

# Introduction

- Although nearly one in two companies intends to aggressively recruit racioethnic minorities

(Thaler-Carter, 2001), guidelines for doing so remain rather non-prescriptive

- Overly Eurocentric (Perkins et al., 2000)
- Too narrowly focused on post-hire outcomes rather than pre-hire decisions (Rau & Hyland, 2003)
- Inappropriately focused on personal intuition and experience rather than empirical support (Highhouse et al., 1999)

# The Benefits of Diversity

- Diversity in organizations is commonly touted as a source for “competitive advantage” (Thomas & Wise, 1999, p. 376) for several reasons, including:
  - Improved ability to reach minority consumer markets and increased market share (Richard, 2000)
  - Improved creativity and decision-making (Richard, Barnett, Dwyer, & Chadwick, 2004)
  - Lower turnover rates (McKay, Avery, Tonidandel, Morris, Hernandez, & Hebl, 2007)
  - Enhanced organizational image (Thomas, 2005)
  - Increased career commitment and career satisfaction among majority *and* minority employees (Hicks-Clarke & Iles, 2000)

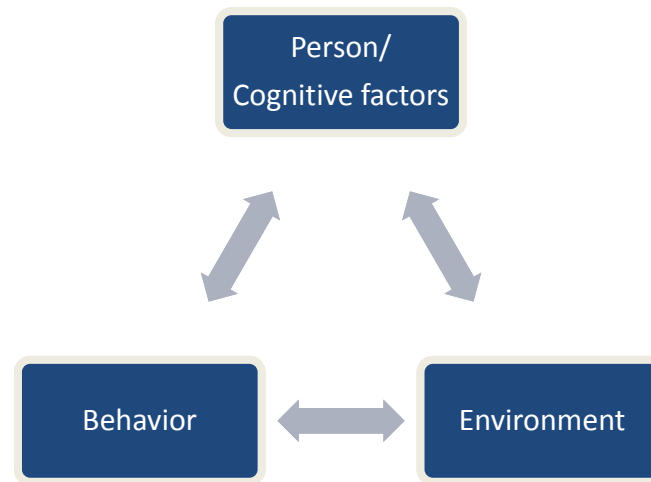
## *Signaling a Diverse Climate*

- *Perceptions* of organizational fit are more potent than actual fit during recruitment (Dineen et al., 2002)
- Organizations must signal their values and characteristics in ways that enhance perceived congruence with desired applicants' values and characteristics (Behling et al., 1968; see also Avery & McKay, 2006)
- Racioethnic minorities may be attracted to organizations by different factors than non-minority (White) applicants (Avery & McKay, 2006)
  - Such differences may be due to differing degrees of racial tolerance and ethnic identity than merely race itself (e.g., Brown et al., 2006; Kim & Gelfand, 2003)

- The strongest and most consistent ways to *successfully* create the impression of a diverse organizational climate in recruitment efforts are:
  - Pictorial depictions of racial diversity in printed/televised recruitment materials (e.g., Avery, 2003; Perkins et al., 2000)
  - Identity-conscious staffing policies like affirmative action and EEO statements (Highhouse et al., 1999; Moechnig & Ratz, 2001)
  - High-commitment-to-diversity statements that convey the importance of diversity to an organization (e.g., Kim & Gelfand, 2003; Rau & Hyland, 2003)

# Social Cognitive Theory at Work

- Social Cognitive Theory (SCT; Bandura, 1986) identifies human behavior as being reciprocally related with personal (i.e., cognitive) and environmental factors



- A core construct in SCT is *self-efficacy*, a person's belief in his/her ability to accomplish a desired goal or outcome
  - In the present context → *job search self-efficacy*

- Job Search Self-efficacy
  - Belief in one's ability to successfully obtain a desired employment outcome
- Efficacy beliefs affect whether individuals think optimistically or pessimistically about outcome expectations
- Efficacy beliefs influence the choices people make at important decisional points, as social influences operating within a decisional situation may elicit certain perceptions of which abilities and values are linked to success on a given task or impending goal (Bandura, 2006)
  - e.g., acceptance or rejection of a job offer, or one's perception of promotion potential or career success within an organization

