

Weight: hiring and career success in america ? assignment



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SKINNY PEOPLE HAVE IT ALL” Weight: A Deciding Factor for Hiring and

Career Success in America Student: Dahlia Kelada University of Houston –

Victoria WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA Abstract One

would expect that when applying for a job, a hiring manager’s decision would be based on a candidate’s qualifications, skill set, potential, and a pleasing personality that would likely fit the norms of the organizational culture. In the United States, however, there is no existing federal legislation to protect obese individuals from weight-based discrimination.

With the exception of Michigan, no other states have laws specifically in place for obesity discrimination. While this paper primarily represents findings in the United States, it can be representative of weight discrimination throughout the world. While it is expected that hiring managers are aware of discrimination laws and human resources best practices; education, skill, capabilities and personality come second to a person’s first impression — their physical appearance. 2? WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA “ SKINNY PEOPLE HAVE IT ALL” Weight: A Deciding Factor for Hiring and Career Success in America ? The American Disabilities Act forbids discrimination with regard to employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotion, layoff, training, fringe benefits, and any other condition of employment (ADA, 1990). The U. S. Civil Rights Act further prohibits discrimination for non job-related factors such as age, gender, race, color, national origin and religion (CRA, 1964). Most people have heard of or experienced some degree of sexual or racial discrimination, and more recently religious intolerance.

Through suggestive media messages and various cultural, and sociological norms, being “skinny” has been engrained in American society as being synonymous with “beautiful” or “good.” Ironically, about 70 million obese and 127 million overweight adults are in America, struggling to find a place in society where they can be accepted and given the same opportunities as those who are considered to be a normal weight. In 2008, the Center for Disease Control estimated that approximately 33 percent of men and 35 percent of women were obese.

Research further shows that the statistic of obesity is on the rise (Rich & Evans, 2005; Lawrence, 2004; Bell, McLaughlin & Sequeira, 2004; Janssen, et. al. , 2004; Lawrence, 2004; Heuer, et. al. 2011). Weight discrimination is just as impacting as gender, racial and religious discrimination. Obese people, after years of research, are found to experience considerable prejudice in their daily living, educational settings, health care, work place, with transportation and interpersonal relationships among family members and friends.

Recent studies suggest that the prevalence of weight discrimination has increased by 66 percent over the past decade; and is found to be somewhat more prevalent than gender WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA discrimination in the United States (Puhl, Andreyeva & Brownell, 2008). Studies indicate that on average, individuals that report weight discrimination have a significantly higher body mass index (Puhl, et. al. , 2008). And as this paper will 4? indicate, people who are considered to be obese will experience lower wages and reduced employment opportunities.

Women are more vulnerable than men to experience weight-based discrimination. As evidence suggests, overweight women are evaluated more negatively than overweight men, and as a result, women are much more likely to experience weight-based discrimination (Fikkan & Rothblum, 2005; Puhl, et. al. , 2008; Bell, et. al. , 2004). It has been suggested that overweight or obese people are further ridiculed, ostracized, fired, denied promotions, and experience other negative consequences (Bell, et. al. , 2004).

Although as Puhl, Andreyeva, and Brownell (2008) argue, these prejudice attitudes do not necessarily translate into discriminatory behavior. As already mentioned, stereotypes of what is beautiful are heavily influenced by the media, setting standards for what is attractive and, therefore, acceptable. Research has shown that mass media does in fact contribute to the social acceptability of weight prejudice (Puhl & Heuer, 2009). Who sets the standard of what is an acceptable and healthy weight? Wouldn't this depend on where one comes from, one's genetics and society?

Are people to look to media or their cohorts or family to get this information? Are we being led to believe something that is taboo? How the public represents obesity is not based on medical and biomedical facts, but rather it creates a cultural understanding of health (Rich & Evans, 2005). **WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA** Employment benefits such as hiring, wages, and promotion are on few of the many “rewards” for being physically attractive, as is the correlation of receiving social and personal rewards, positive perceptions of others, and higher self esteem (Kwan & Trautner, 2009).

