



# EXAMINING THE DRAW OF DIVERSITY: HOW DIVERSITY CLIMATE PERCEPTIONS AFFECT JOB-PURSUIT INTENTIONS

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*Organizations must target talented applicants, who will often be demographically diverse, to attract the most competent and competitive workforce possible. Despite the bottom-line implications of attracting the best and brightest, surprisingly little is known about how and why diversity recruitment strategies affect recruitment outcomes (e.g., job-pursuit intentions). To gain insight into this question, we conducted an initial experimental study (N = 194) to test the premise that other-group orientation moderates the relationship between perceived organizational value of diversity and job-pursuit intentions. In a follow-up experiment (N = 255), identity affirmation was examined as the mediating mechanism for the interaction observed in the first study. Mediated moderation analyses supported the proposed model. Collectively, the studies indicate that job seekers high in other-group orientation are more intent on pursuing employment with organizations deemed to value diversity because they feel that their salient identities are likely to be affirmed. No such indirect effect is present for those lower in other-group orientation.*

*Keywords:* job-pursuit intentions; organizational value of diversity; identity affirmation; other-group orientation

**F**ew areas of human resource management are as vital to organizational success as effective personnel recruitment. Even efficacy in other personnel matters is unlikely to compensate for an inability to attract a high-caliber applicant pool. Given such clear importance, it

is not surprising that recruitment has been an intensely researched topic. Nevertheless, despite literally thousands of studies examining the effects of personnel recruitment, much about the topic remains uncertain (Breugh, Macon, & Gambrow, 2008). One facet seemingly in dire need of further research attention

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is the role played by diversity perceptions during recruitment processes (Avery & McKay, 2006; Kulik & Roberson, 2008; Ployhart, 2006). Unfortunately, many companies have found applicant attraction to be challenging in today's ever-diversifying landscape, which recently led Ployhart (2006, p. 877) to conclude that one of the pressing issues for staffing research is to determine "effective recruitment practices for enhancing diversity."

Though organizational diversity may not be a deal breaker for all job seekers, its influence during the recruitment process should not be

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underestimated. In fact, roughly a third of female and racioethnic minority job seekers have eliminated a prospective employer from further consideration due to insufficient diversity (Thaler-Carter, 2001). Some authors (e.g., Williamson, Slay, Shapiro, & Shivers-Blackwell, 2008) suggest that this may be because people of all racial groups seek evidence of human resource policies (e.g., diversity practices) that will help their career prospects. Moreover, though research indicates that applicant attraction to organizations is influenced more by type of work and organization image than by diversity (Chapman,

Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005), factors that are initially less important often have a considerable impact on final decisions (Osborn, 1990). Accordingly, diversity often plays a critical role in recruiting efforts (Cober, Brown, & Levy, 2004) and is worthy of increased empirical attention.

The existing research in this area paints a somewhat confusing picture concerning the consequences of emphasizing diversity information during personnel recruitment. For example, Thomas and Wise (1999) found that minority applicants tend to place greater importance on diversity factors during a job search than their white counterparts do. This notion has received subsequent empirical support (Avery & McKay, 2006). Other research, however, indicates that white job seekers are not immune to

diversity information when evaluating prospective employers, as their level of organizational attraction also varies considerably when diversity cues appear during recruitment (Avery, 2003; Brown, Cober, Keeping, & Levy, 2006; Umphress, Smith-Crowe, Brief, Dietz, & Watkins, 2007). Another study found that, irrespective of one's racioethnicity, ethnic identity influenced the effect of diversity cues on attraction (Kim & Gelfand, 2003). Despite each of these studies being informative in its own right, the collective interpretation is unclear concerning whom diversity cues are likely to attract or dissuade, and how these prospective differential effects are manifested. For this reason, in their recent review of diversity recruitment research, Avery and McKay (2006) concluded that the literature would benefit from further consideration of moderators of the effects of diversity cues during recruitment.

To clarify existing diversity recruitment theory and help organizations optimize their diversity recruitment efforts, we develop and test theory that stipulates an individual's personal beliefs about diversity (i.e., other-group orientation, or OGO) as a moderator and identity affirmation as a mediating mechanism of the relationship between organizational value of diversity (OVD) and a recruitment outcome, job-pursuit intentions (JPI; applicants' intentions to submit an application, interview, or accept a job offer; Smither, Millsap, Stoffey, Reilly, & Pearlman, 1996). OVD, though similar to constructs like identity safety (Davies, Spencer, & Steele, 2005) and social identity contingencies (Purdie-Vaughns, Davies, Steele, Ditlmann, & Crosby, 2008), is distinct. To elaborate, OVD is individuals' perception of what value an organization places on diversity (Avery, McKay, Wilson, & Tonidandel, 2007). Individuals ascertain OVD by taking cues from various organizational actions (e.g., whether they emphasize diversity initiatives during recruitment). Comparatively, identity safety is defined as an environment where stigmatized social identities are not a threat to success (Davies et al., 2005), and social identity contingencies are judgments, stereotypes, opportunities, restrictions, and treatments that are tied to one's social identity in a

setting (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). Though identity safety and social identity contingencies are likely correlated positively with OVD, they reference a specific environment or setting, whereas OVD is a collection of behaviors demonstrated by an organization. As such, identity safety and social identity do not have the same referent as OVD and, thus, are distinct.

