Confirmation Bias and Similarity Bias in Recruitment: The Influence of Power on Hiring Decisions

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Dissertation written under the supervision of professor

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the MSc in International Management with Specialization in Strategy & Consulting, at the Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 29.12.2024

Abstract

Hiring decisions are critical to organizational success but are often influenced by unconscious cognitive biases (CBs), such as confirmation bias and similarity bias. This thesis investigates how these biases affect hiring decisions of individuals with different feelings of power, using a quantitative survey design. Perceived power was measured using the Personal Sense of Power Scale, while CBs were assessed through adapted tasks evaluating decision-making behavior in recruitment scenarios.

The results reveal that individuals with high perceived power exhibited significantly greater confirmation bias, supporting theories that powerholders rely more heavily on pre-existing beliefs. However, confirmation bias did not significantly predict hiring decisions. In contrast, similarity bias significantly influenced hiring decisions, with participants favoring candidates perceived as similar to themselves, regardless of their level of perceived power. Demographic factors also shaped the occurrence of similarity bias.

These findings have important implications for organizations aiming to improve recruitment practices. Strategies such as structured hiring processes, diverse panels, and unconscious bias training are recommended to mitigate CBs and foster objective decision-making. Future research should explore additional biases, cultural and individual differences, and the long-term effectiveness of bias mitigation strategies. By addressing biases, organizations can enhance hiring fairness, build diverse teams, and achieve sustained performance.

Keywords: Cognitive biases, Hiring decisions, Confirmation bias, Similarity bias, Power dynamics, Perceived power, Recruitment, Workplace diversity

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Resumo

Decisões de contratação são cruciais para o sucesso organizacional, mas frequentemente influenciadas por preconceitos cognitivos (PCs) inconscientes, como o preconceito de confirmação e o preconceito de similaridade. Esta tese investiga como estes PCs afetam as decisões de contratação de indivíduos com diferentes sentimentos de poder, recorrendo a um estudo quantitativo. O poder percebido foi medido através da Personal Sense of Power Scale, enquanto os PCs foram avaliados por tarefas adaptadas que analisaram o comportamento decisório em cenários de recrutamento.

Os resultados mostram que indivíduos com alto poder percebido demonstraram maior preconceito de confirmação, corroborando teorias de que os detentores de poder dependem mais de crenças pré-existentes. Contudo, o preconceito de confirmação não previu significativamente as decisões de contratação. Já o preconceito de similaridade influenciou significativamente as decisões, com participantes favorecendo candidatos semelhantes, independentemente do nível de poder percebido. Fatores demográficos também influenciaram este preconceito.

Estes achados têm importantes implicações para organizações que buscam melhorar práticas de recrutamento. Estratégias como processos estruturados, painéis diversos e formações sobre preconceitos inconscientes são recomendadas. Pesquisas futuras devem explorar outros preconceitos, diferenças culturais e individuais e a eficácia de intervenções ao longo do tempo. Abordar estes preconceitos pode promover contratações mais justas, construir equipas diversas e fomentar um desempenho sustentável.

Palavras-chave: Preconceitos cognitivos, Decisões de contratação, Preconceito de confirmação, Preconceito de similaridade, Dinâmicas de poder, Poder percebido, Recrutamento, Diversidade no local de trabalho

Título: Preconceito de Confirmação e Preconceito de Similaridade no Recrutamento: A Influência do Poder nas Decisões de Contratação

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Acknowledgments

As I reach the end of my master's program, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to those who have supported me throughout this journey.

I would like to begin by thanking my supervisor, Filipa de Almeida, for your guidance and valuable advice during the development of this thesis. Your expertise and constructive feedback have greatly contributed to the direction and quality of this research.

I also want to acknowledge the professors and staff of the Católica Lisbon School of Business & Economics, as well as my fellow students who have accompanied me over the past three semesters. You have truly made this experience unique and memorable and have contributed substantially to my personal and professional growth.

To my friends, thank you for your constant supportive words and encouragement along the way. A special thank you to my sister and parents, whose support and belief in me made it possible for me to pursue and complete this master's degree.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who participated in the survey for this thesis. Your participation was crucial to the success of this work.

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List of Abbreviations

α	Alpha
b	Regression coefficient
BAS	Behavioral activation system
BIS	Behavioral inhibition system
CBs	Cognitive biases
CB_score	Confirmation bias score
CI	Confidence interval
DEI	Diversity, equity, and inclusion
EY	Ernst & Young
$F(v_1, v_2)$	F with v_1 and v_2 degrees of freedom
H1	Hypothesis 1 (2-8 respectively)
HD_CB	Hiring decision confirmation bias
HD_SB_A	Hiring decision similarity bias for Candidate A
HD_SB_B	Hiring decision similarity bias for Candidate B
HRM	Human resource management
IBM	International Business Machines Corporation
M	Mediator
N	Total number of cases
p	p-value
PCs	Preconceitos cognitivos
PP_score	Perceived power score
PSPS	Personal Sense of Power Scale
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers

r	Correlation coefficient
R^2	Multiple correlation squared
SB_A	Similarity bias for Candidate A
SB_B	Similarity bias for Candidate B
SD	Standard deviation
SE	Standard error
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Statistics
WYSIATI	What You See Is All There Is
X	Independent variable
Y	Dependent variable

AI Disclaimer

This document has been reviewed using AI tools for linguistic refinement and clarity.

1. Introduction

Hiring the best talent for the right position from the start is critical to the performance and development of any organization (Roselius & Kleiner, 2000; Vault, 2022). A poor hiring decision can have significant financial as well as operational consequences. Recent studies have shown that the average cost of poor selection decisions can range from 30% to 150% of the employee's annual compensation, taking into account recruitment, onboarding, development, and termination costs (Vault, 2022; SVN Capital, 2024). In addition, it results in wasted time and resources (SVN Capital, 2024). Mismatched hiring can reduce organizational effectiveness and create challenges for managers dealing with unqualified employees. As a fundamental aspect of human resource management (HRM), recruitment is critical to the long-term survival and competitiveness of an organization (Taylor & Collins, 2000). According to resource-based theory, human capital can be a vital asset for competitive advantage (Barney, 2000), making it essential for organizations to recruit talent to maintain and improve their market position.

Selection decisions are often influenced by unconscious biases, which can undermine an organization's ability to hire diverse talent (Consul et al., 2021). Humans are conditioned to make decisions based on cognitive biases (CBs) (Korteling et al., 2018; Nangia & Enderes, 2020). CBs like confirmation bias and similarity bias can result in hiring decisions that reinforce initial beliefs (Ugbaja, 2022) or favor candidates who share similarities with the recruiter, rather than being based purely on objective performance (Jaspers, 2023). Such biases inhibit the diversity that is essential to foster creativity, innovation, and effective problem solving within teams, thereby impacting the performance of the organization as a whole (Rock & Grant, 2016; Ugbaja, 2022). Research shows that 78% of hiring decisions are shaped by similarity bias (Ross, 2024), often resulting in a more homogeneous workforce (Jaspers, 2023).

Power shapes the way people make decisions (Flynn et al., 2011). Despite the significant impact that decisions made by individuals in positions of power have on organizations and society, there is no fundamental research that has directly addressed how power may shape the occurrence of CBs in employee hiring decisions, which represents a significant gap in the literature.

This research investigates the impact of CBs, specifically confirmation bias and similarity bias, on hiring decisions of individuals with different feelings of power using a quantitative approach with a correlational survey.

The study will address the following research question:

How do cognitive biases, specifically confirmation bias and similarity bias, affect hiring decisions of individuals with different feelings of power?

The aim of this research is to provide valuable insights for both managerial practice and academic research. From a managerial perspective, understanding how confirmation bias and similarity bias are influenced by power dynamics is crucial for improving recruitment practices. Recognizing how these biases affect hiring decisions across different power levels can help organizations develop strategies to reduce biases, ensuring fairer and more objective selection processes. A better understanding of these biases can lead to more diverse and high-performing teams, which are shown to provide a competitive advantage (Barney, 2000; Rock & Grant, 2016).

Although much research has focused on CBs in general (Ellis, 2018; Korteling et al., 2018; Thomas & Reimann, 2023), fewer studies have examined how power influences these biases in organizational settings (e.g., Fiske, 1993; Goodwin et al., 1998; Guinote, 2017). Further research is needed to fully understand these relationships and their implications for decision-making and human resource development. By exploring how different levels of perceived power affect CBs in recruitment, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on biases in recruitment and decision-making (Chamberlain, 2016; Whysall, 2018). Addressing this research gap deepens our understanding of how power structures within organizations shape decision-making processes and provides a foundation for future research focused on mitigating biases in other critical areas of organizational behavior.

This thesis is structured into *six chapters*. This initial introductory *Chapter 1* is followed by *Chapter 2*, which presents a comprehensive *literature review*. It provides an in-depth overview of CBs and their influence on hiring decisions, with a focus on confirmation bias and similarity bias, followed by an examination of power in organizations. *Chapter 3* outlines the *research methodology*, detailing the research design, participant selection, procedure, and variable measurement. *Chapter 4* presents the *results* of the study. In *Chapter* 5, the *discussion* interprets the findings in light of the current literature, highlighting theoretical and practical implications. Furthermore, the limitations of this work and the need for future research are identified. *Chapter 6* concludes the thesis with a brief overview.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Cognitive Biases in Recruitment

2.1.1 Decision-Making in Recruitment

Decision-making is the process of reaching a decision by assessing and choosing among alternatives (Huang et al., 2020). This process is fundamental in various organizational functions, particularly recruitment and selection, where decision-makers assess multiple candidates to identify the most suitable one for the role (Hamza et al., 2021).

The recruitment and selection process is an integral part of HRM, helping organizations to identify the most qualified candidates (Hamza et al., 2021; Ma & Allen, 2009) and to secure the talents they need to achieve their objectives (DeCenzo et al., 2010). The recruitment process is a structured approach to systematically attract, identify, choose, and employ candidates with the skills and expertise needed to fill the appropriate roles, whether sourced from within or outside the organization (Hamza et al., 2021; Kanagavalli et al., 2019). Selection, as part of recruitment, involves assessing and interviewing candidates and choosing the best person for the job (Hamza et al., 2021).

The recruitment process is resource-intensive and time-consuming, involving several stages of decision-making, from sourcing candidates to interviewing and the final hiring decision (Hamza et al., 2021). One of the first steps is the assessment of the resume by the recruiter, which filters applicants who will move forward in the process (Díaz et al., 2019). Candidates may be assessed by HR professionals, managers, supervisors, and even prospective co-workers. Interviews may take the form of one-on-one discussions or involve multiple interviewers (DeCenzo et al., 2010). These interviews are used not only to evaluate candidates, but also to facilitate the exchange of information between the candidate and the organization (Rozario et al., 2019).

While technology has significantly impacted the recruitment process, particularly through the rise of online recruiting, both employers and applicants continue to value face-to-face interactions during the selection process (Lievens & Chapman, 2019).

Hiring decisions are often made under time pressure, especially when a position has been unfilled for a longer period of time (Thomas & Reimann, 2023). This urgency can lead to rushed decisions (Thomas & Reimann, 2023), where choices may be more arbitrary and based on intuitive impressions rather than rational evaluation (Koivunen et al., 2019). The interview stage in particular has been criticized for its subjectivity and susceptibility to unconscious biases (Consul et al., 2021).

In this thesis, the focus lies specifically on the selection phase of the recruitment process. Chapter 2.1.2 goes into more detail about the types of CBs that commonly occur in recruitment settings and how they influence decision-making behavior.

2.1.2 Overview of Cognitive Biases in Decision-Making

Individuals are constantly surrounded by vast amounts of information, but not all of it is processed equally or given the same importance (Guinote, 2007). To manage this overwhelming flow of data, people adopt mental shortcuts known as heuristics, which act as guidelines to simplify decision-making (Bazerman & Moore, 2009; Whysall, 2018). While heuristics help individuals make quick decisions, they can also lead to mistakes by oversimplifying or distorting judgments (Whysall, 2018). These shortcuts are fundamental to everyday human cognitive processing (Whysall, 2018), but their automatic nature often results in systematic errors known as CBs, causing individuals to make suboptimal decisions (Berthet, 2022; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974).

CBs are systematic deviations from rational judgment that often lead to illogical conclusions and mistakes in decision-making (Kahneman, 1984). These biases operate unconsciously, influencing decisions and judgments without the individual being aware of them (Bazerman & Moore, 2009; Oberai & Anand, 2018; Whysall, 2018). Kahneman (1984) attributes this deviation primarily to the fact that people base their judgments on the limited information immediately available to them, which is often incomplete or biased – a concept he calls WYSIATI (What You See Is All There Is). Decision-making rarely follows a purely logical framework, as it is often influenced by the assumptions and biases of the decision-maker, making the process far from fully rational (Korte, 2003). The problem does not lie in the decision-making process itself, but in the way the human brain processes information, which can undermine rational decisions (Hammond et al., 1998).