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Any manager, whose attitude toward a person's weight is negative, and whose authority directly impacts an employee's successful existence within an organization, can both impact a person's likelihood of being hired, influence their wage and more devastatingly impact their self-esteem and self-respect. By turning on the television or radio, or opening a magazine, one is likely see or hear an advertisement for a weight loss or body shaping pill, drug, or surgery. Controversies of thinness has been a hot topic in the modeling industry since its ? inception. As of late, models have been ridiculed for being too thin, or unhealthy looking. Some would argue, however, that even models considered to be at an ideal weight for their profession, are still too thin when compared to the average woman's size, suggesting that women should strive to attain a model-like physique. America has an obsession with thinness, admiring those who are, while heavier people are being discriminated against (Bell, McLaughlin & Sequeira, 2004).

Meanwhile, not everyone has the physiological, social, and cultural resources to be thin (Rich, E. , & Evans, J. , 2005). Rich and Evans (2005) argue that the relationship between health, size, and weight are not as significant as people are led to believe, suggesting that people consider that many individuals who are thought to be overweight but are moderately active are actually healthier than their peers who are sedentary but thin. ? WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA Where Does Being " Fat" Come From?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention claim that the terms overweight and obesity for weight is a range that is considered greater than what is generally considered healthy for a given height (CDC, 2009a, Rich & <https://assignbuster.com/weight-hiring-and-career-success-in-america-assignment/>

Evans, 2005) A body mass index (BMI) that exceeds 25 is considered overweight, and a BMI that exceeds 30 is 6? considered obese (CDC, 2009a). Some researchers argue that using BMI as a standard for measuring weight neglects measuring actual fat, suggesting that this method may tell us very little about someone's actual health (Rich & Evans, 2005).

Not to mention, BMI disregards genetics. Obesity discrimination is when people have a negative attitude or prejudice against individuals who are overweight or obese (Bell, McLaughlin, & Sequeira, 2004). Marketing promotions for fast food saturates society, including in school cafeterias; “enticing” people into poor eating behaviors. Ironically, these advertisements do not show overweight or obese people consuming these types of fast foods.

The marketing approach by McDonald's and other chain fast-food restaurants that promote a “dollar menu,” is to offer a nutrition solution that will accommodate a “busy” lifestyle. This concept of a dollar menu would also encourage patrons to buy more than one item. People with expendable income typically enjoy eating healthy food and partaking in healthy lifestyles. Meanwhile, there is no coincidence that there is a link found that individuals with low income, and who have a higher intake of cheap food rich in fat and sugar have a higher resulting BMI (Rich & Evans, 2005; Brunello & D'Hombres, 2007).

Researchers have argued that the family environment heavily influences obesity; however, studies by Cawley (2004) show that it is unlikely that there is a correlation of weight within families due to the family environment. It is

rather from genetic factors. WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA 7? Brunello and D'Hombres (2007) confirm that local economic and social environments do have an impact on weight. They further share evidence that a person's correlation of pay and BMI is in fact dependent on whether the individual lives in an area with higher or lower than average BMI.

Research has further identified that those who live in areas with a higher overweight population density may experience less favorable labor market conditions, considering that there is a greater populous of individuals with the similar weight, and therefore, negatively impacts higher weight on earnings. It is difficult to overcome the public health challenge of obesity because of the stigma associated with obese persons (Puhl & Heuer, 2010; Heuer, et. al. 2011) Understanding obesity requires health education, and while some would work toward creating an awareness and education of creating a healthy life style, some may feel that people should not seek to change people's behavior because of the prejudices of others (Roehling & Pichler, 2007). Thin is Good – Fat is Bad This paper already establishes that there is an emphasis on thinness and weight loss as a “ universal good,” and that everyone should participate in the culture of thinness; although, as Rich and Evans (2005) suggests could be damaging to self-esteem.

Who is to be blamed for an overweight society? On a macro level, media could be to blame; however, on a micro level, people blame the person who is overweight or obese, suggesting that they, solely, are in control of their health. Rich and Evans (2005) suggests it is ethically irresponsible to achieve an ideal weight, which for some, may actually create a condition of semi-
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starvation. **WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA** In Western culture, this fat-stigma that is being reinforced by media could be causing an increasing rate of anorexia and bulimia.

