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Effects of Advertising Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) on Female Applicants' Intentions to Pursue Employment Through Perceived Organizational Support

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Abstract

Employee resource groups (ERGs) have existed since the 1960's to provide additional support for a group of employees within an organization that share a common identity (e.g., gender, race, sexual orientation, veteran status). Gaining in popularity over the past 25 years, they are utilized to drive change and foster diversity management (Welbourne et al., 2017). Organizations have also realized the potential for demonstrating a commitment to diversity to external stakeholders, future applicants, and current employees (Biscoe & Safford, 2010; Friedman & Holtom, 2002). ERGs are unique, thus are difficult to quantify and study empirically. However, given the prevalence of ERGs, it is critical that researchers investigate the role of ERGs for employees, organizations, and potential applicants. This study examined the causal effects of the presence of ERGs in recruiting materials on women's intentions to apply to an organization through perceived organizational support. The study was conducted with 120 women over 18 years old. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. One condition advertised ERGs, and the control condition did not include ERG information. A simple mediation revealed that the relationship between the advertisement of ERGs and application intentions is mediated through perceived organizational support (B = 0.45, $CI95$ = 0.22 to 0.70). Results suggest that the presence of ERGs in recruiting materials may influence the perception of organizational support, which, in turn, affects the likelihood of individuals expressing an intent to pursue. It is critical that the ERGs are perceived as supportive. Therefore, organizations should convey to external stakeholders that their ERGs meaningfully contribute to the development and maintenance of an inclusive culture.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Work as we knew it was forever altered when COVID-19 wreaked havoc on the world. Trends before COVID accelerated, while others halted (Pazzanese, 2021). Remote work and virtual meetings shifted from an emerging trend to a central practice for many organizations (Lund, Smit, & Brown, 2021). Organizations are now adopting hybrid workplaces to accommodate those that work in-person and remotely (Mortensen & Haas, 2021). As changes occur, old questions to new problems arise. But no issue has been highlighted more than the excessive numbers of people leaving their jobs, forcing organizations to question recruitment and retention strategies.

COVID-19 prompted a mass exodus from many organizations as many Americans re-evaluated their priorities and careers. As of September 2021, 19 million US workers had quit their jobs since April 2021 (Gandhi & Robison, 2021). Known now as the Great Resignation, this movement has prompted managers to re-evaluate their strategy for recruiting and retaining employees across at least 4,000 organizations (Cook, 2021). The trend persists beyond the height of the global pandemic as still, one in five workers worldwide planned to quit their jobs in 2022 (Sethi et al., 2022). Moreover, there are disproportionate differences within demographic variables like race, socioeconomic status, and gender.

The English language has not caught up with the evolution of our understanding of gender. The female experience in the workplace is not limited to a person's sex assigned at birth. For this paper and to encompass a diverse group of individuals striving to be included and supported in the workforce, women in the workforce (WIWF) will represent any individual who identifies as a woman.

WIWF are leaving their jobs at higher rates than men. In a 2021 study from the digital banking platform Laurel Road (2022), 34% of women and 35% of BIPOC women indicated they left their jobs in 2021. Comparatively, 30% of all surveyed men left their jobs. The intention to turnover due to household obligations has also been higher for women at 14% compared to men at 12% (Hinchliffe, 2020). From 2020 to 2022, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that 1.1 million women left the workforce (Gonzales, 2022). Before the Great Resignation, women made great strides toward workplace equality, but progress has since halted. Thus, women demand to be seen, heard, and supported and are willing to leave their organizations to get it (McKinsey & LeanIn, 2022).

According to a McKinsey and LeanIn (2022) annual report on WIWF, women leaders, particularly, are switching jobs at historically high rates—rates even higher than men in leadership. The people leading the Great Resignation are mid-career employees between the ages of 30 and 45, with a 20% increase in resignation rates between 2020 and 2021 (Cook, 2021). Organizations must be mindful of this age group and the younger women watching current affairs. The younger generations value working for equitable and inclusive workplaces more than ever (McKinsey & LeanIn, 2022). By watching more senior women opt for these types of organizations over the traditional workplace, the younger generation will likely do the same.

Thus, the Great Resignation could prove to have severe consequences for companies. For example, the trajectory for women in leadership has dramatically changed. The issue was getting women into leadership positions for many years, but now the problem has become keeping them in leadership (McKinsey & LeanIn, 2022). Particularly in leadership, women are just as ambitious as men, but they face hurdles that make it more challenging to advance. Women also do more to support their co-workers and foster inclusion, but this work is often in addition to a

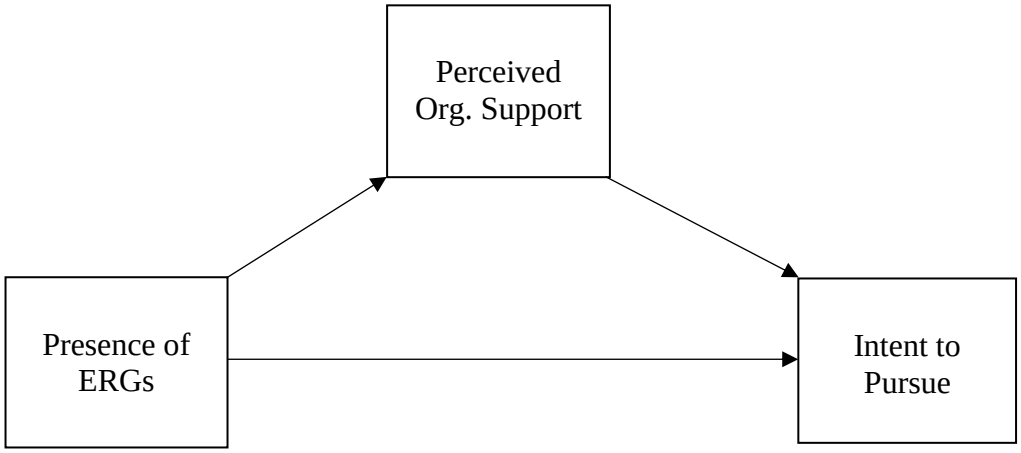
full workload and goes largely unrewarded. Moreover, women also prioritize working for companies that prioritize employee well-being, diversity, equity, and inclusion (McKinsey & LeanIn, 2021; 2022).