We continue to explore the OVD-JPI relationship throughout the remainder of the article. Specifically, the article is organized as follows. We begin by developing theoretical arguments to explain why OVD affects applicant attraction. Specifically, in Study 1, we utilize archival data to provide a preliminary test of OGO as a moderator of the OVD-JPI relationship. Although knowledge about boundary conditions of this linkage likely helps organizations to recruit more diverse personnel, *why* this trait (in combination with OVD) increases attraction of demographically diverse employees is still unclear. This is unfortunate because understanding “job seeker attributions regarding targeted recruitment may determine the ultimate success of these efforts” (Avery & McKay, 2006, p. 174). In addition, given possible limitations of the first study (e.g., the cross-sectional design), in Study 2 we conducted a constructive replication, which “strengthens confidence in the validity of the hypothesized relationships” (Eden, 2002, p. 842).

Thus, in a second study, we replicate and extend the results of the first by experimentally manipulating OVD and examining the mediating role of the individual’s beliefs about the extent to which the company provides an atmosphere that is conducive to, or affirms, their identity. In short, the two complementary studies contribute to the diversity and recruitment literatures by (a) clarifying how prospective job seekers’ perceptions of the value a company places on diversity influence decisions to pursue employment with an organization, (b) highlighting a key contingency influencing the nature of this proposed relationship, and (c) identifying the mechanism underlying this process.

## Study 1

### *Other-Group Orientation as a Moderator of the OVD-JPI Relationship*

Because there is considerable variance in the degree to which people enjoy working in diverse settings (Tsui & Gutek, 1999), it is unlikely that diversity perceptions affect all job applicants in the same manner. One individual difference that likely influences the impact of OVD among job seekers is OGO, or the extent to which individuals interact and feel comfortable with people of other ethnic groups (Phinney, 1992). Individuals high in OGO tend to enjoy meeting and corresponding with members of other racial and ethnic groups more than individuals low in the trait. This in turn results in heightened social and community connectedness (Lee, 2003), satisfaction with intergroup contact (Phelps et al., 1998), and favorable positive multicultural attitudes (Worrell & Gardner-Kitt, 2006) for the former group. In addition to embracing intergroup differences, OGO positively influences career decision-making self-efficacy (Gloria & Hird, 1999) and job seekers’ reactions to racially diverse recruitment advertisements (Avery, 2003). Accordingly, those higher in OGO are prone to look for organizations that provide and encourage such opportunities, whereas those with lower OGO are unlikely to seek an employer that they perceive to value diversity.

Some empirical evidence suggests OGO would act as a moderator of the OVD-JPI relationship. In what appears to be the only study to examine OGO within a recruitment context, Avery (2003) found that it moderated the effect of racial diversity in advertisements on black and white job seekers’ perceptions of organizational attractiveness. Although ad diversity is one means for prospective employers to signal the company’s

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stance on diversity (Avery & McKay, 2006), Avery's (2003) concern was explaining variation in racioethnic differences in job seeking via three-way interactions between race, ad diversity, and OGO. We believe OGO likely affects the more general OVD-JPI relationship as well, irrespective of an individual's racioethnicity. On the one hand, a person strongly oriented toward interacting with dissimilar others may be attracted to a diversity-friendly work environment based on the belief that it would provide them with greater opportunities to interact with different group members on a regular basis. On the other hand, a person low in OGO would not necessarily be drawn to such an

organization because the work environment would violate their preference for homogeneity in their surroundings.

In exploring the OVD  $\times$  OGO interaction on JPI, we draw on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). According to this perspective, individuals seek out settings that affirm (or are conducive to) their important identities because it makes them feel good about themselves. To identify such settings, job seekers likely gather cues signaling to them that the organization shares their values or provides an environment that will permit them to act on the prin-

ciples in which they believe (Highhouse & Hoffman, 2001). We propose that OGO moderates the OVD-JPI relationship through this social identification process. Prior authors (e.g., Kim & Gelfand, 2003) have argued in-group orientation operates via a similar process. However, OGO is different from in-group orientation because OGO describes the extent to which individuals feel comfortable interacting with out-group members, which is often not strongly related to people's feelings about in-group members (Lewis & Sherman, 2010). Therefore, we believe that value is added by studying OGO despite what previous research shows us about how in-group attitudes influence job-seeking processes. Based on this reasoning, we

propose the following relationship between OVD, OGO, and JPI:

*Hypothesis 1: OGO will moderate the relationship between perceived organizational value of diversity and job-pursuit intentions such that it will be more strongly positive for those with higher OGO.*

## Method

### Sample and Procedures

The dataset used to test the hypotheses was described partially in a previous study (Avery, Hernandez, & Hebl, 2004). However, the previous and present studies offer different theoretical contributions and focus on distinct dependent variables.<sup>1</sup> Study participants included 194 individuals from various locations around the United States. Participants were solicited from multiple locations in the United States using various methods (via the Internet for MBA students, using traditional student solicitation methods for undergraduate and graduate students at a southern university, and approached at a large southern airport while waiting for a flight for other participants). A Box's M test showed that the covariance matrices of the study measures were equal across the three methods of collection ( $F[12, 31791.19] = 1.31, p = .21$ ), and, thus, we combined the data for further analyses.

