

SECTION I

OVERVIEW

Talent Convergence Theory, The Onlys, Scrutiny, Stress, Optimism



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Introduction and Overview of the 2020 Data

The *2020 Women of Color in Business: Cross-Generational Survey*® was designed to stress-test and probe deeply several of the 2019 findings.

The authors continued to track “the Onlys,” women who report being always or frequently the only person of their race in a professional setting. Despite 2020’s focus on racial justice, there was just a very slight improvement.

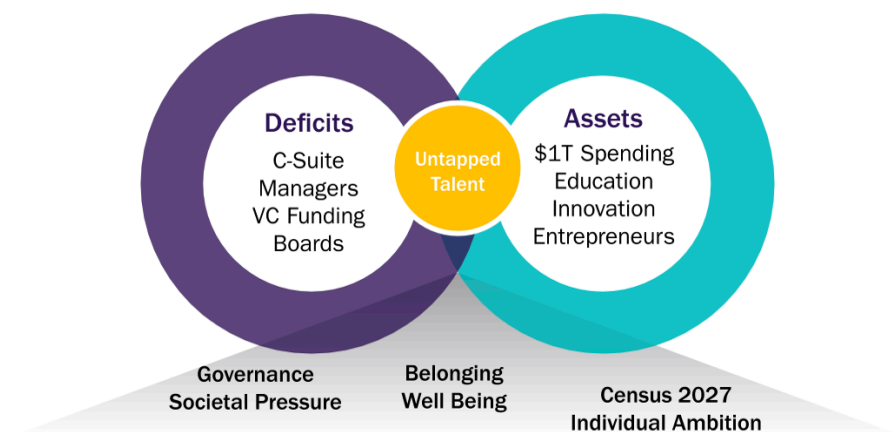
The survey found:

- Levels of stress and scrutiny on the job remained high, especially in the aftermath of 2020’s racial and social justice protests;
- Continued support for “sisterhood” and the strong desire for support from managers, i.e., a sense of belonging, among younger desk workers.
- There remained significant interest in entrepreneurship and in maintaining control of one’s future, especially among younger Black and LatinX women.
- Younger women remain confident, prepared to leave their current employment, if better opportunities emerge. The findings suggest a threat - or opportunity - depending on your perspective for existing employers and venture capitalists.
- White male managers, who were queried for the first time, as well as women of color desk workers, reported increased responsibilities in the D&I (diversity and inclusion) categories in the aftermath of 2020’s protests.

Currently, leadership discussions are framing the D&I focus alongside emerging talent disruption models. The authors’ *2020 Survey* findings validate leaders deploying innovative strategies to unleash and leverage the underrepresented minority talent that is “hidden in plain sight.”

The authors call this concept their “Talent Convergence Theory.” Demographic, governance and societal trends are driving inclusive leaders to redress the “deficits,” e.g., the paucity of minority talent in the C-suite, VC portfolios, boards, and management ranks. With greater awareness of the entrepreneurial spirit and embrace of technological innovation among younger women of color, along with their burgeoning consumer spending resources and educational attainment, the “greenfield” of untapped talent continues to grow.

Talent Conversion Theory



Activating diversity remains the challenge to creating a competitive advantage in the rapidly changing race for talent. The *2020 Survey* findings suggest there is an underlying tension in the race for talent. Who will capitalize on it first? Will it be disruptive venture capitalists who open their spigot of dollars and lure the growing ranks of “side-prenuers” into full-time entrepreneurship? Or will it be the corporations that wake up and fully activate the ambition and creativity of their employees of color? The answers are likely to emerge as the authors challenge and suggest strategies for all participants in their upcoming annual analyses.

2020 Findings on “The Onlys”

In November 2020, co-authors Stewart and Adams commissioned their second survey to test the findings of their 2019 efforts and provide continuity for an actionable leadership playbook. In this section, the data focuses on the impact of *The Onlys* for women of color desk workers, the increased scrutiny and stress that they experience as well as their unexpected optimism and ambition.

The “Onlys” Remain

Of all the 2019 data, the finding of most concern to the authors was that 47% of Black women said that they were always or frequently the only person of their race in a professional situation, 15% always and 32% frequently. Much work remains necessary to accelerate significant declines in the number of “Onlys.”

In the 2020 data, the number declined by one percent to 46%. In 2020, 11% of Black women said they are always the only person of their race in a professional setting, and 35% said they are frequently the only person.

In the 2020 data, the number declined by one percent to 46%.

- For LatinX women, there was a slight improvement. In 2019, 16% said they were always the only person of their race in a professional setting, and 25% said frequently for a total of 41%. In 2020, the numbers were 9% and 27% for a total of 36%.
- For Asian women, in 2019, 11% said they were the only person of their race in a professional setting, and 28% said frequently, for a total of 39%. In 2020, the number ticked up slightly to 40%, 13% always and 27% frequently.
- For white women, the 2019 number was 15%, 6% always and 9% frequently. In 2020, the number ticked up slightly to 16%, 7% always and, again, 9% frequently. By contrast, 72% of white female desk workers said they were not very often or never the only person of their race in a professional setting. In 2019, this number was 73%.



THE ONLY: HOW OFTEN ARE YOU THE ONLY PERSON OF YOUR RACE PRESENT IN A PROFESSIONAL SITUATION?



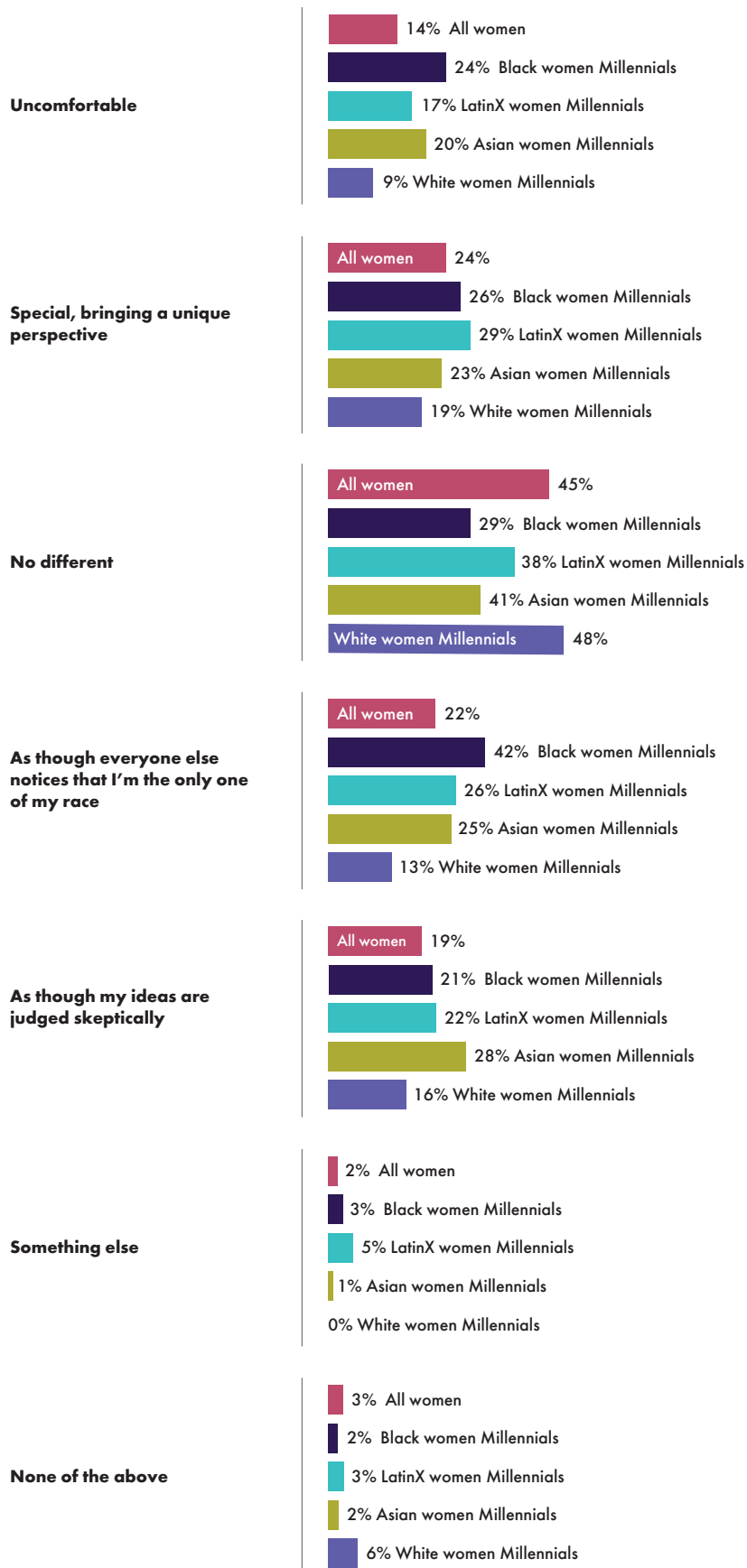
The Impact of “Only-ness” on Female Desk Workers