Just to put it into perspective, cultural differences of an ideal body weight do in fact vary. Consider the Brunello and D'Hombres (2007) European study, where they asked respondents if they were worried about gaining weight; the Maltans, Cyprusians, Italians, Greeks, and Spaniards were at the top of the list strongly agreeing. Meanwhile, Austrians and Irish at the bottom of the list. Any physical trainer, nutritionist or doctor will be aligned with the same notion that, to lose weight, one must reduce caloric intake in relationship to the energy that is expelled.

In other words, do not eat more than what can be burned. Ironically, findings suggest that people who are seeking weight loss treatment still commonly experience weight-based stigma (Friedman, et. al. , 2005). Research shows that news media content may contribute to negative public attitudes toward obese people, further reinforcing and advocating negative attitudes toward weight stigmatization and discrimination (Puhl & Heuer, 2009; Rich & Evans, 2005; Heuer, et. al. , 2011). Constant exposure to thin ideas of beauty may reinforce this antifat bias.

Rather than being seen as valued members of society who deserve the same respect and compassion as non-obese people, the media is dehumanizing obese individuals (Venturini, et. al. 2006; Heuer, et. al. , 2011). For example, one study shows that the more study participants read popular magazines, the more they were held to perceive that overweight people should be

associated with different types of jobs (Venturini, et. al. , 2006). The media further enforces weight stigmatization, as overweight and obese individuals are less likely to be portrayed as experts, advocates, journalists, or health care providers.

Furthermore, as WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA 9? exhibited in studies by Heurer, et. al. (2011), these individuals are less likely to be shown dressed in professional clothing. Imagine the challenges faced by overweight and obese people who are inundated with these stereotypes, where it is highly likely that they will be judged before they even get the chance to be seen for the values they possess. It is common to see negative portrayals of overweight and obese people in television shows, cartoons, movies, advertisements, and news media.

As Heuer, et. al. (2011) has found in their research, there is evidence indicating that the media portrays overweight persons eating or drinking and less likely to be shown exercising. Another example is in the news where photos commonly show obese individuals with their heads or faces omitted to protect their privacy. Researchers argue that by isolating certain body parts to emphasize excess weight, the media is further reinforcing a societal attitude toward an unnecessary emphasis on particular body parts; to intentionally evoke an attitude of disgust.

This research also suggests that people are more likely to express higher levels of weight bias when viewing a news story about obesity that is paired with a stigmatizing photograph; than those who read the same story with a nonstigmatizing photograph (McClure, et. al. , 2011; Heuer, et. al. , 2011).

Children are conditioned at an early age to have weight biases from the teaching of cartoons. These cartoons suggest positive messages about being thin and negative messages about being overweight (Klein, et. al. , 2005). McKown C. and Weinstein, R. S. (2003) have suggested that when children come to understand that stereotypes are endorsed by others, they gain insight into others' social motives, resulting in a profound impact on their relationships with other individuals, social settings and society. These principles are suggested to follow children through adulthood (Bell, et. al. , 2004). If WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA 10? weight bias has a cyclical learning affect, perhaps preventing these stereotypes will never be realized.

While this paper discusses how in American society, negative attitudes toward obese people are a common occurrence, an organic approach must be considered. Do obese and overweight people have weight-biases against obese and overweight people? In other words, are they stereotyping people who are just like them? Carr D. , and Friedman M. A. (2005) suggest that obese people may also develop negative selfevaluations as a reaction to discriminatory treatment. Proving that overweight and obese people do have the same biased attitude against fatness.

For example, in a recent study, those who were restrained eaters and those who were unrestrained eaters advocated a positive attitude toward thinness (Vartanian, et. al. , 2005). The effect of a person's perceived obesity discrimination impacts their selfacceptance and is similar across all races, genders and age categories (Carr & Friedman, 2005). And likewise, several studies have reported that even overweight and obese children are likely to <https://assignbuster.com/weight-hiring-and-career-success-in-america-assignment/>

endorse negative attitudes and stereotypes about obesity the same as average-weight children would (Puhl & Latner, 2007).