Participants agreed to take part in a study on the topic of corporate marketing. Each participant received a brochure that included basic information about the company (i.e., an expanding managerial consulting firm with offices in multiple locations) and a picture of a company representative. The racioethnicity of the representative was experimentally manipulated (black, Hispanic, or white), and the brochure also contained a page with the following measures.

### Measures

Participants responded to the following items using a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). We averaged the items representing

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each construct to form scales, with higher scores denoting greater standing on the construct of interest.

### Job-Pursuit Intentions

We used three items similar to those used in previous research (e.g., Aiman-Smith, Bauer, & Cable, 2001) to assess participants' JPI ( $\alpha = .85$ ). A sample item is "I would exert a great deal of effort to work for this company."

### Perceived Organizational Value of Diversity

Based on prior scales used to assess organizational diversity perceptions (e.g., Mor Barak, Cherin, & Berkman, 1998), we created a four-item scale ( $\alpha = .75$ ). The items were "Clearly, diversity is not important to this company," "Employees at this company are probably very similar to one another," "I suspect that this company discriminates against minorities," and "It is unlikely that this company employs many minorities." Items were reverse-scored such that higher scores indicate greater perceived OVD.

### Other-Group Orientation

We used a subscale of Phinney's (1992) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure to assess OGO. These six items (e.g., "I like meeting and getting to know people from ethnic groups other than my own") proved to be internally consistent ( $\alpha = .81$ ).

### Controls

We used dummy coding to account for the effects of sex (i.e., female) and race/ethnicity (i.e., black, Hispanic) as they could influence both OVD and JPI.

### Results

The means, standard deviations, and correlations for all Study 1 variables are presented in Table I. To provide evidence that the participants differentiated between the three measured variables in the study, we examined OVD, OGO, and JPI items in four competing measurement models (see Table II). A single-factor model examined the goodness of fit when OVD, OGO, and JPI items loaded on one common factor. Next, two two-factor models looked at (a) OVD and OGO on one factor and JPI on the other and (b) OVD and JPI on one factor with OGO serving as the second factor. Finally, a three-factor model tested the hypothesized data structure by examining the goodness of fit when OVD, OGO, and JPI items loaded on independent factors. To compare the goodness of fit of these measurement models, we relied on the chi-square test, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI). Models resulting in RMSEA values of less than .08 and CFI and TLI values of .90 or higher are considered acceptable (Bentler, 1990). Thus, the model fit indices indicated that the three-factor model provided the best fit to the data.

**TABLE I** Study 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for All Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Female	.46	.50	–					
2. Black	.30	.46	.08	–				
3. Hispanic	.27	.44	–.07	–	–			
4. OGO	5.94	.93	.02	.03	.07	(.81)		
5. Perceived value of diversity	5.44	.80	–.00	–.01	.03	.02	(.75)	
6. Job-pursuit intentions	3.56	1.49	.14*	.04	.15*	.10	.05	(.85)

Note: *N* = 194; female, black, and Hispanic are dummy coded (1 = female, black, Hispanic, respectively); coefficient alphas are presented on the diagonal.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

**TABLE II Study 1: Comparative Fit Indices for Two Measurement Models**

Model	$\chi^2$	df	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	$\Delta\chi^2$	$\Delta df$	p
Three-factor model	91.19	62	.05	.96	.96	–	–	–
Two-factor model A	277.04	64	.13	.74	.68	185.85	2	.01
Two-factor model B	277.55	64	.13	.74	.68	186.36	2	.01
One-factor model	521.32	65	.19	.44	.33	430.13	3	.01

Note:  $N = 194$ . Two-factor model A combines the independent variable and moderator, whereas model B combines the independent variable and dependent variable. The chi-squared difference tests compare the fit of each alternative model to that of the expected three-factor model.

**TABLE III Study 1: Summary of Regression Analyses Predicting Job-Pursuit Intentions**

Variable	B (SE)	B (SE)
Female	.43* (.21)	.42* (.21)
Black	.36 (.25)	.29 (.25)
Hispanic	.68** (.26)	.61* (.26)
Perceived value of diversity (OVD)	.08 (.13)	.09 (.13)
Other-group orientation (OGO)	.13 (.11)	.09 (.11)
OVD * OGO		.31** (.13)
$\Delta R^2$	.07*	.03**
$R^2$	.07	.10

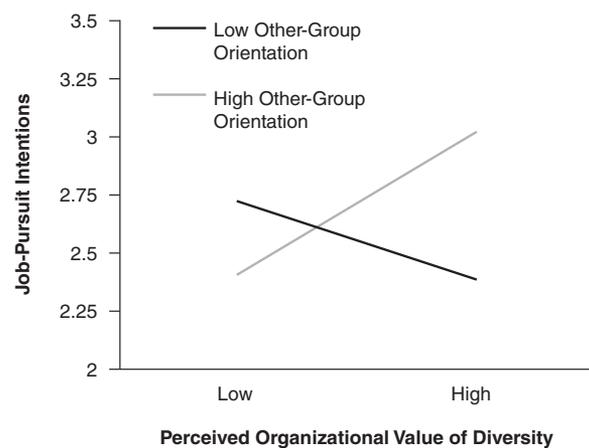
Note:  $N = 194$ ; female, black, and Hispanic are dummy coded (1 = female, black, Hispanic, respectively).