When Black women are the only members of their race present in a professional setting, more reported that they are likely to feel uncomfortable, compared to LatinX, Asian, and white women, who reported feeling no different.

- Among Millennial women, 42% of the Black women reported feeling that their “only-ness” is noticed.
- 24% of Black Millennial desk workers said they feel uncomfortable being “Onlys,” as opposed to 17% LatinX, 20% Asian, and 9% white Millennial women.
- However, 26% of Black Millennials, 29% of LatinX Millennials and 23% of Asian Millennials said they feel special, that their unique perspective in professional settings is seen.

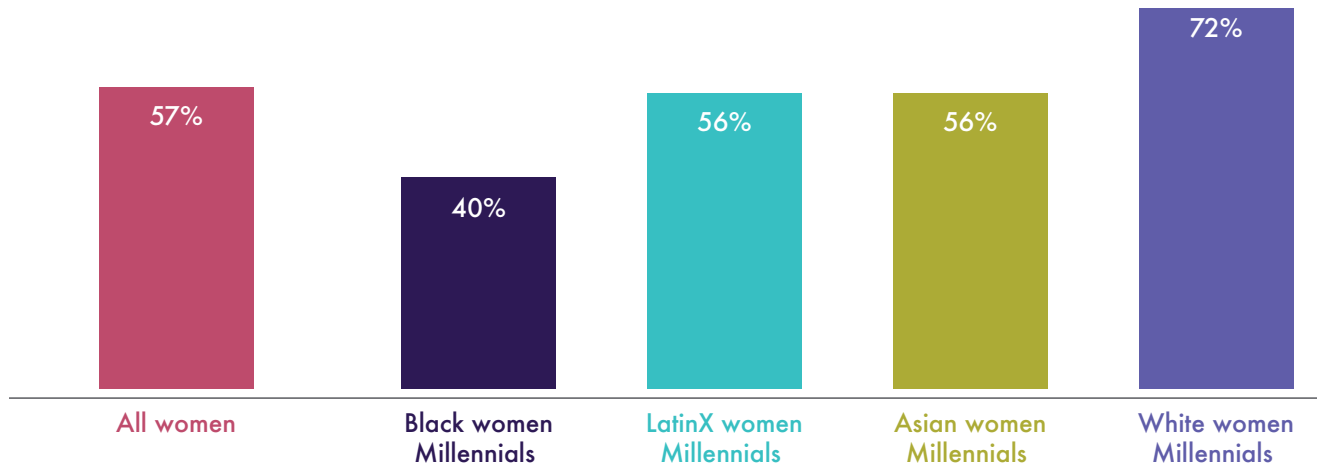


THE ONLY: HOW DO YOU FEEL IN A PROFESSIONAL SITUATION?

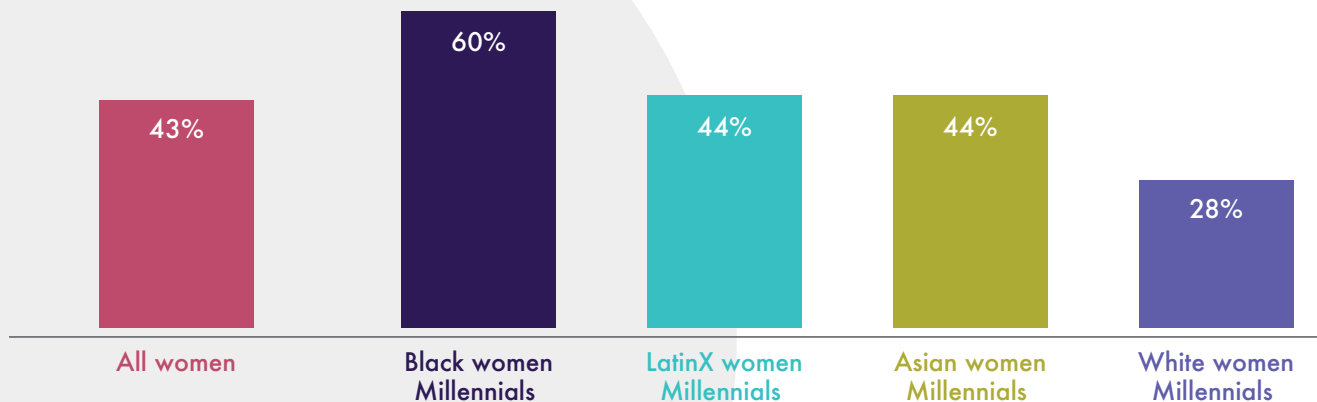


RACE: WHICH OF THESE COMES CLOSER TO YOUR OPINION?

I can freely communicate with my coworkers about issues of race



Part of me feels I have to withhold my true thoughts when talking with my coworkers about issues of race



- The discomfort about being an “only” for Black Millennial women was pronounced. 60% reported that they withhold their true thoughts when talking with colleagues about race. By contrast, 72% of white Millennial women reported no such anxiety about sharing their feelings.

Implications: The dearth of Black female talent is not a pipeline issue. Black women are the largest sector of Americans earning college degrees, according to the U.S. Census. Companies should move swiftly to evaluate the systemic biases built into decades of processes intended to curb the number of hires of color. To win the race for exceptional talent, leaders and managers must demand accelerated hiring of underrepresented minorities in multiples to eliminate tokenism, *onlyness* and they must disrupt bias-ridden recruiting models. The failure to hire more desk workers and executives of color results from a fragmented database issue, not a pipeline concern. The authors have observed that increasingly, entrepreneurs of color are developing new tools to identify diverse talent.