# Self-Efficacy & Racioethnic Minorities

- Racioethnic minorities typically report lower levels of perceived self-efficacy than Whites, because they generally:
  - Hold lower social statuses
  - Experience fewer mastery or successful performances because of existing institutional barriers and inadequate social networks and resources (Hughes & Demo, 1989; cf. Franks & Marolla, 1976)
  - Similarly, media-generated and anecdotal evidence of discrimination *traditionally* blames existing institutional barriers for creating limited opportunities for career advancement, rewards, and optimism for racioethnic minority workers (cf. Doverspike et al., 2000)

# Realities for Minorities at Work

- Common work experiences among minorities may contribute to a pessimistic and self-debilitating mindset (i.e., low self-efficacy) about potential for **career success** (Doverspike et al., 2000; Kossek & Zonia, 1993)
  - Lack of visible role models and mentors in org. positions
  - Missed opportunities for jobs, promotions, and recognition because of inadequate social networks
  - Expectations of inequity of rewards and recognition
  - Negative organizational attitudes and expectations about overall career success because of anticipated barriers to advancement (Foley et al., 2002)

# The Present Study

The present study experimentally examined the extent to which racioethnic minority applicants' perceptions of self-efficacy, organizational attraction, and intentions to pursue are influenced by the experimental manipulation of the four proposed levers of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986) conveyed through implicit and explicit recruitment messages presented on two mock-organization websites (i.e., efficacy-*enhancing* vs. efficacy-*suppressing* conditions)

# *The Malleability of Self-Efficacy*

- The enhancement and/or suppression of one's perceived self-efficacy depends on four key elements
  - 1. Mastery experience:** Focusing on one's strengths in a given context can increase one's self-efficacy, while focusing on one's weaknesses can decrease one's self-efficacy
  - 2. Vicarious experience:** Watching others who are similar succeed within a given context can boost self-efficacy
  - 3. Social persuasion:** Individuals can be persuaded to believe that they have what it takes to succeed within a given context (or vice versa)
  - 4. Physical and emotional states:** Negative psycho-physiological states (e.g., arousal, tension, anxiety, or depression) may decrease self-efficacy (and vice versa)

# *Hypotheses*

## **Racioethnic minority participants will...**

- **(H1)**...report a comparatively higher rating of job search self-efficacy than white participants in the efficacy-enhancing condition than when in the efficacy-suppressing condition.
- **(H2)**...report a comparatively higher rating of organizational attraction than white participants in the efficacy-enhancing condition than when in the efficacy-suppressing condition.
- **(H3)**...report a comparatively higher rating of intention to pursue employment than white participants in the efficacy-enhancing condition than when in the efficacy-suppressing condition.

# Method: Participants

- 100 participants were recruited to assist with a fictitious market-research task testing two new organization's websites
  - Junior and senior, job-bound university students from multiple undergraduate courses at a medium-sized public university in the southeastern U.S.
  - 50 Caucasian students
  - 50 racioethnic minority students
    - 72% Black or African-American, 20% Asian-American, 6% Bi-racial, 2% Latino/Latina
  - Average age was 22.3 years ( $SD = 3.90$ )

# Method: Research Design

- This study employed a single-blind (participants), mixed between and within-subjects factorial design ( $2_{(\text{order})} \times 2_{(\text{race})} \times 2_{(\text{company})}$ )
  - Counterbalancing of order of efficacy-condition presentation was incorporated so that half of the participants (25 Whites and 25 minorities) were exposed to the efficacy-enhancing condition first, while the other half of participants were exposed to the efficacy-suppressing condition first
  - All participants responded to both efficacy conditions

# *Efficacy Manipulations*

## **Efficacy-Enhancing (TyFlo)**

- Positive list of strengths
- Portrayal of a racially diverse workforce in website images of company employees and executives
- Presence of EEO and high-commitment-to-diversity statements, as well as diversity-embracing employee testimonials
- Presence of the low-stress hypothetical job site preview

## **Efficacy-Suppressing (QuadAir)**

- Negative list of weaknesses
- Portrayal of a racially homogenous workforce in website images of company employees and executives
- Absence of EEO and high-commitment-to-diversity statements, as well as diversity-embracing employee testimonials
- Presence of the high-stress hypothetical employment interview