Weight Discrimination in The Workplace Regardless of gender, the perception of an overweight person does, in fact, limit a candidate's opportunity for employment and career advancement in both blue- and white-collar occupations. As Carpenter (2006); Carr and Friedman (2005); and Roehling and Pichler (2008) have found, there has been relatively little attention given to the effect of employment protection based on a person's looks, beauty or other physical characteristics.

When considering types of work, white-collar workers were more likely WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA to report elevated levels of job discrimination compared to blue-collar workers. Their recent studies show that overweight individuals were rated as being less desirable as subordinates, coworkers and bosses, and that overweight women were consistently judged more harshly than overweight men. A large number of individuals studied perceived that they, when placed in an employment setting, were 12 times more likely than normal-weight individuals to report weight-related employment discrimination; followed by obese being 37 times more likely, and severely obese at 100 times more likely (Roehling & Pichler, 2007; Carr & Friedman, 2005). In other words, people who are considered overweight and obese, with BMIs greater than 25, are more likely to report work-related discrimination. More so for women, excessive body weight, or obesity when it is defined as being greater than 30, has been shown to be a handicap to social advancement. Brunello & D'Hombres, 2007) And studies show that women are more than 16 times more likely than men to perceive <https://assignbuster.com/weight-hiring-and-career-success-in-america-assignment/>

weight as a basis for their weight discriminatory experience (Roehling & Pichler, 2007). According to evidence found by Carlsson & Rooth (2006), discrimination is higher in low-skilled occupations as compared to highly-skilled occupations. Weight Effects on Employment Research by Hastings & Snowden (2009) has shown that obesity is indeed associated with health conditions that can interfere with steady employment and limit opportunities for work.

While evidence shows that men with the recommended weight have a less likely probability for employment than obese and overweight men; morbidly obese men, however, have even lower employment rates than do the men in the WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA recommended weight range. Also found in this same study, is that men at the 12? recommended weight have similar levels of employment as men who are overweight and obese. Meanwhile, evidence shows that overweight and obese men have higher employment rates compared to men with the recommended weight (Carpenter, 2006).

With women, however, studies find that those who are obese and morbidly obese suffer significant employment penalties. Surprisingly, the same studies have found that employment among obese women, married, unmarried, black, older and younger women were higher (Carpenter, 2006; Hastings & Snowden, 2009). Only for Hispanic females is weight associated with a lower probability of employment (Cawley, 2003). Weak evidence has been found with regard to obese workers being more likely to being unemployed or segregated in self-employment jobs (Garcia & Quintana-Domeque, 2006).

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Obesity and Levels of Education If referring to an earlier argument, whereby people who have a higher BMI experience lower pay grades, could the premise further suggest that those who have a higher BMI also have lower education levels? It has appeared in some discourse that education plays a factor in obesity rates with some studies indicating that females who were ‘lighter’ have on average more years of education and higher test scores than those who were considered heavy (Cawley, 2004).

Additional studies are aligned with Cawley’s (2004) findings that people who are obese have lower levels of education, earnings and occupation status compared to those who are at a normal weight (Carr & Friedman, 2005). Furthermore, research has found that women who are morbidly obese and obese WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA have lower employment rates and educational attainment; where in contrast, women 13? having the recommended weight have the highest rates of college degrees and are more likely to be white. Carpenter, 2006). White males have, on average, a higher value of human capital measure; and black males who are overweight or obese are likely to have a higher education and intelligence scores than black men who were underweight. Meanwhile, the research continues to show evidence that overweight men have higher levels of education, both overweight and obese men have higher employment and marriage rates than do men whose weight is at the recommended range (Cawley, 2004; Carpenter, 2006).

Women in today’s society are preached the words, “ This is a man’s world. ” Across several generations, daughters are taught that they are to compete in this “ man’s world. ” How do young women prepare for this entrance into <https://assignbuster.com/weight-hiring-and-career-success-in-america-assignment/>

society? What can they equip themselves with? As Heihnan (2001) suggests, because gender bias may exist, influencing how a person is evaluated in a work setting, a woman's competency provides no assurance that she will advance in the same organizational levels as an equivalent performing man.