Again, COVID-19 prompted organizations and employees to consider what an organization should be providing to their employees. Some organizations are attempting to answer the call for equity and inclusion. As a new generation enters the job market, researchers and organizations are learning what these workers will require of their organizations. Specifically, millennials and younger are looking for socially responsible organizations (Bhattacharya et al., 2008; Eger et al., 2019). Organizations displaying corporate social responsibility behaviors demonstrate a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI; McKinsey & LeanIn, 2022; Miller, 2021; O'Boyle, 2021) and provide opportunities for professional development and advancement (Denterlein & Leder-Luis, 2020; Gayle, 2019; Mawhinney & Betts, 2021). To meaningfully commit to DEI, organizations must address systemic issues like pay transparency, the pay gap, work-family policies, targeted recruitment, and work flexibility. However, these issues are not the only components stakeholders hope to see improved. It is also essential for employees to be a part of an organization that values professional development and offers psychologically safe places to discuss sensitive topics within the workplace. Employee resource groups (ERGs) are currently trendy in human resource management as organizations strive to emphasize their commitment to diversity.

For the current study, I tested a theoretical model (see Figure 1; the full proposed model) to predict the positive impact of employee resource groups (ERGs) on WIWF. In this study, I provide additional insights into WIWFs' perceptions of the organizational characteristics via organizational support that influence their decisions to apply to the organization. Specifically, I

proposed that the presence and advertising of ERGs will encourage WIWF to apply to the organization. Another aim of the study was to identify if ERGs signal to applicants that the organization provides a supportive environment. Furthermore, this study sought to determine if the presence of ERGs will predict an applicant's intent to pursue as mediated by perceived organizational support.

Figure 1
Model of the Relationship Between ERGs, Perceived Organizational Support, & Intent to Pursue.



We are in a time when organizations must create policies and foster a culture that meets their stakeholders' needs; neither happens in a vacuum. Ignoring the external factors that influence WIWF experiences is a disservice to the readers. Therefore, before discussing the literature directly related to the variables within the proposed model, I will begin Chapter 1 with a discussion of contextual factors that led us to the modern-day woman's experience. Following the contextual discussion, I will review the current literature examining the implications of advertising employee resources groups as a recruiting tactic to attract female applicants. Additionally, I will review the literature on perceived organizational support. I will also outline

the theoretical and empirical evidence that informs the research hypotheses and discuss the strategy for evaluating these propositions.

Context

For decades, researchers have predicted an issue with the quantity and quality of eligible workers in the US economy (Rynes, 1990). Labor shortages continue to be a surging issue, especially with the global pandemic (Holtz-Eakin & Lee, 2019). As of 2021, 48% of the US workplace were considering leaving their current roles, with 3.6 million workers leaving their positions in May 2021 alone (Gandhi & Robison, 2021). The Great Resignation has perplexed the minds of business leaders as they search for the key to increasing attraction and recruitment as well as retaining current employees. Leaders can address resignation from multiple stages of the employee lifecycle. The initial response from organizations is to address retention concerns (De Smet et al., 2021). However, instead of focusing solely on the factors that negatively impact retention, organizations should also consider displaying their efforts to foster employee development and belonging to attract quality applicants (De Smet et al., 2021).

According to a recent survey, the top reason people leave their current roles is to pursue positions with forward-looking organizations that integrate personal and professional development into every aspect of the employee experience, indicating that employees are looking for more from their employers (Gandhi & Robison, 2021). Similarly, organizations experiencing success in the current employee market highlight their developmental opportunities and supportive systems in job advertisements, recruiting efforts, and the interview process, again emphasizing the importance of attraction organizational support (Gandhi & Robison, 2021). Recruiting research indicates that applicants' quantity and quality are essential to the attraction and recruitment process (Rynes, 1990). Thus, regardless of the social or global context, attracting

the highest quality applicants will always be needed to maintain a competitive advantage (Turban & Greening, 1996).

Women Work in Tired, Traditional Norms

Generally speaking, organizations are considered homogenous beings where the employees' demographics are irrelevant. When we think of Amazon or Google, individuals do not think of the employees that make up those companies. Instead, people tend to generalize about or even personify the entire company's identity (Eisenberger et al., 1986). However, individual characteristics, such as gender, race, and ethnicity, play a vital role in society, which includes the workplace (Nkomo, 1992). Organizations and their norms play a central role in influencing culture, so how individuals operate and are treated within an organization is critical to inclusive efforts (Nkomo, 1992). The traditional corporate workplace predominates with White norms and thus caters to the White majority (Amis, Mair, & Munir, 2020). While corporate America was primarily composed of just one demographic at one time, today's corporate workplace looks much more diverse (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). Yet, the traditional workplace is still a norm in most American corporations, excluding many minorities from being active and successful participants in the organization's culture.

While this study will not address race, to properly understand the importance of creating support systems for minority groups, one must first understand how most Western organizations operate. Organizations are developed and maintained with theory and research created using primarily White male samples while consistently assuming organizations to be race neutral (Nkomo, 1992). Suppose theories based on inadequate samplings are perpetuated in practice and research. In that case, that particular population's values and concerns remain the predominant standard by which all else is compared in literature and the workplace (Cox & Nkomo, 1990).

Failure to include other perspectives is to uphold White males as the norm or the ideal comparison for every other race, gender, ethnicity, and sex (Minnich, 1990).