CBs are not random; they are predictable and consistent across different individuals and situations (Korteling et al., 2018). For example, humans often rely on cognitive shortcuts when situations do not demand complex comprehension (Goodwin et al., 1998). Furthermore, people are more likely to use heuristics when dealing with familiar tasks or when they do not perceive the need to seek further information (Korteling et al., 2018).

Academic research has uncovered more than 100 biases to date (Hofmann, 2022), many of which have similarities and overlapping characteristics, and are often specific examples of one another (Korteling et al., 2018). A key explanation for these CBs is found in the dual-process theory, which highlights two distinct systems of thinking. System 1 is rapid, intuitive, and implicit while System 2 is slower, more conscious and analytical (Kahneman, 1984; Stanovich & West, 2000). System 1 operates automatically and without conscious control. It relies on existing heuristics formed through prior knowledge and experience, which may lead to errors and biases (Derous et al., 2016; Kahneman, 1984). In contrast, System 2 requires more cognitive effort and is employed for more complex decision-making processes (Kahneman, 1984).

These systems do not function in isolation. System 1 and 2 are both engaged while we are awake (Kahneman, 1984). System 2 can sometimes intervene to correct System 1's automatic responses (Derous et al., 2016). When making routine decisions, such as buying groceries, System 1 thinking is adequate and effective. For more critical decisions, System 2 thinking should dominate. However, under conditions of time pressure or cognitive overload, individuals tend to draw more heavily on System 1, which can lead to suboptimal outcomes. As a result, System 1 tends to dominate decision-making in everyday situations, explaining why CBs are so pervasive and difficult to control (Bazerman & Moore, 2009).

Biases significantly influence professional decision-making, particularly in the hiring process (Malhotra, 2019; Thomas & Reimann, 2023). In interviews lacking objective performance measures, such as ability test scores, recruiters tend to rely more heavily on subjective judgments, thereby amplifying the risk of biased decision-making (Whysall, 2018). Unconscious biases can shape recruitment outcomes, sometimes at the expense of more qualified but less stereotypically ideal candidates (Derous et al., 2016). Thus, candidate selection is significantly influenced by the individuals making the hiring decision (Morgan & Carley, 2014).

The impact of implicit biases in recruitment extends beyond individual hiring decisions, significantly affecting organizational dynamics. These unconscious biases can lead to discrimination

throughout the recruitment and selection process (Whysall, 2018), potentially undermining employment policies and damaging an organization's corporate culture and ethical standards. Biases can be based on physical or biological characteristics, often influencing decisions in favor of certain groups (Oberai & Anand, 2018).

In addition to fostering inequality, biases can also hinder team spirit in the workplace. When hiring decisions are shaped by unconscious biases, the talent pool narrows, limiting the diversity that is essential to building an inclusive and dynamic environment (Oberai & Anand, 2018). This reduction in diverse perspectives and experiences weakens the organization's potential for growth (Ugbaja, 2022).

Research has highlighted several key biases, including confirmation bias, halo effect, in-group bias, status bias, stereotyping bias and similarity bias, all of which influence how interviewers assess candidates (Oberai & Anand, 2018; Thomas & Reimann, 2023). Of the various biases, confirmation bias and similarity bias are particularly relevant in the recruitment context (Malhotra, 2019; Nickerson, 1998; Thomas & Reimann, 2023). In the following chapters, I will explore these two biases and their specific mechanisms and effects in recruitment settings.

2.1.3 Confirmation Bias

2.1.3.1 Definition and Mechanisms of Confirmation Bias

Confirmation bias is an unconscious cognitive bias that refers to the tendency of individuals to seek, interpret, and recall information in a way that supports their initial and existing beliefs (Oswald & Grosjean, 2004). Once formed, these beliefs tend to persist even when confronted with conflicting evidence (Bazerman & Moore, 2009; Hofmann, 2022). This belief persistence has been demonstrated in studies where individuals with opposing views interpret the same data in ways that support their respective views (Hofmann, 2022).

The bias is expressed through selective attention to information that confirms prior views (Bourke, 2016). Focusing on a single perspective often leads individuals to overlook critical facts, skewing their view, and reinforcing narrow judgments (Lee, 2020).

When forming opinions, individuals unconsciously seek out evidence that supports their initial beliefs. This behavior is the result of a desire for validation of their perspective (Oberai & Anand, 2018). This selective search can lead to incorrect judgments, as people often rely on dominant or widely accepted views without critically evaluating them (Lee, 2020).

Individuals tend to give more weight to information that is in line with their beliefs (Hammond et al., 1998; Oswald & Grosjean, 2004). This overvaluation of supportive and undervaluation of contradictory evidence reinforces existing judgments (Hofmann, 2022; Kahneman, 1984) and often leads individuals to overestimate the correctness of their views (Nickerson, 1998). Individuals may misinterpret cues and use conflicting information to support their view (Rabin & Schrag, 1999). This tendency to see patterns where none exist, known as the illusion of correlations, reinforces confirmation bias (Hofmann, 2022).

Confirmation bias also influences how people remember information. People are more likely to recall evidence that confirms their beliefs, while opposing information is often forgotten or dismissed (Oswald & Grosjean, 2004).

Furthermore, first impressions play a pivotal role in confirmation bias. It is natural for humans to form initial judgments about others (Derous et al., 2016). These first impressions influence how subsequent information is interpreted (Chamberlain, 2016; Hofmann, 2022). The primacy effect explains our tendency to better remember the first information we receive, which may carry more weight in our decision-making than information received later (Hofmann, 2022). This rapid formation of first impressions is driven by cognitive system 1 (Derous et al., 2016).

Through confirmation bias, people tend to believe their favored beliefs more strongly than is justified (Rabin & Schrag, 1999). By selectively processing information that conforms to preexisting views, confirmation bias reinforces overconfidence, skews their perception of reality and lead individuals to rely too heavily on their own opinions and abilities (Karki, Bhatia, & Sharma, 2024).

2.1.3.2 Confirmation Bias in Recruitment

Confirmation bias in recruitment refers to the tendency of interviewers to seek information that aligns with their preconceptions about a candidate (Chamberlain, 2016). Rather than objectively assessing a candidate's qualifications, recruiters unconsciously look for evidence that confirms their initial impressions (Ugbaja, 2022).

This bias is particularly apparent in job interviews, where decisions are frequently made based on a short interaction with the candidates (Barrick et al., 2012). According to Judge et al. (2000), interviewers often form final judgments within the first four minutes of a 30-minute interview, making early impressions highly influential on the overall outcome. In addition, interviewers

tend to give more weight to negative information, making it difficult for candidates to overcome a poor first impression (Judge et al., 2000).

Interviewers may unknowingly ask easier questions of candidates they favor, further reinforcing their belief that they have found the right person for the job (Healy, 2016). As a result, candidates who make strong first impressions may receive higher ratings and job offers, regardless of their actual qualifications. These quick, intuitive judgments persist throughout the interview process and shape the final evaluation of the candidate (Barrick et al., 2012).

As a result, confirmation bias leads to overconfident recruiters who believe they have identified the ideal candidate early in the process, potentially overlooking individuals who may be better suited for the position (Kausel et al., 2016). Confirmation bias can also manifest itself during interviews by emphasizing a candidate's strengths while ignoring potential weaknesses. Focusing on irrelevant details that fit preconceived notions of who the best candidate should be can result in qualified candidates being overlooked, leading to poor hiring decisions (Ugbaja, 2022).

Confirmation bias occurs in hiring in three ways: biased search for information, biased interpretation, and biased memory. Biased search for information occurs when information that supports preconceived opinions about a candidate is actively sought. Biased interpretation refers to when interviewers process the available data to fit their pre-existing beliefs. Biased memory refers to the selective memory of information that aligns with their initial impression (Ugbaja, 2022).

2.1.4 Similarity Bias

2.1.4.1 Definition and Mechanisms of Similarity Bias

Similarity bias, also referred to as affinity bias or similar-to-me bias, is a cognitive tendency to prefer people who share similar characteristics, such as physical look, background, or beliefs (Jaspers, 2023). This bias unconsciously influences decision-making, drawing people towards those who appear, behave, or think like them (Carnahan & Moore, 2023). People are more likely to have a favorable view of themselves and similar others (Jaspers, 2023). It is part of human nature to feel an affinity with people like ourselves (Malhotra, 2019; Ross, 2024), which explains why similarity bias emerges in various contexts, from personal relationships to professional decisions (Jaspers, 2023).

This bias is driven by the brain's reliance on mental shortcuts, where individuals quickly assess whether there is familiarity in someone based on limited information, often formed during first impressions (Ross, 2024). People tend to feel less vulnerable and more comfortable around those who share their qualities, fostering a sense of belonging (Abbasi et al., 2024).

Similarities can include demographic factors such as race, gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic background, as well as mental elements such as character, values, education, and interests (Abbasi et al., 2024). People tend to use their self-perception as a baseline for these comparisons. For example, someone who views themselves as intelligent may automatically attribute that same trait to others who share similar physical characteristics, such as wearing glasses (Pilat & Krastev, n.d.). According to social cognition theory, people often assess others not based on their individual traits, but by relying on stereotypes tied to their group affiliation (Kulik & Bainbridge, 2006).

The similarity-attraction paradigm provides a theoretical foundation for understanding this bias. It posits that we tend to form more favorable overall evaluations of individuals we are attracted to (Goldberg, 2005). This attraction is often stronger toward those who share similarities with us, as people tend to rate those who are perceived to be more like them more positively than those who are perceived to be less like them (Henderson & Welsh, 2024). This effect is so widespread that it has been described as ubiquitous, occurring across a wide range of situations (Byrne, 1997; Montoya et al., 2008).

Several explanations for the similarity effect have been proposed. Byrne's reinforcement model suggests that individuals have a basic desire for a stable and logical worldview. Similar individuals reinforce this view, generating positive emotions and attraction. In contrast, dissimilar individuals disrupt this sense of coherence, creating negative emotions such as anxiety or confusion, which can lead to aversion and loss of attraction (Montoya & Horton, 2013). Dissimilarity can challenge one's understanding of both the self and the world, further contributing to negative feelings toward those who differ (Abbasi et al., 2024).

Another explanation is provided by information processing theory, which suggests that the type and salience of information inferred from similarity or dissimilarity directly affects attraction. Favorable information about someone perceived as similar often leads to positive feelings and attraction, reinforcing the bias towards those who are like us (Montoya & Horton, 2013).

2.1.4.2 Similarity Bias in Recruitment

Similarity bias often emerges in recruitment, particularly in job interviews (Montoya et al., 2008; Rivera, 2012). In such scenarios, interviewers are likely to rate candidates who are similar to themselves higher (Judge et al., 2000). This tendency can lead to biased selection decisions, where decision-makers favor candidates who are similar to them (Malhotra, 2019).

Hiring decisions influenced by similarity bias often result in the selection of candidates who studied at the same institution, share the same language, or even resemble the interviewer's younger self (Malhotra, 2019). For example, a recruiter may subconsciously assume that a candidate with similar qualifications has greater potential (Ross, 2024). This can be further amplified by the interviewers' tendency to use themselves as a benchmark, interpreting candidates' value through their own personal experiences. In such cases, evaluators believe that a similar experience to their own is inherently better (Rivera, 2012).

Several studies have confirmed that similarity in factors such as gender, age (Abbasi et al., 2024), education (Abbasi et al., 2024; Rivera, 2012), political affiliation (Abbasi et al., 2024), race (Abbasi et al., 2024; Goldberg, 2005), culture, and professional or extracurricular experience (Rivera, 2012) can bias hiring decisions. When interviewing candidates with these similarities, interviewers may feel a stronger connection or even excitement during the interview, which can cause them to overlook the candidates' shortcomings (Rivera, 2012). This can lead to an unconscious lowering of selection criteria for candidates with whom the interviewer shares similarities. Moreover, similarities in experience can provide informational advantages that are not available to evaluators with different backgrounds (Rivera, 2012). As Rivera (2012) illustrates, an interviewer familiar with a challenging major might recognize the candidate's potential, whereas others might dismiss it based on assumptions. Conversely, experiential dissimilarities can lead to informational disadvantages, where evaluators without such familiarity might misjudge a candidate's qualifications (Rivera, 2012).

