THE ROLES OF DIVERSITY BENEFITS IN ORGANIZATIONAL

ATTRACTIVENESS

by

AMANDA D. GRAY

(Under the Direction of Kecia M. Thomas)

ABSTRACT

Employee benefits play an important role in a potential job applicant's estimation of organizational attractiveness (Barber, 1998). The present study examined the impact of three diversity benefits (tuition reimbursement for minority group members, extended and paid maternity leave, and domestic partnership) on college students' ratings of organizational attractiveness within a laboratory setting. The research also explored the manner in which the demographic characteristics of the participants impacted the relationship between the various diversity benefits and organizational attractiveness. Two 2x4 designs were utilized to analyze the data. The analyses provide no support for the hypotheses.

INDEX WORDS: Diversity, Benefits, Recruitment, Organizational Attractiveness

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful family who has provided unspeakable amounts of support and encouragement. First, to my husband, Billy who has encouraged me to do whatever it takes to meet my goals. He has always believed in me, even when I haven't believed in myself. Next, I thank my father who has quietly taught me the importance of integrity through his example. He has shown me the power of hard work and the strength that comes from doing what you think is right. Finally, I thank my mother who has always believed so strongly that I could do whatever I set my mind to, that she made me believe it myself. She is the most amazing person I know and I am grateful for all of the lessons I have learned from her. I could never have reached this goal without the three of you!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Employee benefits play an important role in a potential job applicant's decision to move from the recruitment to the selection phase of employment (Bernadin & Russell, 1998). Such forms of indirect compensation often provide employers the edge when it comes to recruiting and selecting highly talented individuals. It is often the additional advantage of the benefit package that can truly sell an organization. For these reasons, the topic of indirect compensation, or benefits, has received a fair amount of attention in the literature. However, while considerable attention has been given to the standard line of benefits offered by most organizations, only a very limited focus has been granted to benefits designed to attract members of diverse groups.

As issues related to diversity become more prominent in the corporate landscape, many organizations are working to attract a more diverse workforce. Attracting a new kind of worker has granted organizations the opportunity to explore new avenues and methods of recruitment. Research has suggested that minority group members perceive recruitment materials in a different manner than majority group members and find different factors attractive (Perkins, Thomas & Taylor, 2000). For this reason, the traditional mode of operation needs to be examined and reconfigured in order to meet the needs of the contemporary workplace.

There are many benefits, including tuition reimbursement for minority group members, extended and paid maternity leave, and domestic partnership, that directly target particular groups. The implications of offering extended and paid maternity leave, domestic partnership benefits (spousal benefits for same-sex couples) and tuition reimbursement for minority group members have received extremely limited research focus. Given that today many organizations are carefully considering offering these benefits for the first time in an effort to encourage workplace diversity, research related to the impact of these decisions is both necessary and timely.

The present study seeks to explore the impact of the inclusion of diversity-related benefits in recruitment materials on participants' reactions to the organization. The diversity construct will be broken out into three large components composed of sexual orientation, gender, and race/ethnicity. The research question for this pursuit will be how do these types of benefits impact attractiveness? Is the benefit – attractiveness relationship affected by candidates' demographic char acteristics? Investigation of these questions has obvious value for organizations considering offering these kinds of benefits.

Theoretical Perspective

Although a plethora of definitions for the concept of prejudice exist, Allport (1954) offers a characterization that has been used to guide much of the research that has followed. His definition envisioned prejudice as "an antipathy based on a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed towards a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he is a member of that group" (p. 9). From the earliest days of research in this area a variety of divergent theories have been developed that work to explain the existence of this phenomenon. One approach is called the motivational approach. This approach asserts that prejudice develops and flourishes

in order to either achieve desired goals or satisfy needs, or results from socialized negative feelings and beliefs about out-group members.

An example of this approach can be seen in John McConahay's work on the theory of modern prejudice. Modern racism is defined as the expression in terms of symbols and symbolic behaviors of the feeling that blacks are destroying important values and making unnecessary demands (McConahay & Hough, 1976). The theory asserts that while traditional measures of racism have shown a declining trend, actual antiblack feeling has not diminished at the same rate. Due to the fact that racist views are socially undesirable at present, the expression of negative racial attitudes can be expected to be reserved for ambiguous situations in which individuals could attribute their racist behavior to another source (McConahay, 1986). In the modern prejudice framework this prejudice is expressed by the voicing of disapproval towards policies that are symbolic of various minority groups. While an individual may be unwilling to agree with overt statements of racist sentiment, that same individual may be opposed to changes designed to promote the welfare of minority groups.

Modern racism is distinct from old-fashioned racism in a number of essential ways. Old-fashioned racism centers on stereotypic beliefs regarding black intelligence and honesty. It also involves overt support for discriminatory policies and direct discrimination. Modern prejudice maintains that racism is bad and discrimination is over. However, this theory also asserts that blacks are making demands that are unfair and are receiving more than they deserve.

The theory of modern prejudice is related to McConahay's efforts to develop a measure of racism that would be applicable to the contemporary landscape. Given the

climate of political correctness that reigns in our culture, it is no longer acceptable to give voice to prejudiced views. However, these views may continue to persist. The goal of McConahay's development of the Modern Racism Scale is to measure these views despite the impediment of public disapproval of overtly prejudicial views (McConahay, 1986).