For decades researchers have called for organizations to change their entire character from being traditionally manned by White males to a more diverse group of employees to recast the culture and physical makeup of the organization that will propel them to competitive advantages not yet discovered (Bilimoria et al., 2008; Thomas & Ely, 2008;). Organizations develop and maintain a more diverse employee base, but the dominant cultural norms remain unchanged (Friedman & Holtom, 2002). Beyond just the culture aspects, employees with decision-making power are still predominately White and male, thus more likely to reinforce and uphold the traditional corporate cultural norms (Green et al., 2021).

Women have been able to breach lower levels of organizations but continue to struggle to enter upper-level management positions compared to their male counterparts (McKinsey & LeanIn, 2021). It is not enough to recruit women into entry-level positions when representation and support are needed at all levels of the organization (Bilimoria et al., 2008). If we can diversify the pipeline by encouraging women to enter organizations, gender gaps in advancement, compensation, and retention may disappear (Etzkowitz et al., 2000).

Transitioning Away from Tradition

Organizations should focus on more profound and meaningful change transforming systems and structures that have upheld work practices and policies perpetuating inequities (McCracken & Wallace, 2000; Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000). An inclusive environment is beneficial not only to women and other minority groups but also to men. An inclusive environment enables everyone to experience supportive and positive relationships between all genders while minimizing stereotypes about men's and women’s roles in the workplace, thereby

improving work conditions for all (McLean, 2003). Inclusion can also improve reward systems, advancements, and work policies that support work-life integration for all genders, rather than just benefiting those that fulfill traditional norms (Bilimoria et al., 2008; McLean, 2003). Thus, if organizations strive to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for women and other minorities, the workplace becomes more supportive and motivating for all employees (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000).

Given the model of the economy, we can consider employment in terms of supply and demand. The introduction of inclusion initiatives can occur at both the supply and demand sides of the employee experience. The demand side suggests that initiatives to improve work-life balance, like remote work, flexible work schedules, and child-care support, will enhance the employee experience and make the work environment more inclusive (Bilimoria et al., 2008). In contrast, supply-side efforts focus on attracting and recruiting women throughout organizational ranks. For the purpose of this paper, I will focus on attraction efforts, or the supply side, of employment.

Gender and Traditional Societal Expectations

Gender is one demographic that has played a distinct role in the evolution of the appearance of the American workplace. The expectations of the American worker have remained relatively constant, despite the diversification of gender over time. For decades, the gap between men and women in the workplace was massive. However, over the past few decades, women have experienced moderate gains, like narrowing the pay gap and holding more positions of power. Yet inequalities persist. For example, women are still less likely than men to hold positions of business or political power (World Economic Forum, 2019). Likewise, not accounting for intersectionality, women still earn only 80% of their male counterparts (US

Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). Furthermore, the pay gap widens when introducing additional layers of demographics. For instance, single women have just 32% of single men's wealth (assets minus debts; Torres, 2019).

From 2015 to 2020, the representation of women in corporate America rose incrementally from 23% to 28% of senior vice president roles and 17% to 21% of c-suite positions (Lean In, 2020). Likewise, women in management positions continued to rise (Torpey, 2016). COVID-19 put an immediate halt to progress. The pandemic pushed women to work a "double shift" as children could not attend childcare facilities, school, and after-school programs. In 2019 alone, 3 million American women exited the workplace due to feeling undervalued, unequal, and experiencing outdated expectations of caregiving (Cerullo, 2021). Unsurprisingly the trend continued in 2020; two million women were considering taking a leave of absence or leaving the workplace entirely (Gandhi & Robison, 2021). In the days of the Great Resignation, women have been leaving the workforce at higher rates than their male counterparts (De Smet et al., 2021). If women continue to leave the workforce in droves, we could see all the prior progress dwindle and set us back even further than we left off before the pandemic. Thus, employers must consider new methods of recruiting and attracting women to their organizations.

Moreover, women continue to do most domestic chores within their homes while maintaining full-time jobs. As of 2018, women were responsible for 76.2% of the unpaid work at home (Addati, Umberto, Esquibel, & Valarino, 2018). As stated above, more women than men have recently considered leaving the workplace to tend to household obligations. Social role theory suggests that people will act in accordance with stereotypes and gendered expectations given to them by society (Eagly, 1987). For example, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021), the average American works 34.4 hours per week. Men work 4.6 hours more

than women at 41 hours per week, but married men work 4.5 hours more than single men (Doyle, 2021). Married women, however, only work 1.7 hours more than single women (Doyle, 2021). This finding suggests that having a spouse at home is more beneficial for men than women. Marriage may be more useful for married men because spouses still maintain the stereotypical role expectations of their assigned gender. Due to the preservation of traditional gender roles, women are generally expected to tend to the household's needs even if she holds full-time employment.

History offers the best examples and explanations of the gendered expectations men and women still hold today. There are still sex-typical occupations and family expectations and behaviors (Eagly, 1987). Before the industrial revolution, there was a stark division of labor dependent on gender. Men provided for their families by being physically and mentally tough, independent, assertive, and risk-taking (Eagly, 1987). Women, however, were left at home to perform the “domestic” chores, while men worked outside the house because they were viewed as harmonious and communal (Eagly & Steffen, 1984). Specifically, women were expected to be nurturing, gentle, sympathetic, concerned about the welfare of others, and interpersonally sensitive (Eagly & Steffen, 1984). Related to the workplace, a recent study revealed that women benefit most from creating networks comprising other women willing and able to share information about the organization, negotiation strategies, and interviewing tips (Yang et al., 2018). Because women are more likely to face hurdles and stereotypes in their workplace, they can better relate and relay the best strategies for negotiations, promotions, and navigating the organizational culture. Conversely, men also had inner circles, but the genders of their inner circle members did not matter to their success (Yang et al., 2018). Therefore, diversity strategies

like employee resource groups and mentoring programs may be more attractive and beneficial to WIWF than men.