In addition, the time spent at work creates social relationships between colleagues. This leads evaluators to select candidates who are not only qualified, but who are also likely to become social contacts or even friends in order to have a better time at work (Rivera, 2012).

One of the main consequences of similarity bias in recruitment is the formation of homogeneous teams (Roebken, 2010). When recruiters consistently favor candidates who are similar to themselves, the workplace can quickly become dominated by individuals with similar backgrounds,

perspectives, and approaches (Jaspers, 2023). Such homogeneity can limit team creativity, productivity (Ross, 2024), and innovation (Oberai & Anand, 2018), as a lack of diversity of thinking leads to a uniform approach to problem solving and a reduction in flexibility (Jaspers, 2023).

In addition to fostering homogeneity, similarity bias can increase inequality within organizations. For example, by continually selecting candidates who resemble the current workforce, companies unintentionally reinforce existing gender and racial inequalities, making it harder for underrepresented groups to access higher positions (Jaspers, 2023). This creates a cycle in which certain groups are systematically favored while others are excluded (Rivera, 2012). This exclusion not only undermines organizational diversity (Abbasi et al., 2024), but also limits access to a wider range of talent and ideas that are essential for sustainable success (Jaspers, 2023).

2.2 Power in Organizations and Decision-Making

2.2.1 Definition of Power

The dynamics of power are widespread and often hidden within society (French & Raven, 1986). It is a fundamental aspect of human behavior and has been defined in various ways (Guinote, 2017; Keltner et al., 2003). According to Galinsky et al. (2003), power represents the capacity to control both one's own resources and those of others. A critical element of power is the freedom to make decisions and take action without being limited by surrounding circumstances or external conditions (Galinsky et al., 2008). Keltner et al. (2003) similarly define power as an individual's capacity to influence others' conditions by distributing resources or inflicting punishments. This highlights how power encompasses both material and social resources, ranging from financial assets to friendship, knowledge, and decision-making authority (Keltner et al., 2003).

In another approach, Anderson et al. (2012) emphasize power as an individual's capacity to influence others, focusing on the interpersonal aspects in social environments. Tobore (2023) adds that power enables individuals to impose their will on others by controlling vital resources, allowing them to achieve their goals. This view aligns with Emerson's (2019) relational theory of power, which suggests that power resides in the dependency of others. According to this perspective, those who control essential resources hold power over those who depend on these resources (Galinsky et al., 2015; Goodwin et al., 2000). Therefore, individuals who control

others' outcomes are relatively powerful, while those whose outcomes rely on others are relatively powerless (Goodwin et al., 2000).

Anicich and Hirsh (2017) emphasize the importance of recognizing middle power as a distinct and often overlooked role within the power hierarchy. While research often focuses on high and low power roles, this binary perspective can hide the non-linear effects associated with middle power (Anicich, 2021). They propose a power continuum that encompasses the entire range of power dynamics, rather than limiting it to two extremes. Middle power is characterized by an unstable, shifting sense of influence, where individuals do not consistently feel either powerful or powerless within their social network. This unique position leads individuals to engage in vertical code-switching, i.e., adjusting their behavior between high power and low power roles based on the situation. Middle power individuals are thus more likely to experience role conflicts (Anicich & Hirsh, 2017). A middle power perception can manifest in three distinct ways. The first is power fluctuation, where individuals experience shifts between low and high power based on context. The second, power tension, occurs when individuals simultaneously feel both low and high power, either on different bases of power or in interactions with different people. Lastly, some individuals experience a stable medium power state, consistently feeling a moderate level of power (Anicich, 2021).

For the purposes of this study, power will be defined as the ability to influence others' behavior and decisions through control over material and social resources. This definition aligns with the perspectives of Galinsky et al. (2003) and Keltner et al. (2003), emphasizing the relational and resource-based aspects of power, which are critical to understand its role in decision-making processes, specifically in organizational settings. Both subjective (feelings of power) and objective (organizational position) dimensions are assessed, as an individual's role within the organization largely shapes their perceived power (Anicich & Hirsh, 2017). Research by Anicich and Hirsh (2017) highlights that objective power and subjective feelings of power are typically high correlated.

2.2.2 Power and Decision-Making Behavior

Power plays a pivotal role in shaping decision-making behavior by granting individuals greater independence and autonomy, reducing their reliance on external input (Galinsky et al., 2003; Sturm & Antonakis, 2015). Feelings of power can reduce the openness to advice (Tost et al., 2012). Power can result in less deliberation in decision-making (Galinsky et al., 2003, 2008),

as powerholders often make decisions based on their own beliefs, attitudes, and interpretations, disregarding the perspective of others (Galinsky et al., 2006, 2008). This self-reliance narrows their focus (Galinsky et al., 2006) and fosters overconfidence, defined as an overestimation of one's knowledge, decisions, and judgments (Berthet, 2021; Fast et al., 2012; Hofmann, 2022). Overconfidence can impair decision-makers' awareness of their mistakes (Kausel et al., 2016). Studies have shown that power increases optimism and leads to greater risk-taking, as powerful individuals are more likely to overlook potential downsides in pursuit of opportunities (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006).

Powerholders also tend to place greater trust in their past experiences and thoughts (Briñol et al., 2007; Guinote, 2017). While this facilitates quicker decisions and action (Guinote, 2017), it may also increase the likelihood of misjudgments (Fast et al., 2012). In contrast, individuals with less power tend to be less confident (Briñol et al., 2007), are more deliberative, and cautious (Keltner et al., 2003). Their reliance on the perspectives of others (Keltner et al., 2003) often leads to hesitation to act (Briñol et al., 2007).

High power is associated with increased self-esteem, while low power results in decreased self-esteem. High self-esteem fosters a belief in one's ability and right to hold power, which is essential for attaining power (Wojciszke & Struzynska–Kujalowicz, 2007).

The possession of power often creates feelings of invincibility, making individuals to feel exempt from the rules (Tobore, 2023). It reduces empathy and concern for others (Van Kleef et al., 2008), prioritizes personal over collective goals, and fosters expectations that subordinates will make sacrifices (Overbeck & Droutman, 2013). Research has shown that power impairs perspective-taking (Galinsky et al., 2006) and increases the tendency to objectify others (Gruenfeld et al., 2008; Guinote & Cai, 2016).

A well-known framework for understanding these differences is the approach/inhibition theory (Keltner et al., 2003). According to this theory, high power activates the behavioral approach system (BAS), which motivates individuals to pursue rewards and opportunities, leading to automatic thinking and uninhibited behavior (Guinote, 2017). Low power, instead, activates the behavioral inhibition system (BIS), making individuals more focused on risks and threats, which fosters caution and avoidance (Keltner et al., 2003). Middle power individuals face increased uncertainty, which drives them to adopt more controlled and deliberate cognitive processing. According to the revised approach/inhibition/avoidance theory of power, this state

activates the BIS, promoting a cautious, evaluative approach. In contrast, high power individuals often rely on the BAS for automatic, reward-driven decisions, while low power individuals engage the fight-flight-freeze system, prompting intuitive, threat-focused responses (Anicich & Hirsh, 2017).

Powerholders also process information differently from those with less power. Powerholders often adopt a broader, more global perspective (Galinsky et al., 2015; Sturm & Antonakis, 2015), focusing on central information while overlooking peripheral or less relevant details (Guinote, 2007). Positive emotions associated with power encourage simplified, heuristic-based processing (Gasper & Clore, 2002). As a result, individuals with power are less aware of the factors around them that could affect their decisions (Galinsky et al., 2015). They also show a greater tendency to rely on stereotypes, prioritizing information that supports the stereotypes and giving less weight to contradictory information (Goodwin et al., 2000; Guinote & Phillips, 2010).

In contrast, individuals in low power positions, who more frequently experience negative emotions, adopt a more analytical and elaborative style of information processing (Gasper & Clore, 2002). They pay equal attention to all information, including less important details (Guinote, 2007), and are generally less prone to stereotyping (Goodwin et al., 2000). Low power individuals process information more carefully and thoroughly (Van Kleef et al., 2008) and consciously evaluate the actions and intentions of others (Keltner et al., 2003). Their lack of resources and increased social constraints often result in greater negative affect (Wojciszke & Struzynska–Kujalowicz, 2007).

The situated focus theory of power, by Guinote (2017), suggests that having power improves mental flexibility, helping people focus on the goals and desires that matter most in a situation while ignoring distractions. This flexibility not only allows them to make decisions faster, but also increases their confidence in achieving their goals (Guinote, 2017). However, this reliance on instincts can make them more likely to fall into stereotypes and preconceived ideas, leading to CBs. People with less power tend to form more detailed views of others (Guinote, 2007).

Having established the foundational concepts of power in organizational settings and its influence on decision-making, Chapter 2.3 delves deeper into how power interacts with CBs in recruitment contexts, leading to the formulation of the study's hypotheses.

2.3 Power and Cognitive Biases in Recruitment

2.3.1 Power and Confirmation Bias

Power in organizations has been shown to significantly shape cognitive processes (Guinote, 2007), with individuals in high power positions often displaying increased confidence in their judgments (Galinsky et al., 2008) and a greater sense of control over outcomes (Galinsky et al., 2015). This confidence can result in decision-makers to rely heavily on their own judgments (Galinsky et al., 2008, 2006). In recruitment, this can manifest as confirmation bias, where decision-makers seek, interpret, and remember information that aligns with their early impressions of a candidate (Oswald & Grosjean, 2004). Powerholders tend to prioritize goal-relevant information while disregarding evidence that contradicts their expectations (Guinote, 2017). Powerholders are also likely to make quick decisions (Briñol et al., 2007; Galinsky et al., 2003). Research has shown that first impressions in the early stages of a recruitment process are highly influential (Derous et al., 2016), shaping the way in which subsequent information is processed (Chamberlain, 2016; Hofmann, 2022) and thus affecting the final hiring decision (Barrick et al., 2012). As a result, decision-makers in high power positions may be less likely to adjust their views when confronted with disconfirming evidence, further reinforcing their preconceptions (Galinsky et al., 2006).

Given these tendencies, it is reasonable to expect that decision-makers with high feelings of power will be more susceptible to confirmation bias in hiring decisions compared to those with other feelings of power. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H1*: Decision-makers with high feelings of power will exhibit greater confirmation bias compared to those with other feelings of power.*

H2*: Greater confirmation bias leads to hiring decisions that reinforce pre-existing beliefs.*

H3*: Decision-makers with high feelings of power will exhibit greater confirmation bias, leading to hiring decisions that reinforce their pre-existing beliefs, compared to those with other feelings of power.*

2.3.2 Power and Similarity Bias

Individuals in low power positions often display more cautious and deliberative behavior, relying on perspective of others to guide their decisions (Keltner et al., 2003). This increased dependence on external input (Goodwin et al., 2000) leads them to carefully evaluate actions and intentions, making them more risk-averse (Keltner et al., 2003). As a result, they may be more attracted to candidates with similar characteristics (Jaspers, 2023), as this perceived familiarity provides a sense of security and reduces the perceived risk involved in decision-making (Rivera, 2012).

Research suggests that the similarity bias may be pronounced among low power individuals because they are hesitant to act without external validation (Briñol et al., 2007; Keltner et al., 2003). These decision-makers are likely to use their own self-perception as a reference point (Pilat & Krastev, n.d.) and rely on familiar traits or backgrounds as a measure of competence and potential (Rivera, 2012; Ross, 2024). As a result, they may favor candidates who reflect their own characteristics, reinforcing shared experiences or values as a factor in hiring decisions (Malhotra, 2019).

In contrast, individuals in high power positions tend to rely more on their own traits (Overbeck & Droutman, 2013), experiences, and accomplishments (Van Kleef et al., 2015) when evaluating others, also using themselves as a reference point for decision-making (Overbeck & Droutman, 2013). Power increases self-focus (Overbeck & Droutman, 2013), self-confidence (Galinsky et al., 2008), and self-esteem (Wojciszke & Struzynska–Kujalowicz, 2007), leading powerful decision-makers to be more inspired by themselves (Van Kleef et al., 2015). This self-reliance may promote similarity bias, whereby powerful individuals favor candidates who resemble them in characteristics, attitudes, or experiences (Carnahan & Moore, 2023), believing those traits to be superior (Rivera, 2012).

Middle power individuals, by contrast, experience more uncertainty in their interactions, which prompts them to engage in more controlled and deliberate cognitive processing (Anicich & Hirsh, 2017). This attentiveness may reduce their reliance on similarity as a shortcut, potentially leading to a more balanced evaluation of candidate attributes. Examining middle power as a comparison point may thus reveal that similarity bias can emerge at both high and low levels of power, though through distinct mechanisms.