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

In the first step of a hierarchical moderated multiple regression (see Table III), participants' gender, race/ethnicity, OGO, and OVD were entered. In step two, the  $OVD \times OGO$  interaction was added. The  $OVD \times OGO$  interaction on JPI was statistically significant ( $B = .31$ ,  $p = .01$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .03$ ). In support of Hypothesis 1, which predicted that OGO would moderate the perceived OVD-JPI relationship, our results showed that a significantly stronger, positive association between OVD perceptions and JPI was observed among those with higher OGO ( $B = .38$ ,  $p = .03$ ) compared to those with lower OGO ( $B = -.20$ ,  $p = .24$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 1 received support (see Figure 1 for a graphic illustration of this interaction using the procedures described by Cohen and Cohen, 1983).

## Discussion

The results of Study 1 suggest that participant OGO moderated the OVD-JPI relationship.



**FIGURE 1.** Study 1: The Interactive Effect of OGO and Perceived Organizational Value of Diversity on Job-Pursuit Intentions

Nevertheless, limitations in the methodology necessitate replication and extension of its findings. For instance, all variables in the model were measured via self-report, and

thus may be subject to percept-percept inflation that could increase the covariation among variables and enlarge the calculated correlations in the present study (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Further, we measured and investigated OGO as moderating the OVD-JPI relationship but failed to assess potential mediators of this interactive relationship. Thus, in Study 2, we aim to replicate the moderating effect of OGO in addition to investigating identity affirmation as a possible mechanism underlying the OVD-JPI relationship.

## Study 2

To remedy the shortcomings and validate the findings from the first study, we experimentally manipulated the recruiting organization's value placed on diversity using an organizational impression management approach similar to that described by Avery and McKay (2006). Through this methodology, we sought to specify, as elaborated here, identity affirmation as a key mediator of the moderating effect of OGO on the OVD-JPI relationship.

### *Identity Affirmation as a Mediator*

As Hypothesis 1 indicated, we believe OGO moderates the OVD-JPI relationship. However, there is likely more to this relationship. Specifically, we explore identity affirmation as a mediating mechanism in the OVD  $\times$  OGO-JPI relationship. To begin, we believe that OVD is related to identity affirmation and that this relationship is moderated by OGO. When organizations value diversity (i.e., high OVD), applicants' identities are more likely to be affirmed. Put another way, applicants feel that their identities are accepted, no matter how diverse they are. Conversely, when organizations do not value diversity (i.e., low OVD), applicants are less likely to have confidence that their identities are accepted at that organization.

Further, OGO exacerbates the OVD-identity affirmation relationship. To elaborate, when organizations are high in OVD and applicants are high in OGO, both organizations and the applicant embrace diversity.

As such, applicants' identities are affirmed. Conversely, when organizations value diversity and applicants are low in OGO, applicants' identities are not affirmed because there is a mismatch between the organization's values and their own values. This is also the case when organizations are low in OVD and applicants are high in OGO. Contrastingly, when organizations are low in OVD and applicants are low in OGO, applicants' identities are affirmed.

Next, we believe that identity affirmation is related to JPI. When identity affirmation is high, this condition should relate to applicants' intentions to pursue employment. However, when identity affirmation is low, applicants' intentions to pursue employment should also be low. As such, OVD  $\times$  OGO relates to identity affirmation. In turn, identity affirmation relates to JPI. Together, these theoretical assertions suggest that (a) organizational value of diversity will be associated with heightened job-pursuit intentions via identity affirmation, and (b) this indirect effect should be stronger for people placing greater value on diversity (i.e., high OGO) than for those who do not (i.e., low OGO). Therefore, we propose the following in Hypothesis 2:

*Hypothesis 2: Identity affirmation will mediate the moderated relationship between organizational value of diversity and job-pursuit intentions. Specifically, the organizational value of the diversity-identity affirmation relationship (stage 1) will be stronger for those higher in other-group orientation.*

## Method

### *Sample and Procedures*

Participants were 263 students from a large southern university in the United States. Participants were presented with stimuli that manipulated sections of recruitment advertisements (e.g., Williamson et al., 2008). To elaborate, each participant was assigned randomly to view one of four versions of a fictitious consulting company's website (i.e., LODI Consulting Company). These versions represented the four levels of

OVD (i.e., low, medium low, medium high, and high). To create the four differing levels of OVD, we embedded two manipulations of company OVD (ordinal variable) in each website. First, we varied diversity-related information by changing the number and type of diversity awards received by the company. Second, we manipulated the number and type of languages in which the company's website was available. The combination of these two manipulations resulted in four versions of LODI's website.

Further, we chose to manipulate language and awards, as opposed to other variables, because they are more objective than other features of websites are (e.g., pictures, narratives). For example, pictures and narratives can be falsified or fabricated by organizations that are trying to manage impressions of their organization. However, the number of languages that a website is available in and the number and type of awards that an organization has been given are not variables that are under control of organizations. As such, viewers of organizational websites are more likely to believe information coming from a third party (i.e., awards, languages) than information that is directly under the control of organizations (e.g., pictures, narratives). Additionally, range restriction likely exists when it comes to the use of website pictures depicting diversity. Specifically, increasing numbers of organizations know about the positive effects that come about as a result of using diverse pictures as a recruiting tool. Consequently, range

restriction exists because in this day and age, a majority of companies do not use pictures of demographically homogenous employees (i.e., pictures that represent low levels of diversity; Cober et al., 2004). After viewing one of the versions of the fictitious company's website, participants completed a short online survey.