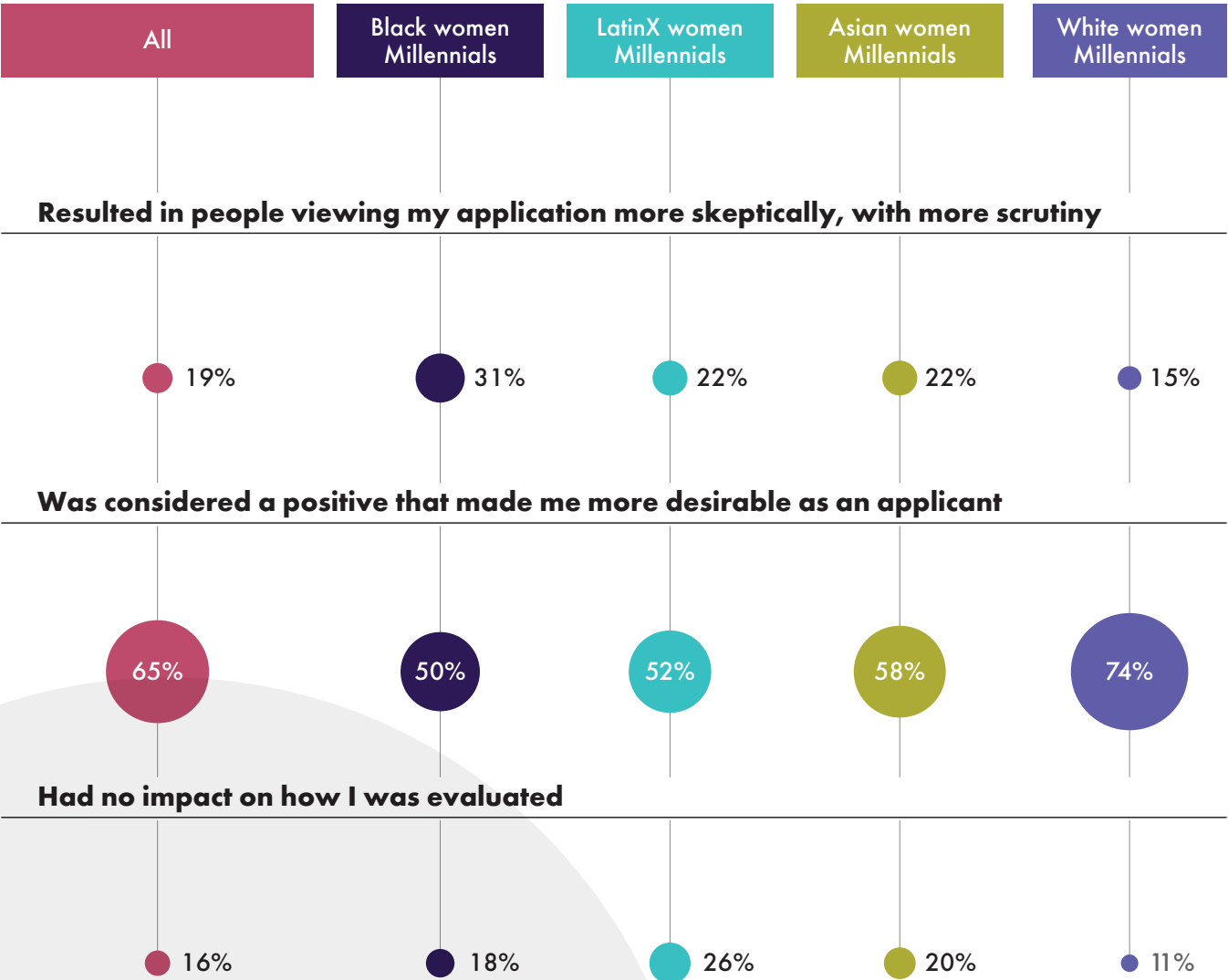
Scrutiny: In Hiring and On the Job

Hiring is the gateway to employment, and the way a woman of color is perceived can have long-lasting effects. Majorities of the women in all four races said their race and gender had no effect on their job applications.

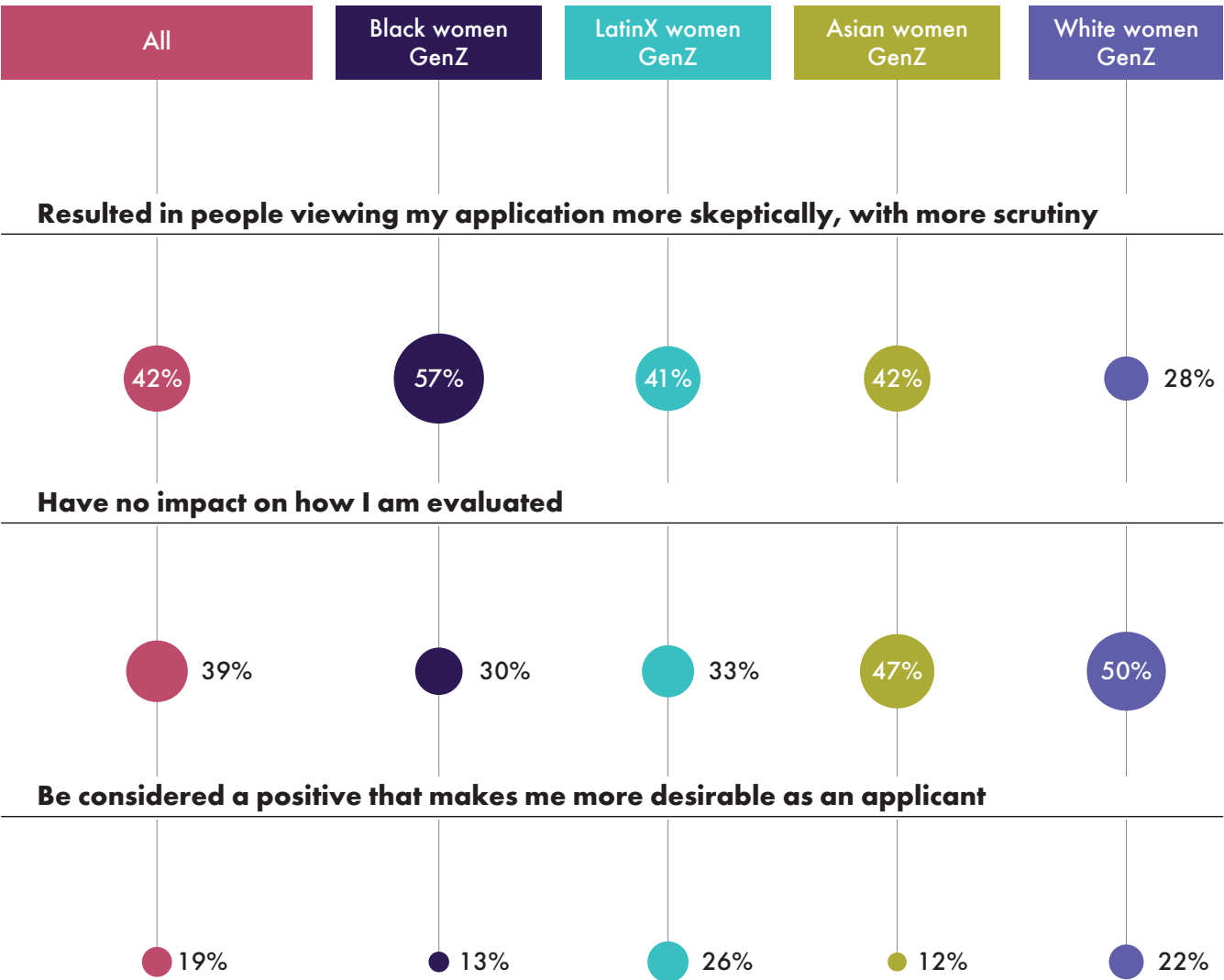
However, in 2020, 29% of Black women overall reported extra scrutiny in the application process as a result of their race and gender. The percentage was significantly larger than those for the other races: 15% LatinX, 19% Asian, and 12% white.

- The 2020 responses did show a slight improvement over 2019 when 31% of Black women and 17% of white women said their race and gender led to their job applications being viewed more skeptically.
- Among Black Millennials in 2020, 31% said their race and gender led to their job applications being viewed more skeptically. By contrast, 22% of both LatinX and Asian women agreed and only 15% of our white Millennial respondents felt that way, twice the number of the Black Millennials.
- Among 2020’s Gen Z respondents, there was an expectation that they will face scrutiny in hiring because of their race and gender.
 - 57% of Black Gen Z female desk workers anticipated that their race will bring greater scrutiny to their job applications, as opposed to 28% of white Gen Z women. 41% of LatinX and 42% of Asian Gen Z respondents also felt that their race will bring scrutiny to their job applications.
- However, 26% of the LatinX women, the largest sector, say that their race/gender will be a positive in the hiring process, consistent with 2019 data.