The tenets of modern prejudice are built upon McConahay's early work on symbolic racism. The theory has remained the same; only the name of the theory has changed. The term symbolic racism was changed to modern racism to highlight the postcivil-rights-movement nature of this ideology and to acknowledge that new and old racism are both symbolic. Both forms of racism are grounded in socialization and not experience, hence they are both actually symbolic.

Modern prejudice is closely related to another theory, developed by Gaertner & Dovidio (1986), called aversive racism. This concept, developed with attention to the attitudes of white, egalitarian people, characterizes an ambivalence that results from a conflict between egalitarian beliefs and unacknowledged negative feelings and beliefs about blacks. The theory asserts that people are strongly motivated to appear unprejudiced in interracial environments. Research in this area has demonstrated that when bias can be rationalized or attributed to other sources, the majority of people, irrespective of prejudice level, will discriminate (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986)

Although the two theories share a number of common features, modern prejudice is distinct from aversive racism in a number of fundamental ways. While the theory of aversive racism is drawn from research observing the behavior of political liberals in interracial settings, modern racism is founded on work with political conservatives. The original concept of symbolic racism was founded upon anti-black socialization and is correlated with conservative value orientation. The two theories are drawn from considerably disparate orientations, with aversive racism addressing the responses of the political left and modern racism concentrating on those of the political right.

A considerable amount of research has been done that has generated strong support for the theoretical perspectives discussed previously. One study, guided by the aversive racism framework, explored change over a ten-year period in participants' expression of racial attitudes and discrimination in hiring preferences for a black vs. white candidate (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000). The participant's ratings of candidate qualification were not affected directly by race. When qualifications were similar there was no preference to hire the white candidate over the black candidate. However, when the qualifications of the two candidates were more different and the choice between them was not as clear, a preference for the hiring of the white candidate was evident. The results supported the theoretical framework, by demonstrating that antiblack bias is discernible primarily in situations that are ambiguous. When individuals can attribute their bias to another source, they do not feel racist, and hence are more willing to behave in a discriminatory manner. Findings from this study provide support for the theories of both aversive racism and modern racism, by indicating that racism is not something that this country has resolved and that people will discriminate in situations in which they are not forced to confront their bias.

An earlier study conducted by McConahay in 1983 employed the concept of ambivalent racism in order to demonstrate construct validity for the Modern Racism Scale. Studies of racial ambivalence have suggested that people experience a feeling of ambivalence with regard to race that emerges from their own conflicting positive and negative feelings about the topic (Katz, Wackenhut, & Hass, 1986). This ambivalent state creates feelings of tension for the individual when they are in situations that make these issues salient. Participants in this study completed the Modern Racism Scale and then assessed job applicants with matching resumes with the exception of a picture of either a black or a white male attached to the resume.

Results from this study demonstrate that an individual's level of modern prejudice does impact behavior. People who have higher scores on the scale feel more ambivalent and are more likely to behave erratically, with situations designed to elicit positive/negative racial behavior being associated with significantly higher/lower ratings for black than white candidates. People who do not score in the high ranges of the scale do not behave inconsistently across contexts. This reveals that the modern prejudice construct does tap into the work that has been done on racial ambivalence and that both ideas are valuable to the understanding of white behavior in racially salient contexts.

Kinder and Sears (1981) tested the theory of symbolic prejudice against another theory of white racism called the racial threat hypothesis which is drawn from realistic group conflict theory. The researchers investigated which theory more succinctly accounted for the voting behavior of suburban whites in mayoral elections. The findings from this study indicated that symbolic resentments are more salient than tangible threats on white's political responses. Symbolic racism was a better predictor of voting behavior in a mayoral race that pitted a black candidate against a white candidate than explicit racial threat. This study provides strong support for the strength of the theory of symbolic/modern prejudice. The theory of modern prejudice has tremendous implications for our lives in the twenty-first century. Although traditional measures of racism have shown decline in recent years, this theoretical perspective makes us aware of the fact that investigation into this changing phenomenon is still sorely needed. Many initiatives such as busing programs, affirmative action, and welfare, are modern symbols that represent equality of opportunity, an ideal with which many whites are not comfortable (McConahay & Hough, 1983). While the voicing of disapproval for freedom of opportunity is no longer en vogue, the modern racist is generally not supportive of initiatives that promote equality of opportunity, as this is an example of blacks asking for more than they deserve in a culture that has solved the problem of racism.

Researchers have further suggested that racial prejudice may be but one expression of a generalized propensity to denigrate any group that is perceived to be challenging the status quo (Weigel & Howes, 1985). For this reason, it may be instructive to extend the theory of modern prejudice to encompass majority members' sentiments regarding a variety of minority groups.

Some broader examples of modern symbols are employee benefits offered to minority workforce members. Benefits such as extended and paid maternity leave, tuition reimbursement for minority employees, and domestic partnership benefits for gays and lesbians are designed to attract and retain minority employees. Guided by the theory of modern prejudice, it would be reasonable to expect that majority group members, while refraining from openly disapproving of these minority groups, may not support the granting of these kinds of benefits to minority group members. This is expected to be particularly true for those groups that are highly stigmatized, such as gays and lesbians. An example of this phenomenon is the often-reported family-friendly backlash. As organizations have become increasingly supportive of the work/life balance of their employees in recent years, a considerable amount of academic research and popular press attention has been devoted to the detrimental effects that this new trend has had on workers (Rothausen et al., 1998). Policies like on-site child-care have been linked to negative attitudes towards the center (Kossek & Nichol, 1992) and negative employee behaviors such as absenteeism (Goff et al., 1990) for those employees who do not have the opportunity to take advantage of this benefit.

