

# Promotion Recommendations of All Sizes

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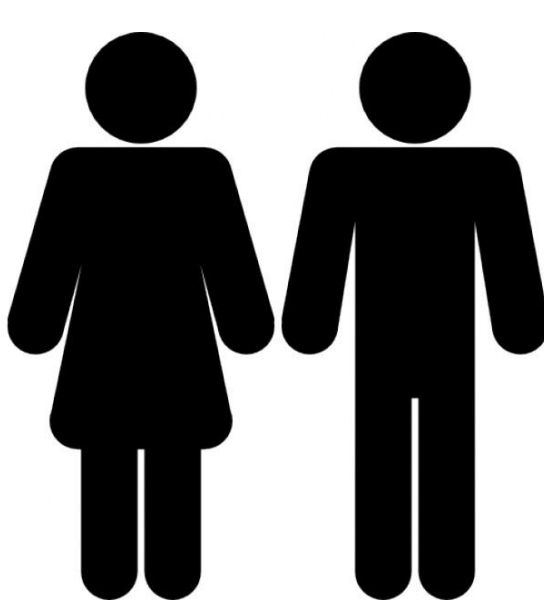
## Background

Weight discrimination in the workplace has become a prevalent research topic as obesity rates rise in the United States. Researchers that have studied body types have found evidence that people assign personality traits to differing body types. Current research on weight discrimination shows a bias against people that are overweight and obese. This may be because people see someone's physical appearance before they experience their personality attributes, or because appearance is relatively stable over time (Butler, et al. 1993). Klassen, et al., 1993 identified specific negative traits associated with obesity including, but are not limited to, unkempt, lazy, lacking self-discipline, lacking self-care, unhealthy, and emotionally insecure. This study also identified specific negative stereotypes associated with very thin individuals. These traits included being physically weak, nervous, overly ambitious, unhealthy, vain, introverted, and emotionally insecure. The research on weight discrimination in the workplace has focused largely on hiring decisions, disciplinary actions, and co-worker perceptions.

## Variables Under Investigation



Weight



Gender



Similar to me

## Hypothesis

- 1 Thin candidates will be recommended for promotion at a higher rate than overweight candidates.
- 2 Participants, regardless of their weight, will show a preference for thin candidates. However, thin participants will show the strongest preference for thin candidates.
- 3 Thin female candidates will be recommended for promotion at a higher rate than will thin male candidates

## Methods

Participants will review:

- ✓ Company profile
- ✓ Personnel files: current job description, promotion position job description, current resume, two most recent performance reviews with professional photo.

Participants will be assigned to 1 of 4 conditions. Each condition includes: one overweight female, one overweight male, one thin female, one thin male. Conditions vary in qualifications of the candidates

## Participants Complete Three Surveys:

- 1
  - Participant ratings on 19 job relevant skills.
- 2
  - Participant ratings on candidate qualifications.
  - Rankings of which candidate the participant would recommend for promotion.
  - Participant ratings on ease of making promotion recommendation
- 3
  - Demographic survey:
    - Gender
    - Race
    - Age
    - Current Employment Status
    - Participants' perception of their own weight (Gregory, et al. 2008)



## Study Conditions

- |   |        |  |
|---|--------|--|
| 1 | ✓<br>○ | Overweight candidates<br>Thin candidates |
| 2 | ✓<br>○ | Thin candidates<br>Overweight candidates |
| 3 | ✓<br>○ | Female candidates<br>Male candidates     |
| 4 | ✓<br>○ | Male candidates<br>Female candidates     |

## Discussion

A few limitations should be addressed regarding this study. First, the participants will come from a student population, many of which may not have experience with promotion decisions. This study also compares extremes of candidate weight (thin and overweight), without average weight candidates. Lastly, the results of this study could be impacted by society's view of attractiveness, since thinness is perceived to be attractive. Future research should further investigate weight discrimination regarding thin individuals, as well as the interaction of attractiveness and weight.

## References

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