



**EQUALITY  
GROUP**

# **BAME BOSS;**

Ethnic Minority Aspirations  
of Being on the Board



59% of ethnic minority citizens aspire to be on the board  
BUT only 2% make it



55% ethnic minority Brits have been advised to be  
'more realistic' about their career aspirations



Half of the UK's ethnic minorities have stated that they have  
no prominent professional role models of their ethnicity



46% of ethnic minorities advised to commence a career NOT  
relevant to their skills or interests



50% of BAME Brits in 2018 are the first in their family to  
attend higher education- verses 26% of non-ethnic minorities

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Hephzi Pemberton, founder of Equality Group has commissioned nationally representative research that delves into UK ethnic minority citizens, their career aspirations and the inequalities that persist within the world of work. This research is launched amidst latest industry data that shows only 84 of the 1,048 directors in the FTSE100, originate from an ethnic minority. Contextualised by the disconcerting fact that there are more directors called Dave or Steve within these 100 companies than there are women or ethnic minorities, this timely research unveils a damning insight and ever-present reality that impacts almost 8 million Brits attempting to succeed in the UK's professional arena. Underpinned by an overwhelming drive to succeed in positions of seniority, the study commissioned by Equality Group- an organisation that helps companies attract, retain and develop diverse talent- unveils majority sentiments of ambition, academic prowess and unwavering perseverance propelling the UK ethnic minority workplace forward. Whether this sentiment is met by an academic and/or professional infrastructure is questioned significantly given that 46% -2.5 million- ethnic minority citizens were encouraged to commence their career in a role that did not reflect their career aspirations or academic credentials at that time.

As cited by the University of Leicester in 2017, students from ethnic minority groups have, academically, significantly improved over the last two decades and are achieving higher grades than the national average. With this in mind, it is important to assess ethnic minority experience upon leaving education in order to understand how such stark differences within the professional career ladder has occurred.

# Key statistics

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- Over 3 million ethnic minority Brits (59%) aspired upon leaving school of securing a role at senior management, director and/or board level
- Half of ethnic minority respondents noted that there are no prominent role models of their ethnic profile in positions they aspire/ have aspired to reach professionally
- 58% -over 3 million- ethnic minority citizens stated that they had friends and family role models who they considered aspirational in relation to their career progression
- Over half, 55% -almost 3 million-ethnic minority citizens declared that they were advised to be more realistic in regards of their career goals by those who influenced their career, compared to only 19% of non-minority ethnic citizens.
- 46% -2.5 million- ethnic minority citizens were encouraged to commence their career in a role that did not reflect their career aspirations or academic credentials at that time.
- Three quarters of minority respondents, 75%- almost 4 million people-noted that their professional success is down to personal merit, conviction and perseverance and not the guidance of academic or professional support.
- 50% of ethnic minority respondents were the first generation within their family to attend university verses only 26% of non-ethnic respondents.
- 46% - two and a half million- ethnic minority citizens stated they would feel supported if there is ethnic minority representation at board/director level as they believe it would aid their career progression in a fairer manner.

## Lack of ethnic minority representation within business and the repercussions of this:

Half of ethnic minority respondents noted that they had no professional role models of their ethnic profile within the UK's professional landscape. This is extremely topical yet unsurprising given that the FTSE has just noted a drop in the number of ethnic minority Directors in the UK's largest 100 companies to only 84 out of 1,048. The underrepresentation of relevant role models and the subsequent lack of identification that ethnic minority citizens have with people in positions of authority, largely contributes to the underrepresentation of ethnic minority citizens on boards.

# BAME vs Non-BAME Aspirations, Assistance, and Work

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- I had aspirations upon leaving school of securing a role at senior management, director and/or board level.

BAME	NON BAME
59% agree	14% agree

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- I felt I had clear guidance from teachers, professors and career advisors regarding the choices I should make to get the career I wanted.

BAME	NON BAME
49% agree	18% agree

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- I had friends and family role models who guided me, that I considered aspirational in relation to career my progression.

BAME	NON BAME
58% agree	26% agree

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- There are no prominent role models of my ethnic profile in positions I aspire/ have aspired to reach professionally.

BAME	NON BAME
50% agree	14% agree

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- I was advised to be more realistic of my career goals by those who influenced my career progression.

BAME	NON BAME
55% agree	21% agree

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- I was encouraged to commence my career in a role that did not reflect my career aspirations or academic credentials at that time.

BAME	NON BAME
46% agree	19% agree

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- My professional success is down to personal merit, conviction and perseverance & not the guidance of academic or professional support.

BAME	NON BAME
75% agree	63% agree

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- I was the first generation in my family to attend university.

BAME	NON BAME
50% agree	26% agree

## Hepzhi Pemberton, CEO and Founder of Equality Group

comments on the report:

“This report makes it clear that ethnic minority students have strong support structures available to them throughout their educational careers. However, there seems to be a significant deficit upon entering the world of work. This research indicates that young ethnic minority students have significant levels of professional aspiration, supported by an educational infrastructure, that should, in theory, enable them to excel within their chosen professional careers. This is however far from the reality when assessing the UK’s BAME representation at senior management, board and director level. It is a shocking reality that in 2018, the workplace does not nurture and support BAME talent in a manner that reflects the undeniable aspirations prominent in this community. As a society of business leaders, decision-makers, professionals & commentators, we have an obligation to ensure that intention is met with action to ensure the UK’s workforce - in its entirety - has access to a democratised career ladder that promotes inclusion for all at every level.”

## About Equality Group

Equality Group harnesses the power of diverse leaders for Finance, Technology and Social Impact. They change the business landscape by widening the range of exceptional candidates and offering them unique leadership opportunities. Their consultancy service helps companies attract, retain and develop diverse talent, which our Executive Search service headhunts.