Jenner (1994) provides a powerful illustration of this phenomenon in her discussion of the ChildFree Network. This group is a national organization, representing 2,000 members who provide support for childless adults. While the network does not explicitly oppose initiatives designed to support working parents, they do feel that these kinds of initiatives create unequal treatment for parents and non-parents in the workplace. The belief that workers are being treated differently as a function of group membership creates resistance from the group that does not receive the benefit. Flynn (1996) discusses a similar sentiment in an article providing suggestions for human resource professionals about how to deal with the growing dissatisfaction of childless workers.

Clearly this trend represents a compelling demonstration of the manner in which individuals may have a negative response towards policies that benefit specific groups. The modern prejudice literature suggests that this "new backlash" is simply an expression of modern prejudice.

Diversity and Employee Benefits

The present study seeks to work within the modern prejudice framework by examining individual reactions to policies that are symbolic of diverse groups. Will individuals voice approval for diversity benefits that confront them with covert symbols of diverse groups?

This section describes research that has examined the impact of racial and gender diversity on employee attitudes and reactions. Organizations are becoming increasingly diverse with respect to both race/ethnicity and gender. Many ethnic minority group members are moving into roles within organizations that have previously been occupied primarily by whites, while women are also beginning to move upwards in organizations and occupying a variety of new roles. As the race/ethnicity and gender diversity of organizations increases, organizational members have reactions to the shifting composition of their work environment. A substantial amount of research has explored the way that people feel about the presence of both ethnic minorities and women in the workplace.

The impact of recruitment materials has been shown to be meaningful in the research literature. In a study utilizing an undergraduate student population, Williams and Bauer (1994) explored the impact of the manipulation of a specific statement supporting the goal of workplace diversity in recruitment materials on the participants' ratings of organizational attractiveness. The statement outlined the fact that the organization ensured that women, ethnic minorities, handicapped individuals, and Vietnam veterans had equal access to employment and opportunity for advancement. Participants in the explicit diversity support statement condition granted the organization

significantly higher ratings of organizational attractiveness than the participants in the control condition. Results for this study demonstrate that most people express support for the presence and fair treatment of minority group members in the workplace.

A study conducted in 1993 by Kossek and Zonia examined university employees' attitudes and perceptions regarding the diversity climate of their workplace. They also explored how the participants felt about the administrations' support of diversity at the organizational level. The survey results suggest that on average the participants did endorse the promotion of diversity within their workplace. The individuals in this sample communicated support for the advancement of diversity in a general sense. A similar study surveyed the attitudes of 340 university students towards admissions and curriculum policies related to diversity (Sands, 1998). This investigation found that the majority of the sample endorsed the goal of achieving cultural diversity within the university. The preceding studies suggest that people generally endorse policies that promote racial/ethnic diversity.

A study conducted in 1998 by Mor Barak et al. explored the diversity climate for ethnic minorities and women in a Western U.S. electronics company. Each member of the organization was asked to complete a questionnaire designed to assess the employees' views related to diversity at work. The results of the questionnaire indicated a number of interesting findings, including that the majority of employees acknowledge the importance of workplace diversity while believing that the organization should put more energy into the diversity effort. Most respondents did not report high levels of comfort with individuals from other groups, but seemed to envision an increase in their comfort level as a goal. This study suggests that while people do voice support for the abstract goal of diversity, they may not be comfortable with people that they consider to be different from themselves.

While the preceding studies explore the endorsement of diversity in a general, abstract sense, other researchers have focused their attention on employee reactions to a very specific policy, affirmative action. Will participants continue to voice support for diversity when faced with tangible policies designed to advance these goals? Kravitz and Platania (1993) considered this issue with an undergraduate student population at a southeastern university. As part of their study, participants completed a six-item Attitude Toward Affirmative Action scale with values ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5)strongly agree. Responses indicate that most individuals have neutral responses to this policy, although attitudes do appear to be related to group membership. Men and women have significantly different means, as do Whites when compared to Hispanics and Blacks. While the mean scores do not reflect strong disagreement with this policy, they do suggest that many people are neutral or undecided about this issue. Although research suggests that people are more supportive of diversity in the abstract sense, they do not appear decidedly unsupportive of specific policies like affirmative action. However it does appear that when confronted with overt symbols of minority groups, people are not as willing to offer support.

The aversive racism literature would suggest that people behave indifferently with respect to these types of initiatives because they are motivated to maintain their nonprejudiced self-image (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). For this reason, most individuals will not communicate an avid disapproval, but at the same time will also not communicate approval for these initiatives. By remaining ambivalent they have neither supported these policies nor offered opposition that could be perceived as racist. In this way they are able to maintain their non-racist self-image.

This motivation is likely to manifest itself in individual's responses to organizational policies or programs designed to address the specific needs of minority group members. While individuals may not be willing to communicate an overt disapproval of these benefits, it is likely that it they will not be as attracted to organizations that provide benefits that target members of diverse groups. An example of a benefit that an organization could offer in order to attract ethnic/racial minorities would be the provision of tuition reimbursement benefits for minority group members. The tuition reimbursement benefit was selected in order to provide a monetary resource that would be comparable to the extended and paid maternity leave and the domestic partnership benefit (see Appendix A for a listing of alternate benefits suggested by subject matter experts). Tuition reimbursement could provide ethnic minorities the type of monetary contribution, similar to the other benefits explored in the present study, which could help to eliminate the unique barriers that this group faces in their career development.