Couple that with the high statistic of women who are discriminated against because of weight, it would seem that women have much greater challenges ahead of them if they wish to compete in a workforce. Is Discrimination in The Best Interest of Business? Some employers are concerned about the business impact a person's weight has on their bottom line. For instance, one study shows considerable evidence that weight increases the probability of health-related work limitations, and the probability of receiving disability-related income (Burkhauser & Cawley, 2004).

WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA Overweight job applicants and employees may experience employment discrimination, considering the increasing attention on employee weight and health care costs for employers, (Alvarez & Soltis, 2006; Grossman, 2004; Wysocki, 2004) To further add to the concern about employer health care costs, studies show that for Hispanic, white and black women (and with black and Hispanic men), their BMIs, weight in pounds and obesity indicators are all positively associated with the probability of health limiting the amount of work that one can do for pay (Cawley, 2003).

There are varying results for white men; however, considering their BMI, weight in pounds and obesity indicator, weight does not correlate with a greater probability of disability. It has been shown that individuals perceived

as being fat, are considered to have a laundry list of personality traits; for instance, they may be perceived as irresponsible, unfocused, lazy, less conscientious, have poor work habits, more likely to have emotional problems, less energetic, less likely to get along with others and less suitable for active positions (Cawley, 2003; Roehling & Odland, 2008; Venturini, et. al. 2006; Puhl, Andreyeva & Brownell, 2008; McClure, et. al. , 2011; Friedman, et. al. , 2005). There is no evidence that overweight individuals are less agreeable or less emotionally stable. Results do show, however, that heavier men have a slight tendency to be more agreeable than thinner men (Roehling, Roehling & Odland, 2008). Furthermore, studies show evidence that a job applicant may encounter different employment opportunities based on their physical attractiveness. This may be due to a perception that the less-attractive person is less socially skilled than attractive individuals (Jawahar & Mattsson, 2005).

Meanwhile, researchers would argue that physical attractiveness does not, in fact, raise actual productivity (Mobius & Rosenblatt, 2005). **WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA** A study was conducted to investigate if people would make a spontaneous association of being “ fat” with specific type of jobs. Results indicate that the “ fat person” was more likely associated with jobs that would require minimal interpersonal or public contact; and to the opposite, hiring managers were more willing to place a normal-weight person in a professional position that requires high levels of personal interaction.

Because of these common weight stigmas, hiring managers may consider these fat persons as being less suited for particular jobs. As a result, the <https://assignbuster.com/weight-hiring-and-career-success-in-america-assignment/>

person may not be hired because that candidate is perceived that their personal characteristics do not fit the necessary requirements to fulfill the job position (Venturini, et. al. , 2006). Some would argue that a candidate's qualifications take precedence over appearance perceptions.

For instance, evidence shows that with highly qualified applicants, weight-related attitudes toward an overweight applicant are likely to be low.

Meanwhile, the body weight of an unqualified job candidate will be even less of a priority, considering they have not met the minimum job requirements.

Studies show that if an applicant is thin and highly qualified, then a hiring manager's attitude toward that applicant is likely to be positive (Sartore & Cunningham, 2007). Some industries put in place certain physical restrictions for employment.

For instance people who are legally blind cannot perform some jobs; likewise, companies feel that individuals who are overweight are unable to move quickly if required, such as flight attendants, firemen, or any position where safety can be an issue (Bell, et. al. , 2004). Weight-based discrimination on employment has even been studied in the health and fitness industry. Regardless of qualification level, thin people applying for the role of personal trainer were viewed as a better fit and more hireable than overweight applicants

WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA 16? (Sartore & Cunningham, 2007). Overweight individuals should be aware of the bias they may encounter and how it can impact their career success (Roehling & Pichler, 2007). Weight & Wages Strong race and gender difference have

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been found, in previous research, showing a correlation between wages and obesity. Moreover, because of work place discrimination or by a reduction in productivity, obesity has been shown to lower wages (Cawley, 2003; Cawley, 2004).

