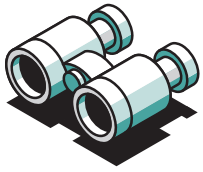
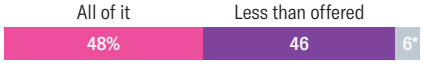


WORK-LIFE BALANCE

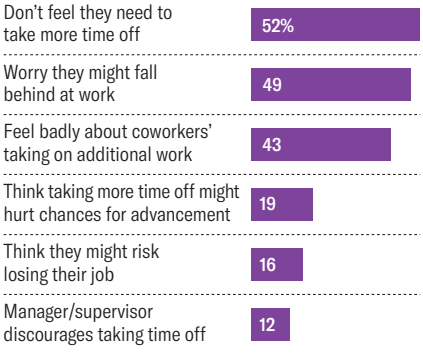
Why Don't Employees Use All Their PTO?

When Pew researchers surveyed 5,902 U.S. workers about paid-time-off policies, they learned that nearly half did not take all the days off their employer offered. The reason workers cited most often for not taking full advantage of time off was that they didn't need it all.

Among workers whose employers offer paid time off, % saying they take:



Among workers who take less paid time off than offered, % saying each is a reason why:



*Workers who had unlimited time off or did not answer the question.

Source: "How Americans View Their Jobs," Pew Research, 2023

BIASES

Insidious Stereotypes Are Hurting East Asian Employees

Research has proved that diversity and inclusion are crucial to harmonious, productive workplaces. But even the most inclusive workforce may harbor biases. A study of 2,304 students at a U.S. business school found that ethnic East Asians—people with Chinese, Japanese, and South Korean backgrounds—were perceived by classmates to be less creative than people of other ethnicities. A related study of 1,104 U.S. adults showed that ethnic East Asians were also less likely to be seen as leadership material.

The researcher conducted a confidential survey two weeks into an MBA program, asking students to score seven classmates on a scale of 1 to 7. Participants rated how strongly they agreed with three statements: "This person is a good source of creative ideas," "This person comes up with new and practical ideas to improve performance," and "This person comes up with creative solutions to problems." Two weeks later the participants completed another confidential survey, which displayed the class roster with students' headshots and asked, "Whom do you view as a leader in your class section?" East Asian students received the lowest creativity ratings of all the ethnic groups and were nominated the least often as class leaders.

The findings were replicated in a study in which people were asked to rate a fictitious manager's perceived creativity. Participants were shown one of six profiles that were identical—a male, native English-speaking American citizen with seven years of experience in marketing—except for the person's name and ethnicity. The researcher then asked the respondents to evaluate the candidates on the same qualities as in the prior study. Again, the East Asian candidate received the lowest average creativity score.

In the same study participants were asked to rate how strongly they agreed with these statements: "I view this person as a leader," "I believe this person possesses leadership qualities," and "I would recommend this person as a leader." Even though the candidate profiles were substantively identical, the East Asian candidate received a lower average leadership score than candidates of other ethnicities did.

The researcher recommends that companies start to address this issue by acknowledging that the bias exists and determining whether it's prevalent in their organizations. They should also find ways to encourage East Asian employees to showcase their creative ideas and leadership qualities.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH *"A Creativity Stereotype Perspective on the Bamboo Ceiling: Low Perceived Creativity Explains the Underrepresentation of East Asian Leaders in the United States," by Jackson G. Lu* (Journal of Applied Psychology, *2024)*