# Measures

- **Mastery Experience:** Two item index of the degree to which participants thinking more about their strengths than their weaknesses when considering their chances of (a) *being hired* and (b) *succeeding* in the organization
- **Vicarious Experience:** 4-item composite index of similarity to successful employees and leadership in the organization ( $\alpha = .85$  efficacy-enhancing;  $\alpha = .88$  efficacy-suppressing)
- **Social Persuasion:** Rated agreement/disagreement with the statement, "These recruitment materials have persuaded or convinced me that I have what it takes to succeed in this organization."
- **Physical & Emotional States:** Six items adopted from Marteau and Bekker's (1992) State Anxiety Inventory ( $\alpha = .75$  efficacy-enhancing;  $\alpha = .88$  efficacy-suppressing)

- **Job Search Self-Efficacy:** Moynihan, Roehling, LePine, and Boswell's (2003) Job Search Self-Efficacy Scale ( $\alpha = .87$  efficacy-enhancing;  $\alpha = .89$  efficacy suppressing)
- **Organizational Attraction & Intentions to Pursue:** Highhouse, Lievens, and Sinar's (2003) Organizational Attraction Scale. Org. Attraction ( $\alpha = .90$  efficacy-enhancing;  $\alpha = .94$  efficacy-suppressing); Pursuit Intentions ( $\alpha = .82$  efficacy-enhancing;  $\alpha = .88$  efficacy-suppressing)

# Method: Procedure

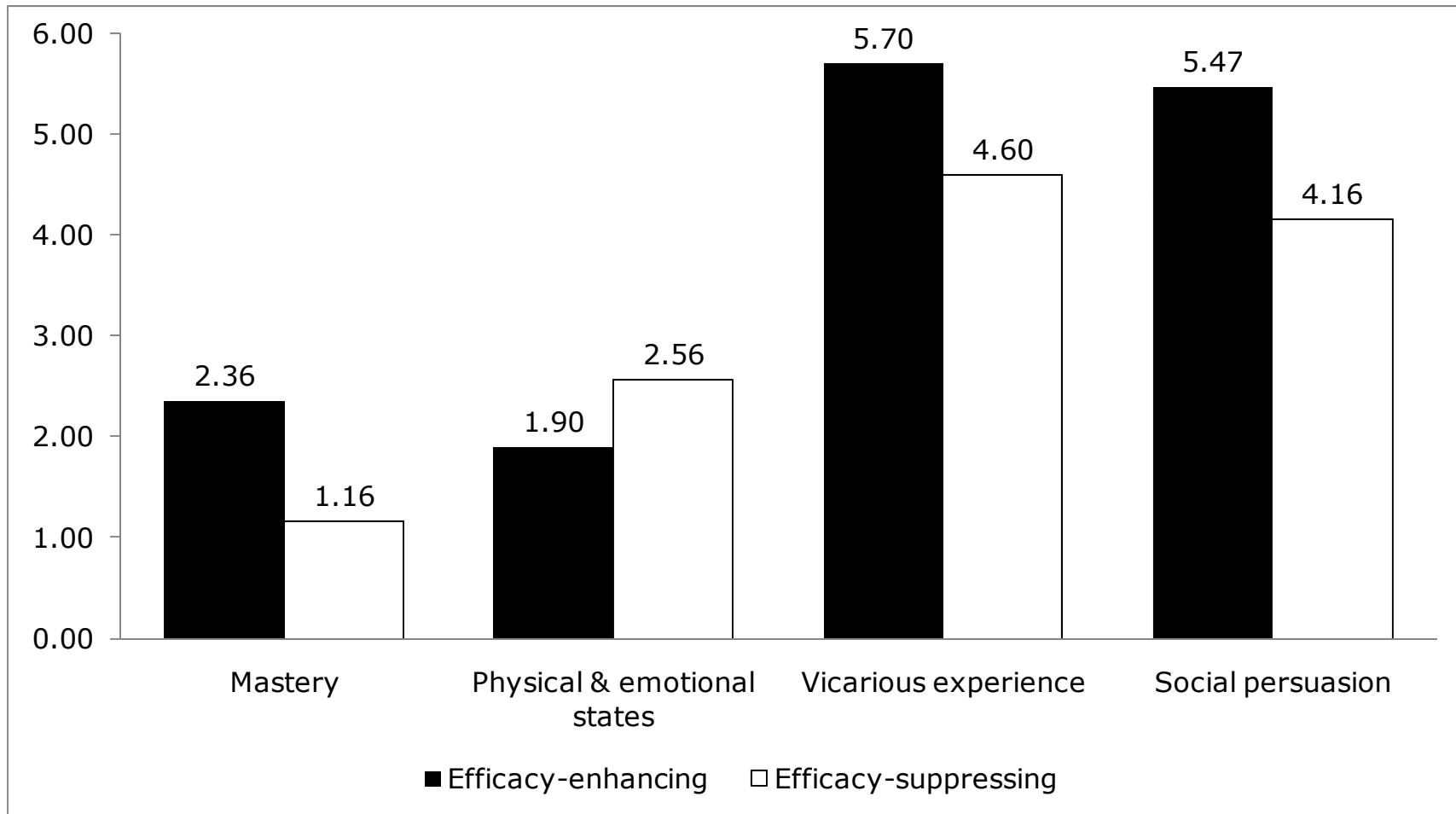
1. During proctored data collection sessions, participants were introduced to the project and internet-interface through a brief internet-based overview of the fake market-research firm
2. After reviewing consent documents and indicating their willingness to participate in the “market research”, participants provided personal and demographic information (e.g., work history and interests)
3. Participants were then randomly assigned (ensuring equal distribution of sex and White/minority demographics) to either begin with the efficacy-enhancing (TyFlo) or efficacy-suppressing (QuadAir) condition
4. All participants had 60 minutes to complete this activity, although most needed around 30 minutes