Gendered Role Expectations and Their Consequences

While the division of labor has become more blurred over the decades, there are still traditional gender expectations that persist not only in the home but in the workplace. For example, and perhaps most noteworthy, it has been theorized that gender plays a vital role in the performance of organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs; Diefendorff et al., 2002). Social norms emphasize the performance of communal, helping behaviors by women, in contrast to independent, assertive behaviors by men (Eagly and Steffen, 1984; Langford and MacKinnon, 2000). In the workplace, women are expected to perform more OCBs than men (Heilman and Chen, 2005; Morrison, 1994). Likewise, women are more likely to view OCBs as an element of their role despite such behaviors not being listed in the job description (Heilman and Chen, 2005; Morrison, 1994). However, where women are expected to perform OCBs, the expectation for men is slightly different. When men perform an OCB, it is perceived as going beyond their job description. Thus, men performing OCBs may be given a boost in their performance reviews (Heilman & Chen, 2005).

The extra work extends beyond just the workplace. Over the past few years, it became apparent that women maintain various roles-- barely sustainable lifestyles. Depending on life stage, women may occupy a full-time position in an organization and be any combination of other roles like a mother, caregiver, and spouse. For example, at the pandemic's peak, while everyone was at home, women often took on the additional roles of teacher and nurse and learned to work from home while tending to their families. As a result, women leave the workplace, stating that the pay is not worth the effort (McKinsey & LeanIn, 2021).

Regardless of progress in recent years surrounding gender roles, societal norms still dictate that men should spend more time at work, but women should spend more time with their families (Van der Lippe & & Lippényi, 2018). This norm, paired with traditional gender norms, influences how men and women approach work and family roles, thus emphasizing the divide between the two genders (Van der Lippe & & Lippényi, 2018). Women tend to be associated with the family domain, while men are associated with the work domain (Van der Lippe, 1994).

Additionally, remote work will continue to be a growing trend (w, 2021). According to Van der Lippe and & Lippényi (2018), women are more likely than men to experience work-family conflict when working from home, but mitigated when they are in a supportive organization (e.g., other remote workers on the team, encouraged to take breaks, supportive managers). Since the family domain is more salient for women than men, women tend to be more sensitive to a supportive organizational environment (Rupert et al., 2012; Thompson & Cavallaro, 2007).

Women Who Break Rules

Additionally, women violating their gendered expectations have an increased potential to be socially rejected or receive negative consequences for organizational rewards because they are not acting per their assigned stereotypes (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007). As women are still encouraged to adhere to the norms of working their way up in an organization, they also have the potential to be ostracized, criticized, or rejected by their counterparts within an organization. Stereotyping continues to be a pervasive problem across all organizations, impacting women in positions of leadership and roles where females are the minority (Hall, Schmader, & Croft, 2015). Particularly for women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), women disproportionately vacate their roles due to workplace bullying, isolation, or social

identity threat due to feelings of incompetence or lack of belonging (Blickenstaff, 2005; Hall, Schmader, & Croft, 2015). Moreover, research indicates that the mere awareness of negative stereotypes can unconsciously block women's interest and advancement in STEM settings (Walton & Spencer, 2009). Women who remain in their STEM role may have developed coping strategies that prevent them from being susceptible to social identity threats, thus prolonging their employment in a male-dominated and lucrative field (Hall et al., 2015). Additionally, women that are managers in the workplace tend to receive more criticism and scrutiny than men, thus being evaluated as worse performing than their male counterparts (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992). All this to say, women continue to exist within spaces where they are not necessarily welcome by their co-workers but still have much to contribute to organizations.

Decades of research regarding gender discrimination in the workplace have created a metaphorical structure entirely made of glass to explain the barriers women and people of color face when attempting to get ahead. The term "glass ceiling" was coined in 1978 by Marilyn Loden to illustrate the invisible barrier that prevents high-achieving women from rising beyond a certain level in an organization's hierarchy (Lockert, 2022). To illustrate this today, women account for 29.1% of chief executives in the US, and only 8.2% of Fortune 500 companies' CEOs are women (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021; Women Business Collaborative, 2021). Simultaneously, men in female-dominated fields experience a "glass escalator" where they receive favorable treatment and speedy promotions because of their gender (Williams, 1992). Lastly, and most recently, Ryan and Haslam (2007) posed a concept they deemed the "glass cliff." Women experience the glass cliff after breaking through the glass ceiling and are placed in a leadership position associated with a greater potential for failure (Ryan & Haslam, 2005). Whether women are up against a ceiling, cliff, or other glass structures, one must also consider

the strategies and resources that organizations and women can utilize to ensure they can break through the glass. As previously stated, women who form a network of other women can better advance through organizations. Therefore, employee resource groups may be a beneficial resource for women.

Literature Review of Study's Variables

In the following sections, I will introduce the variables within the study. First, I will discuss organizational attractiveness at a broad level and further describe the role of signal theory in developing attitudes toward organizations. I will expand on this discussion with a breakdown of the facets of organizational attraction: general attractiveness, prestige, and intent to pursue (Highhouse et al., 2003). I will specifically highlight the intent to pursue as my primary focus of the current study. Next, I will discuss corporate social responsibility's role as a recruitment and attraction tool, emphasizing diversity management. Since employee resource groups have recently become a diversity management strategy, in this study, I will attempt to add rigor to our understanding of ERGs as a tool for diversity by examining the relationship between the existence of ERGs within recruitment literature and applicants' intentions to pursue. Lastly, I propose that the relationship between the presence of ERGs and intentions to pursue is dependent on a third variable: perceived organizational support. Thus, I will conclude the literature with an overview of perceived organizational support.