While several studies have found that among females, a negative correlation between body weight and wages exist, others find no statistically significant connection between a person's body mass index and their wage (Cawley, 2004). Garcia & QuintanaDomeque (2006) has indicated that it is extremely difficult to statistically detect any significant relationship between obesity and wages. One study found that for white females, a ten-pound weight increase was associated with 1. 4 percent wage decrease; and 1. 1 percent for both Hispanic males and females; and . percent for black females (Cawley, 2003). The correlation of unemployment and wages tend to be different for men and women (Garcia & Quintana-Domeque, 2006). For instance, while both Cawley (2004) and Brunello & D'Hombres (2007) find evidence of white American females experience a negative and statistically significant correlation between earnings and BMI, there is strong evidence that there is a correlation also for men which can be noted as much greater than for females. Black males, in contrast, who have a higher body weight are found to have higher wages.

For instance, black men who weight 70 pounds more than the average weight are WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA likely to have a 4. 2 percent wage increase (Cawley, 2004). The opposite holds true for 17? black and Hispanic men, where those who were considered overweight did not learn any less than men that were considered to have a <https://assignbuster.com/weight-hiring-and-career-success-in-america-assignment/>

healthy weight; however, obese men earned approximately six to eight percent less (Cawley, 2004). For Hispanic females in the same study, those who weighed 62 pounds more than the average weight experienced a 6. percent wage decrease; meanwhile, black females who weighed 79 pounds more than the average, were associated with a 4. 7 percent wage decrease; and white females who are overweight earn 4. 5 percent less than those who were found to be a healthy weight. In turn, black females and males were the only ones whose being underweight earned them less than those of a healthy weight (Cawley, 2004; Cawley, 2003). The Brunello & D'Hombres, (2007) study excludes the consideration of wages earned by workers that may be self-employed, unemployed, or who may not be employed because of overweight or obesity.

There have been several investigations on whether weight plays a role on the probability of finding work for those who are on welfare. Among black survey respondents, who had a 10 percent weight increase compared to the average respondent were associated with 10. 9 percent increase in the percent of months spent on welfare (Cawley & Danziger, 2004). Meanwhile, for white respondents, a 10 percent increase in weight from the average, was associated with the probably of current employment to be a 12 percent decrease, an 8. 9 percent decrease in the probability of full-time employment, 5. percent fewer hour worked per week, 5 percent fewer months worked, a 16 percent increase in the percent of months spent on welfare and a 10 percent lower earnings (Cawley & Danziger, 2004).

WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA Cawley & Danziger, (2004) evaluated the Women's Employment Study (WES) data of current and

former welfare recipients and found that weight was a barrier for white females to transition from welfare to work, but not for black females. 18? While negative attitudes toward obesity are enduring in North American society, there is evidence of similar happenings throughout Europe.

For example, when using the European Community Household Panel (ECHP), researches identified an association between BMI and wages is negative for women and positive for men (D'Hombres & Brunello, 2005). The opposite of evidence found in the United States. Furthermore, Brunello, and D'Hombres, (2007) show that BMI negatively affects wages with a stronger effect on males than for females; with a greater effect in countries along the Mediterranean specifically Spain, Greece, Italy and Portugal; concluding that a 10 percent increase in body mass index reduces the real earnings of males by 3. 7 percent and females by 1. 86 percent. Self-Perceptions & Discrimination Research has shown that adverse psychological and physical health outcomes for employees occur when a person perceives they, themselves, are a victim of employment discrimination (Roehling & Pichler, 2007). Perceived discrimination, however, may not be aligned with the objective reality. In other words, individuals may accurately perceive discrimination when it does, in fact, occur. However, even when discrimination does not actually occur, they may still perceive the situation as discriminatory (Roehling & Pichler, 2007; Harris, et. l. , 2004). As Carlsson, and Rooth (2008) suggest, it is problematic to make inferences about discrimination from interviewing respondents, as job seekers may overstate or understate the degree of discrimination. **WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA** Research indicates that employers do not necessarily

express their true attitudes toward minorities; and if they do, their attitudes are not automatically consistent with their behavior (Carlsson & Rooth, 2006).