- 4) After reviewing the four web pages for one organization (i.e., "What We Do," "Who We Are," "Working Here," and "Interested"), participants were automatically directed to a brief internet-based survey with the aforementioned scales and questionnaires regarding that organization
- 5) Upon completing the first such survey, participants automatically were directed to the second organization's website, and its respective reaction survey page
- 6) Following this survey, participants were directed to a final closing "Thank You" screen
- 7) At the conclusion of the data collection period, all participants were contacted with a detailed debriefing letter to explain to them the real purpose of this study

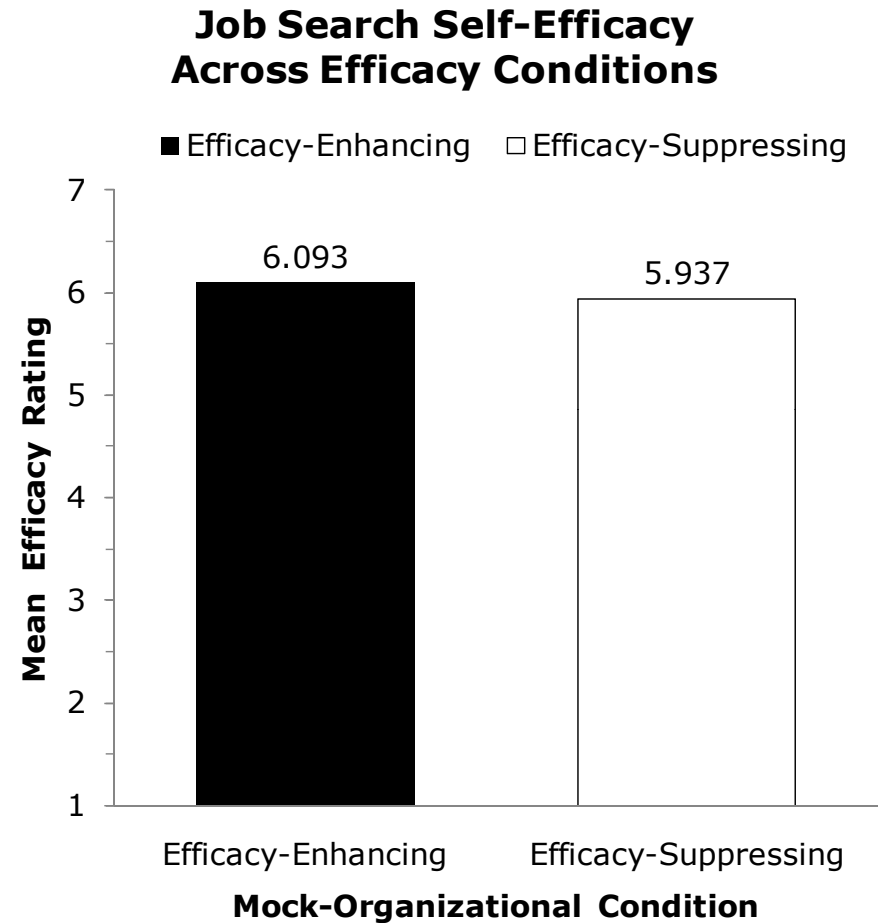
# Analyses & Results

- No order effects were observed, so all responses were combined to more powerfully consider the core study hypotheses
- Manipulation checks revealed a significant within-participant difference in job-related self-efficacy across the two efficacy conditions
- In addition, significant differences were observed between the two efficacy conditions in terms of all four contributors to efficacy that were manipulated as a set