This leads us to the following hypotheses:

H4*: Decision-makers with low feelings of power will exhibit greater similarity bias compared to those with feelings of middle power.*

H5*: Decision-makers with high feelings of power will exhibit greater similarity bias compared to those with feelings of middle power.*

H6*: Greater similarity bias leads to hiring decisions that favor candidates who share characteristics or similar backgrounds with the decision-makers.*

H7*: Decision-makers with low feelings of power will exhibit greater similarity bias, leading to hiring decisions that favor candidates who share characteristics or backgrounds similar to their own, compared to those with feelings of middle power.*

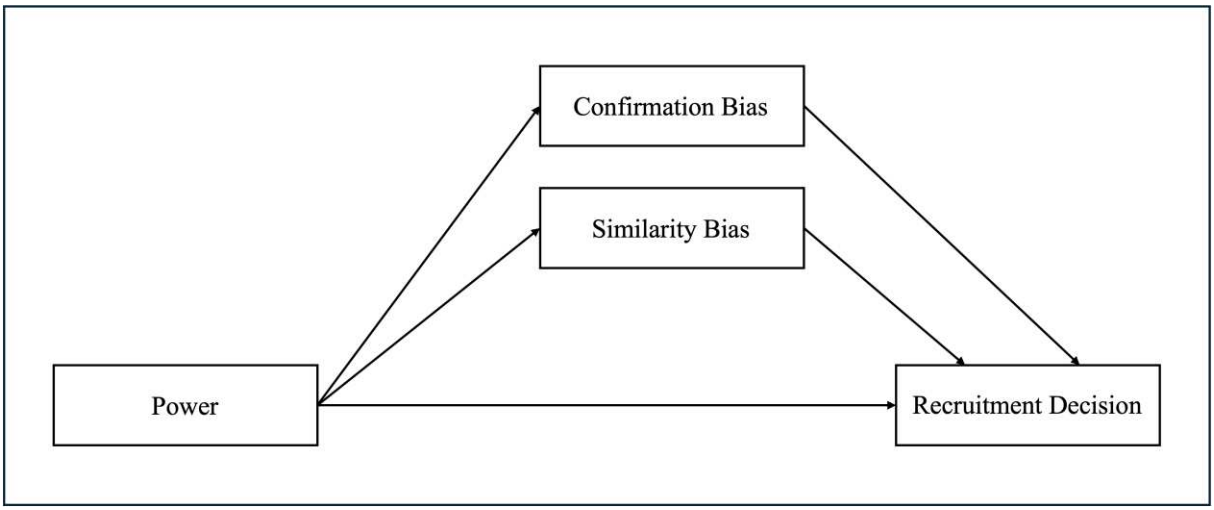
H8*: Decision-makers with high feelings of power will exhibit greater similarity bias, leading to hiring decisions that are more heavily influenced by their own traits and self-perception, compared to those with feelings of middle power.*

2.4 Conceptual Model

Figure 1 illustrates the model based on the proposed hypotheses. It serves as the basis for the following data analysis.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model



3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The aim of this study was to investigate how feelings of power influence hiring decisions, mediated by CBs, specifically confirmation bias and similarity bias. A cross-sectional, correlational research design was employed, using a quantitative approach to explore the relationships among power, CBs, and hiring decisions. Data was collected through an online survey created using Qualtrics, a well-established survey platform (Carpenter et al., 2019). Before collecting data, a pilot study ($N = 5$) was conducted to assess the clarity and flow of the questions. Feedback from the pilot study was used to refine the survey before launching it.

3.2 Participants

To achieve a broad and diverse sample, participants were recruited using convenience sampling through multiple social media platforms, such as LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and Instagram. The study included individuals who had experience in making or participating in hiring decisions. Participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous, with no monetary compensation provided. The study was online between November 8, 2024 and November 22, 2024 and gathered 224 responses. 66 participants had to be excluded from the survey because they did not complete the survey, did not have the relevant experience, or did not pass the attention check. This led to a total valid sample size of 158 participants (65.2% male, 34.8% female). The average age of participants was 45.41 years (SD = 13.85), ranging from 22 to 75 years. The sample consisted of participants representing 15 different countries. The majority were from Germany (57.6%, N = 91), followed by Sweden (12.7%, N = 20) and the United Kingdom (5.7%, N = 9). More than half of the participants held a master's degree (54.4%, N = 86), followed by those with a bachelor's degree (32.9%, N = 52). A significant proportion of participants reported having over 10 years of professional experience (71.5%, N = 113) and many held senior roles within their organizations, with 34.2% (N = 54) identifying as executives and 32.3% (N = 51) as managers. Participants represented diverse industries, with the majority working in insurance (28.5%, N = 45), reinsurance (23.4%, N = 37), and consulting (11.4%, N = 18). All participants reported having experience in making or influencing hiring decisions, with most indicating extensive (34.2%, N = 54) or moderate experience (32.3%, N = 51). For more details on the population statistics, see Appendix 1.

3.3 Procedure

Upon accessing the online survey, participants were first presented with an introduction explaining the purpose of the study and the assurance of anonymity in their responses. By proceeding, participants consented to take part in the study. The survey was divided into four sections, each designed to gather data relevant to the objectives of the study.

To ensure the survey included only participants with experience in hiring decisions, participants were first asked how much experience they have in making or influencing hiring decisions in their organizations on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = No experience, 5 = Extensive experience). Those who selected "No experience" were informed that they did not meet the study's participation criteria and were directed to the end of the survey, where they received a polite thank-you message for their interest and time.

The first section measured participants' perceived power in their professional environment. The second and the third sections focused on measuring confirmation bias and similarity bias. To examine potential order effects, these sections were presented in a randomized order: half the participants began with the confirmation bias task, while the other half started with the similarity bias task. In the confirmation bias section, participants rated a hypothetical candidate and selected questions to assess their personality trait. The similarity bias section presented candidate profiles and asked participants to rate the similarity between the candidates and themselves, as well as the likelihood of the candidates being recommended for the position. An attention check was embedded in this section, requiring participants to select "Somewhat agree" as the correct answer choice (Waites & Ponder, 2016). The fourth and final section gathered demographic information, such as age, gender, nationality, education level, and professional experience. Participants were also asked about their role within the organization and the industry in which they work.

The survey ended with an optional feedback section and a debriefing, where participants were thanked for their participation. For further details, refer to Appendix 2.

3.4 Variable Measurement

3.4.1 Independent Variable: Power

Perceived power was measured using the Personal Sense of Power Scale (PSPS) developed by Anderson et al. (2012). This scale consists of 8 items rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree) and is intended to measure power as a trait variable. The PSPS assesses participants' perceived influence over others in their professional environments. Example items include "I can get my colleagues to do what I want" and "My ideas and opinions are often ignored" (Anderson et al., 2012).

Furthermore, objective power was assessed by gathering participants' job roles within their organization. This information was collected for descriptive purposes and is not used in hypothesis testing.

3.4.2 Mediators: Cognitive Biases

Confirmation bias was measured by adapting a task based on Snyder and Swann's (1978) study, further developed by Berthet (2021) for a recruitment context. In the original task, participants reviewed four hypothetical candidate profiles, each associated with a specific personality trait (e.g., agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, extroversion) (Berthet, 2021). To keep the study concise and maintain participant engagement, the survey focused on a single hypothetical candidate with the personality trait of conscientiousness. Next, participants were presented with 20 questions, eight of which were designed to confirm the candidate had the described personality trait, eight to disconfirm it, and four neutral questions. Participants were instructed to select eight questions they would ask the candidate (Berthet, 2021). The order of the questions was randomized to ensure that participants' answers were not influenced by the sequence of the questions (Siminski, 2008). After selecting the questions, participants rated the candidate's likelihood of being hired, using two items from Cable and Judge (1997).

Similarity bias was assessed using an adaptation of the method proposed by Henderson and Welsh (2024), which builds on the similarity-attraction paradigm initially introduced by Byrne (1997). This paradigm posits that individuals tend to favor those they perceive as similar to themselves (Henderson & Welsh, 2024). In hiring contexts, this bias can influence how decision-makers evaluate candidates based on shared attributes such as education, professional experience (Rivera, 2012), and personal interests (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998).

In this study, participants were presented with profiles of two hypothetical candidates for a Project Manager position, each differing in age, nationality, education, professional experience, hobbies, and interests. Participants then rated the perceived similarity between themselves and each candidate on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Not at all similar, 5 = Very similar) across three dimensions: educational background, professional experience, and hobbies and interests. Additionally, participants completed two items adapted from Kristof-Brown et al. (2002), asking them to rate how similar they believed the candidate's values and beliefs were to their own (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree) and how much the candidate reminded them of themselves (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). To evaluate the impact of similarity bias on hiring decisions, participants rated the likelihood of hiring each candidate using two items from Cable and Judge (1997).

3.4.3 Dependent Variable: Hiring Decision

The hiring decision was evaluated by the likelihood of recommending the candidate for hire and the overall assessment of the candidate. Participants rated this likelihood using two items adapted from Cable and Judge (1997). A sample item included: "How likely are you to recommend this candidate to be hired?" on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Very unlikely, 5 = Very likely).

For confirmation bias, participants rated their likelihood of hiring after selecting questions about the candidate that either confirmed or disconfirmed their initial impression, providing insight into how confirmation of prior beliefs influenced their hiring decision. For similarity bias, participants rated their likelihood of hiring after assessing their perceived similarity to the candidate. This helped to capture whether perceived similarity influenced their hiring decision.

3.4.4 Control Variables

Based on previous literature, demographic information such as age (Li et al., 2013), gender (Koch et al., 2015), education level (Abbasi et al., 2024), and years of professional experience (Whitfield & Wood, 2023) were collected as control variables. By controlling for these factors, the study aimed to isolate the specific impact of power on hiring decisions, as mediated by confirmation bias and similarity bias.

4. Results

4.1 Data Preparation and Scale Reliability

The data collected for this thesis were analyzed using International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Statistics (SPSS). The PSPS required reverse-coding of negatively worded items before calculating the average score for each participant, yielding a Cronbach's α of .83. The confirmation bias score was computed as the proportion of trait-confirming questions selected. The similarity bias scores for Candidates A and B were analyzed separately due to the low correlation between their ratings ($r = .38$, $p < .01$), with Cronbach's α values of .77 and .85, respectively. This suggests that the candidates were perceived differently by participants, making it inappropriate to aggregate the two scores into a single measure. The hiring decision score for Candidates A and B showed Cronbach's α values of .86 and .87. The hiring decision score for the confirmation bias task yielded a Cronbach's α of .90. All Cronbach's α values are considered fairly high (Taber, 2018), indicating that the scales have internal consistency across items and are reliable for the analysis in this thesis. Further details can be found in Appendix 3.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 provides an overview of the descriptive statistics for all scale variables used in the analysis. Table 2 presents Pearson's correlation coefficients, offering first insights into the relationships between perceived power, confirmation bias, similarity bias, and hiring decisions.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
CB_score	158	.13	.88	.4945	.15477
SB_A	158	1.17	4.67	2.9219	.78392
SB_B	158	1.00	4.83	2.7416	.79776
HD_CB	158	1.50	5.00	3.7310	.68104
HD_SB_A	158	1.50	5.00	4.1456	.67320
HD_SB_B	158	2.00	5.00	3.9747	.65520
PP_score	158	3.75	7.00	5.6574	.70966
Valid N	158				

Table 2

Bivariate Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. CB_score	1	-.046	.000	.084	.107	.218**	.221**
2. SB_A	-.046	1	.377**	.169*	.296**	-.103	-.113
3. SB_B	.000	.377**	1	.084	-.097	.313**	.115
4. HD_CB	.084	.169*	.084	1	.312**	.188*	.074
5. HD_SB_A	.107	.296**	-.097	.312**	1	.333**	.003
6. HD_SB_B	.218**	-.103	.313**	.188*	.333**	1	.249**
7. PP_score	.221**	-.113	.115	.074	.003	.249**	1

Note. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

The analysis for hypothesis testing was divided into two primary focuses: confirmation bias and similarity bias.

To test H1, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether feelings of power predict confirmation bias. Control variables, including age, gender, professional experience, and educational background, were included in the model to account for potential confounding effects. The overall model explained only a small proportion of the variance in confirmation bias (R^2 = .08, $F(10,147) = 1.22$, p = .284), indicating that most of the variation in confirmation bias was not accounted for by the variables included in this analysis. This suggests that other factors beyond those included in the analysis may contribute to confirmation bias. Despite the low explanatory power of the model, perceived power was a significant predictor of confirmation bias (b = 0.05, SE = 0.02, p = .017). This finding provides support for H1, demonstrating that high feelings of power are significantly associated with an increased tendency to exhibit confirmation bias.