Organizational Attractiveness

Part of the evolution of organizations is dependent on their ability to innovate. Organizations must constantly improve to remain competitive by attracting and retaining a diverse and qualified pool of applicants (Celani & Singh, 2010). There is a lack of research that addresses the underlying processes or components that attract personnel (Darnold & Rynes,

2013). However, applicants usually rely on limited information when forming expectations about what it might be like to work for an organization (Backhaus et al., 2002). Signal theory contends that applicants use cues, or signals, to form cognitions about the organization's values (Rynes, 1989; Spence, 1973). For example, an organization's reputation may contribute, or signal, to an applicant's knowledge about the organization (Cable & Turban, 2002). Once thoughts or opinions have been formed based on signals from the organizations, applicants then make decisions about whether they will engage or disengage with an organization.

Organizational attractiveness was first defined as an organization-specific attitude (Vroom, 1966). Later, Singh (1973) added the component of choice to the definition of organizational attractiveness by utilizing an item to assess the likelihood of accepting a job with an organization. Similarly, Turban and Keon (1993) defined organizational attractiveness as a positive attitude about a company that motivates applicants to engage with it. An additional operationalization of organizational attractiveness contends that an organization should clearly communicate desirable attributes to potential applicants (Berthon et al., 2005). More recent literature defines organizational attractiveness as the probability of potential employees applying for job openings (Hansen & Schnittaka, 2018; Turban, 2001). For this paper, I will use the definition provided by Lis (2018), who defines organizational attractiveness as positive sentiments about a company and the motivation to initiate and develop a relationship with an organization.

In its simplest form, organizational attractiveness is an attitude. An attitude is an evaluation of an object. In this case, an object is a loose categorization of people, oneself, entities, or issues. The assessment of an object can be positive, neutral, or negative and may produce affective, cognitive, or behavioral correlates (Fiske, 2018). For example, if a person

forms an attitude about a new flavor of ice cream, they may think, “Yum, this is delicious! I will order this flavor again.” In this case, “yum” is the affective correlate, the emotion or feeling provoked by the object. “This is delicious” is the cognitive correlate where the person forms a belief about the ice cream. “I’ll order this flavor again” is the behavioral correlate demonstrating a likelihood of approaching or avoiding the object again. According to Fishbein and Ajzen’s (1975) theory of reasoned action, behavior is a combination of cognitions that lead a person to engage in that behavior. Those cognitions form an attitude. Ultimately, attitudes influence a person’s intention to engage in a behavior.

Predictors of applicant attraction. As people form attitudes about an organization, they rely on information relevant to its success (e.g., stock market performance, advertisements, perceived product successes) and current employee well-being (e.g., advertised employee support programs, current or former employee testimonials). However, the amorphous form of attitudes makes it difficult to ascertain specific and tangible features that people look for when evaluating the reputation or desirability of an organization.

Research supports a positive link between applicant attitudes toward an organization and job characteristics like pay and location (Chapman et al., 2005). However, there is often slight variation in these aspects within the same career field, making it more difficult for applicants to clearly distinguish between competing organizations (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003). For example, if I am a civil engineer entering the job market out of college, I will likely receive similar offers from competing organizations (e.g., pay, benefits, job descriptions.). Choosing the organization will then come down to finer points like brand reputation or commitment to employee and community welfare.

According to signal theory, applicants will use various cues to form attitudes or opinions about the organization. For instance, to stand out against competitors, organizations that emphasize corporate social performance may signal to applicants their ability to make valuable or worthy decisions about how an organization allocates its resources. While an organization's economic performance is vital to its positive reputation, it is not the only factor influencing its reputation. The good reputation of one organization can dampen the signal of another organization, thus inhibiting the number of prospects that pursue the competitors.

Organizations use recruiting tactics, like corporate social performance (CSP), to distinguish themselves from other organizations (Rynes, 1991; Turban & Greening, 1996). CSP cues applicants that an organization is responsible and a worthy employer (Turban & Greening, 1996). It also signals how the organization fares against its competitors regarding products, jobs, strategy, and potential (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990).

A model of organizational attractiveness. As an attitude, organizational attraction has been measured as univariate and multivariate (Highhouse et al., 2003). As measurements adapted from the original works of single-item assessments of organizational attraction and choice, the items have revealed at least three primary dimensions that comprise the broader construct of organization attraction: general organizational attractiveness, intent to pursue, and prestige. Highhouse and colleagues (2003) identified the three dimensions as congruent with the three components of Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action (see Figure 2). The theory of reasoned action posits that three mechanisms lead to the execution of a behavior: an attitude about a behavior, the social norm, and the intention to engage in the behavior. The first dimension, general organizational attractiveness, aligns with Vroom's (1966) single-item measure to assess general organizational attractiveness to a hypothetical organization. More

specifically, general organizational attractiveness can be described as a person's affective thoughts about an organization, thus aligning with the attitude toward the behavior dimension from the theory of reasoned action (Highhouse et al., 2003). General organizational attractiveness is relatively passive because it does not imply that action will occur toward or away from the organization. The passivity of this variable explains why individuals are simultaneously attracted to multiple organizations without acting.

According to the model, general organizational attractiveness paired with prestige will lead to intent to apply. Previous research indicates that general attractiveness and prestige are not statistically distinct from each other (Allen, Mahto, & Otondo, 2007; Phan-Armaneous, 2022). However, research does indicate that there is a distinction between general organizational attraction and intent to pursue (Allen et al., 2007; Phan-Armaneous, 2022). Conceptually, these findings still align with the theory of reasoned action, where an attitude triggers an intention to perform a behavior, leads to engagement of the behavior.