Based on the research findings discussed previously, it is expected that participants will rate the organization as less attractive in the tuition reimbursement conditions, then in the no tuition reimbursement conditions. *Hypothesis 1*: There will be a significant main effect for the race/ethnicity benefit provided for minority group members, such that ratings of organizational attractiveness will be lower in the tuition reimbursement conditions than in the no tuition reimbursement conditions.

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Like racial/ethnic minorities, women too are viewed as a major beneficiary of the diversity movement. While research in this area indicates that the majority of people endorse a positive view of a workplace that is diverse with respect to the presence of both men and women (Mor Barak et. al, 1998) will the majority of people continue to offer support for this view when they are confronted with overt symbols of women in the workplace? An example of a symbol that could serve to represent the increase of women at work is on-site child-care benefits. This is a benefit that is designed with attention to the different and unique needs of working women. Many organizations have begun to offer this benefit, and still more are considering it as a possible addition to their benefit package. How do people feel about the emergence of this benefit in the corporate landscape?

The organizational outcomes associated with the offering of on-site child-care as an employment benefit have received a considerable amount of research (Rothausen, Gonzalez, Clarke, & O'Dell, 1998). The literature in this area consistently suggests that employer supported child-care benefits are generally perceived as desirable by participants (Kossek & Nichol, 1992). Mize and Freeman, in a study conducted in 1989, explored employee perceptions of the offering of on-site child-care to workers. The research was designed in the style of a needs assessment conducted in a business setting. Results from this study suggest that the majority of the sample was supportive of on-site child-care within the organization, evidenced by their willingness to agree to offer monetary support for the program.

Another employee benefit that is designed to benefit women is maternity leave. While many organizations offered some form of this benefit prior to this date, President Bill Clinton took a large step forward in this domain by signing the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) into law in 1993. This piece of legislation states that organizations of a specific size are required by law to reserve the position of an employee if they should need to take leave for a specified time period in order to care for a sick relative or a new born child or a newly adopted child. Much like on-site child-care the FMLA does not provide any additional advantage to women, as men are welcome to exercise their right to utilize these opportunities. While this marks an important step forward, how do employees respond to organizations that step beyond this legislation and target women exclusively by offering extended and paid maternity leave?

Based on the findings outlined in the literature discussed previously, it is expected that participants will rate the organization as more attractive in the extended and paid maternity leave conditions, than in the no extended and paid maternity leave conditions.

This expectation marks a departure from the expectation surrounding the race/ethnicity benefit. The rationale for this difference centers on the fact that while men do not profit directly from a benefit like extended and paid maternity leave, they will receive some indirect benefit from this initiative if they are married. However, the only individuals who could reap the rewards of a program providing tuition reimbursement for minorities would be the minority group members themselves. Majority group members do not receive even an indirect benefit from this type of initiative. For this reason, it is expected that the race/ethnicity benefit will be perceived more negatively than the gender benefit.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant main effect for extended and paid maternity leave, such that ratings of organizational attractiveness will be significantly higher in the

extended and paid maternity leave conditions than in the no extended and paid maternity leave conditions.

This section explores research that has examined individuals' attitudes and reactions to sexual minorities. The visibility of gays and lesbians has increased exponentially in recent years (Yang, 1997). While this group represents the most invisible minority, their presence is becoming increasingly clear. Though gays and lesbians comprise a vital part of the American labor force, there has been limited research on issues related to the experiences of the homosexual in the workplace (Ragins & Cornwell, 2000). However, research has shown that discrimination is pervasive in the workplace experiences of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (Croteau, 1996).

Research is not clear on attitudes towards homosexuals in the workplace specifically, however a body of research does address attitudes towards homosexuals in general. In a study published in 1996, Herek and Capitanio conducted a two-wave phone survey surveying Americans attitudes towards homosexuals. The researchers did not report significant change over the one-year period that separated the two waves of their study. In the first wave only attitudes towards gay men were assessed with items scored on a 4-point scale that were summed to create a sum score ranging from (3) extremely favorable attitudes to (12) extremely hostile attitudes. The average score was 9.08 with a standard deviation of 2.71. In the second wave, attitudes towards both gay men and lesbians were surveyed with average scores 9.09 and 9.0 respectively. The majority of the sample expressed negative attitudes towards both gay men and lesbians.

A poll published in 1997 in the Public Opinion Quarterly offers a great degree of insight into public attitudes towards homosexuals and homosexuality. The data presented

in this article provide information over four decades on a wide range of issues from morality to issues of legality. While it does appear that generally attitudes have become more positive over time, attitudes are still not favorable. The American public continues to voice considerable disapproval for homosexuality.

Although the tides do seem to be shifting slowly, the majority of Americans do not appear supportive of equal rights for homosexuals. Research exploring individuals' reactions to gay men and lesbians has been generally disapproving. Given the generally non-supportive workplace environment for gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, it is expected that the participants will not perceive the organization offering domestic partnership benefits to be as attractive as the organizations that do not offer this benefit. *Hypothesis 3:* There will be a significant negative main effect for domestic partnership benefits, such that ratings of organizational attractiveness will be significantly lower in the domestic partnership conditions than in the no domestic partnership conditions.

