future. They also have lower chances of obtaining higher education.

Consequently, it influences the poverty rates in the black community. It also results in increased costs to taxpayers

as they must support assistance programs that have been incorporated into the school system. Over the past years, the problem has become very widespread. It has also been normalized by the use of terms like "achievement gap" (Shore et al. 2011). Such terms justify why black students do less well than white students in schools by linking it to natural occurrences.

In Healthcare

As Shore et al. (2011) point out, disparities in healthcare have been increasing at an alarming rate. Compelling evidence shows that the underrepresented groups in healthcare are often victims of unconscious bias. In this case, implicit attitudes refer to the associations that alter caregivers' perceptions, dictating how they interact with the patient. Stereotyping and prejudice play a significant role in purporting the existing healthcare disparities instead of mitigating them. The unintended differences are often reflected in medical school admission and faculty hiring and promotion. In this case, ageism, gender bias, and name bias are very prominent. Unconscious bias is also commonly experienced in inpatient care.

According to a study by Consul et al. (2021), white and black caregivers are likely to treat patients of their own race better. Similarly, patients have a high preference for caregivers from a similar ethnic background. Patients also tend to feel more confident when assigned to male practitioners, especially for high-risk medical procedures. On the same note, young doctors are viewed as inexperienced, and patients may opt for older doctors. It robs the caregivers of a fair chance to practice, which interferes with their career growth (Kallman 2017). It also adversely affects their motivations, which directly influence the quality of services they offer to patients.

Compared to heterosexual patients, members of the LGBTQ community experience higher rates of health disparities. It is a result of both conscious and unconscious bias that has been projected on them. The problem begins with the presentation of clinical information in hospitals. Here, the patients are required to give their age, presumed gender, and their racial identity. According to Maina et al. (2018), the information fuels unconscious bias towards the patient. Basing medical care on stereotypes may result in premature closure or missed diagnosis, which puts the patient at more risk. For instance, at the beginning of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) pandemic, it was assumed that the disease could only be transmitted to members of the gay community. The assumption hindered timely recognition of infections in women, children, and heterosexual men. Apart from sexual orientation, other factors that affect the judgment and behavior of health practitioners include socio-economic status, age, weight, and disabilities, among others (Kallman, 2017). Mitigating implicit bias in this sector will help reduce the disparities in it.

In Legal Settings

Implicit bias takes different forms in the legal profession. First, Stephens and Baskerville (2020) specify that women outnumber men in law school. However, these statistics are not carried over into work. In this case, he notes that 20% of partners in law firms are female. Furthermore, the number of women who leave the profession is significantly greater than that of men. It is argued in some studies that the primary reason for this situation is the continued harassment and gender bias experienced by women in this sector. Here, law firms are more likely to employ male workers. Moreover, new attendees are often given "housework" assignments that undervalue their time and expertise (Tate and Page 2018). Ageism is also quite common in this sector. Young professionals are considered to be inexperienced and are not assigned to any important cases.

Apart from ageism and gender bias, implicit bias can be found in other areas of the law. For instance, Maina et al. (2018) indicated that unconscious bias is highly prevalent in jury selection. Usually, little is known about the jury, and legal practitioners must use their instincts when selecting jury members. The prejudice deprives the accused of fundamental rights. It also affects the objectivity of the trial and undermines public confidence in the judicial system. The issue is aggravated by the fact that the courts are not permitted to examine the motivations of the juror.

Pacella and Guyette (2021) argued that attorney bias goes beyond jury selection. For instance, prosecutors are supposed to make a decision that can easily be influenced by unconscious bias. In addition, the decisions they make have a significant impact on the lives of defenders. They may opt to offer a plea bargain or contest bail. Further, the prosecutors decide on the crime charged with. All these decisions are susceptible to unconscious biases like gender bias, name bias, and appearance bias. Judicial bias is also quite common. Although judges have vowed to be impartial, their decisions are subject to influence by implicit bias. In this case, their attitudes towards the accused are influenced by their upbringing and experiences. Studies have proven that trial court judges rely heavily on intuition rather than deliberate judging (Stephens and Baskerville 2020). It provides more opportunities to apply implicit biases during trials.