Intent to apply. According to the principle of correspondence, for the attitude to be the best predictor of a behavior, the behavior and attitude should be measured at the same level of specificity (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Furthermore, an intention to engage in a behavior is more predictive of the behavior than a general attitude toward an object (Highhouse et al., 2003). For example, if one is interested in predicting retirement, assessing intent to retire rather than organizational commitment would be more meaningful. Intent to retire is more proximal to the behavior of retiring compared to organizational commitment. Previous empirical research has identified a positive link between organization attraction and intent to apply (Acalar & Bilgic, 2013; Roberson et al., 2005; Sharma & Prasad, 2018).

For the present study, to ensure specificity aligned with Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) principle of correspondence, I measured organizational attraction using the intent to pursue. Given that I am unable to observe participants applying to my fictitious organization, intent to apply is the next most proximal behavior. Intent to pursue is the attitude that comes before applying for a role at an organization but after developing an attitude and expectation of the organization (Highhouse et al., 2003). Intent to pursue moves beyond the passivity of general organizational attraction towards action, which maps on to behavioral intention.

Corporate social performance as an attraction tactic. As the workforce evolves and diversifies, new expectations are introduced to organizations. Organizations are expected to extend beyond traditional expectations (Celani & Singh, 2010; Turban & Greening, 1996; Waddock et al., 2002). Today, organizations' stakeholders expect to maximize efforts to improve their support and treatment of employees and the communities they serve (Aguinis & Glavas, 2013). Scholars and practitioners have identified this construct as a component of CSP, which emphasizes the extent to which an organization fulfills its social responsibilities to stakeholders, the community, and the environment (Wood, 1991). To begin to uncover how people form attitudes or preferences towards an organization, the duration of the study will only address the stakeholder portion of the CSP definition.

Researchers have identified CSP as a competitive advantage that organizations can leverage to have greater financial success and improve consumer relations (Turban & Greening, 1996). Competitive organizations have three characteristics: They are: (a) distinguishable from competitors, (b) provide an economic benefit to stakeholders, and (c) not easily duplicated (Pfeffer, 1972). As organizations have become increasingly similar in products, procedures, or resources, the employees tend to have a competitive advantage that sets organizations apart.

Improving the image from CSP, in turn, yields a competitive advantage by attracting a higher quantity and quality of personnel (Davis, 1973; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Greening & Turban, 2000). Equally, attracting and retaining superior talent can provide organizations a sustainable competitive advantage (Lado & Wilson, 1994; Pfeffer, 1972; Turban & Greening, 1996; Write et al., 1995).

Diversity management practices. Diversity management practices, like diversity training, ERGs, and diverse hiring strategies, fall under the overarching umbrella of CSP by supporting employees with minority identities (Greening & Turban, 2000). Diversity management practices are a trendy tactic that employers use to cue applicants that they are committed to social responsibility (Turban & Greening, 1996; Wright et al., 2016). An organization's reputation also contributes to an applicant's knowledge of the organization (Cable & Turban, 2002). Strong CSP cues, like advertising diversity management practices, can signal to an applicant that the organization is an amenable place to work for applicants from a protected class (Cable & Turban, 2002).

Diversity has transitioned from prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, sex, national origin, or religion to a desirable trait of an organization to its key stakeholders. Diversity can be defined as "policies and practices that seek to include people who are considered to be, in some way, different from the traditional member" of an organization (Herring & Henderson, 2011, p. 630). An organization that chooses to emphasize diversity can value diversity, manage diversity, or both. In the case of valuing diversity, an organization demonstrates appreciation for differences (Sinclair, 2000). On the other hand, managing diversity requires organizations to develop and maintain programs to attract, employ, and retain diverse employees (Sinclair, 2000).

Diversity management is a product of the lack of support for Affirmative Action. As a result, human resource (HR) professionals created a business case for diversity to maintain or increase diversity without federal mandates, creating a need for diversity programs (Williams et al., 2014). These diversity programs vary from organization to organization regarding what may or may not be included but use one or any combination of mentoring programs, ERGs, diversity training, improved compensation plans, and targeted recruitment (Williams et al., 2014).

As minority employees at companies like those in the S&P 100, women may find it challenging to find people they identify with or feel they belong in the organization. However, it is now more crucial than ever to convince potential applicants that they will belong and grow within the organization to recruit and retain a diverse workforce (De Smet et al., 2021). For example, organizations in the S&P 100 are pledging to invest billions of dollars in improving working conditions for Black people and increasing recruiting efforts from historically Black colleges and universities (Green et al., 2021). As Black applicants seek out employment, it will be vital to feel as though they could belong in an organization. Without the right diversity management strategies, Black applicants may not perceive that they will belong or feel like they belong should they end up in the organization.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts continue to move forward at a quicker pace. As devastating events like the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor plague our country, organizations hastily attempt to support their minority employees, while keeping productivity moving forward. As a result, those working within DEI continue to innovate in an attempt to increase physical diversity and create a psychologically safe and supportive environment for all. Additional support in the form of diversity management practices has also been applied to assist women. While it is difficult to capture all the efforts of practicing DEI experts outside of

affirmative action, there are six common diversity programs: diversity committees/taskforces, diversity training, diversity managers, diversity evaluations, networking programs, and mentoring programs (Kalev et al., 2006).

Employee Resource Groups

Some diversity management strategies are not externally noticeable. Strategies like targeted recruitment or diversity training are not advertised to those external to the organization. However, some aspects of an organization's diversity strategy are readily available to the public. Employee resource groups (ERGs) are often one of the diversity management strategies highlighted on an organization's diversity web pages or offered as a benefit in job postings. This study will focus on the presence of ERGs within recruiting materials. To understand the potential importance and impact of ERGs within recruiting materials, the following section will provide insight into creating and maintaining typical groups within an organization.

ERGs continue to be a growing trend in HR management as a tool to foster inclusion in the workplace and increase retention (Douglas, 2008). Recently, ERGs, which was once just considered a grassroots initiative for and by employees, has transitioned to a trendy diversity management strategy and is also the focus of the present study. Since ERGs are unique to an organization and the groups it serves, often different terminology is used; examples include employee network groups, affinity groups, caucuses, and resource groups. The original concept of employee groups was first termed "affinity groups" in the 1960s as a response to racial riots in New York. Affinity groups were developed for employees, by employees, at Xerox as a space for Black employees to meet within the organization to address workplace discrimination and encourage an equitable environment (Douglas, 2008).