SCRUTINY IN HIRING: RACE AND/OR GENDER



GEN Z EXPECTATIONS: SCRUTINY AND HIRING - RACE AND/OR GENDER

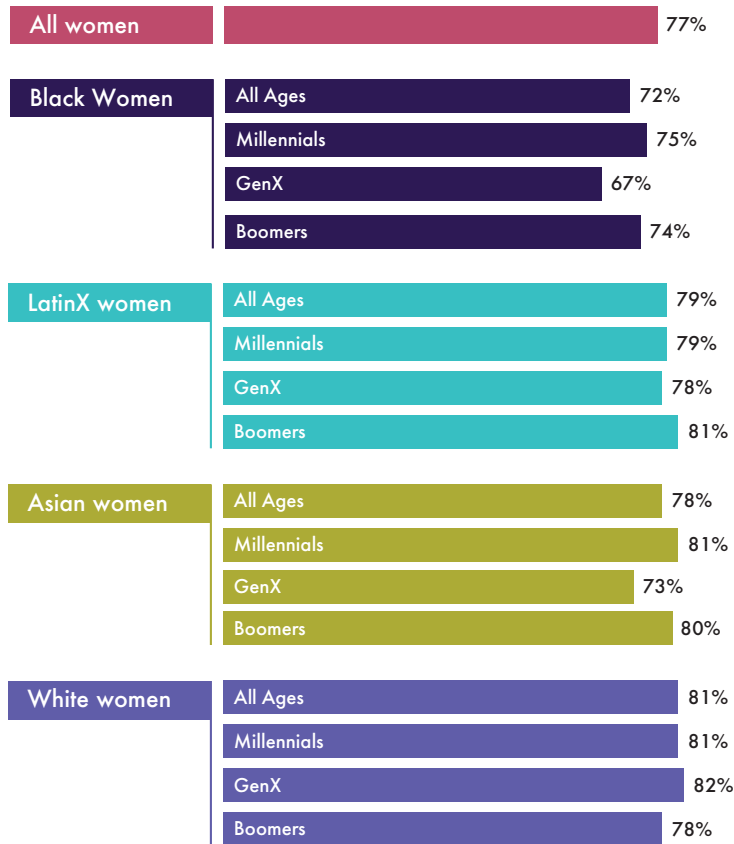


Once on the job, Black women within each generation in 2020 were the least likely to feel as if people at work root for them to succeed and the most likely to feel that their work is viewed with skepticism and scrutiny. The results were consistent with the 2019 findings.

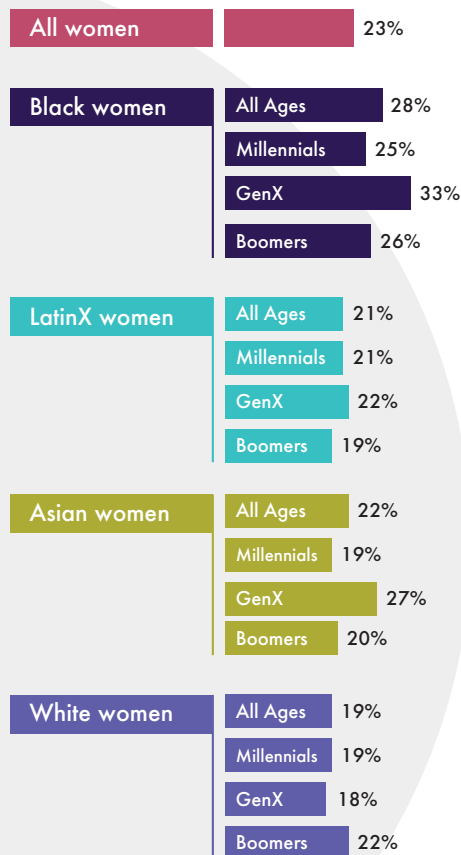
- Indeed, 67% of Gen X Black women, down from 74% last year, felt that their co-workers root for them to succeed, compared to 82% Gen X white women.
- Yet, a full third of Black Gen X women said they did not feel encouraged at work, compared to just 18% of white Gen Xers.

SUCCESS AT WORK: WHICH IS CLOSER TO YOUR VIEW?

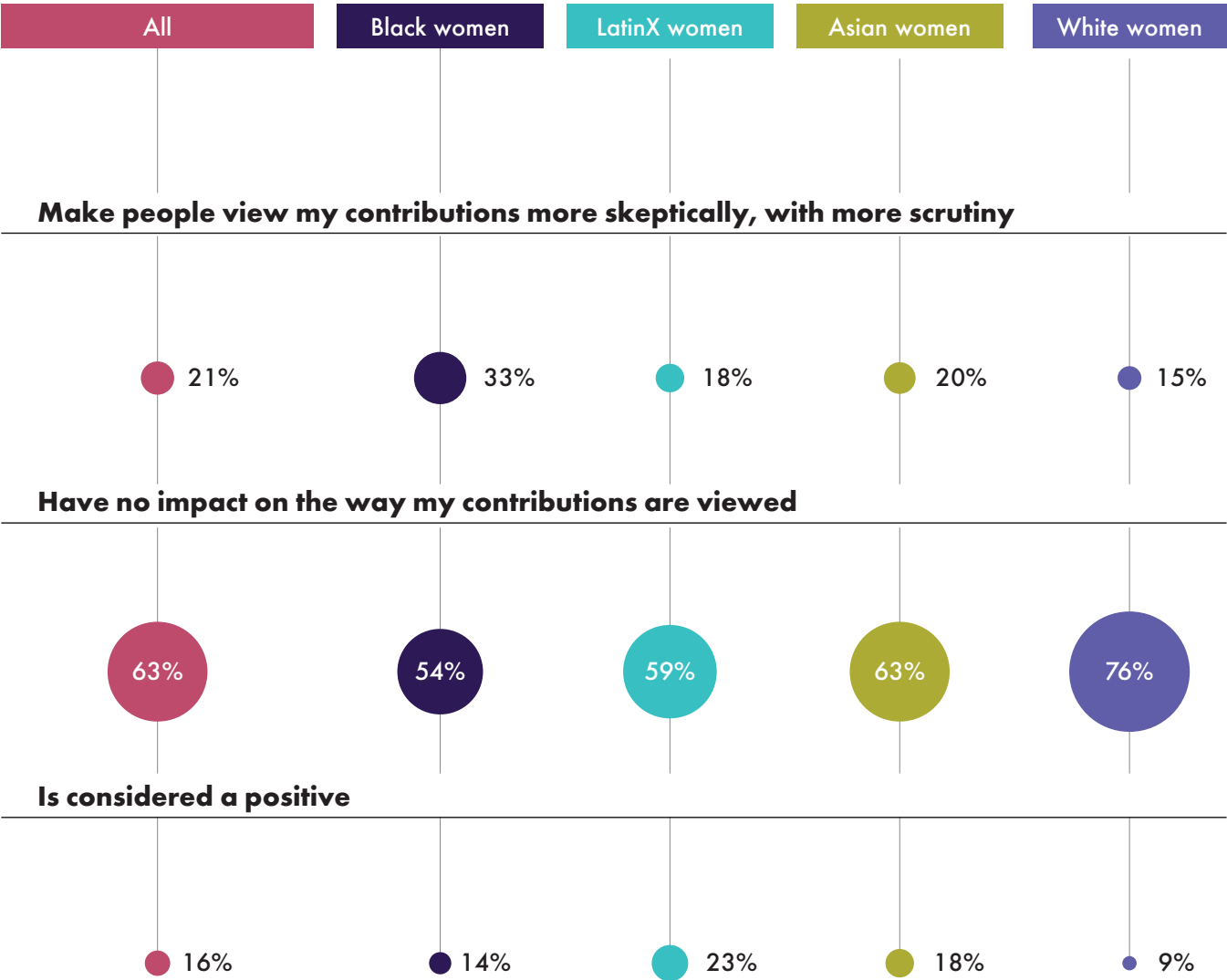
I feel as though people
at work root for me
to succeed