## Measures

Study participants responded to each of the following measures, using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), unless otherwise noted. Higher scores denote greater standing on the construct of interest. Coefficient alphas for each scale used in Study 2 are presented in Table IV, and the full scales are in the Appendix.

### OGO

As in Study 1, we used Phinney's (1992) measure to assess OGO ( $\alpha = .81$ ).

### Job-Pursuit Intentions

We used five items similar to those used in previous research (Aiman-Smith et al., 2001) and similar to the JPI scale used in Study 1, to assess JPI ( $\alpha = .88$ ).

### Identity Affirmation

Based upon prior identity affirmation work in organizational settings (e.g., Ashforth & Mael,

**TABLE IV** Study 2: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for All Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Female	.84	.37	–							
2. Asian	.28	.45	–.04	–						
3. Black	.16	.37	–.08	–	–					
4. Hispanic	.21	.40	.05	–	–	–				
5. Other race	.06	.24	–.02	–	–	–	–			
6. OGO	4.05	.66	–.02	–.08	–.03	.04	.06	(.81)		
7. Identity affirmation	3.47	.77	.09	.07	–.02	.05	.16**	.19**	(.86)	
8. Job-pursuit intentions	3.35	.80	.10	.05	.02	.07	.07	.07	.63**	(.88)

Note:  $N = 263$ ; female, Asian, black, Hispanic, and other race are dummy coded (1 = female, Asian, black, Hispanic, and other race, respectively); coefficient alphas are presented on the diagonal.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

1989), we created and pilot-tested 14 items designed to measure the construct using a small-scale convenience sample ( $N = 70$ ). A principal components analysis revealed that the highest-loading items loaded on the same factor (all six factor loadings were above .40). The subsequent CFA confirmed these six items all load onto the same identity affirmation factor. Consequently, we used this six-item scale to assess the extent to which participants perceived that their identities would be affirmed, or accepted, at LODI ( $\alpha = .86$ ).

### Manipulation Checks

If the OVD manipulation was successful, participants exposed to the more favorable diversity conditions should score higher on the two manipulation check items (i.e., “In how many languages was the company’s website available?” and “How many awards had this company received for their diversity efforts?”). One-way ANOVA results indicated a significant main effect of OVD condition on both the number of languages [ $F(3,258) = 32.80$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .28$ ] and awards [ $F(3,256) = 18.41$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .18$ ]. Post hoc analyses indicated significant differences ( $p < .01$ ) between each of the four conditions predicting languages, and three of the four differed in predicting awards (i.e., conditions 2 and 3 did not differ significantly from one another); thus, the manipulation appears to have produced the intended effect.

### Controls

We again controlled for the sex and race/ethnicity.

## Results

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for Study 2 are presented in Table IV. Again, we analyzed a series of measurement models to provide evidence that the participants differentiated between the three measured variables in the study. Results of the measurement models are presented in Table V. One model examined the goodness of fit of identity affirmation, OGO, and JPI items loading on one common factor. Two others assessed two-factor models with items from the (a) mediator and dependent variable and (b) mediator and moderator as indicators of one common perceptual factor, and the remaining scale acting alone as a second latent variable. Finally, a three-factor model tested the expected data structure, with the identity affirmation, OGO, and JPI items all loading on independent factors. Model fit indices ( $\chi^2$ , RMSEA, CFI, and TLI) indicated that the three-factor model provided the best fit to the data.

To test the study hypotheses, we used hierarchical linear regression and macros provided by Edwards and Lambert (2007) designed to test moderation and mediation simultaneously. In retesting Hypothesis 1, which predicted that OGO would moderate the relationship between perceived OVD and JPI, the OVD  $\times$  OGO interaction significantly predicted JPI ( $B = .14$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ). Simple slope analyses revealed that the effect of OVD on JPI was null for participants lower in OGO ( $B = .01$ ,  $p = .86$ ) but positive for those higher in OGO ( $B = .20$ ,  $p < .01$ ; see Figure 2). Hence, as in Study 1, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

**TABLE V** Study 2: Comparative Fit Indices for Three Measurement Models

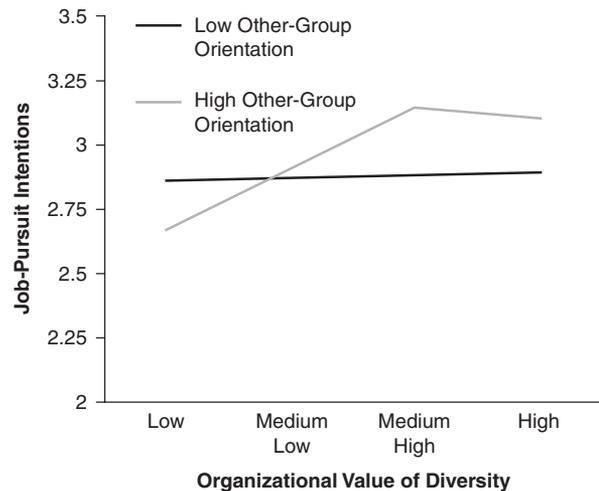
Model	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	$\Delta\chi^2$	$\Delta df$	<i>p</i>
Three-factor model	227.02	115	.06	.95	.94	–	–	–
Two-factor model A	523.25	117	.12	.82	.79	296.23	2	.00
Two-factor model B	628.86	117	.13	.78	.74	401.84	2	.00
One-factor model	930.69	118	.17	.64	.59	703.67	3	.00