Today, ERGs are defined as “groups of employees within an organization who share a common identity, defined by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or shared extra-organizational values or interests (Briscoe & Safford, 2010, p. 1). Importantly, these groups are entirely separate from their work team, business group, or unit and are unaffiliated with workers’ unions. However, there is a tendency to assume that ERGs are limited to specific demographic groups. Welbourne and McLaughlin (2013) proposed three broad categories of ERGS: social-cause-centered ERGs, professional-centered ERGs, and attribute-based ERGs. The most common ERGs may be attribute-based ERGs, specifically, groups based on race, LGBTQIA+, and women (Mercer, 2011). While all certainly serve a potentially valuable benefit to employees, the focus of this dissertation will only include the advertisement of attribute-based ERGs.

ERGs have gained popularity over the past 25 years and are utilized by organizations globally (Welbourne et al., 2017). They are also used to drive change and foster innovation in addition to diversity management (Welbourne et al., 2017). As they have gained popularity, organizations have realized the potential for demonstrating a commitment to diversity to external stakeholders, future applicants, and current employees (Biscoe & Safford, 2010; Friedman & Holtom, 2002).

ERGs are still typically developed and maintained by employees and are sometimes known as grassroots initiatives. To create an ERG, group members can usually expect to identify a purpose statement, a charter, leadership structure and be available to anyone in the company (Friedman & Holtom, 2002). Regardless of how the ERG is initiated, it is supported by the larger organization but typically with limited to no funding (Friedman & Holtom, 2002; Welbourne et al., 2016). The goals of ERGs center around the connection of minority employees to each other

and their allies. These connections allow for greater knowledge-sharing opportunities, networking, social support, and mentoring (Friedman & Holtom, 2002). The groups strive to be horizontal, eliminating as much hierarchy as possible (Biscoe & Safford, 2010; Welbourne et al., 2017). Maintaining a relatively flat group ensures members the freedom to speak or act without repercussions from employees with formal power (Connelly & Kelloway, 2003).

There are various activities that ERGs may perform, including regular meetings, corporate strategy, fundraising, networking opportunities, speaker events, or community outreach (Friedman & Holtom, 2002). Meetings and activities are attended and led by group members. However, HR managers or senior executives may be invited to talk about specific issues or hear concerns from the members regarding the company (Friedman & Holtom, 2002). Additionally, ERG sub-teams may put together presentations to educate the larger organization. ERG meetings may be conducted over lunch or after work hours. The frequency at which ERGs have group meetings also varies but typically occurs once per month or every other month (Friedman & Holtom, 2002).

Social identity theory may best explain how ERGs offer refuge to minority groups in the workplace. To simplify and operate in the world, people strive to make their lives easier by creating social categories to place people in easily identifiable groups (e.g., age, sex, gender, religious affiliation, and age range; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). According to social identity theory (SIT), cataloging people into groups allows individuals to define themselves within a social environment (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The schema by which people categorize others varies by individual and may comprise personal and social identities. SIT classifies personal identity as distinctive characteristics like physical abilities and attributes, interests, and psychological traits like personality. Social identities are group classifications where people feel a connectedness or

sense of belonging with the group(s) of people with whom that person identifies. For example, if a person says, "I am a Black American woman," she perceives herself as a member of at least those three groups. Once people have internalized their personal and social identifications, they naturally engage with similar people (Friedman & Holtom, 2002).

Research is scarce regarding the impacts of ERGs on nearly all traditional outcomes of interest (Welbourne et al., 2017). However, in theory, ERGs should be an effective tool to foster inclusion. ERGs may be an initiative that can benefit multiple areas, including attraction and retention (Briscoe & Safford, 2010; Friedman & Holtom, 2002). As previously stated, ERGs can signal to applicants, investors, and employees that the organization is committed to supporting employees. In addition, the presence of ERGs may positively impact the organization's reputation. Therefore, an organization with ERGs may signal to an applicant that this workplace is safe and inclusive, leading WIWF to want to work for the organization (Behrend et al., 2009). To assess this hypothesis, I proposed the following:

Hypothesis 1: Applicants will be more likely to apply to an organization with ERGs than organizations without ERGs.

Perceived Organizational Support

There is a reciprocal relationship that exists between the employee and employer. Employees who are emotionally committed to an organization demonstrate superior performance, less absenteeism, and less turnover (Rhodes & Eisenberger, 2002). Likewise, if an organization is committed to employees, employees may reap benefits like higher pay, more promotions, and improved tools and information that is important to one's job. Establishing a norm of reciprocity ensures a constant attempt to create homeostasis between employee and employer.

Perceived organizational support (POS) is how employees believe their organization values or care about an employee's well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). It is also an employee's confidence that an organization will provide support to best perform in one's role (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Likewise, employees who feel an emotional commitment to an organization are more likely to have increased performance and reduced absenteeism and turnover intentions (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Additionally, employers value employees if they demonstrate dedication and loyalty (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

POS is significantly related to important workplace outcomes like absenteeism, OCBs, job satisfaction, performance, absenteeism, and turnover (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Ghosh & Reio, 2013; Thompson et al., 2020). It is also distinctly different from other similar constructs, including affective organizational commitment, effort-reward expectancies, lead-member exchange, supervisor support, perceived organizational politics, procedural justice, and job satisfaction (Rhodes & Eisenberger, 2002). POS may be a benefit to the organization because the organization is more likely to reduce turnover costs and retain high-quality employees (Dawley et al., 2010).