In the Workplace

As Tate and Page (2018) note, diversity and inclusion are paramount in facilitating improved performance in the workplace. Therefore, organizations strive to diversify their staff members as much as possible. However, the unconscious preference for people who are like us hinders the achievement of this goal. Prejudice is experienced more in the hiring and recruitment process. In this case, the recruiter aims at finding the right candidate based on their expertise and experience in their field. However, this goal is not always achieved.

In some cases, gender bias and appearance bias can hinder the objectivity of the hiring process. As a result, the company may hire people who are not the best fit for the vacant position. According to Thompson (2021), it has a direct impact on the performance and productivity of the company. They forego talented and skilled employees by judging them based on established implicit attitudes.

Davis and Chansiri (2018) also determined that unconscious bias in the workplace could lead to bullying. Bullying is experienced when employees are judged based on their appearance, mostly their weight and height. It goes hand in hand with unlawful discrimination and harassment. In many companies, female employees have complained of being harassed by their male coworkers. If they decide to report the instances to the authorities, the business is at high risk of reputational damage. Having a bad reputation in the market is suicidal for many interactions. First, Tate and Page (2018) highlighted that customer refrain from working with companies associated with any form of harassment. Secondly, a damaged reputation pushes away talented employees who will not want to work in such an environment. Furthermore, a lawsuit filed after harassment may cost the company a lot of money. Thus, it proves that implicit bias has an indirect impact on revenue generation in the workplace.

A study by McClellan et al. (2012) established that unconscious bias could be detrimental for employees. Their study evaluated the views of 3,570 participants. The sample population consisted of men and women from different minority groups. It was concluded that 33% of the participants felt alienated from the workplace. As a result, 34% of them refrained from sharing their ideas and solutions with their coworkers. Further, 80% of the participants would not refer other people to the employers. These results reflected the impact of unconscious bias on the mental well-being of the employees. Davis and Chansiri (2018) asserted these results by noting that employees who were victims of implicit bias had developed feelings of isolation over time. It leads to the release of stress hormones, which has an impact on the productivity of employees at a personal level. It also results in less emotional engagement and increases the risk of stress-related illnesses. Pacella and Guyette (2021) also stated that feelings of alienation are directly associated with increased accidents and absenteeism in the workplace. The severity of this issue is confirmed by Toribio (2021), who argued that emotions stemming from discrimination are expected to resurface. Moreover, it takes the brain 3-4 hours to get rid of stress emotions. As a result, employees may not be at their best capacity to work, which lowers client satisfaction. It also increases the level of disengagement, which affects employee turnover and satisfaction.

In Politics

According to McClellan et al. (2012), prejudice in politics mainly surfaces during the electoral season. As a political science expert, he notes that people in pools who claim to be undecided already have an implicit preference for a particular candidate. Although they are oblivious of it, their prejudice significantly impacts who they eventually vote for. Instead of getting factual information, the voters try to rationalize their initial thoughts. For instance, voters would say, "there is just something that I don't like about Donald Trump", without internalizing their substantive issues (Stephens and Baskerville 2020). Therefore, they end up relying on the implicit attitude towards the candidate.

Unconscious bias also dictates the public view on different political issues. Thompson (2021) gave an example proving that unconscious bias influences an individual's opinion on the debate on immigration and gun ownership. On the first issue, the study concluded that many members of the mass public have a negative implicit attitude towards Latinos. It was contrary to what they self-reported to the pollsters. Various factors influenced the attitudes. The brain detects patterns in immigration as covered by media houses. Primarily, one group is associated with negative information, which is not always valid. Exposure to misleading information shapes the implicit attitudes towards people of color in politics. Similar events are experienced in debates on gun ownership, especially in the law enforcement sector. Sukhera (2019) claimed that unconscious bias comes into play despite the training that police officers go through when it comes to implicit decisions. Here, the implicit bias involves the mental association between weapons and people of color. The media have played a significant role in creating an image that associates black people with gun-related crimes.