I don't feel as though
people at work root
for me to succeed



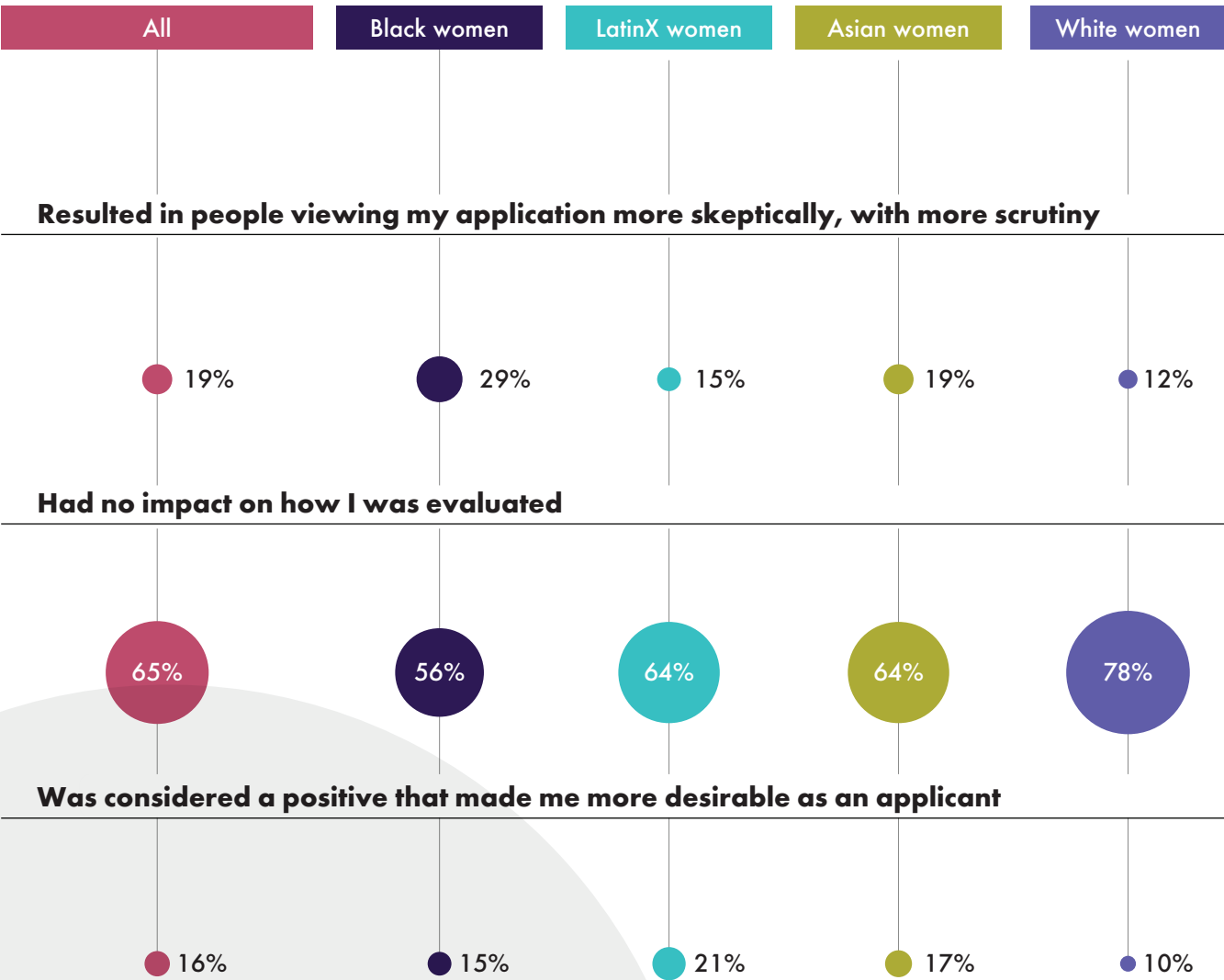
IMPACT OF RACE AND/OR GENDER ON WORK CONTRIBUTIONS



Majorities reported that their race had no impact on the way their contributions at work were evaluated.

For those who did feel that race had an impact, 31% of Black Millennial workers said their contributions at work were viewed more skeptically. 23% of LatinX Millennials said their race and gender were considered as positives.

IMPACT OF RACE AND/OR GENDER ON HIRING



Stress

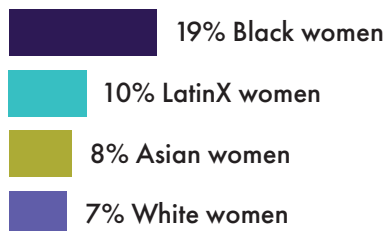
In 2019, majorities of all of the female desk workers reported stress on the job. At 80%, white Millennials reported the highest level of stress.

In 2020, the question was changed to gauge additional stress on the job as a result of the racial and social justice protests. A majority of Black women, 54%, reported greatly or somewhat increased stress; 39% for LatinX women; 34% for Asian women; and 30% for white women.

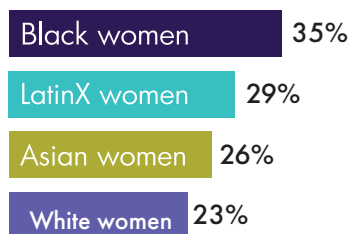
Majorities of the LatinX, Asian and white female desk workers said their stress remained the same.

