


Chapter 5

The Role of AI and Automation in Inclusive Hiring: A New Frontier for Workforce Diversity

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ABSTRACT

As organizations strive to build more inclusive and representative workforces, artificial intelligence (AI) and automation have emerged as powerful—but complex—tools in the hiring process. This chapter critically examines how AI-driven systems are being deployed to identify, attract, and evaluate talent, and the implications this has for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. While automation promises to remove human bias and improve efficiency, it also risks replicating or even amplifying the very inequities it seeks to solve. Drawing on real-world case studies, ethical debates, and current research, this chapter explores how AI can either entrench systemic discrimination or serve as a catalyst for fairer hiring, depending on how it is designed, trained, and governed. By interrogating the underlying assumptions embedded within algorithmic tools and highlighting the importance of transparency, accountability, and stakeholder collaboration, this chapter offers a nuanced and forward-thinking perspective.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-2312-1.ch005

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INTRODUCTION

In today's technologically driven labor landscape, the way we search for, evaluate, and hire talent is undergoing a radical transformation. At the center of this shift is the growing influence of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation—technologies that are fundamentally reshaping traditional hiring paradigms. From automated resume screening tools and AI-powered video interviews to predictive analytics for job performance, recruitment is increasingly being guided not by human hands alone but by algorithms and data systems. While these innovations promise greater efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and scalability, they also raise urgent questions about fairness, accountability, and inclusion. At the same time, the imperative to build diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforces has never been more pressing. Amid global calls for social justice, widening economic inequality, and a growing awareness of systemic discrimination, organizations are being held to a new standard: representation must be real, inclusion must be intentional, and diversity must go beyond surface-level optics. The confluence of these two forces—technological disruption and DEI imperatives—has created both a profound opportunity and a complex dilemma: Can AI be used to advance inclusive hiring, or will it merely reproduce the biases and exclusions embedded in our historical data and institutional systems?

This chapter begins with an exploration of the evolving nature of workforce diversity and the expanded expectations that organizations now face. Diversity is no longer measured solely by demographic quotas or representation metrics; it is about creating systems that recognize, value, and leverage difference at every stage of employment (Singh, 2021). Equity involves actively addressing disparities and barriers that have historically marginalized certain groups, and inclusion requires sustained efforts to create environments where all individuals—regardless of background—feel a genuine sense of belonging and respect. In this context, AI and automation offer both promise and peril (Brynjolfsson, 2022). On one hand, these tools can help mitigate unconscious human bias by relying on standardized data points and removing subjective judgments. They can widen the talent pool by surfacing non-traditional candidates, and they can provide recruiters with analytical insights that support more informed decision-making. On the other hand, when poorly designed or carelessly implemented, AI systems can entrench bias, mask discrimination behind a veneer of objectivity, and make the hiring process less transparent and accountable.

One of the central challenges lies in the training data that AI relies on. If historical hiring patterns were shaped by systemic exclusion—favoring certain universities, zip codes, genders, or racial backgrounds—then the algorithms trained on such data are likely to replicate these biases, regardless of the developers' intentions. Moreover, the “black box” nature of many proprietary AI systems makes it difficult

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