To test H2, a separate multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to assess whether confirmation bias predicts hiring decisions that reinforce pre-existing beliefs. The model was not significant ($F(10,147) = 1.02$, p = .431), with only 7% of the variance in the hiring decision explained by the predictors (R^2 = .07). Confirmation bias did not significantly predict the hiring decision (b = 0.34, SE = 0.36, p = .344). Among the control variables, education had a

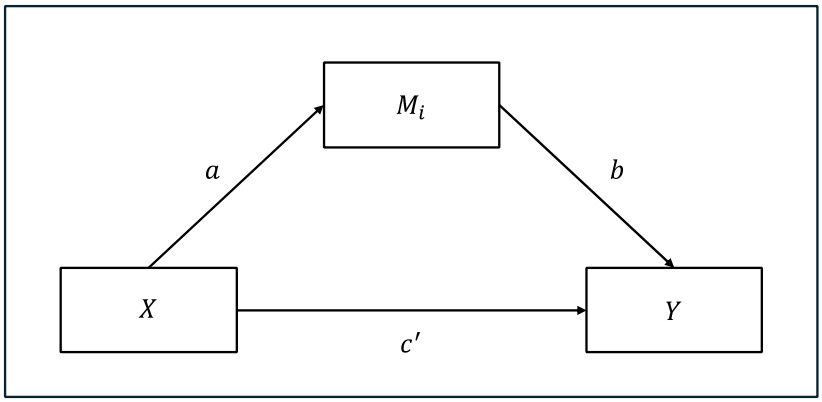
significant effect on the hiring decision.[1] These results do not support H2, suggesting that greater confirmation bias does not significantly predict hiring decisions that reinforce pre-existing beliefs in this sample.

A mediation analysis was conducted using Hayes PROCESS macro (Model 4) to test H3. This analysis examined perceived power as the independent variable (X), confirmation bias as the mediator (M), and the hiring decision in the confirmation bias task as the dependent variable (Y). The mediation model evaluated the direct effect of perceived power on the hiring decision (*Path c'*) and the indirect effect through confirmation bias (*Path a*b*) (see Figure 2). In the first step, the analysis assessed the relationship between perceived power and confirmation bias (*Path a*). This relationship was already tested in H1 and showed that individuals with high levels of perceived power significantly tended to exhibit greater confirmation bias. The second step explored the effect of confirmation bias on the hiring decision (*Path b*). This relationship was not statistically significant ($b = 0.24$, $SE = 0.36$, $p = .515$), indicating that confirmation bias did not significantly predict the hiring decision in this sample. Similarly, the direct effect of perceived power on the hiring decision (*Path c'*), controlling for confirmation bias, was not statistically significant ($b = 0.13$, $SE = 0.09$, $p = .151$). The indirect effect of perceived power on the hiring decision through confirmation bias (*Path a*b*) was also not statistically significant, as the 95% bootstrap confidence interval for this effect included zero (CI = [-0.03, 0.05]). Detailed results of the mediation analysis are provided in Appendix 4. These findings indicate that while perceived power is linked to confirmation bias, this bias does not mediate the relationship between perceived power and the hiring decision, resulting in H3 not being supported.

[1] The education category "other", which consisted of participants holding diplomas or state examinations, had a significant effect on the hiring decision ($b = -0.76$, $SE = 0.33$, $p = .023$).

Figure 2

Conceptual Model 4 of Hayes PROCESS macro for SPSS



Note. Adapted from *PROCESS: A versatile computational tool for observed variable mediation, moderation, and conditional process modeling*, by A. F. Hayes, 2012.

Before analyzing the hypotheses related to similarity bias, it is important to first examine the distribution of perceived power among participants. As presented in Table 3, the sample consisted of individuals reporting middle and high levels of perceived power, with perceived power scores ranging from 3.75 to 7. No participants identified as having low levels of perceived power. This absence of low power individuals in the dataset restricts the ability to fully test hypotheses involving this group. It was not possible to test whether decision-makers with low feelings of power exhibit greater similarity bias compared to those with middle power (H4), or whether low power decision-makers exhibit greater similarity bias that leads to hiring decisions favoring candidates who share characteristics or backgrounds similar to their own compared to those with middle power (H7). Consequently, due to the lack of data for the low power group, neither H4 nor H7 can be tested.

Table 3

Distribution of Perceived Power

	N	%
3.75	3	1.9%
4.00	2	1.3%
4.13	2	1.3%
4.25	1	0.6%
4.50	2	1.3%
4.63	4	2.5%
4.75	5	3.2%
4.88	4	2.5%
5.00	7	4.4%
5.13	8	5.1%
5.25	7	4.4%
5.38	10	6.3%
5.50	10	6.3%
5.63	11	7.0%
5.75	16	10.1%
5.88	9	5.7%
6.00	10	6.3%
6.13	8	5.1%
6.25	12	7.6%
6.38	7	4.4%
6.50	8	5.1%
6.63	1	0.6%
6.75	3	1.9%
6.88	3	1.9%
7.00	5	3.2%

Two multiple linear regression analyses were conducted to test H5, hypothesizing that decision-makers with high feelings of power will exhibit greater similarity bias compared to those with feelings of middle power. Separate models were run for the similarity bias scores of Candidate A and Candidate B, with perceived power as the independent variable. For Candidate A, the overall model was statistically significant ($F(10,147) = 2.36$, $p = .013$), explaining 14% of the variance in similarity bias ($R^2 = .14$). However, perceived power did not significantly predict similarity bias toward Candidate A ($b = -0.07$, $SE = 0.10$, $p = .506$). Interestingly, the control

variable education emerged as a significant predictor.[2] Additionally, professional experience negatively predicted similarity bias (b = -0.15, SE = 0.07, p = .046), suggesting that participants with more professional experience were less likely to show similarity bias. For Candidate B, the overall model was not statistically significant (F(10,147) = 1.74 , p = .077), explaining only 11% of the variance in similarity bias (R^2 = .11). Similarly, perceived power was not a significant predictor of similarity bias for Candidate B (b = 0.07, SE = 0.10, p = .493). However, gender and education showed significant negative effects.[3] In summary, the results did not support H5, as perceived power was not a significant predictor of similarity bias for either candidate. However, the findings highlight the influence of demographic factors, such as education level, professional experience, and gender, on similarity bias.

To test H6, two multiple linear regression analyses were conducted. The dependent variables were the hiring decisions for Candidate A and Candidate B, derived from the similarity bias task. The independent variables were the respective similarity bias scores. For Candidate A, the regression model was statistically significant (F(10,147) = 2.50, p = .009), explaining 15% of the variance in the hiring decision (R^2 = .15). Similarity bias significantly predicted the hiring decision (b = 0.25, SE = 0.07, p < .001), indicating that participants who perceived greater similarity to Candidate A were more likely to recommend Candidate A for hiring. Among the control variables, education had a significant impact on the hiring decision.[4] For Candidate B, the regression was also statistically significant (F(10,147) = 2.59, p = .006), also explaining 15% of the variance in the hiring decision (R^2 = .15). Similarity bias significantly predicted the hiring decision (b = 0.25, SE = 0.07, p < .001), indicating that participants who perceived greater similarity to Candidate B were more likely to recommend Candidate B for hiring. The results support H6, demonstrating that greater similarity bias is positively associated with hiring decisions favoring candidates perceived as similar to the decision-maker.

A mediation analysis was conducted using Hayes PROCESS macro (Model 4) to test H8. Two separate mediation models were run for the similarity bias scores of Candidate A and Candidate

[2] Participants with a high school education exhibited lower similarity bias toward Candidate A compared to those with other education levels (b = -1.50, SE = 0.55, p = .008).

[3] Female participants demonstrated lower similarity bias compared to male participants (b = -0.47, SE = 0.18, p = .009). Furthermore, participants in the education category "other" (e.g., diploma, state examination) also exhibited lower similarity bias toward Candidate B (b = -0.91 SE = 0.38, p = .017), compared to participants with other educational backgrounds.

[4] The education level "less than high school" (b = 1.30, SE = 0.66, p = .049) and "master's degree" (b = 0.30, SE = 0.13, p = .021) were significant, suggesting that participants with these education levels were more inclined to favor Candidate A.

B, with perceived power as the independent variable (X), similarity bias as the mediator (M), and hiring decision as the dependent variable (Y).

The first mediation model examined the relationship between perceived power, similarity bias, and the hiring decision for Candidate A. In the first step, the analysis assessed the effect of perceived power on similarity bias (*Path a).* As shown in H5, this relationship was not statistically significant, indicating that perceived power did not significantly predict similarity bias toward Candidate A. In the second step, the analysis evaluated the effect of similarity bias on the hiring decision for Candidate A (*Path b*). This relationship was statistically significant (b = 0.25, SE = 0.07, p = < .001)., suggesting that greater similarity bias significantly predicted the hiring decision favoring Candidate A. However, the direct effect of perceived power on the hiring decision (*Path c'*), controlling for similarity bias, was not statistically significant (b = 0.06, SE = 0.09, p = .475). The indirect effect of perceived power on the hiring decision through similarity bias (*Path a∗b*) was also not statistically significant, as the 95% bootstrap confidence interval included zero (CI = [-0.08, 0.04]).

The second mediation model explored the relationship between perceived power, similarity bias, and the hiring decision for Candidate B. Similar to Candidate A, perceived power did not significantly predict similarity bias (*path a*), as shown in H5. The second step assessed the effect of similarity bias on the hiring decision for Candidate B (*Path b*). This relationship was statistically significant (b = 0.23, SE = 0.06, p = < .001), indicating that greater similarity bias significantly predicted the hiring decision favoring Candidate B. Unlike Candidate A, the direct effect of perceived power on the hiring decision (*Path c'*), controlling for similarity bias, was statistically significant (b = 0.24, SE = 0.08, p = .004), suggesting a direct positive effect of perceived power on the hiring decision for Candidate B. However, the indirect effect of perceived power on the hiring decision through similarity bias (*Path a∗b*) was not statistically significant, as the 95% bootstrap confidence interval included zero (CI = [-0.04, 0.08]). These findings indicate that similarity bias did not mediate the relationship between perceived power and hiring decisions for either Candidate A or Candidate B. As a result, H8 is not supported. Further details on the mediation analyses can be found in Appendix 4.

5. Discussion

5.1 Interpretation of Key Results

The aim of this study was to investigate how CBs, specifically confirmation bias and similarity bias, affect hiring decisions of individuals with different feelings of power, and to explore whether these biases mediate the relationship between perceived power and hiring decisions. Using a quantitative approach, the study employed a correlational survey to examine the relationships between perceived power, confirmation bias and similarity bias, and their potential influence on hiring decisions. Eight hypotheses were developed and tested to explore these dynamics in detail.

The first key finding is that perceived power significantly predicted confirmation bias, supporting H1. This aligns with the extensive literature showing that individuals with high levels of power often display overconfidence in their judgments (Berthet, 2021; Fast et al., 2012; Hofmann, 2022) and are more likely to rely on stereotypes and heuristics during decision-making processes (Goodwin et al., 2000; Guinote & Phillips, 2010). This finding corroborates earlier work by Galinsky et al. (2003, 2008, 2006), which showed that powerful individuals often prioritize their own beliefs and interpretations, leading to reduced deliberation. Furthermore, it supports evidence that powerholders tend to make quick decisions based on initial impressions and are less likely to adjust their views when confronted with disconfirming evidence (Briñol et al., 2007; Galinsky et al., 2003, 2006). The finding also aligns with the approach/inhibition theory proposed by Keltner et al. (2003) and the revised approach/inhibition/avoidance theory by Anicich and Hirsh (2017). These theories suggest that individuals with high power are more likely to use stereotypes and cognitive shortcuts, such as confirmation bias, whereas those with middle power engage in more deliberate information processing. Additionally, this result supports the study by Thomas and Reimann (2023), who identified a bias blind spot, including for confirmation bias, among HR professionals. Notably, the majority of their participants occupied high power roles and had substantial professional experience.

H2, which states that confirmation bias leads to hiring decisions that reinforce pre-existing beliefs, was not supported. This result contrasts with previous findings (e.g., Thomas & Reimann, 2023; Ugbaja, 2022). While confirmation bias was observed in this sample, it did not significantly influence hiring decisions, suggesting that the relationship between this bias and the hiring decision may depend on contextual factors.