STRESS FROM 2020'S FOCUS ON RACIAL JUSTICE

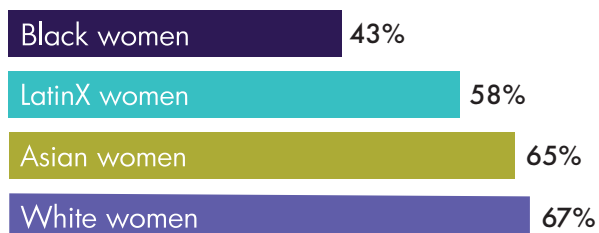
Greatly increased



Somewhat increased

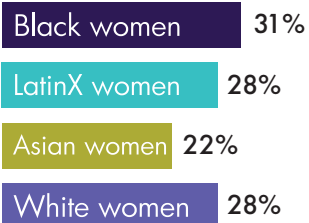


Stayed the same



STRESS FROM COVID-19 PANDEMIC

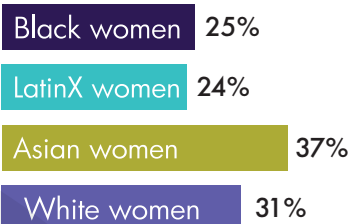
Greatly increased



Somewhat increased



Stayed the same

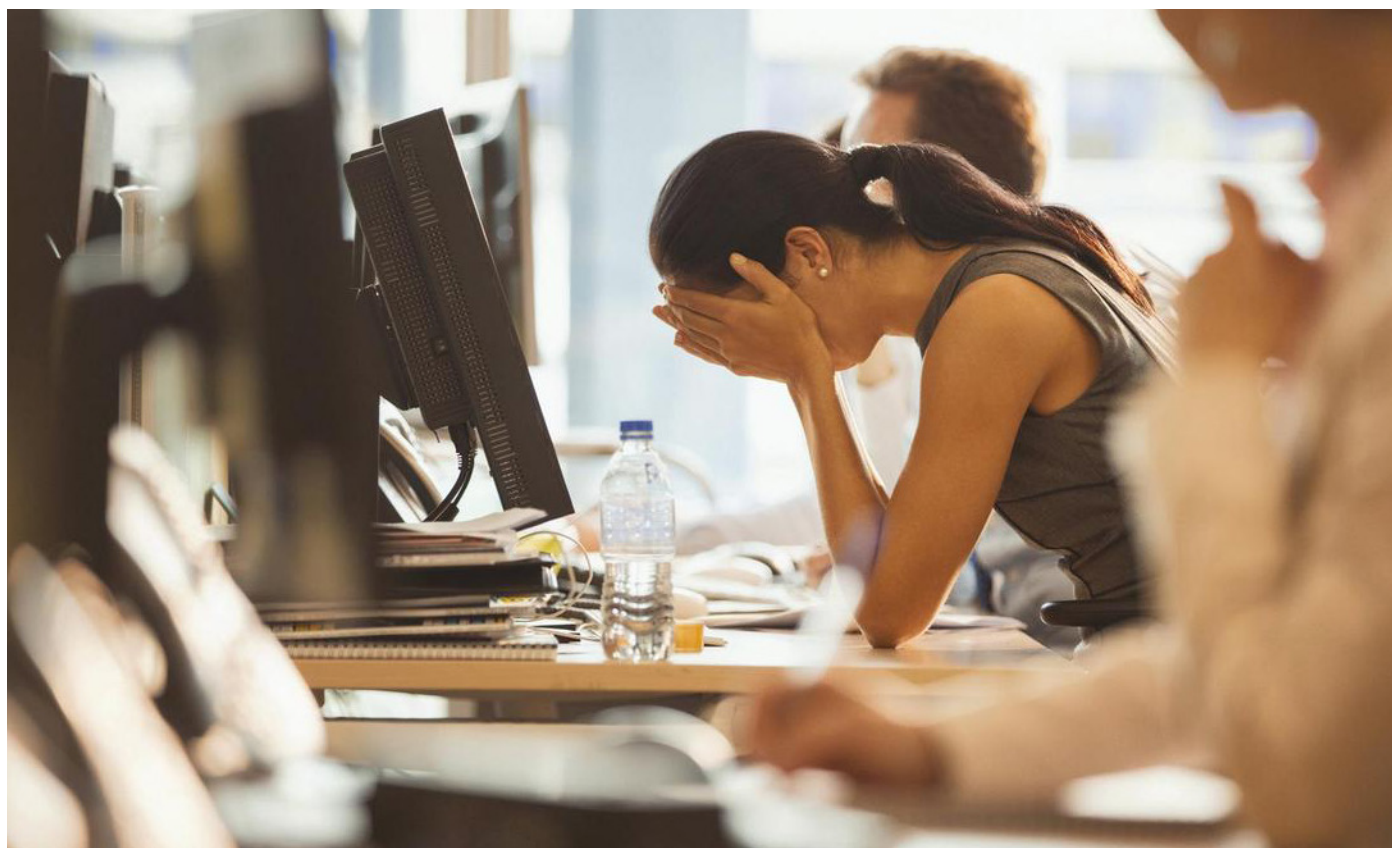


The COVID-19 pandemic also caused greatly or somewhat increased stress among women desk workers of all races: 70% for Black women, 72% for LatinX women, 60% for Asian women and 67% for white women.

Response to Stress: Ask for Help vs. Handle on My Own

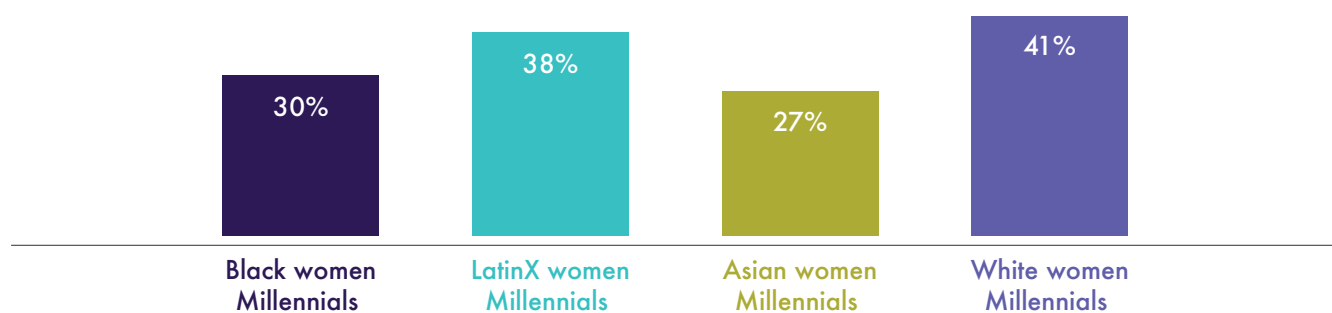
The respondents did report generational and racial divides in answer to the question of asking for help to deal with stress on the job.

- Of Millennials, 27% of Asian women said they were least likely to ask for help, as opposed to 41% of white Millennial women.
- All Gen Z female groups, 48% Black, 50% Latinx, 45% Asian, 41% white, were more likely to anticipate asking for help than dealing with stress on their own, compared to older generations. This finding is important for prospective employers. The youngest generation of workers wants greater support on the job, more access to resources to enhance their sense of well-being.