Overcoming Implicit Bias

Unfortunately, in the context of Turkish society and our culture, we have to state that we are faced with dramatic shortcomings in terms of the knowledge produced in the scientific and academic fields to address the problem of recognizing and overcoming unconscious biases. In a simple search made by entering the keywords "unconscious bias" and/or "implicit bias", it was seen that there were no master's and doctoral studies written on or containing this subject and/or concept in the YÖK National Thesis Center at least as of December 2021. The only exception is one (1) doctoral thesis, which emphasizes the need for the Implicit Association Test (IAT), to be adapted into Turkish and adapted to Turkish society and culture (Şenyurt 2018). There is also one (1) article published in 2020, including again the author of this doctoral thesis (Şenyurt et al. 2020). The same result can be seen in the search made on the 'dergipark' platform, except Korkmaz's study (Korkmaz 2017). Another exceptional study that deserves mention is a compilation book study, which includes contributions from researchers from different disciplines about the struggle against prejudice and discrimination in general, not specifically about unconscious bias. (Çayır and Ceyhan 2012).

Unfortunately, since such a result is in question, no advanced theoretical and empirical background and research can offer suggestions and solutions to overcome unconscious prejudices or biases under this title. Therefore, it has not been possible to deal with it in Turkish society and culture under this title. One of the main reasons for producing/writing this review is this significant shortcoming pointed out here. The current study should be considered a modest contribution to making original and local studies by pointing out this fundamental shortcoming. We want to point out that we deliberately avoided this study since suggestions and discussions based on theoretical and empirical data will remain speculative.

At the Personal Level

As Whitford and Emerson (2018) point out, overcoming prejudice should start at the individual level before progressing to other sectors in society. The first step is to acknowledge that one has some unconscious bias. There are various tests that one can take to identify the unconscious biases that one possesses. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is instrumental in facilitating self-understanding on the issues. It is also helpful in comparing the differences between people and groups. According to Bucknor-Ferron (2016), the test is used to detect any subconscious associations of different objects and concepts in the Bible. It was first introduced in 1998 by Anthony Greenwald, Debbie McGhee, and Jordan Schwartz. Over the years, it has been used as an assessment. It is applicable since the score helps people identify and reflect on attitudes that they would not be willing to reveal in public.

Apart from taking the test, Houwer (2019) also recommends an intra-inspection of all parts of one's life. Doing so will help reveal all the implicit biases that have influenced different decisions and shaped the type of relationships created with others. Unfortunately, becoming aware of one's biases is simply the first step. Davis and Chansiri (2018) recommend expanding one's experience to expand interactions with people from different backgrounds. The strategy is based on the reasoning that perceiving people as individuals will help eliminate pre-established group associations. It also helps the person to challenge, which reduces the chances of acting on harmful prejudices. On the other hand, Stephens and Baskerville (2020) suggest that people should avoid making snap decisions. Instead, they should take their time and consider all the facts. Moreover, allocating enough time for the decision-making process reduces the likelihood of resorting to mental shortcuts.

Pushing back against default assumptions is yet another strategy that can help overcome implicit bias. According to Perrin (2019), it requires individuals to push back against any reflexive judgment. One should challenge the biased reasoning and consciously replace it with a more objective opinion. If it is constantly reinforced, the right attitude will eventually override the prejudice. Reading books and other informative materials can also help individuals unlearn any negative associations they have developed over time. It goes hand in hand with participating in facilitated discussions and training sessions that aim at minimizing bias. On the other hand, Page (2018) argues that individuals should take advantage of any discussion with dissimilar people. By sharing their biases with others, they have a chance to learn alternative perspectives and viewpoints.

In the Workplace

As established earlier, unconscious bias is very prevalent in the workplace. Based on this finding, multiple studies have identified steps that managers can implement to help mitigate implicit bias. First, Toribio (2021) emphasized that managers should be aware of the biases likely to be experienced in the workplace. They should also sensitize the workers and ensure that they are aware of the unconscious bias. Doing so will help the employee to recognize that everyone has biases. It will also help them identify the biases that they are most likely to have, allowing them to take proactive steps to address them. Second, Houwer (2019) also recommends offering training opportunities to employees serving in the human resource (HR) department. The suggestion is based on the concept that implicit bias is likely to be experienced in the hiring and recruitment process. The two roles are assigned to the HR department. Furthermore, this department identifies who will be promoted, receive a raise, or be assigned to a different role. If the HR members can identify where implicit bias is likely to creep in, they can adopt measures to facilitate objectivity in decision making.