Participant Effects

Although a considerable body of research exists that indicates that people are generally supportive of racial/ethnic and gender diversity in an abstract sense, still more research has explored the manner in which this support is related to various group memberships. The Kravitz and Platania (1993) study, outlined previously, utilized a between-subjects design that manipulated the target of the affirmative action program (women, minorities, or handicapped). The findings demonstrate that support for affirmative action/equal employment opportunity programs are strongly related to both gender and race/ethnicity. Women are significantly more supportive of these policies than are men, as are Hispanics and Blacks more supportive than Whites. The target of the policy was not found to make a significant impact on individual attitudes. In the present study it is expected that the targets of the benefits *will* have a differential impact on attitudes due to the fact that the benefits will be different for each group and will address the specific needs of that group. This marks a considerable departure from the Kravitz and Platania (1993) study; designed to examine attitudes toward one program designed to benefit multiple groups.

A similar study, utilizing a real world sample, explored one organizations' response to equal opportunity and affirmative action initiatives. Konrad and Linnehan (1995) surveyed mid-level managers in four organizations regarding their attitudes regarding these types of practices. The results did outline significant differences in attitudes for different groups of people. White women and ethnic minorities of both genders expressed more positive attitudes toward these interventions than White men.

Niemann and Dovidio (1998) explored this issue in the context of a survey of members of the American Psychological Association. Their results underscore the literature discussed previously by demonstrating that group membership does play a role in the communication of attitudes towards affirmative action. Women were more supportive of affirmative action than men in the sample, and African Americans and Hispanics were more supportive of this policy than Asian participants.

Further support for this phenomenon is evidenced in a study conducted in 2000 by Kravitz and Klineberg. In their study, designed to compare the attitudes of Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics, they found that Whites voiced opposition for the typical affirmative action plan as described by the researchers. Blacks communicated the most support, followed by Hispanic respondents. The finding that women and ethnic minorities are more supportive of more general diversity initiatives is a finding that has been reported in a number of studies. The Kossek and Zonia study (1993) reported earlier uncovered a similar finding. Their results indicate that women are more supportive than men and ethnic minorities are more supportive than Whites. In the Williams and Bauer (1994) study, gender and ethnicity accounted for a significant amount of the variance in the organizational attractiveness ratings. Although the entire sample found diversity attractive, women and ethnic minorities found it significantly more attractive than white men. This identical finding is also evident in the research conducted in 1998 by Mor Barak et al. Based on the results of previous research, it is expected that the relationships between both the tuition reimbursement benefit and organizational attractiveness and the extended and paid maternity leave benefit and organizational attractiveness will be moderated by gender and ethnicity.

Hypothesis 4: Gender will moderate the tuition reimbursement – organizational attractiveness relationship, such that women will have significantly higher ratings of organizational attractiveness in the tuition reimbursement conditions than men. *Hypothesis 5:* Race will moderate the tuition reimbursement – organizational attractiveness relationship, such that individuals who identify as members of racial/ethnic minorities will have significantly higher ratings of organizational attractiveness in the tuition reimbursement conditions attractiveness in the tuition reimbursement.

Hypothesis 6: Gender will moderate the extended and paid maternity leave – organizational attractiveness relationship, such that women will have significantly higher

ratings of organizational attractiveness in the extended and paid maternity leave conditions than men. The pattern of ethnic minority support for women is comparable to the manner in which women communicate support for ethnic minorities.

Hypothesis 7: Race will moderate the extended and paid maternity leave – organizational attractiveness relationship, such that individuals who identify as members of racial/ethnic minorities will have significantly higher ratings of organizational attractiveness in the extended and paid maternity leave conditions than white participants.

As discussed previously, individuals are generally disapproving of sexual minorities. Given this reality, it is also true that group differences do exist in levels of approval/disapproval. In a 1996 study investigating the nature of homophobia as either a prejudice or a phobia, Logan found a significant main effect for gender on a homophobia scale. Males scored considerably higher than females (F=49.45, p<.001), consistent with findings reported in a number of other studies (e.g., Herek and Capitanio, 1996; Schellenberg, Hirt, & Sears, 1999). Based on these results, it is expected that the relationship between the domestic partnership condition and organizational attractiveness will be moderated by gender.

Hypothesis 8: Gender will moderate the domestic partnership – organizational attractiveness relationship, such that women will have significantly higher ratings of organizational attractiveness in the domestic partnership conditions than men.

The present study seeks to explore the impact of the inclusion of diversity-related benefits in recruitment materials on participants' reactions to the organization. This information could increase knowledge in a number of areas including: broadening our understanding of the impact of the provision of diversity benefits on both majority and

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

368 students enrolled at a large Southeastern university participated in the study. Data from 264 participants were used in the analysis.¹ Fifty-two percent of the sample (137) was female, while forty-seven percent (125) were male. Two participants did not report this information. The ethnic breakdown the sample is as follows: 19% African American (49), 7% Asian (19), 69% Caucasian (181), 1.5% Hispanic (4), and 3% other (8). Three participants did not report this information. Participants were drawn from the university research pool and African American Studies classes. ANOVA was used to detect the presence of differences between participants recruited from the research pool and those recruited through African American Studies classes on organizational attractiveness ratings across conditions. This analysis returned an $F_{(1, 262)} = .000$, p = .991. This value is not significant, suggesting that these groups do not differ with respect to the dependent variable.

The participants rated the attractiveness of the organization after reviewing the recruitment materials.

¹ Participants were dropped from cells in order to maintain balance with respect to race and gender in each condition. Data from the one participant who did not pass the manipulation check was also not used in the analyses.