Note:  $N = 247$ . Two-factor model A combines the mediator and dependent variables, whereas model B combines the mediator and moderator variables. The chi-squared difference tests compare the fit of each alternative model to that of the expected three-factor model.

Hypothesis 2 stated that identity affirmation would mediate the interactive effects of OVD and OGO on JPI. As expected (see Table VI), when OGO was higher, the OVD–identity affirmation ( $B = .26, p < .01$ ) and identity affirmation–JPI relationships ( $B = .65, p < .01$ ) were statistically significant, yielding a significant indirect effect ( $B = .17, p < .01$ ). This indirect pathway was not significant when OGO was lower, and the difference between the two indirect effects was statistically significant (effect =  $.16, p < .01$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

### Discussion

As anticipated, the results of Study 2 replicate and extend those of Study 1. Specifically, in



**FIGURE 2.** Study 2: The Interactive Effect of OGO and Organizational Value of Diversity on Job-Pursuit Intentions

Study 2, we hypothesized that identity affirmation acts as a mediating mechanism through which a company’s OVD influences JPI. Consistent with these predictions, OVD influenced participants’ job-pursuit intentions through expected levels of identity affirmation in the prospective work setting. Thus, the results of Study 2 provide evidence of the roles that identity affirmation and OGO play in the process underlying the diversity cues–JPI relationship.

### General Discussion

In the current research, we investigated the role of diversity perceptions in influencing job-pursuit intentions. Specifically, we examined both moderating and mediating influences on this relationship by conducting two studies that produced a consistent pattern of support for our proposed model. As expected, respondents placing greater value on diversity were more responsive than those who do not to a prospective employer’s presumed or expressed support for diversity. Additionally, the results of Study 2 shed light on the process underlying this interactive relationship. In particular, we experimentally manipulated the recruiting company’s support for diversity, and demonstrated that identity affirmation mediated this relationship. Specifically, support for diversity seemed to attract those who personally valued it. Perhaps this is because these individuals also tended to believe that the firm would provide an atmosphere that would support their identity. These findings not only corroborate

**TABLE VI** Moderated Mediation Analysis of Effects of Organizational Value of Diversity on Job-Pursuit Intentions Through Perceived Identity Affirmation

Moderator Variable	Stage		Effect		
	First	Second	Direct	Indirect	Total
OGO					
Low	.02	.55**	-.01	.01	.00
High	.26**	.65**	.03	.17**	.20*
Differences	.24**	.10	.03	.16**	.19

Note:  $N = 263$ . Tests of differences for the indirect and total effect were based on bias-corrected confidence intervals derived from bootstrap estimates. Regression coefficients are unstandardized. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

our proposed hypotheses, but also have significant implications for research and practice.

## Implications

### Theoretical

One important contribution of this research is that it helps to reconcile some of the mixed findings amidst the organizational diversity literature. For instance, some (Kossek & Zonia, 1993; Mor Barak et al., 1998) but not all (Hicks-Clarke & Iles, 2000; Hopkins, Hopkins, & Mallette, 2001) studies on perceived diversity climate have reported differences in the strength of effects based on respondents' racioethnic group. This literature, however, is relatively devoid of theoretical explanations for this inconsistency. One reason might be that racioethnicity is serving as an imperfect proxy for individuals' value for diversity. Although minorities generally might place greater value on diversity than members of the racioethnic majority, there is considerable variability within racioethnic groups (i.e., not all minorities value diversity more than all white Americans). Our results indicate that whereas diversity climates (or in this case participants' perceptions thereof) may exert some influence on everyone, the nature and magnitude of that influence is likely to vary according to how much the individual values diversity.

Further, we also extend prior research by explicating the processes underlying the penchant for diversity cues to attract individuals. Our findings imply that people may intend to pursue employment opportunities with organizations that are supportive of diversity because they feel that such firms may provide opportunities to affirm their valued identities. These results are consistent with social identity theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), which posits that people are likely to be more attracted to organizations that reinforce favorable views of themselves. Based on this framework, we provided evidence that participants had stronger intentions to pursue employment with organizations perceived to embrace diversity because such environments

were seen as offering them greater opportunities to find support for their social identity. Notably, by utilizing experimental laboratory methodology, we were able to provide stronger evidence for the hypothesized causal links between OVD and job-pursuit intentions. This helps to address the call by Avery and McKay (2006) for future research to test these relationships empirically.