Organizations should also modernize their approach to hiring. According to Joseph and Murphy (2013), it involves using the right words in job descriptions. He noted that wrong wording in the job description could discourage women from applying for certain positions. Reworking the job descriptions will allow the organization to attract a wider pool of applicants. Recruiters should also refrain from judging applicants blindly. To achieve this goal, Consul et al. (2021) recommend requesting applicants to omit their names and genders when submitting their applications. Additionally, they suggest giving candidates simple tasks to evaluate their skill set. Lastly, McClellan et al. (2012) argue that companies need to standardize the interview process to prevent hiring decisions after using unstructured interviews. All these factors will ensure that employee selection will be based on merit.

Perrin (2019) argues that any decision made in the workplace should be based on reliable data and not personal intuition. In addition, the management should be made up of people from different social and ethnic groups. This ensures that all groups and backgrounds are represented in decision-making. Employees should also be encouraged to speak up against any biases. According to Davis and Chansiri (2018), it entails allowing staff members to voice their concerns and

give their opinions. For instance, the management can request employees to give anonymous feedback on their experiences in the workplace. Organizations should also create a culture that encourages open dialogue, encouraging employees to speak up. Lastly, Joseph and Murphy (2013) encourage the management to set diversity and inclusion goals. It will help create diverse teams that discourage biases in the workplace.

In Schools

A study by Houwer (2019) identifies multiple ways teachers can reduce implicit bias in the classroom. First, teachers are encouraged to cultivate awareness of their psychological biases. Doing so will improve the interactions they have with students from different social or ethnic groups. It also decreases the sense of unease and allows them to make better decisions. In most cases, they are afraid of working on their biases for fear of being reprimanded by the management. Therefore, they end up being oblivious of how implicit bias affects their interactions in the classroom (Howard and Bornstein 2018). By admitting that they are subject to implicit bias, teachers are in a better position to take the necessary steps.

Secondly, teachers should work on increasing empathy and empathic communication. Lopez (2018) defines empathy as the ability to understand another person's perspective and emotions. He also emphasizes that empathy is crucial in all human social encounters, including teaching. However, many teachers have little understanding of the students' backgrounds. One of the solutions to this is to learn about students' lives, which shows that the teacher cares. The management can also help by organizing empathy training. Joseph and Murphy (2013) also recommend hiring teachers from different backgrounds. According to their study, teachers should practice mindfulness practices. They noted that these practices are instrumental in decreasing stress in teachers and help reduce bias. For instance, a study by Page (2018) proved that loving-kindness meditation could help reduce implicit bias toward a targeted group.

Pacella and Guyette (2021) identified intercultural communication techniques that teachers can use to reduce implicit bias. The techniques can also be used when interacting with other colleagues in the school setting. The first step entails asking questions to have a deeper understanding of what the student believes. Secondly, teachers should embrace framing to look at issues from a different perspective (Howard and Bornstein 2018). Finally, including dialogue and reflection is also recommended in the study. All these strategies require the teachers to be ready for change.

In Healthcare

Eliminating biases in healthcare will allow all people to have the same levels of care. First, Perrin (2019) stressed that healthcare professionals should be aware of any prejudice they have and be ready to eliminate them. McDowell et al. (2020) also encourage educating health practitioners on health disparities. Doing so will help reveal the role of biases in purporting the biases. Holding positive and frequent intergroup contact with members of marginalized groups has also proven to be quite instrumental. It allows the caregivers and the patients to interact and exchange ideas on improving the quality of healthcare services. Ultimately, it will help highlight any implicit bias and identify effective mitigation measures.

The management should also be ready to implement change in hospitals. For instance, Page (2018) encourages asking patients a list of questions regarding their condition. Asking more questions leads to extended and in-depth conversations between the health provider and the patient. It allows the caregiver to understand the condition more and refrain from relying on intuition when diagnosing. Hospitals should also create awareness of the additional needs of patients from different social groups (Howard and Bornstein, 2018). Using a person-centered approach when dealing with patients also reduces the risk of implicit bias. Lastly, the management in health facilities should revise the policies to align with bias elimination strategies.