And although body shape can be the first impression, and can dominate a person's perception, this attitude can prevent hiring managers from realizing other relevant individual characteristics. For employers and 19? decision-makers, it is important to ensure that performance limitations are real rather than imaginary or based on stereotypes. Managers who are aware of the relationship between weight and perceived employment discrimination, can help make changes within the organization, whether it be in the form of intervention, diversity training programs or weight discrimination formal policies (Bell, et. l. , 2004; Roehling & Pichler, 2007). Conclusion In conclusion, hatred, stereotyping and denying individuals equal rights to employment and the same standard of living is wrong. As a society, people need to learn to accept the fact that each and every person has value and can contribute to society in a positive way. It is considered unprofessional for managers and employees to bring their personal beliefs into the work place, they practice conservatism and reserve. Why is it that when it comes to overweight people, perceptions are acted upon? Society needs to change, nd everyone on a micro level needs to be proactive in changing these stereotypes. Change can start at various opportunities; but it must first start with the media; followed by offering weight-based education in the classroom, child care facilities, at home, and in the work place. Managers should be taught ethical standards of responsibility and employment practices. Attitudes toward weight and health issues will change when the

public, educators, parents and health professionals adopt a more WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA cautious attitude.

As a society, we can change the negative attitude toward people who 20? are heavy by changing our perspective of changing associations; for example, fat can be beautiful, or fat can be healthy. Meanwhile, health experts are attempting to address the issue of obesity by educating the public about nutrition choices and activity levels (Rich & Evans, 2005) Explaining different levels of tolerance and discrimination against heavier people can be impacted by the natural tendency to expect cultural difference with what is considered to be an ideal weight (Brunello & D'Hombres, 2007).

We should offer alternative narratives on obesity in efforts to contribute to a wider political, social and cultural discussion on how we are to make sense of obesity (Rich & Evans, 2005). While there is tremendous evidence showing the prejudiced attitudes toward obese people, very little has been done to document these perceived weight-based discriminations and the prevalence of these experiences in the United States (Puhl, et. al. , 2008). People are sometimes embarrassed to report weight-based discrimination, or afraid of the repercussions.

Only when people who experience discrimination start to speak up, and raise an awareness of this fat-bias, will perceptions and behaviors change. Society at all levels can change this discrimination. Medicaid should cover treatment for obesity, nutrition counseling and weight loss treatments. Professional journalists are ethically inclined to avoid stereotyping of race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical

appearance or social status (Society of Professional Journalists, 2010).

Journalists should made a deliberate effort o rid their visual content from these biases by increasing awareness of weight bias and stigma in media reporting, and exercising caution when selecting a photograph to use alongside a news article or broadcast, especially if it's a weight-related topic (Heuer, et. al. 2011). WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA 21? The issue of weight with organizational decision makers, policy makers and those in diversity research is gaining importance. If we do not intervene and shift these societal attitudes, weight bias may likely remain to be socially acceptable and will harm future generations of overweight children and adults.

While some cases have been successful in seeking restitution, it is still hard to prove discrimination at the legal level. Several organizations, such as the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance, advocate laws that would prevent weight discrimination. (Bell, et. al. , 2004; Puhl, et. al. , 2008). If discriminatory laws expand to include obese people, this may potentially be an effective strategy for ensuring that those weight stigmas are not translated into discriminatory treatment (Carr & Friedman, 2005). WEIGHT: HIRING AND CAREER SUCCESS IN AMERICA References Alvarez, F. P. & Soltis, M. J. (2006). Preventive medicine: Employee wellness programs are prone to legal maladies that require careful monitoring. HRMagazine, 5, 105-109. 22? Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (1991), Pub. L. No. 101-336, 2, 104 Stat. 328. Bell, M. P. , McLaughlin, M. E. , & Sequeira, J. M. (2004). Age, disability, and obesity: Similarities, differences, and common threads. Brunello, G. & D'Hombres, B. (2007). Does body weight affect wages?

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