Additionally, the present study also provides additional support for the influential attraction-selection-attrition framework introduced by Schneider (1987). This theoretical perspective suggests that organizations become increasingly homogenous by attracting and selecting individuals similar to incumbents, and via the voluntary and involuntary turnover of those who do not fit within the company. Organizations that do an excellent job of managing diversity are likely to advertise this success (Bernardi, Bean, & Weippert, 2002), which our results suggest will help to attract more applicants who value diversity. Brown et al. (2006, p. 2067) recently drew a somewhat similar conclusion, but from a deterrence (as opposed to attraction) perspective, when stating that "the communication of diversity messages in job advertisements may encourage those individuals least likely to fully integrate into a diverse workplace to self-select out of an organization." Thus, Schneider's process may aid in explaining the trend of organizations' engaging in perpetual cycles of diversity management failure (Perry & James, 2004) or success (e.g., the continuity of companies noted as best employers for minorities and women), as company diversity reputations likely attract applicants with similar penchants.

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### Managerial

In addition to theoretical implications, the findings also provide managerial implications. For example, our findings provide

some support for practitioners to follow the approach proposed by Avery and McKay (2006) for attracting a diverse workforce. Specifically, they suggested that companies could project an image of valuing diversity by presenting diversity cues in their recruitment advertising. One such cue included in their discussion was presenting information about diversity awards. Though prior evidence (e.g., Roberson & Park, 2007; Wright, Ferris, Hiller, & Kroll, 1995) shows these awards have a positive effect on organizational effectiveness indicators like stock prices, none has made empirical linkages to applicant attraction. Our findings link both this cue and another not included in Avery

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*Our findings show that (a) white participants' responses are anything but homogenous and (b) many are likely attracted by corporate support of diversity.*

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and McKay's framework (i.e., language diversity on the website) to participant intentions to pursue further employment opportunities with the organization. Accordingly, it seems that including information about diversity awards and ensuring that all recruitment information is available in multiple languages may be viable ways for recruiters to convey to prospective job seekers that their company values diversity.

An additional practical implication is that our results illustrate the importance of organizations having a well-conceived strategy for diversity recruitment. Though this may seem intuitive, it is nota-

ble that recent surveys by Monster.com and the Society for Human Resource Management indicated that 54 percent and 79 percent of American companies, respectively, currently have diversity recruitment programs ("Many U.S. Employers Lack," 2006). Even if we accept the higher of these estimates, this means one of every five companies does not have a plan in place for attracting talent in today's ever-diversifying landscape. This is especially problematic when one considers that (a) the same Monster.com poll found that more than 80 percent of online job seekers use the company's website diversity recruitment resources as a proxy for their level of commitment to diversity, and (b) other recent evidence shows

minorities, women, recent immigrants, and high achievers to be influenced by organizational diversity recruitment programs when making job-choice decisions (Ng & Burke, 2005).

Further, it is noteworthy that conveying organizational support for diversity did not necessarily alienate white participants, as a number of authors in the popular (e.g., Frase-Blunt, 2003) and academic (e.g., Kidder, Lankau, Chrobot-Mason, Mollica, & Friedman, 2004) literatures alike have discussed concerns about backlash. Specifically, the fear is that white applicants will interpret support for diversity as bias against their racioethnic group in favor of minorities. Our findings, however, suggest that those concerns may be somewhat overstated. In fact, the simple slopes of perceived organizational value of diversity on job-pursuit intentions among those low in OGO (i.e., those seemingly most prone to backlash) were nonsignificant in either study. Moreover, three-way interactions with racioethnic dummy variables, OGO, and OVD were nonsignificant in either study, indicating that the interactive pattern produced in both studies does not vary across racioethnic groups. In conjunction with past studies looking at individual differences within the majority group in response to diversity cues in recruitment (Avery, 2003; Brown et al., 2006; Umphress, Smith-Crowe, Brief, Dietz, & Watkins, 2007), our findings show that (a) white participants' responses are anything but homogenous and (b) many are likely attracted by corporate support of diversity.

Finally, the results of this study may have implications beyond the recruitment realm. Research suggests individuals form beliefs—labeled psychological contracts—concerning the terms of exchange between an employee and their organization developed on perceived organizational promises (Rousseau, 1995). Employees may incorporate their perceived organization's value of diversity into these psychological contracts, forming expectations of the firm based on information presented in the recruitment process. The beneficial results of this process likely vary depending on the extent to which an organization lives up to

its advertised diversity stance. For example, an employee high in OGO entering an organization that values diversity may experience benefits beyond those typically associated with a diverse workforce. Specifically, social identity theory suggests these employees may develop positive attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and engagement through the identify affirmation process (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). In contrast, the results may be unfortunate if an employer fails to live up to its pro-diversity stance (McKay & Avery, 2005).

Additionally, similar results may be experienced with other forms of contract breach, such as individuals low in OGO entering a pro-diversity organization. In such a situation, organizations may consider incorporating diversity training into their socialization process in an attempt to align employee expectations and mitigate felt contract breach. Overall, implications of this study highlight the importance of transparency in the recruitment process. To more fully understand this process, future research should examine the extent to which diversity cues during recruitment are incorporated into employees' psychological contracts.

### *Limitations*

As with any study, there are limitations that should be acknowledged. First, interpretations of Study 1 are limited by the correlational, cross-sectional design. Second, all data were collected via Likert-type self-report surveys. This makes it possible that common method variance (CMV) impacted our findings. We note, however, that CMV cannot account for interactive effects (Evans, 1985) and we obtained similar findings in the second study wherein the independent variable was manipulated. This suggests the impact of CMV was minimal.