In the Political and Legal Sectors

The most effective strategy, in this case, entails educating the masses on how implicit bias affects their decision in different political processes. As Houwer (2019) notes, political leaders play on the public's naivety to reach their goals. If the public is sensitized to these issues, the chances of exploitation by politicians are mitigated. Additionally, individuals from different social groups should be actively involved in politics. This entails running for office and participating in political campaigns. It ensures that everyone is represented in decision-making. The government can facilitate this by implementing affirmative actions. Page (2018) defines the term affirmative action as a policy implemented to increase opportunities for underrepresented groups in society. He also notes that various countries have already introduced some sort of affirmative action policies for public office. For instance, many European countries have policies that require women to make up half of the candidates in any election. Such policies facilitate diversity and inclusion, which helps challenge implicit biases.

Most of the strategies that have been discussed can also be applied in the legal sector. For instance, Pacella and Guyette (2021) identify that confronting biases in the legal sector requires all the involved parties to be aware. They should also be motivated to overcome their prejudice, which affects their decision-making. Legal schools should also consider including teachings on unconscious bias in their training programs. Doing so will prepare the practitioners for any challenges that may hinder objective decision-making. On the other hand, Perrin (2019) encourages legal officers to individuate clients.

It reduces the risk of judging the client based on stereotypes associated with their social groups. Lastly, they should practice accountability, which also helps eliminate prejudice.

Conclusion

Unconscious bias stems from a feature of the human brain that helps make quick decisions through a series of shortcuts. It shapes our perceptions of the world and other people and can make controversial decisions. We often approach people and situations with unconscious generalizations and preconceptions rather than objective or quantitative parameters.

It is necessary to understand the unconscious bias better and overcome our inner (unconscious) biases by detecting it in our individuality and social relations and interactions. Humanity is in a relatively better place in terms of its past political and social experiences and its knowledge in combating the "bias/prejudice" concept, which is a conventional concept at the theoretical and practical level. The concept of classical prejudice/bias has been given much thought, and considerable scientific knowledge has been formed about it (Sherif 1936, Adorno et al. 1950, Allport 1954, 2016, Sherif et al. 1965, Tajfel 1970, 1974, 1978, 1982; Tajfel andTurner 1979, 1986, Adorno 2016). However, most people are largely unaware of their unconscious and/or implicit biases. This situation poses a threat to personal and social relations that should take seriously. It is necessary to be open and alert in the face of our own unconscious biases. When we see unconscious bias forming, the best way to deal with it is to face it; it is necessary to go beyond this and realize how prejudice seeps into relationships and interactions. To be conscious about this subject and concept, it seems essential to make an effort to raise awareness of what the concept is and its manifestations, both at the individual, social, and scientific level-producing analyses and studies on gender and other characteristics in research and scientific, technical, and medical issues. Unconscious bias can manifest in myriad forms, so it is helpful to be aware of some of the ways it can affect individuals and their day-to-day relationships. In this context, conscious awareness is of great importance. Unconscious bias can negatively affect individual and social relationships, such as belittling people of different religious or political views, favoring people from a similar social background, prioritizing those of a particular gender, and ignoring an alternative point of view put forward someone from a different educational level. Recognizing and suppressing unconscious bias is a skill, and, like any skill, it needs to be remembered and practiced.

The above discussion shows that because the human brain cannot process all the information at once, it suffers from unconscious biases. Therefore, many people are unaware of unconscious or implicit bias and how it shapes their perspective. Prejudice manifests itself in different ways.

These include gender bias, age discrimination, name bias, appearance bias, proximity bias, and confirmation bias. The debate about unconscious bias is based on scientific theories and approaches. Among the theories mentioned are the dual attitude system 1 thinking model and the social identity theory. Implicit bias is evident in different industries. The discussion shows how negative connotations and stereotypes point to discrimination in schools, workplaces, healthcare, politics, and the legal sector. Finally, this article offers advice that can help overcome implicit biases in these areas and points out what action can be taken.

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