- Hypotheses and the exploratory research question were tested with a three-way mixed analysis of variance (ANOVA),  $2_{(\text{order})} \times 2_{(\text{race})} \times 2_{(\text{company})}$

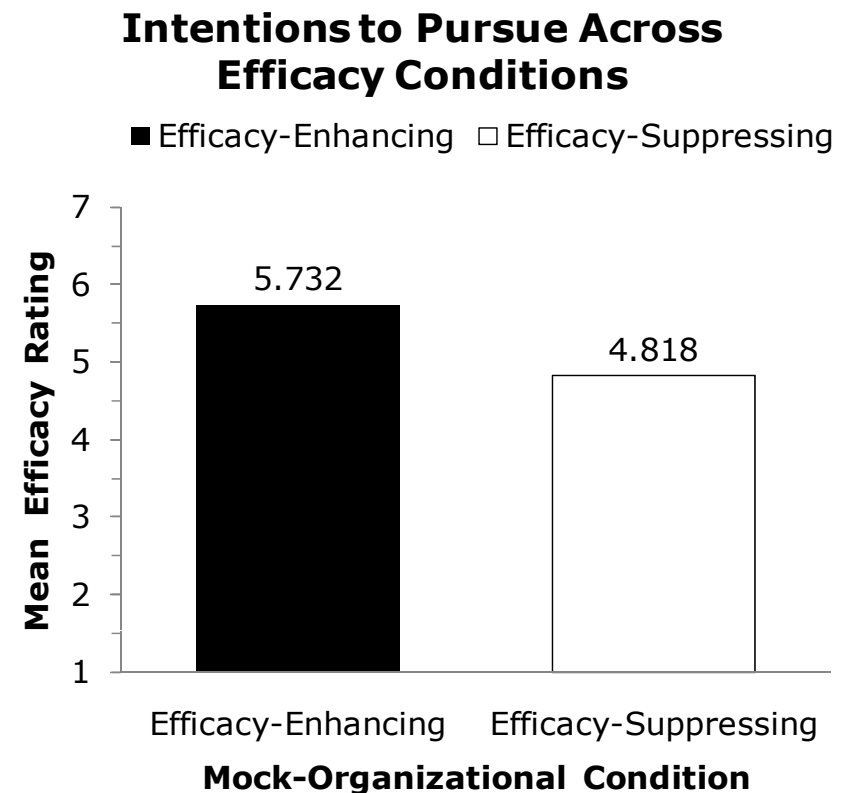
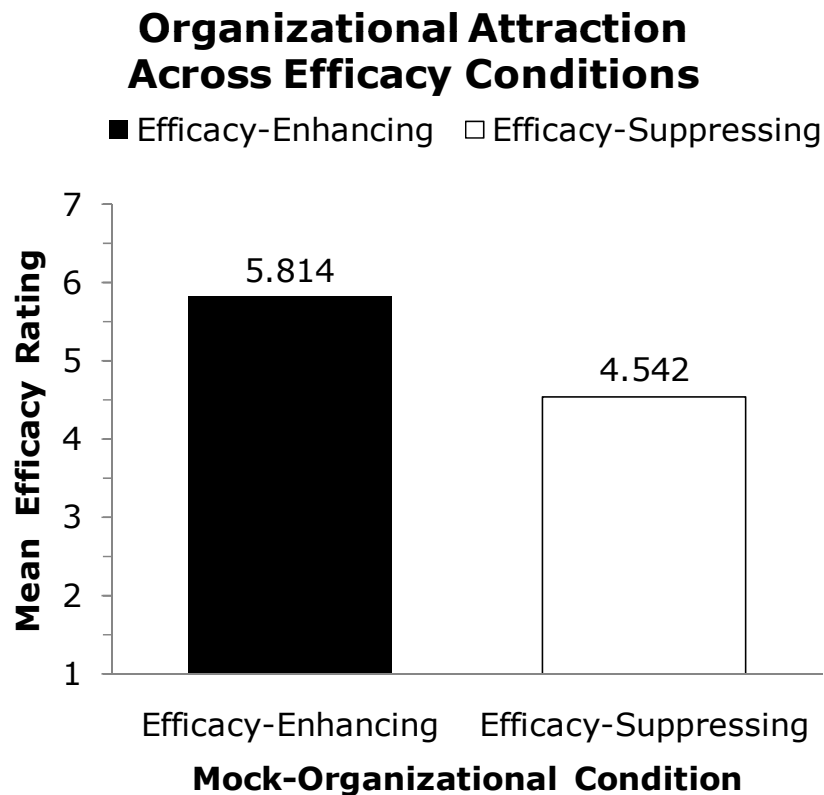
|                             | Efficacy-enhancing |           | Efficacy-suppressing |           | <i>t</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>d</i> | 95% CI |       |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|--------|-------|
|                             | <i>M</i>           | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i>             | <i>SD</i> |          |           |          |          | Lower  | Upper |
| Mastery                     | 2.36               | 2.15      | 1.16                 | 2.29      | 6.15     | 99.00     | 0.00     | 0.61     | 0.81   | 1.58  |
| Physical & emotional states | 1.90               | 0.73      | 2.56                 | 1.20      | -6.87    | 99.00     | 0.00     | -0.69    | -0.85  | -0.47 |
| Vicarious experience        | 5.70               | 0.98      | 4.60                 | 1.50      | 7.11     | 99.00     | 0.00     | 0.71     | 0.79   | 1.41  |
| Social persuasion           | 5.47               | 1.41      | 4.16                 | 1.76      | 6.97     | 99.00     | 0.00     | 0.70     | 0.94   | 1.68  |