Similarly, H3, which hypothesized that confirmation bias mediates the relationship between perceived power and the hiring decision, was not supported. Although power was shown to significantly predict confirmation bias, this bias did not act as a mediator, leaving the hiring decision unaffected. One plausible explanation for these results is the widespread implementation of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives in many organizations, including in industries such as consulting and (re)insurance, which dominated the study's sample. For instance, companies such as Allianz (Allianz, 2022), Marsh McLennan (Marsh McLennan, 2023), Ernst & Young (EY) (Gino & Coffman, 2021), and Deloitte (Brodzik et al., 2021) have implemented unconscious bias training programs aimed at mitigating the impact of CBs for example on hiring decisions. A global study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) across multiple industries found that 72% of organizations participating in the study either trained their interviewers in unconscious bias or were exploring such training, reporting positive effects on recruitment practices (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2017). These interventions may have helped participants mitigate the impact of their biases, leading to more objective hiring decisions even in the presence of confirmation bias. The characteristics of the sample may also account for these results. Many participants held senior roles and reported extensive recruitment experience, which may have reduced their reliance on CBs. This suggests that hiring experience and targeted training can serve as moderating factors, diminishing the influence of confirmation bias on hiring decisions. Another contributing factor could be the controlled and hypothetical nature of the survey. While confirmation bias was present, it did not influence hiring decisions, possibly because participants were aware they were in an artificial setting without real-world consequences. There was no urgency, stress, or pressure to fill an actual position, which are factors that often amplify the impact of biases in real recruitment scenarios (Thomas & Reimann, 2023). Instead, participants may have approached the task with more caution and deliberation, knowing their responses were being assessed, thereby reducing the influence of confirmation bias on their final hiring decision.

H4, which proposed that decision-makers with low feelings of power would exhibit greater similarity bias compared to those with middle power, could not be tested because the sample lacked participants who reported low levels of perceived power. Similarly, the mediation analysis to test H7, which proposed that decision-makers with low feelings of power will exhibit greater similarity bias compared to those with middle power, leading them to favor candidates they perceived as similar to themselves, could not be conducted for the same reason. As a result, these hypotheses remain unexamined in the present study.

This finding is unexpected, as prior research (e.g., Lin et al., 2019; Sekścińska et al., 2022; Choi & Mattila, 2013; Van Kleef et al., 2015) has identified the presence of low levels of perceived power across various organizational contexts. However, the characteristics of the study's sample may explain this discrepancy. The study predominantly included senior professionals, such as executives and managers, with extensive recruitment experience. Individuals in these roles are inherently more likely to perceive themselves as powerful, as they often control resources, influence organizational decisions, and operate with greater autonomy. Consequently, the absence of low-power participants may reflect the hierarchical distribution of power within the sample.

The cultural background of the sample may have further influenced the distribution of perceived power. A significant proportion of participants were from Germany and Sweden, countries characterized by relatively low power distance according to Hofstede's cultural dimensions. In such cultures, hierarchical differences are less pronounced, and individuals across various organizational levels may feel a greater sense of empowerment, even in roles that might be perceived as less influential in high power-distance cultures (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Additionally, the survey required participants to have recruitment experience, which may have unintentionally excluded individuals in low hierarchical positions. While such individuals might influence hiring indirectly (e.g., through recommendations or feedback), they may not perceive themselves as formal decision-makers in recruitment processes, leading to their absence in the sample.

The analysis further did not support H5, which proposed that decision-makers with high feelings of power would exhibit greater similarity bias compared to those with feelings of middle power. No significant relationship was identified between perceived power and similarity bias, indicating that similarity bias operates independently of an individual's perceived level of power. This finding is at odds with research suggesting that power amplifies reliance on cognitive shortcuts (Goodwin et al., 2000; Guinote & Phillips, 2010). Instead, the findings indicate that similarity bias may be a widespread tendency, influencing decision-makers irrespective of their perceived levels of power. The finding contrasts with existing literature showing that high power individuals are more inspired by themselves, self-focused, and often use their own traits, experiences, and self-perception as benchmarks when evaluating others (Overbeck & Droutman, 2013; Van Kleef et al., 2015). Demographic factors emerged as small but significant influences on similarity bias. Participants with greater professional experience demonstrated

lower levels of similarity bias, suggesting that professional experience may mitigate reliance on this cognitive shortcut. Women exhibited lower similarity bias than men, highlighting potential gender differences in candidate evaluations. The education level also played a role: participants with a high school education or those categorized under "other" education (e.g., diploma, state examination) showed significantly lower similarity bias. Overall, these findings suggest that similarity bias may be shaped by a combination of individual characteristics and demographic factors, rather than being driven primarily by power dynamics.

Another key finding is that greater similarity bias significantly influenced the hiring decision, with participants being more likely to recommend candidates they perceived as similar to themselves. This result supported H6 and aligns with the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1997), which suggests that individuals are naturally inclined to form more favorable evaluations of those they feel an affinity toward (Goldberg, 2005). The finding is consistent with prior research showing that decision-makers tend to favor candidates who share similarities with them in attributes such as education, professional experience, and personal interests, often rating these individuals more positively than those who differ from them (e.g., Henderson & Welsh, 2024; Malhotra, 2019; Rivera, 2012).

H8, which hypothesized that decision-makers with low feelings of power would exhibit greater similarity bias compared to those with middle power, leading them to favor candidates they perceived as similar to themselves, was not supported. While similarity bias significantly influenced hiring decisions, as shown by support for H6, the analysis provided no evidence that perceived power indirectly influenced hiring outcomes through similarity bias. This result is consistent with the finding for H5, which showed no significant relationship between perceived power and similarity bias, further supporting the idea that similarity bias operates independently of power dynamics. Instead, it may be more influenced by factors such as professional experience, gender, and highest degree of education.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

This thesis advances academic understanding of CBs and power dynamics in organizational decision-making, particularly in the context of hiring. While prior research has extensively explored CBs (Ellis, 2018; Korteling et al., 2018; Thomas & Reimann, 2023) and power dynamics (e.g., Galinsky et al., 2003; Goodwin et al., 2000; Gruenfeld et al., 2008; Keltner et al., 2003; Van Kleef et al., 2008) in decision-making as separate topics, less attention has been given to

the ways in which power influences these biases within organizational contexts (e.g., Fiske, 1993; Goodwin et al., 1998; Guinote, 2017). By investigating the interplay between perceived power, confirmation bias, similarity bias, and hiring decisions, this study addresses a critical gap, contributing to the literature on CBs, power, and HRM. In addition, it opens pathways for future research to explore how other CBs may interact with power dynamics in similar contexts.

A key contribution of this research lies in the finding that perceived power significantly predicts confirmation bias, aligning with theories that suggest individuals with high power are more inclined to rely on their judgments and preconceptions (Galinsky et al., 2008, 2006). However, confirmation bias neither directly influenced hiring decisions or mediated the relationship between power and hiring decisions. This highlights the complex relationship between power and CBs and suggests that power alone does not determine the extent to which confirmation bias shapes decision-making. Instead, its role in recruitment may depend on external factors such as organizational DEI initiatives aimed at mitigating unconscious biases (Gino & Coffman, 2021).

Another significant theoretical contribution of this research is the evidence that similarity bias plays a critical role in hiring decisions, with participants favoring candidates perceived as similar to themselves. Unlike confirmation bias, similarity bias was not directly related to perceived power. Instead, it was influenced, although to a lesser extent, by demographic factors such as professional experience, education, and gender. This finding suggests that similarity bias arises more from individual characteristics than power dynamics.

Building on Anicich and Hirsh's (2017) concept of the power continuum, this study positions middle power as a distinct category within power dynamics, complementing the traditional focus on high and low power in the literature. Although dataset limitations prevented an in-depth analysis of feelings of low power, the thesis emphasizes the importance of examining the entire power spectrum to fully understand how power shapes CBs and decision-making processes.

5.3 Practical Implications

Many organizations have already recognized the substantial impact CBs can have on the hiring process. Research shows that biases are inherent in human decision-making (Korteling et al., 2018; Nangia & Enderes, 2020), influencing and often distorting outcomes (Whysall, 2018). This underscores the importance of addressing CBs across all organizations. This study revealed that decision-makers with high perceived power were more susceptible to confirmation bias, while similarity bias influenced hiring decisions regardless of the level of perceived

power. These findings highlight the need to raise awareness about CBs across all levels of organizational power and to implement targeted strategies to mitigate their effects.

One effective strategy is to establish diverse hiring panels composed of individuals from different demographics and hierarchical levels. Such panels encourage collective decision-making and integrate a wider range of perspectives, helping to reduce CBs (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2017).

Implementing structured recruitment processes is another way to reduce CBs. Establishing predetermined rules for interview questions, candidate assessments, and selection criteria increases consistency across candidates and reduces subjective judgments (Kim & Roberson, 2022; Levashina et al., 2014). Standardized decision-making frameworks ensure that hiring choices align with objective job requirements, discouraging decisions based on CBs (Levashina et al., 2014).

Accountability among hiring decision-makers also has the potential to mitigate the effects of CBs. Organizations can introduce mechanisms that require decision-makers to justify their choices and follow explicit guidelines for handling ambiguous situations (Nandigama & Shyamsunder, 2021). This promotes deliberate and controlled decision-making, reduces reliance on unconscious biases (Kim & Roberson, 2022), and enhances the fairness and integrity of hiring decisions.

Investing in unconscious bias training is another valuable approach to mitigating CBs and their impact. Such training goes beyond raising awareness by teaching participants how to identify and manage their biases and adjust their behaviors in a sustainable way (Gino & Coffman, 2021). For example, Google trains its hiring managers and recruiters to counteract biases, fostering fairer hiring practices (Google, 2022). EY encourages culturally diverse teams to engage in open discussions about biases, promoting collaborative solutions (Gino & Coffman, 2021). Deloitte employs a holistic DEI strategy that combines virtual modules, coaching, and small-group discussions to create lasting behavioral change (Brodzik et al., 2021). Similarly, Microsoft offers practical online training with best practices for addressing biases in common workplace situations. These initiatives have been shown to be effective, with employees reporting increased awareness of bias and reduced biases even weeks after training (Gino & Coffman, 2021). Organizations can draw inspiration from these successful examples and adopt similar strategies to improve their hiring practices.

In addition, nudges offer a way to guide decision-makers toward more objective hiring decisions. Encouraging decision-makers to review position requirements before evaluating candidates helps them to remember and apply lessons from unconscious bias training to their everyday practices (Gino & Coffman, 2021).

Addressing CBs in the hiring process improves the quality and objectivity of decisions, fosters workplace diversity, and nurtures a culture of inclusivity (Oberai & Anand, 2018). These strategies not only enhance individual decision-making, but also help build innovative, high-performing teams that drive organizational success (Rock & Grant, 2016; Ugbaja, 2022).

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

While this study offers valuable theoretical and practical contributions, it is subject to several limitations that highlight opportunities for further research to validate and expand its findings.

The use of convenience sampling, with the survey distributed primarily within my personal and professional network, likely introduced sampling bias (Johnson et al., 2000). This resulted in an overrepresentation of professionals from the (re)insurance and consulting industries, reflecting my internship experiences in these fields. Consequently, the sample lacked diversity in roles and industries, which may have skewed the findings. Future studies should aim for a more balanced representation by including participants from a broader range of sectors to improve the generalizability of the results.

The sample size further limited the statistical power of the study, particularly in testing hypotheses involving low power groups, as there were insufficient data for participants in such roles. Additionally, the sample was predominantly composed of participants from Germany, which limits the applicability of the findings to other cultural contexts. Cultural differences, as suggested by Hofstede (2011), may yield different results in more diverse and international samples. Future research should aim to include larger, culturally, and professionally diverse samples to uncover subgroup-specific insights and enhance the global relevance of the findings.

The reliance on self-report measures presents another limitation. Participant's responses may have been influenced by social desirability bias or participants' inability to accurately self-assess their power perceptions and biases (Brenner & DeLamater, 2016; Johnson et al., 2000). To address this, future research could incorporate objective measures to mitigate these concerns and provide more reliable data. Moreover, the use of hypothetical scenarios to simulate hiring

decisions may not fully replicate the complexities and contextual pressures of real-world recruitment processes, potentially reducing the external validity of the findings. Conducting field studies or simulations in real organizational settings would offer more realistic insights into how power and CBs influence decision-making during hiring processes.

This study focused on confirmation bias and similarity bias, which are highly relevant to recruitment, but other CBs, such as the halo effect (Oberai & Anand, 2018; Thomas & Reimann, 2023), may also significantly influence hiring decisions. Examining these biases in future research would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how power dynamics interact with CBs in recruitment contexts.