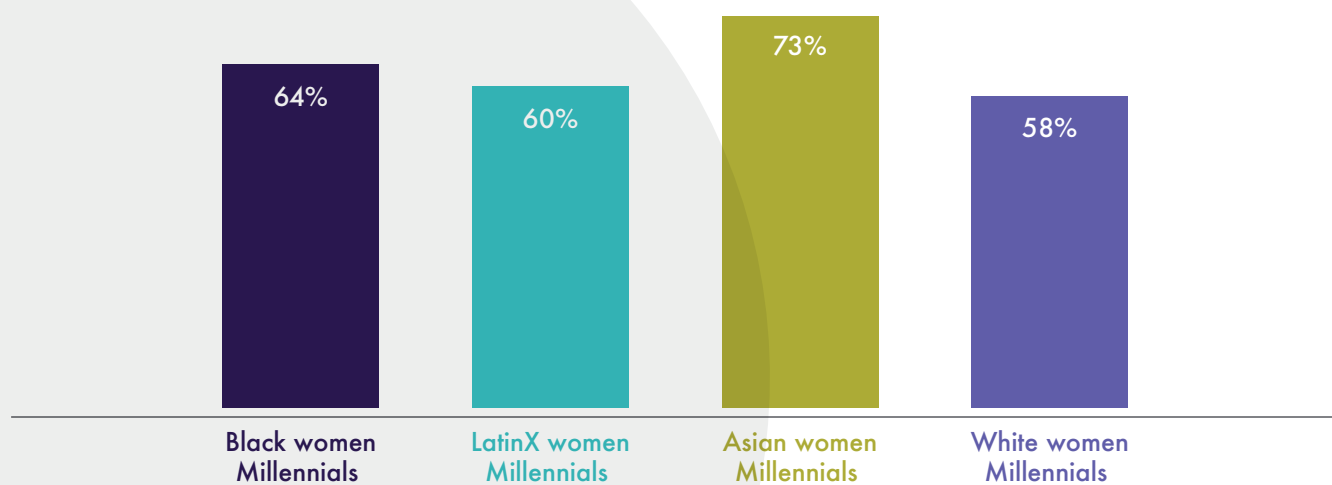


APPROACH TO WORK STRESS

Talk to or seek guidance from other people at work

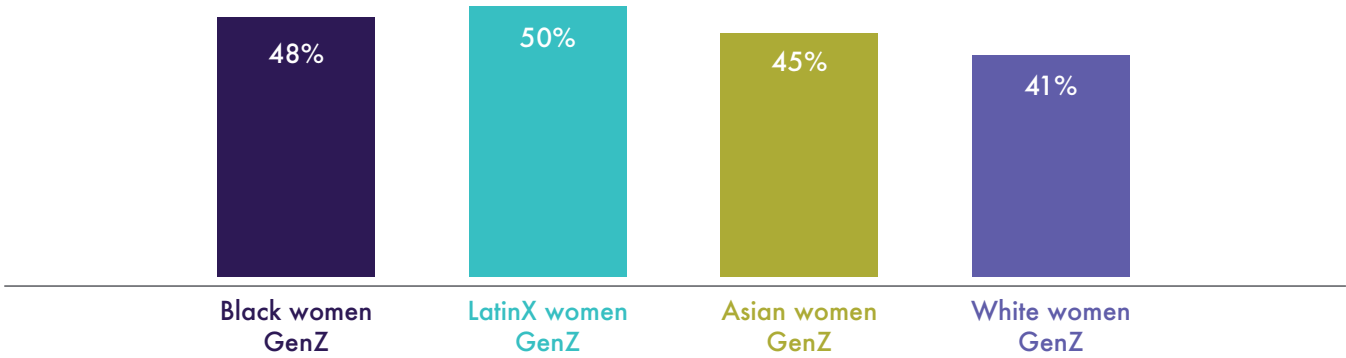


Handle it on my own

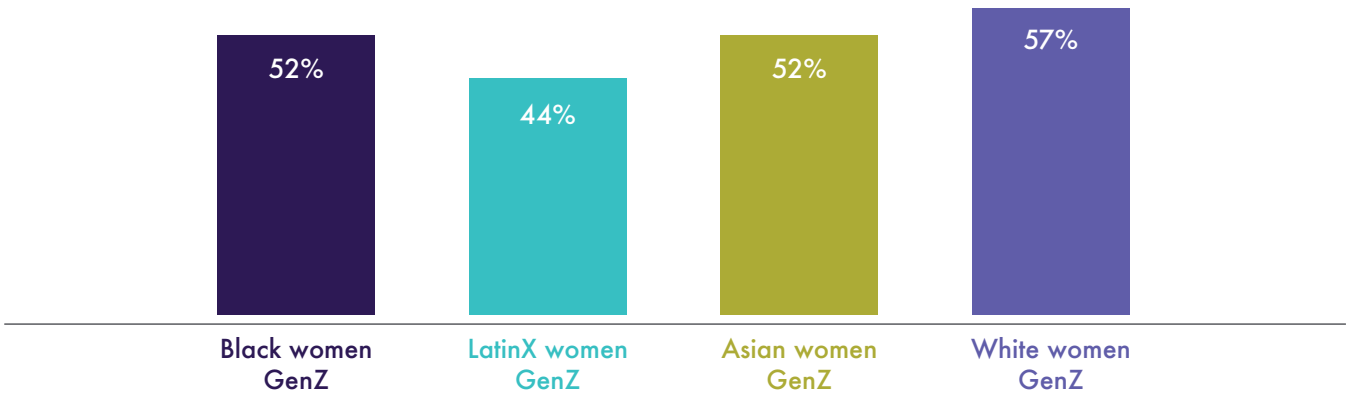


GEN Z - LIKELY APPROACH TO WORK STRESS

Talk to or seek guidance from other people at work



Handle it on my own



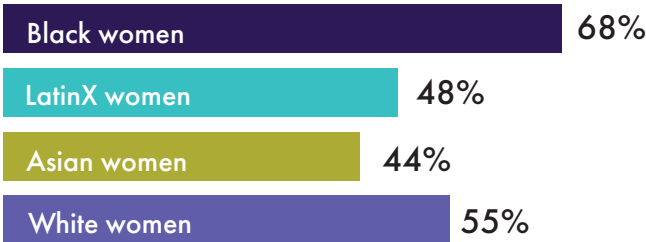
Contributions, Authenticity, Optimism, Confidence

Despite facing scrutiny in the workplace, Black women across all generations continued to show remarkable optimism, entrepreneurial spirit, and confidence in both their abilities and futures.

- Although Black female desk workers were least likely to feel that people at work root for them, and most likely to feel that their work was evaluated with scrutiny due to their identity, of all women surveyed, they were most likely to report that they have made strong contributions at work.
- 68% of Black Millennials felt this way, compared to 55% of white Millennial women.

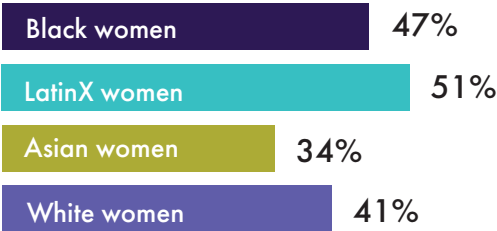
MILLENNIALS: CAREER AND JOB SATISFACTION

**I've made strong contributions
in the jobs I've had**

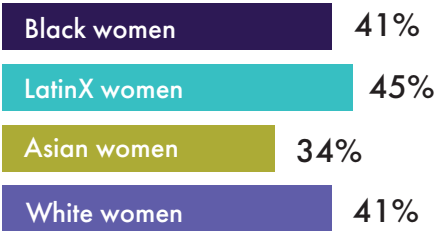


MILLENNIALS: CAREER AND JOB SATISFACTION

I've had the opportunity to do meaningful and satisfying work



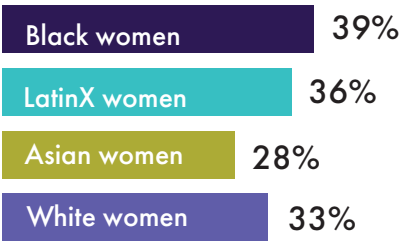
I've had good opportunities for career growth and development appropriate to my skill level and contributions



Black female desk workers said that their work has had a good impact on society to a greater degree than women in other races.

MILLENNIALS: CAREER AND JOB SATISFACTION

I feel as though my work in my job has had a good impact on society more broadly



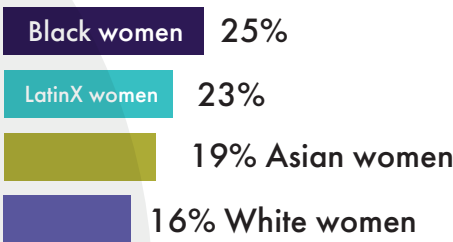
Asian women reported the lowest levels of career satisfaction.

- Only 39% of Millennials strongly agreed that they have had the opportunity to do meaningful work, compared to 48% Black, 48% LatinX, and 42% white women. This trend was consistent with 2019 data.

Just 25% of Black women were satisfied that they have earned and saved as much as they want for their lifestyles. All of the other races reported even less financial satisfaction.

MILLENNIALS: FINANCIAL SATISFACTION

I’ve been able to earn and save as much as I would like for the lifestyle I want

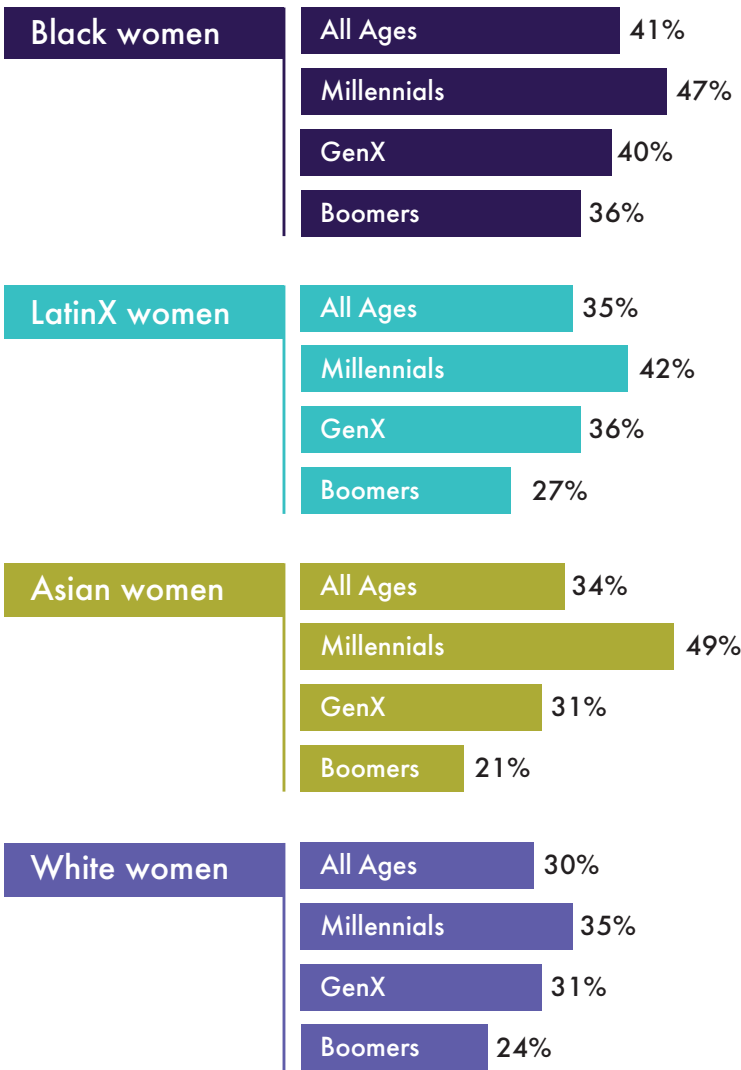


Authenticity

Majorities of female desk workers across the races reported that they can be their authentic selves at work, despite any external pressures they may face.