- A significant multivariate effect was observed between the efficacy-enhancing and -suppressing organizational conditions, Wilks' Lambda = .58,  $F(2, 95)=34.74$ ,  $p<.05$
- **Hypothesis 1 was supported** → Job-related self-efficacy was significantly higher following exposure to the efficacy-enhancing condition than the efficacy-suppressing condition,  $F(1, 96)=4.33$ ,  $p<.05$ , partial  $\eta^2=.04$



- **Hypotheses 2 and 3 were both partially supported** → Participant race did not influence reactions to the efficacy manipulations, but a significant main effect of efficacy condition was found for the outcomes of *organizational attraction*,  $F(1, 96)=69.75, p<.05$ , partial  $\eta^2=.42$ , and *intentions to pursue*,  $F(1, 96)=54.64, p<.05$ , partial  $\eta^2=.06$



# Discussion

- Results suggest that creation and implementation of efficacy-enhancing recruitment materials may help to improve equal and fair attraction for *all* potential applicants (regardless of minority status)
  - Contrast with previous research (e.g., Avery et al., 2004; James et al., 2001) suggesting racioethnic minorities value and are more attracted by organizational diversity efforts than White applicants
- The findings of the present study could be used to improve the fairness of recruitment and hiring procedures to all applicants, regardless of their minority or majority status

# *Limitations and Future Directions*

- Sample was full-time undergraduate students
  - However, participants were nearing college graduation and were attuned to the job search process
- All participants were from the southern U.S., where the proportion of minorities is relatively high
  - This may have influenced participants' race-related attitudes of all participants and may explain the lack of a significant main effect for participant minority status (c.f., Avery, 2003)
- Future research will benefit by considering additional moderators of relationships between recruitment tactics and organizationally relevant outcomes
  - Individual differences in racial tolerance, other-group orientation, and/or ethnic identity (cf., Avery, 2003; Brown et al., 2006; Kim & Gelfand, 2003)

# **Interested in more details?**

This poster and a related working paper  
can be downloaded online at:

**<http://www.utc.edu/faculty/chris-cunningham>**