Demographic factors such as professional experience, education, and gender appeared to influence similarity bias in this study. These findings suggest that individual characteristics play a role in shaping CBs and their effects on hiring decisions. Future research should investigate how these demographic factors interact with power and whether they amplify or mitigate biases.

Finally, the potential mitigating effect of DEI initiatives suggests a promising area for further investigation. Future research could examine how organizational efforts, such as unconscious bias training, structured hiring processes, and diverse hiring panels, interact with power dynamics and CBs to shape hiring decisions. Longitudinal studies could assess the long-term effectiveness of these initiatives and explore whether their impact varies across different levels of power.

Addressing these limitations and exploring the proposed research directions can provide a deeper understanding of the interplay between power dynamics and CBs in hiring.

6. Conclusion

Effective decision-making in hiring is crucial for organizational success, yet it is often influenced by unconscious CBs. This thesis examined how confirmation bias and similarity bias influence hiring decisions of individuals with different feelings of power.

The findings revealed that perceived power significantly predicted confirmation bias, with participants with high perceived power relying more heavily on pre-existing beliefs. However, this bias did not directly affect hiring decisions, nor did it mediate the relationship between power and hiring outcomes, suggesting that factors like organizational DEI initiatives may mitigate its effects.

Similarity bias significantly influenced hiring decisions, with decision-makers favoring candidates perceived as similar to themselves. This bias operated independently of perceived power and was shaped by demographic factors such as education, gender, and professional experience.

These findings highlight the importance of addressing biases in recruitment at all levels of power. Organizations must implement targeted strategies, including structured hiring processes, diverse hiring panels, and unconscious bias training, to ensure fair, objective, and inclusive recruitment practices. By mitigating these biases, organizations can make better hiring decisions and unlock the benefits of diverse and high-performing teams, driving innovation and sustained success in an increasingly competitive landscape.

Future research should broaden these insights by including more diverse industries and participants across the full power spectrum, exploring cultural and individual differences, and investigating additional CBs. Understanding the long-term impact of DEI initiatives will be key to developing sustainable solutions. Ultimately, reducing CBs in hiring is not just an operational necessity, but a strategic opportunity to foster equity, drive innovation, and secure a competitive edge in a constantly evolving world.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Population Statistics

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Age

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	158	22	75	45.41	13.852
Valid N	158				

Table 2

Frequency Table for Gender

	N	%
Male	103	65.2%
Female	55	34.8%

Table 3

Frequency Table for Nationality

	N	%
Austria	3	1.9%
Belgium	2	1.3%
Canada	1	0.6%
Denmark	2	1.3%
Finland	4	2.5%
France	3	1.9%
Germany	91	57.6%
Hungary	2	1.3%
Iceland	3	1.9%
Italy	4	2.5%
Netherlands	5	3.2%
Portugal	1	0.6%
Sweden	20	12.7%
Switzerland	8	5.1%
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	9	5.7%

Table 4

Frequency Table for Education

	N	%
Less than high school	1	0.6%
High school degree	2	1.3%
Vocational training	5	3.2%
Bachelor's degree	52	32.9%
Master's degree	86	54.4%
PhD	7	4.4%
Other (please specify)	5	3.2%

Table 5

Frequency Table for Education – Category Other

	N	%
	153	96.8%
Diploma	4	2.5%
State examination	1	0.6%

Table 6

Frequency Table for Professional Experience

	N	%
0-1 year(s)	8	5.1%
2-3 years	21	13.3%
4-5 years	10	6.3%
6-7 years	4	2.5%
8-9 years	2	1.3%
10+ years	113	71.5%

Table 7

Frequency Table for Role

	N	%
Intern	8	5.1%
Working student	12	7.6%
Junior employee	12	7.6%
HR assistant	2	1.3%
Team leader	12	7.6%
Manager	51	32.3%
Executive	54	34.2%
Other (please specify)	7	4.4%

Table 8

Frequency Table for Role – Category Other

	N	%
	151	95.6%
Assistant manager	1	0.6%
HR Specialist	2	1.3%
Senior employee	2	1.3%
Specialist	2	1.3%

Table 9

Frequency Table for Experience in Making or Influencing Hiring Decisions

	N	%
Little experience	18	11.4%
Some experience	35	22.2%
Moderate experience	51	32.3%
Extensive experience	54	34.2%

Table 10

Frequency Table for Industry

	N	%
Architecture	1	0.6%
Audit	1	0.6%
Automotive Industry	4	2.5%
Beauty Industry	1	0.6%
Chemical Industry	2	1.3%
Consulting	18	11.4%
Consumer Goods	3	1.9%
Creative Agency	1	0.6%
E-Commerce	1	0.6%
Electronic Development and Production	1	0.6%
Energy	1	0.6%
Financial Services	13	8.2%
FMCG	4	2.5%
Food Industry	2	1.3%
Gas & Oil	1	0.6%
Healthcare	1	0.6%
Industrial Sector	1	0.6%
Information Technology	4	2.5%
Insurance	45	28.5%
InsurTech and Software Development	1	0.6%
Machinery Manufacturing	1	0.6%
Manufacturing	1	0.6%
Marine Industry	1	0.6%
Marketing	1	0.6%
Marketing and Communications	1	0.6%
Personal Services	1	0.6%
Pharmaceuticals	1	0.6%
Professional Services	1	0.6%
Reinsurance	37	23.4%
Retail Trade	1	0.6%
Sports Industry	2	1.3%
Tax	1	0.6%
Technology	1	0.6%
Telecommunications	2	1.3%

Appendix 2: Survey

Start of Block: Introduction

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. I, Lotta Meier, am conducting this study as part of my master thesis at Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics, under the supervision of Filipa de Almeida. The aim of this study is to explore decision-making in recruitment contexts, and your participation will provide valuable insights into how recruitment decisions are made within organizations.

Please be assured that your responses will remain completely anonymous and confidential. The data collected will be used solely for academic research purposes and will only be presented in aggregate form in my thesis, ensuring no individual responses can be identified.

The survey should take approximately 5 minutes to complete. Participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time by closing the survey. There are no right or wrong answers, so please respond as honestly as possible. Please take the study in one go, without interruptions.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please email Lotta Meier (s-lmeier@ucp.pt). By continuing you agree to participate.

Thank you for your valuable contribution to this research!

End of Block: Introduction

Start of Block: Recruitment Requirement

Q1

	No experience	Little experience	Some experience	Moderate experience	Extensive experience
How much experience do you have in making or influencing hiring decisions within your organization?	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Recruitment Requirement

Start of Block: Personal Sense of Power Scale

Q2 Please rate the following statements. In my work relationships…

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I can get him/her/them to listen to what I say.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My wishes do not carry much weight.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can get him/her/them to do what I want.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Even if I voice them, my views have little sway.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I think I have a great deal of power in my workplace.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My ideas and opinions are often ignored.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Even when I try, I am not able to get my way.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If I want to, I get to make the decisions in my team.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q3 Please rate the following statements according to how you feel right now.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
How in control do you feel right now?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
How in command do you feel right now?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
How powerful do you feel right now?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Personal Sense of Power Scale

Start of Block: Similarity Bias Task

Thank you for your answers. Now please imagine the following situation. Imagine you are hiring for a Project Manager role at a mid-sized consumer goods company. The position requires strong organizational skills, leadership experience, and the ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously. Additionally, the ideal candidate should possess excellent interpersonal skills and be capable of performing well under pressure, managing cross-functional teams, and overseeing product launches. You will now review two hypothetical candidates for this Project Manager position. After reviewing each candidate's profile, you will be asked to evaluate how similar you feel they are to yourself in different areas, as well as your overall impressions of the candidate.

Page Break

Candidate A
Age: 34
Nationality: German
Education: Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from a public university in Munich, followed by a master's degree in Marketing from a business school in Berlin.
Work Experience: The candidate has 8 years of experience in project management, primarily in the consumer goods industry. They have led several cross-functional teams and managed large-scale product launches in Germany and other European markets. The candidate is known for their strong leadership and organizational skills, excelling at keeping multiple projects on track under tight deadlines.
Leadership Experience: The candidate has led teams of up to 20 people and is experienced in managing diverse, cross-functional teams, including marketing, operations, and sales departments.
Hobbies: The candidate enjoys photography and yoga. They are passionate about mindfulness and often lead wellness workshops. They also enjoy hiking and traveling in their free time.

Please answer the following questions based on your impressions of the candidate.

Q4

	Not at all similar	Slightly dissimilar	Neither similar nor dissimilar	Slightly similar	Very similar
How similar do you feel this candidate's educational background is to yours?	○	○	○	○	○
How similar do you feel this candidate's professional experience is to yours?	○	○	○	○	○
How similar do you feel this candidate's hobbies and interests are to yours?	○	○	○	○	○
How similar do you perceive yourself to be to this candidate overall?	○	○	○	○	○

Q5

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
This applicant and I have many of the same beliefs and values.	○	○	○	○	○
Please select answer choice "Somewhat agree".	○	○	○	○	○
This applicant reminds me of myself.	○	○	○	○	○

Q6

	Very unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat likely	Very likely
How likely are you to recommend this candidate to be hired?	○	○	○	○	○

Q7

	Very negative	Somewhat negative	Neither negative nor positive	Somewhat positive	Very positive
Please give your overall evaluation of this candidate.	○	○	○	○	○

Page Break

Candidate B
Age: 33
Nationality: Portuguese
Education: Completed vocational training in Project Management and holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from a technical university in Lisbon. The candidate recently completed an executive education course on leadership from an international business school.
Work Experience: The candidate has 8 years of experience in the consumer goods industry, specializing in managing complex, high-budget projects. They have successfully overseen several high-profile product launches across Southern Europe. The candidate is known for their excellent organizational skills and ability to foster strong relationships with stakeholders.
Leadership Experience: The candidate has led multiple project teams, typically consisting of 15-20 members, working across functions like product development, marketing, and finance.
Hobbies: The candidate is passionate about cycling and is an avid board game enthusiast. They participate in triathlons and enjoy organizing game nights with friends.

Please answer the following questions based on your impressions of the candidate.

Q8

	Not at all similar	Slightly dissimilar	Neither similar nor dissimilar	Slightly similar	Very similar
How similar do you feel this candidate's educational background is to yours?	○	○	○	○	○
How similar do you feel this candidate's professional experience is to yours?	○	○	○	○	○
How similar do you feel this candidate's hobbies and interests are to yours?	○	○	○	○	○
How similar do you perceive yourself to be to this candidate overall?	○	○	○	○	○

Q9

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
This applicant and I have many of the same beliefs and values.	○	○	○	○	○
This applicant reminds me of myself.	○	○	○	○	○

Q10

	Very unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat likely	Very likely
How likely are you to recommend this candidate to be hired?	○	○	○	○	○

Q11

	Very negative	Somewhat negative	Neither negative nor positive	Somewhat positive	Very positive
Please give your overall evaluation of this candidate.	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Similarity Bias Task

Start of Block: Confirmation Bias Task

Thank you for your answers. Now please imagine the following situation. You will now be presented with a description of a job candidate. After reviewing the candidate, you will see a list of 20 potential interview questions. This type of person is typically responsible, orderly, and persevering. They can be depended on to accept responsibilities. They do not allow personal benefit or gain to conflict with ethical principles. They are painstaking and thorough and see a job through in spite of difficulties or temptations. They are hardworking, strong-willed, and sometimes get overinvolved with details.

Q12 Please select 8 out of these 20 questions that you would most likely ask the candidate during a job interview.

- [ ] Tell me about a situation where your concern for detail made it difficult to get a project done on time.
- [ ] Why is it that others feel they can depend on you?
- [ ] Describe a situation in which you avoided compromising your personal standards even under pressure to do so.
- [ ] What do you do to keep yourself motivated to finish a task on which you are losing interest?
- [ ] When was the last time you got so caught up in something you were doing that you forgot about everything else?
- [ ] Tell me about some ways in which you feel you differ from your typical col leagues in your organization.
- [ ] Tell me about a situation where perseverance paid off for you.
- [ ] How did you feel the last time you resisted the temptation to take “the easy way out”?
- [ ] How did you feel the last time someone depended on you to do something and you let them down?
- [ ] How often do you miss or skip work meetings or scheduled work-related activ-

ities?

- [ ] When does your interest in your own personal life get in the way of getting important things done?
- [ ] Do you think you would perform better at work if you were more organized? Why or why not?
- [ ] Tell me about a project you started and never finished.
- [ ] In what kinds of situations are you willing to stretch your ethics to get some thing you want?
- [ ] What was your reaction the last time you received negative feedback at work because of formatting, spelling or communication mistakes?
- [ ] What are the projects you just can't get motivated to start?
- [ ] How would other people describe you?
- [ ] What do you do to keep up with current events?
- [ ] What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
- [ ] What movie that you saw in the last year impressed you most?