The three benefits were piloted to determine the extent to which participants connect each benefit with the groups they were designed to symbolically represent. Forty-five students from the research pool were given a recruitment ad from one of the three experimental conditions. They were asked to review the ad, turn it over on its back, and check which group they believe most directly benefits from the employee benefit offered by the organization in the ad. They were asked to choose between the following groups: veterans, ethnic minorities, women, senior citizens, and gays and lesbians. The results of the pilot study suggest overwhelmingly that participants do make the expected connections between benefits and minority groups. Of the 13 students who reviewed the gender benefit ad, all thirteen checked women. All 17 of the 17 students who reviewed the ethnicity benefit checked ethnic minorities, and 15 of the 15 who reviewed the domestic partnership ad checked gays and lesbians.

The participants were randomly assigned to conditions in two 2x4 between subjects designs. Table 6 outlines the percentages of males vs. females and minorities vs. non-minorities in each condition. One 2x4 will explore race and one will explore gender. After setting alpha at .05, power at .8, and adopting an effect size of .2, the results of a power analysis (Cohen, 1988) suggest that data from 212 participants was needed in order to detect effects (see Appendix B for calculations). In each condition the participant was told that they were involved in a study investigating college students' perceptions of recruitment-related marketing strategies. Each participant was then given a condition appropriate version of the recruitment materials (see Appendix C for an example). The recruitment materials for each condition were identical with the exception of the benefit manipulation. In the benefit-present conditions the advertisement closes with the following statement: As evidence of our commitment to diversity in the workplace, this organization offers tuition reimbursement for minority group members/ extended and paid maternity leave/ domestic partnership benefits for same sex couples. In the no benefit-present conditions this sentence was omitted. The participants were given a standard length of time to review the material. Once the review time elapsed, each participant was given a questionnaire to complete (see Appendix D). The questionnaire included scales designed to measure organizational attractiveness. In addition to the scales, the questionnaire also includes a manipulation check and demographic information including the following: gender, race/ethnicity, partnership/marital status, major, and hometown. Upon completion of the questionnaire, the participants were thanked for their time.

Organizational Attractiveness. This variable was measured using a 13-item scale called the Attraction, Image, and Compatibility (AIC) scale (Perkins, Thomas, & Taylor, 2000). This scale is composed of three subscales to which participants will communicate their endorsement of items by responding to a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The participants' responses to each of the subscale items were averaged to generate a score for each of the subscales. Only data from the attraction subscale was analyzed.

The attraction subscale is a six-item scale that measures the participants' level of attraction towards the organization. An example item is "I would speak to a company representative about the possibility of employment." Perkins et. al, (2000) report an alpha coefficient of .90 for this subscale. The current study reports an alpha coefficient of .84 for this subscale. The mean for the scale is 3.28, (SD=.69). Furthermore there

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were significant gender (F $_{(1,260)}$ = 13.20, p< .000) and race (F $_{(1,259)}$ = 3.76, p = .054) differences in attraction with women having higher mean attractiveness ratings (3.42) than men (3.11) and minority group members having higher mean attractiveness ratings (3.39) than majority group members (3.22).

Results

Analyses consisted of a series of ANOVA that examined the influence of various diversity benefits and participant demographics on ratings of organizational attractiveness. As expected, the results did suggest that the gender benefit was more attractive with an organizational attractiveness mean of 3.38, than either the race benefit (3.19) or the domestic partnership benefit (3.18). The discussion of the results is structured by the independent variable manipulated.

The first analysis focused on the impact of the tuition reimbursement benefit, participant race and participant gender on ratings of organizational attractiveness (see Tables 1 and 2). The presence of the ethnicity benefit (Hypothesis 1) did not contribute to differences in attractiveness, $F_{(1,132)} = 2.101$, p = .150. There was no significant interaction between the ethnicity benefit and participant race (Hypothesis 5), or between this benefit and participant gender (Hypothesis 4) on organizational attractiveness. Adjusted means were used for the analysis conducted to test Hypothesis 5 to correct for the lack of balance within the design.

The next analysis focused on the impact of the extended and paid maternity leave benefit, participant race and participant gender on ratings of organizational attractiveness (see Tables 3 and 4). The presence of the gender benefit (Hypothesis 2) did not contribute to differences in attractiveness, $F_{(1,128)} = .025$, p = .875. Neither the relationship between the gender benefit and participant race (Hypothesis 7) nor the relationship between the gender benefit and participant gender (Hypothesis 6) contribute significantly to differences in the dependent variable (attractiveness). Adjusted means were also used for the analysis conducted to test Hypothesis 7 to correct for the lack of balance within the design.

The final analysis focused on the impact of the domestic partnership benefit and participant gender on ratings of organizational attractiveness (see Table 5). The presence of the domestic partnership benefit (Hypothesis 3) did not contribute to differences in attractiveness, $F_{(1,128)} = 2.243$, p = .137. The relationship between this benefit and participant gender (Hypothesis 8) did not contribute significantly to differences in the dependent variable (attractiveness).

CHAPTER 3

DISCUSSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of three diversity benefits (tuition reimbursement for minority group members, extended and paid maternity leave, and domestic partnership) on college students' ratings of organizational attractiveness within a laboratory setting. The mere presence of these benefits did not contribute to differences in ratings of organizational attractiveness, as no main effects were found. The hypotheses were based on the theories of modern prejudice and aversive racism, which suggest that while individuals are not willing to overtly communicate prejudiced sentiment, these beliefs are exposed in situations in which they can be more covertly communicated.

