



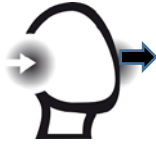









12 Cognitive Biases That Can Impact Search Committee Decisions

<p>1. Anchoring Bias Over-relying on the first piece of information obtained and using it as the baseline for comparison.</p>  <p>For example, if the first applicant has an unusually high test score, it might set the bar so high that applicants with more normal scores seem less qualified than they otherwise would.</p> <p>PsychCentral: The Anchoring Effect and How it Impacts Your Everyday Life</p>	<p>2. Availability Bias Making decisions based on immediate information or examples that come to mind.</p>  <p>If search committee members hear about a candidate from Georgia who accepted a job and then quit because of the cold weather, they might be more likely to assume that all candidates from the southern U.S. would dislike living in Minnesota.</p> <p>VerywellMind: Availability Heuristic and Making Decisions</p>	<p>3. Bandwagon Effect A person is more likely to go along with a belief if there are many others who hold that belief. Other names for this are “herd mentality” or “group think.”</p>  <p>In a search, it may be difficult for minority opinions to be heard if the majority of the group holds a strong contrary view.</p> <p>WiseGEEK: What is a Bandwagon Effect? Psychology Today: The Bandwagon Effect</p>
<p>4. Choice-supportive Bias Once a decision is made, people tend to over-focus on its benefits and minimize its flaws.</p>  <p>Search committee members may emphasize rationale that supports decisions they have made in the past. “We hired someone from a prestigious university last time and it worked out really well.”</p> <p>Plexxi: On Choice-Supportive Bias and the Need for Paranoid Optimism</p>	<p>5. Confirmation Bias Paying more attention to information that reinforces previously held beliefs and ignoring evidence to the contrary.</p>  <p>A search committee member who believes that women are more intelligent might selectively focus on aspects of resumes that highlight the intelligence of female applicants.</p> <p>Psychology Today: What is Confirmation Bias? VerywellMind: Confirmation Bias</p>	<p>6. Fundamental Attribution Error Overemphasizing personal factors and under-estimating situational factors when explaining other people’s behavior.</p>  <p>For example, if an applicant is late to an interview the committee might conclude he is irresponsible or lazy, rather than remember that a major campus access road was closed unexpectedly.</p> <p>Ethics Unwrapped: Fundamental Attribution Error</p>
<p>7. Halo Effect Judging others similarly on all traits, assuming that because someone is good or bad at one thing they will be equally good or bad at another.</p>  <p>During a search, if a candidate has strong educational credentials the committee might conclude that she is also a strong leader.</p> <p>The Economist: The Halo Effect Robert Half: Hiring and the Halo-Effect Trap</p>	<p>8. Ingroup Preference Bias People tend to divide themselves into groups, and then attribute positive attributes to their own group.</p>  <p>Search committee members who perceive commonalities with applicants are more likely to view them favorably.</p> <p>Explore Psychology: What is the Ingroup Bias? Understanding Prejudice: Ingroup Favoritism</p>	<p>9. The “Jerk” Factor It’s not a cognitive bias, but research has shown an academic tendency to over-value individuals who display “brilliant but cruel” behavior and to attribute less intelligence to people with “nice” behavior.</p>  <p>Search committee members can be unduly impressed by an academic star that builds himself up at the cost of behaving disrespectfully toward others.</p> <p>WorkMatters: Brilliant but Cruel</p>
<p>10. Ostrich Effect Avoiding bad news about a decision by ignoring data that might be negative.</p>  <p>For example, a committee may choose not to pay attention to data about how their choice affects diversity goals or minority employment rates.</p> <p>99u: The Ostrich Problem and the Danger of Not Tracking Your Progress Effectiviology: The Ostrich Effect-On the Danger of Burying Your Head in the Sand</p>	<p>11. Recency Effect Recent events are easier to remember, and can be weighed more heavily than past events or potential future events.</p>  <p>In a search, candidates that were interviewed early in the process may be evaluated less favorably. A similar bias is the proximity effect, in which candidates interviewed in person are viewed more favorably than those interviewed via distance technology.</p> <p>SKYbrary: Recency Bias</p>	<p>12. Zero-risk Bias Preferring the choice that provides certainty of a smaller benefit as opposed to an alternative with more risk and greater potential benefit.</p>  <p>Search committees may seek to avoid risk by hiring a “safer” candidate with a greater perceived likelihood of success rather than taking a reasonable amount of risk.</p> <p>Decision Lab: Zero Risk Bias</p>