Two broader limitations involve the fact that (a) our conceptualization of OVD broadly pertains to diversity in general and not a single form (i.e., sex, race/ethnicity) and (b) our conceptualization of OGO specifically pertains to race/ethnic diversity. First, our conceptualizations of diversity and identity affirmation in

Study 2 do not qualify these constructs very specifically. This is a limitation because we cannot be certain in knowing what aspect(s) of participants' social identities was affirmed by the manipulation. However, the advantage here is the potential generalizability of findings when conceptualizing diversity broadly as we do in the present study. Though we would anticipate a similar pattern of results if one were to use more specific indices of diversity and identity affirmation, such an expectation is admittedly speculative and should be tested empirically. Further, it is important to note that the practical implications of the study are the same, whether employees' identity affirmation relates to JPI because their race/ethnic identity was affirmed or because another identity was affirmed.

Second, our indicator of participants' personal diversity valuation pertained to only a single form (i.e., race/ethnicity). As an anonymous reviewer pointed out, there is no reason to believe that an individual who is open to interactions with ethnically diverse others will also be open to interactions with individuals who are diverse in other ways (e.g., gay, disabled). Though we would anticipate a similar pattern if we had used a more general index of diversity openness (e.g., Hobman, Bordia, & Gallois, 2004), such an expectation should be tested empirically.

Third, a methodological concern in both samples involves their artificial nature. Though the materials were designed to resemble those commonly used by organizations when recruiting personnel (e.g., brochures, websites), our subjects were participating in research studies as opposed to actively seeking jobs with real companies advertising actual vacancies. As such, this study does not take into account the myriad drivers of actual job seekers' attitudes such as actual consequences of employment decisions. We encourage subsequent scholars to examine these issues in the process of individuals actively seeking jobs.

### *Future Research Directions*

Next, this study suggests multiple avenues for future research. This study examined the JPI of participants in a simulated recruitment

situation. Although intentions may be used as a suitable proxy for actual behavior (Bell, Weichmann, & Ryan, 2006; Truxillo, Bauer, Campion, & Paronto, 2002), future research should examine actual job-acceptance behaviors within and between applicants applying to a variety of organizations. In addition, this study informs the underlying psychological process of attraction to diversity cues through identity affirmation of those valuing diversity. However, what impact will these pro-diversity expectations have on individuals entering the workplace? This process should be examined in more detail using longitudinal, between-subject research designs.

Further, researchers should investigate attitudes and job behaviors (e.g., task performance, counterproductive behavior, organizational citizenship behaviors), to help elucidate further the impact that diversity recruitment efforts may have on identity affirmation, psychological contract breach, and subsequent employee behavior. Additionally, it would be interesting to see how the relationships studied here generalize to settings wherein there are lower societal or cultural expectations for identity affirmation in the workplace. It should not be taken for granted that societies do not vary considerably in the degree to which expression of employee identities at work is encouraged or even allowed.

## Conclusions

Limitations notwithstanding, our research makes theoretical and empirical contributions in an area sorely in need of further examination (Avery & McKay, 2006; Ployhart, 2006). Although others have studied the effects of

diversity cues during personnel recruitment, our research is among the first to articulate the underlying process regarding why diversity cues attract some individuals, yet fail to attract others. In short, through the mediated-moderation model tested here over two studies, OGO and identity affirmation appear to provide a viable explanation for the draw of diversity.

## Note

1. The intent of the original study was to determine the interactive impact of a firm representative's race/ethnicity and participants' race/ethnicity on organizational attractiveness. Organizational attractiveness is an outcome conceptually distinct from job-pursuit intentions—the focus of the present study (Aiman-Smith, Bauer, & Cable, 2001; Highhouse, Lievens, & Sinar, 2003). In the present study, we choose to focus on job-pursuit intentions as opposed to organizational attractiveness because a behavioral intention such as job-pursuit intentions is a stronger behavioral predictor than an attitude such as organizational attractiveness. Further, in the current investigation, we examine perceived value that an organization places on diversity and its relationship with intentions to pursue employment with the firm. The original study did use perceived organizational value of diversity, but the proposed interaction failed to significantly predict attractiveness, and thus no further analyses concerning it were discussed. Because there was no significant (a) main effect of representative race/ethnicity or gender or (b) interactive effect between the depicted representative's demographics and that of the participant on either organizational value for diversity or job-pursuit intentions, this archival dataset is well suited for our particular purposes.

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**APPENDIX Study 2 Scales****Job-Pursuit Intentions**

1. If I was offered a job here, I would accept the job offer.
2. If I were looking for a job, a job there would be very appealing.
3. If I were looking for a job, I would exert a great deal of effort to work for this company.
4. After viewing the company's website, I would no longer be interested in working for this company except as a last resort.
5. If I were looking for a job, I would be interested in pursuing an application with this company.

**Identity Affirmation**

1. This organization would ignore my identity.
  2. This organization would view my unique identity as an asset.
  3. This organization would value what I have to offer.
  4. This organization would appreciate the things that make me different.
  5. This organization's Human Resources department probably has procedures and programs in place that would support my identity needs.
  6. This organization celebrates people's different identities.
-