There was a lack of support for the hypothesized main effects for each of the benefits (tuition reimbursement for ethnic minorities, extended and paid maternity leave, and domestic partnership). No differences in attractiveness ratings were detected between each of the benefit conditions and the control group. This lack of findings could be due to a number of flaws including weaknesses in the design of the research and failure of the theoretical premise to apply to the experimental situation.

The design flaws relate primarily to the recruitment advertisement, which did not have a high degree of mundane realism. The presence of this rather artificial stimulus likely undermined the attempt to create a realistic simulation of a job search. It is suggested that the participants may not have responded in a manner similar to the way they would respond in a real life situation. For this reason, any potential differences between experimental groups may have been obscured. It is also possible that the fivepoint Attraction, Image, and Compatibility (AIC) scale was not sensitive enough to capture existing differences on the dependent variable between groups.

The pattern of responses explicitly predicted by the theories of modern prejudice and aversive racism were not revealed in the present study. There were not differences in ratings of organizational attractiveness between the control condition and the race/ethnicity benefit condition. It is unclear why the predictions made by these theories were not realized in the present situation.

Another possibility for the lack of main effect findings could spring from the lack of relevance that these theories may have for other diverse groups. While the modern prejudice and aversive racism literatures are based on responses to ethnic minorities, they have not been extended to responses to women or gays and lesbians. Perhaps this pattern of responses does not apply to other diverse groups.

The interaction hypotheses were also not supported. Neither gender (H4) nor race (H5) appear to moderate the relationship between the tuition reimbursement benefit and ratings of organizational attractiveness. Male and female participants did not respond differently to the organization in this condition. Similar patterns of results were also evident in the comparison of minority and white participants.

Neither gender (H6) nor race (H7) appear to moderate the relationship between the maternity leave benefit and ratings of organizational attractiveness. Perhaps due to the fact that ethnic minorities and whites can benefit from the presence of an extended and paid maternity leave benefit, differences between these groups were not as great with respect to this benefit. It also the case that while men cannot personally take advantage of this benefit, they can benefit indirectly if there spouse is offered this benefit. Perhaps for this reason, differences between women and men were not significant.

Similarly, gender was not identified as a moderator in the relationship between the domestic partnership benefit and attractiveness ratings (H8). Although research has demonstrated that women are less homophobic than men (Logan, 1996), this did not translate into a difference in organizational attractiveness ratings in the current study.

However, differences in organizational attractiveness between demographic groups were evident. Women rated the organization as more attractive than men and ethnic minorities rated the organization as more attractive than whites. While these groups did appear to have different ratings across conditions, these differences were not borne out when comparing benefit conditions with the control condition. This finding was not hypothesized, but could be explained by the fact that regardless of condition each recruitment ad did state that the organization was an equal opportunity employer. Perhaps the minority participants (women and ethnic minorities) were more attracted to the statement of equal opportunity than majority group participants across conditions. While they did not differentiate between the three benefits and the control conditions, they were more attracted across the board due to this common statement.

Another possibility for the lack of findings with respect to the specific benefits is the fact that they may have lacked relevance for the sample. While tuition reimbursement is generally a salient issue for a college population, a sample of college students drawn exclusively from a state university with a large percentage of students that receive scholarship money from the state, may not mirror this pattern. Perhaps this characteristic of the sample decreased the relevance of the tuition reimbursement benefit. Further, the maternity leave and domestic partnership benefits may represent events too distal to have immediacy. It is possible that the participants could not identify with these issues. This lack of identification decreased the salience of the issue.

A frequent criticism of laboratory studies, particularly one using a sample composed exclusively of undergraduate students, is the concern related to external validity. How well can we expect the information gleaned in this environment to generalize to the real world of work? This is certainly a concern in the present study. Would these participants really respond to this fictional organization in the same way they would respond to an organization to which they were actually considering employment? Another related concern is the bias inherent in the use of self-report techniques. The exclusive reliance on self-report techniques in the current study gives rise to concern about the validity of the findings.

Future Research

Future research should reexamine this issue with the use of more realistic recruitment advertisements. It is also suggested that either benefits relevant for a college population be utilized or a "real world" sample of job seekers be employed for the future replication of this study. While college student participants are *considering* a future job search, they are not currently engaged in this pursuit and may have different reactions than people who are actively engaged in the process of a job search.

One way to utilize the current sample and increase the validity of the study would be to use an ad that represents a fictional university, instead of a fictional organization. In this way the stimulus would hold more relevance for the sample. The benefits could be modified to address the needs of a college population. The race/ethnicity benefit could be changed to a racial minority campus organization that is actively supported by the university. The gender benefit could be changed to the presence of a women's center on campus that would be designed to meet the specific needs of college women. The gay/lesbian benefit could be changed to a gay and lesbian campus organization that is actively supported by the university. This method would allow future research to utilize this sample and more succinctly investigate these issues.

One way to utilize both the current stimulus ad and the benefits described in the present study while increasing validity would be to target a sample of 'real world" job seekers. It is expected that experienced participants who are actively engaged in a job search would find the benefits more salient and relevant. This increase in relevance should lead to stronger detection of real differences in attractiveness between groups.

Increases in the degree of salience that the experience holds for the participants could lead to a greater understanding of the mechanisms that may be in play when potential applicants begin to consider recruiting organizations. It would also be useful to employ a scale that offered more sensitivity for the measurement of the dependent variable. In these ways, the current research study could be improved.