Based on your choice of questions and the candidate's profile, please respond to the following questions.

Q13

	Very unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat likely	Very likely
How likely are you to recommend this candidate to be hired?	○	○	○	○	○

Q14

	Very negative	Somewhat negative	Neither negative nor positive	Somewhat positive	Very positive
Please give your overall evaluation of this candidate.	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Confirmation Bias Task

Start of Block: Demographic Information

Q15 How old are you?

_____

Q16 How do you describe yourself?

- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Non-binary
- ○ Prefer not to say
- ○ Prefer to self-describe _____

Q17 What is your nationality?

▼ Afghanistan ... Zimbabwe

Q18 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- ○ Less than high school
- ○ High school degree
- ○ Vocational training
- ○ Bachelor’s degree
- ○ Master’s degree
- ○ PhD
- ○ Other (please specify) _____

Q19 How many years of professional experience do you have?

- ○ 0-1 year(s)
- ○ 2-3 years
- ○ 4-5 years
- ○ 6-7 years
- ○ 8-9 years
- ○ 10+ years

Q20 What is your current role in your organization?

- ○ Intern
- ○ Working student
- ○ Junior employee
- ○ HR assistant
- ○ Team leader
- ○ Manager
- ○ Executive
- ○ Other (please specify) _____

Q21 Please specify the industry you work in.

_____

End of Block: Demographic Information

Start of Block: Optional Feedback

Q22 Do you have any feedback or comments about this survey?

_____

End of Block: Optional Feedback

Appendix 3: Data Preparation and Scale Reliability

Table 11

Reliability Statistics for the Personal Sense of Power Scale

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.833	8

Table 12

Item-Total Statistics for the Personal Sense of Power Scale

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Perceived Power 1	39.46	25.702	.468	.827
Perceived Power 2	39.44	27.190	.526	.820
Perceived Power 3	40.13	24.557	.521	.821
Perceived Power 4	39.41	26.498	.576	.814
Perceived Power 5	40.08	22.020	.698	.794
Perceived Power 6	39.20	27.038	.573	.816
Perceived Power 7	39.24	25.865	.620	.808
Perceived Power 8	39.87	23.245	.605	.809

Table 13

Reliability Statistics for Similarity Bias for Candidate A

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.774	6

Table 14

Item-Total Statistics for Similarity Bias for Candidate A

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Similarity A 1	14.32	15.366	.505	.745
Similarity A 2	14.73	16.795	.393	.773
Similarity A 3	14.85	17.004	.291	.808
Similarity A 4	14.65	14.712	.772	.678
Similarity A 5	14.12	17.686	.550	.741
Similarity A 6	14.97	14.789	.766	.680

Table 15

Reliability Statistics for Similarity Bias for Candidate B

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.851	6

Table 16

Item-Total Statistics for Similarity Bias for Candidate B

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Similarity B 1	13.78	15.728	.644	.825
Similarity B 2	13.83	16.219	.576	.839
Similarity B 3	13.62	16.849	.456	.866
Similarity B 4	13.77	15.429	.814	.792
Similarity B 5	13.35	18.154	.641	.831
Similarity B 6	13.90	15.939	.788	.799

Table 17

Reliability Statistics for Hiring Decision Similarity Bias for Candidate A

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.855	2

Table 18

Reliability Statistics for Hiring Decision Similarity Bias for Candidate B

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.873	2

Table 19

Reliability Statistics for Hiring Decision Confirmation Bias

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.900	2

Table 20

Correlation between Similarity for Candidate A and Similarity for Candidate B

	SB_A	SB_B
SB_A	1	.377**
SB_B	.377**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix 4: Hypothesis Testing

Mediation analysis for H3

```
Run MATRIX procedure:

***************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 *****************

          Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.       www.afhayes.com
    Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

**************************************************************************
Model  : 4
    Y  : HD_CB
    X  : PP_score
    M  : CB_score

Covariates:
 Gender_F Edu_LHS  Edu_HS   Edu_Voc  Edu_MS   Edu_PhD  Edu_Oth  Prof_exp Age

Sample
Size:  158

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 CB_score

Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .2766      .0765      .0236     1.2177    10.0000   147.0000      .2842

Model
              coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant      .1850      .1240     1.4912      .1380     -.0602      .4301
PP_score      .0493      .0204     2.4122      .0171      .0089      .0896
Gender_F      .0228      .0349      .6544      .5139     -.0461      .0918
Edu_LHS       .0592      .1570      .3766      .7070     -.2512      .3695
Edu_HS       -.0997      .1128     -.8841      .3781     -.3226      .1232
Edu_Voc      -.0477      .0742     -.6433      .5211     -.1944      .0989
Edu_MS       -.0419      .0303    -1.3841      .1684     -.1018      .0179
Edu_PhD      -.0316      .0639     -.4949      .6214     -.1580      .0947
Edu_Oth      -.0899      .0741    -1.2134      .2269     -.2362      .0565
Prof_exp      .0181      .0147     1.2314      .2201     -.0110      .0473
Age          -.0008      .0018     -.4685      .6401     -.0043      .0027

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 HD_CB
```

```
Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .2791      .0779      .4599     1.1215    11.0000   146.0000      .3486


Model
              coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     3.2588      .5514     5.9101      .0000     2.1690     4.3485
PP_score      .1327      .0919     1.4438      .1510     -.0489      .3143
CB_score      .2378      .3639      .6534      .5145     -.4814      .9570
Gender_F      .0026      .1541      .0166      .9868     -.3021      .3072
Edu_LHS       .1179      .6932      .1701      .8651    -1.2521     1.4880
Edu_HS       -.2785      .4989     -.5582      .5776    -1.2646      .7076
Edu_Voc      -.1918      .3279     -.5851      .5594     -.8398      .4561
Edu_MS       -.0967      .1345     -.7186      .4735     -.3626      .1692
Edu_PhD      -.0166      .2822     -.0586      .9533     -.5744      .5413
Edu_Oth      -.7699      .3283    -2.3448      .0204    -1.4188     -.1210
Prof_exp     -.0254      .0653     -.3891      .6978     -.1546      .1037
Age          -.0041      .0078     -.5165      .6063     -.0196      .0115


****************** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****************

Direct effect of X on Y
     Effect         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
      .1327      .0919     1.4438      .1510     -.0489      .3143



Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:
             Effect     BootSE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
CB_score      .0117      .0201     -.0291      .0543

*********************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ************************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
  95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
  5000

NOTE: Due to estimation problems, some bootstrap samples had to be replaced.
      The number of times this happened was:
     4111

------ END MATRIX -----
```

Mediation analysis for H8

Similarity bias for Candidate A:

```
Run MATRIX procedure:

***************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 *****************

          Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.       www.afhayes.com
    Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

**************************************************************************
```

```
Model  : 4
    Y  : HD_SB_A
    X  : PP_score
    M  : SB_A

Covariates:
 Gender_F Edu_LHS  Edu_HS   Edu_Voc  Edu_MS   Edu_PhD  Edu_Oth  Prof_exp Age

Sample
Size:  158

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 SB_A

Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .3722      .1385      .5654     2.3642    10.0000   147.0000      .0127

Model
             coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     3.6374      .6068     5.9943      .0000     2.4382     4.8366
PP_score     -.0666      .0999     -.6669      .5059     -.2641      .1309
Gender_F     -.0260      .1707     -.1526      .8790     -.3633      .3112
Edu_LHS      -.7052      .7683     -.9180      .3601    -2.2235      .8130
Edu_HS      -1.4954      .5518    -2.7103      .0075    -2.5858     -.4050
Edu_Voc      -.4096      .3630    -1.1282      .2611    -1.1270      .3079
Edu_MS        .0447      .1482      .3015      .7635     -.2482      .3376
Edu_PhD       .0245      .3127      .0783      .9377     -.5935      .6424
Edu_Oth      -.6239      .3623    -1.7224      .0871    -1.3399      .0920
Prof_exp     -.1454      .0721    -2.0171      .0455     -.2879     -.0029
Age           .0093      .0087     1.0709      .2859     -.0079      .0265

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 HD_SB_A

Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .3850      .1482      .4151     2.3091    11.0000   146.0000      .0122

Model
             coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     3.1854      .5800     5.4919      .0000     2.0391     4.3317
PP_score      .0615      .0858      .7169      .4746     -.1080      .2310
SB_A          .2502      .0707     3.5407      .0005      .1106      .3899
Gender_F      .0470      .1462      .3215      .7483     -.2420      .3360
Edu_LHS      1.2671      .6602     1.9194      .0569     -.0376     2.5719
Edu_HS        .0132      .4844      .0273      .9782     -.9442      .9707
Edu_Voc       .2980      .3124      .9537      .3418     -.3195      .9154
Edu_MS        .2874      .1270     2.2626      .0251      .0364      .5385
Edu_PhD       .0597      .2679      .2227      .8241     -.4699      .5892
Edu_Oth       .3803      .3135     1.2131      .2270     -.2393     1.0000
Prof_exp     -.0575      .0626     -.9179      .3602     -.1812      .0663
Age          -.0009      .0075     -.1140      .9094     -.0156      .0139


****************** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****************

Direct effect of X on Y
     Effect         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
      .0615      .0858      .7169      .4746     -.1080      .2310
```

```
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:
         Effect     BootSE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
SB_A     -.0167      .0294     -.0797      .0392

************************ ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ************************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
  95.0000


Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
  5000

NOTE: Due to estimation problems, some bootstrap samples had to be replaced.
      The number of times this happened was:
     4137

------ END MATRIX -----
```

Similarity bias for Candidate B:

```
Run MATRIX procedure:

***************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 *****************

          Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.       www.afhayes.com
    Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

**************************************************************************
Model  : 4
    Y  : HD_SB_B
    X  : PP_score
    M  : SB_B

Covariates:
 Gender_F Edu_LHS  Edu_HS   Edu_Voc  Edu_MS   Edu_PhD  Edu_Oth  Prof_exp Age

Sample
Size:  158

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 SB_B

Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .3252      .1057      .6078     1.7383    10.0000   147.0000      .0773

Model
             coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant    2.9743      .6292     4.7273      .0000     1.7309     4.2177
PP_score     .0712      .1036      .6870      .4932     -.1336      .2760
Gender_F    -.4708      .1769    -2.6606      .0087     -.8205     -.1211
Edu_LHS     -.1365      .7966     -.1714      .8641    -1.7108     1.4377
Edu_HS      -.5495      .5721     -.9606      .3384    -1.6801      .5811
Edu_Voc      .0528      .3764      .1402      .8887     -.6911      .7967
Edu_MS      -.1702      .1537    -1.1073      .2700     -.4739      .1335
Edu_PhD      .1834      .3242      .5656      .5725     -.4573      .8241
Edu_Oth     -.9066      .3756    -2.4137      .0170    -1.6489     -.1643
Prof_exp     .0508      .0747      .6791      .4982     -.0970      .1985
Age         -.0133      .0090    -1.4755      .1422     -.0311      .0045

**************************************************************************
```

```
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 HD_SB_B

Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .4450      .1980      .3702     3.2768    11.0000   146.0000      .0005


Model
              coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     2.0930      .5270     3.9713      .0001     1.0514     3.1346
PP_score      .2400      .0810     2.9629      .0036      .0799      .4001
SB_B          .2338      .0644     3.6326      .0004      .1066      .3610
Gender_F     -.0358      .1414     -.2529      .8007     -.3152      .2437
Edu_LHS       .8379      .6217     1.3477      .1798     -.3909     2.0667
Edu_HS        .1198      .4479      .2674      .7895     -.7654     1.0049
Edu_Voc       .7030      .2938     2.3928      .0180      .1223     1.2836
Edu_MS        .0209      .1204      .1735      .8625     -.2171      .2589
Edu_PhD      -.2227      .2533     -.8793      .3807     -.7233      .2779
Edu_Oth      -.0713      .2989     -.2384      .8119     -.6620      .5195
Prof_exp     -.0487      .0584     -.8330      .4062     -.1641      .0668
Age           .0024      .0071      .3373      .7364     -.0116      .0164


****************** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****************

Direct effect of X on Y
     Effect         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
      .2400      .0810     2.9629      .0036      .0799      .4001

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:
         Effect     BootSE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
SB_B      .0166      .0275     -.0362      .0746


********************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ************************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
  95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
  5000

NOTE: Due to estimation problems, some bootstrap samples had to be replaced.
      The number of times this happened was:
     4213

------ END MATRIX -----
```