AUTHENTICITY AT WORK

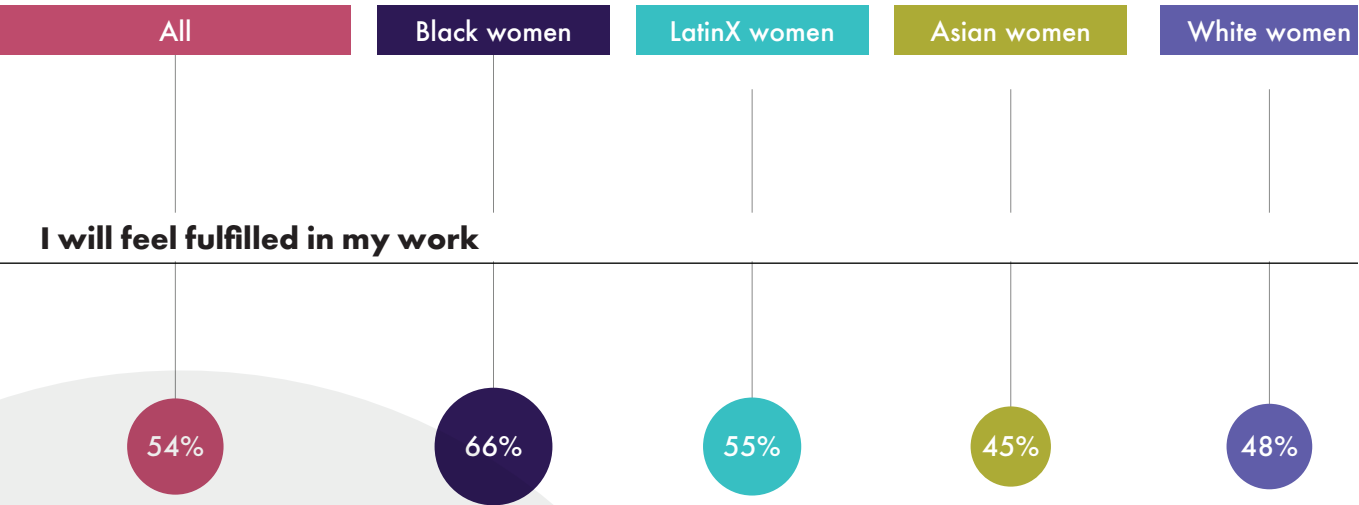
I have to tone down who I really am to better fit in



Gen Z Career Optimism Expectations: Fulfilling Work and Strong Contributions

- Among the youngest desk workers, Gen Z Black women were the most optimistic that they will have fulfilling work experiences:
 - 66% anticipated feeling fulfilled in their work, compared to 55% LatinX, 45% Asian women, 48% white.

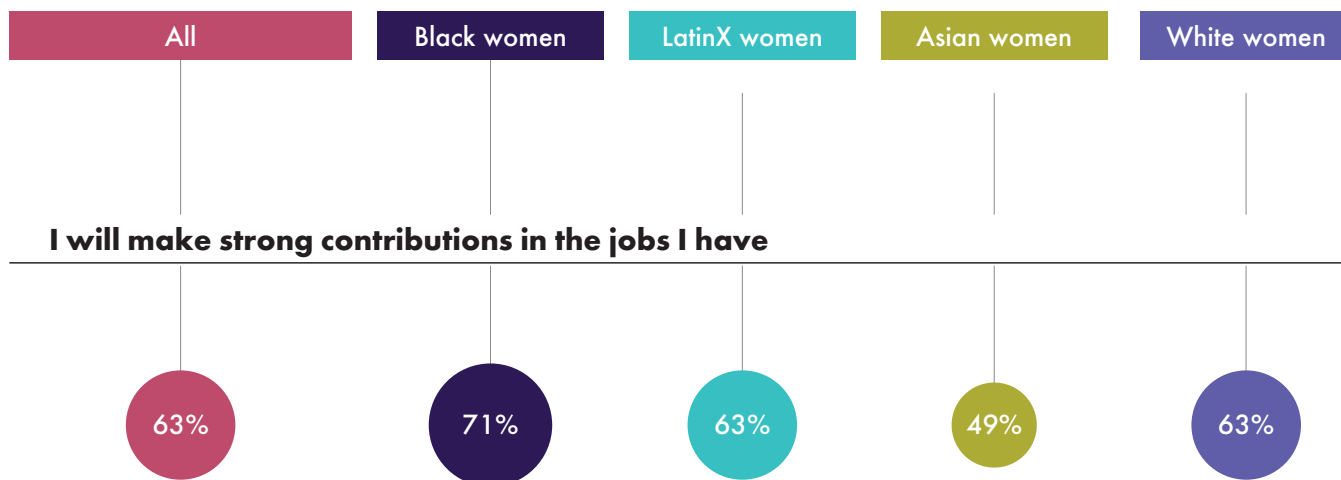
GEN Z CAREER EXPECTATIONS



Gen Z Career Optimism Expectations: Fulfilling Work and Strong Contributions

- Likewise, 71% of Black Gen Z female desk workers expected to make strong contributions to their jobs.
 - The other races were slightly less optimistic. 63% of LatinX and white Gen Z women expected to make strong contributions to their jobs. Asian women were the least optimistic at just 49%.

GEN Z CAREER EXPECTATIONS



These trends were consistent for all questions relating to future career opportunities and emphasize the need for inclusive leaders to appreciate the greater desire for belonging and care that the incoming generation of workers expects.

Take the #TeamUp Challenges

After analyzing their data over two years, the authors have developed a series of challenges for both managers and individual desk workers. These challenges are intended to help everyone “lead, empower, and thrive” in their workplaces.

Challenge #1

For Senior Leaders and Managers:

Eradicate the “Onlys” on your team by hiring more of them. Look around and understand where “Onlys” reside within your company and track when critical mass is reached, particularly in teams of 20+.

Challenge #2

For Senior Leaders and Managers:

Hire in multiples and strive for overall workplace belonging.

Goal:

Reduce the 46% of Black women who have frequently or always been the only person of their race in a professional situation to 25% by 2025 and 0% soon thereafter.

Conclusion

A troubling reality emerged in the *2019 Women of Color in Business: Cross-Generational Survey*®. Nearly half, 47%, of Black female desk workers reported that they were always or frequently the “only” person of their race in a professional setting. In 2020, the figure went down by just one point to 46%. For LatinX women in 2020, more than a third, 36%, said that they were always or frequently the only person of their race in a professional setting, an improvement over the 41% reported in 2019.

The authors are challenging organizations, specifically corporations and venture capital firms, to reduce the number of “Onlys” to 25% by 2025 and to zero soon thereafter. In the six months since the publication of “A Blessing: Women of Color Teaming Up to Lead, Empower and Thrive,” the authors have been advocating that our “inclusive allies” hire us, hire women of color in multiples. Given that the “Onlys” finding improved by only 1%, the authors stress that increasing the numbers of underrepresented minorities in corporations now is an urgent, yet easily actionable activity.

A new suggestion for achieving the “moonshot goal” of zero “Onlys” is to ensure that all managers are trained before they assume people management responsibilities, and that existing managers are adequately trained and retrained regularly to empower their teams, recognize bias, and reward great performers. More importantly, managers should be held accountable for their people management capabilities as, increasingly, these skill sets will have a direct correlation to the risks and the rewards of the workplace.

Given the ambition, creativity and confidence demonstrated by Gen Z and Millennial women of colors, the authors have been told, “Women of color are thirsty right now. And we all have an opportunity to bring them a glass of water.” Teaming up is the glass; great managers can be the water.

Great managers matter.