The present study could also be extended through a qualitative follow up study designed to investigate how job seekers understand and draw meaning from recruitment advertisements. This study would help illustrate Rynes' (1991) argument that job seekers use limited information to make job related decisions, by exploring how job seekers use specific information about benefits to make decisions about organizations. This approach could serve to take a step back to explore the manner in which individuals weigh benefit packages in the initial impression-forming stage of job seeking with an organization. A qualitative study would provide a deeper understanding of how job seekers consider benefits in their decision-making.

Contributions

Although the goals of exploring the phenomenon of modern prejudice in both the context of organizational recruitment and outside the realm of exclusive focus on racial minorities were not achieved, the current study does make valuable contributions to the recruitment literature. This study demonstrates that the prominent inclusion of benefits designed to target minority group members in the recruitment materials of organizations does not appear to detract from the interest of potential applicants who cannot take advantage of these benefits. This is an advantage for organizations seeking to attract both the minority and the non-minority applicant.

The present study sought to investigate the role of employee benefits in a potential job applicant's estimation of organizational attractiveness. The impact of three diversity benefits (tuition reimbursement for minority group members, extended and paid maternity leave, and domestic partnership) on college students' ratings of organizational attractiveness within a laboratory setting was explored. The research also dealt with the manner in which the demographic characteristics of the participants impacted the relationship between the various diversity benefits and organizational attractiveness. The analyses provided no support for the hypotheses.

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APPENDIX A

FEEDBACK FROM SME'S

Feedback elicited from subject matter experts on an appropriate race/ethnicity

benefit follows:

- 1. Racial/ethnic support groups
- 2. African American employee organization
- The payment of an employee' s dues/conference fees for black professional organizations such as the NBMBAA, NSBE, NABA, or civic organization like NAACP or Urban League
- 4. Scholarships for the children of employees of color
- 5. Tuition reimbursement for minority group members
- 6. Proactive recognition of Black History Month, the MLK holiday
- 7. Diversity workshops and training
- 8. Flexible holidays that individuals could take in order to observe 'ethnic' holidays

APPENDIX B

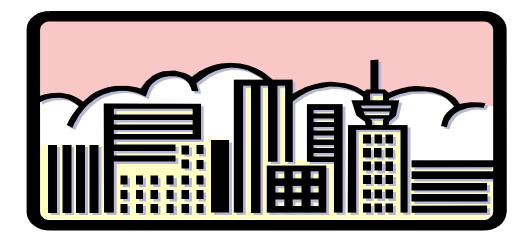
POWER ANALYSIS

 $\propto = .05$ f = .2 p = .8 $N_c = ((n' - 1)(u + 1) / \# \text{ of cells}) + 1$ $N_c = ((99-1)(1 + 1) / 8) + 1$ = 13 / cell $13 \times 16 \text{ cells} = 212$ N = 212 APPENDIX C

INSTRUMENTS



There comes a time in the progress of a company, when it stands at the threshold of an era of splendid opportunity. For PeoplePro Incorporated, that time is now. This is possible because of the quality of our employees. We encourage our employees to realize their true potential. If you are serious about your career, take a serious look at PeoplePro Incorporated.



This organization is an equal opportunity employer. As evidence of our commitment to diversity in the workplace, this organization offers extended and paid maternity leave.

12345Strongly DisagreeDisagreeNeither Agree Nor DisagreeAgreeStrongly Agree

Please rate your agreement with the following statements based on the scale below:

____ I would request additional information regarding the possibility of employment with this company.

____ I would like this company to recruit on campus.

____ I would speak to a company representative about the possibility of employment.

____ I think this organization is attractive.

____ I would not recommend this company to a friend.

____ I like this organization.

Please provide the following demographic information.

Gender		Male		Female
Race/Ethnicity		African American/Black		Asian
		Caucasian/White	Hispani	c
		Other		(please describe)
Marital Status	Ma	rried	Sin	gle
Major				
Hometown				

APPENDIX D

TABLES

Analysis of Variance for Organizational Attractiveness - Race Benefit by Ethnicity

Source	df	F	р
Race Benefit	1	2.101	.150
Ethnicity	1	5.031	.027*
Race Benefit x Ethnicity	1	.730	.394

Analysis of Variance for Organizational Attractiveness – Race Benefit by Gende
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Source	df	F	р
Race Benefit	1	2.101	.150
Gender	1	14.491	.000*
Race Benefit x Gender	1	2.455	.120

Analysis of Variance for Organizational Attractiveness - Gender Benefit by Ethnicity

Source	df	F	р
Gender Benefit	1	.025	.875
Ethnicity	1	.192	.662
Gender Benefit x Ethnicity	1	1.190	.277

Source	df	F	р
Gender Benefit	1	.025	.875
Gender	1	3.128	.079
Gender Benefit x Gender	1	.401	.528

Analysis of Variance for Organizational Attractiveness – Domestic Partnership Benefit by Gender

Source	df	F	р
DP Benefit	1	2.243	.137
Gender	1	2.804	.096
DP Benefit x Gender	1	.515	.474

Frequency Count of Participants in each Condition

Condition	Male	Female
Control	30	35
Gender Benefit	30	34
Ethnicity Benefit	35	33
DP Benefit	30	35

Condition	Minority	Non-Minority
Control	8	57
Gender Benefit	32	31
Ethnicity Benefit	30	38