It has been theorized that POS creates a social exchange between employees and the organization, thus increasing organizational attachment (Casper & Buffardi, 2004). Social exchange theory (SET) is a primary theory describing mechanisms determining how relationships progress. Relationships are a series of interactions between two entities. SET plays a pivotal role in understanding workplace behavior. A primary posit of this theory is that interactions generate obligations causing people to be interdependent on the actions of someone else dependent on if the interaction is positive or negative (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1962). According to SET, when a person receives something from another person or entity, there is a

need to reciprocate to balance the exchange (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This reciprocal relationship is typically exemplified between individuals, but SET can also be applied to understand the relationship between organizations and their employees. SET hypothesizes that if an organization is perceived as supportive, employees may feel an obligation to the organization, portrayed as organizational commitment (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Previous studies have demonstrated that activities like mentoring programs (Dawley et al., 2010) and effective training (Rhodes & Eisenberger, 2002) increase organizational commitment.

The Relationship Between ERGs and Perceived Organizational Support

As previously mentioned, ERGs are used to retain and recruit diverse applicants to organizations. Previous research has investigated the relationship between ERGs and turnover intentions and determined that ERGs can serve as a helpful initiative to curb minority employees' turnover intentions (Friedman & Holtom, 2002). Additionally, social identity theory can be applied to explain how presenting ERGs to potential applicants lures applicants to organizations by demonstrating that the applicant can see themselves in the organization and with a more specific group.

ERGs cue applicants that they can belong or fit in with the organization and sub-groups like the ERGs. Known as signaling theory, information readily available to applicants serves as cues, or signals, to indicate features of an organization that either cue applicants to apply to the organization or not (Rynes, 1991; Spence, 1973). Without access to complete information, applicants will utilize the information they possess as signals of organizational characteristics (Turban, 2001). Several studies have demonstrated that a number of variables, including organizational characteristics and policies, serve as signals to potential applicants (Aiman-Smith et al., 2001; Cable & Turban, 1994; Lievens et al., 2001). Other studies have also demonstrated

that other variables, like recruitment activities or even the recruiter themselves, can signal attraction (Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005). However, ERGs as a recruiting tactic have not been empirically studied. Therefore, I proposed the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Applicants will perceive organizations with ERGs as more supportive than organizations without ERGs.

The Relationship Between Perceived Organizational Support and Intent to Pursue

Past research indicates that perceived organizational support enhances attachment through organizational commitment and performance (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). This research supports the notion that applicants may be more attracted to the organization if they believe the organization will be supportive. Additionally, a study revealed that family-supportive organizational perceptions mediated the relationship between work-family benefits and affective commitment (Allen, 2001). It is also significantly negatively correlated with turnover intentions, turnover, and work strain (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Thus, I proposed that when ERGs are presented in recruiting materials, it will facilitate perceived organizational support and, in turn, will influence intentions to pursue employment with the organization (See Figure 1) . To test this, I proposed the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3: Applicants that perceive higher levels of organizational support will be more likely to apply to an organization than those with a lower perception of organizational support.

Hypothesis 4: ERGs will positively influence intentions to pursue through perceived organizational support.

CHAPTER 2

Method

I used a cross-sectional, experimental design with a simple mediation to evaluate the theoretical model.

Participants

Inclusion criteria. The present study focused on advertising a support tool (i.e., ERGs) to benefit WIWF. Thus, participants were filtered based on several inclusion criteria: (a) at least 18 years; (b) lived in the United States.; (c) female or female-identifying. Women are still considered a minority, occupying 47.2% of the civilian US workforce (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021) as the largest representing minority group, female and female-identifying participants make for a large population from which to collect an adequate sample. Furthermore, organizations consistently seek new and innovative strategies to attract and retain female employees (Parmer, 2021).

Sample size and power. For the current study, I utilized a Monte Carlo power analysis (Schoemann, Boulton, & Short, 2017). The targeted power was set to 80% and used 1000 replications. Given the minimal amount of empirical research on ERGs, I ran the analysis with low (.15), medium (.30), and high (.60) correlations; each set of correlations produced a recommended sample size of 100 participants. Therefore, after accounting for the potential loss of participants in the screening and data-cleaning process, data from a total of 120 participants will be collected.

Recruitment. Data for the current study was collected through Prolific, a crowdsourcing platform used by academics, pollsters, organizations, developers, and market researchers (Palan & Schitter, 2018). Crowdsourcing platforms have increased in popularity over the years (Peer et

al., 2017). While MTurk is still the most widely-used crowdsourcing platform, Prolific has continued to grow over the past few years (Palan & Schitter, 2018). Compared to MTurk, Prolific has a more diverse set of participants and a higher level of data quality (Peer et al., 2017). After considering the two platforms, it was determined that Prolific would be a reasonable option for the present study. Prolific allows researchers to post tasks to be completed by any participant that meets the specified requirements for the task. By setting filters within Prolific, I was able to filter who was invited to participate in the study. Before officially launching the Prolific survey, I indicated my prescreening criteria (i.e., US residence, age, and female/female identifying). Prolific users that met the prescreening criteria were notified by Prolific via e-mail that they were eligible to participate in my study.

Procedure

If Prolific invitees decided to participate, they were directed to Qualtrics, an online survey platform, to complete the survey. After running pilot tests, it was projected that the survey would take less than 10 minutes to complete. Participants were compensated $1.67, based on a $10 hourly wage. Before completing the actual survey, they agreed to the informed consent. If participants consented, they verified their age and gender. Participants were directed out of the study if they did not meet the requirements. Assuming they met the requirements of the study, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. Half of the participants were directed to a vignette with no ERG description, and this served as the control group (see Appendix A). The other half served as the experimental group and viewed a vignette with an ERG description and list of ERGs (See Appendix B).

After participants viewed the vignette, they responded to questions regarding organizational attractiveness and support to ascertain whether ERGs enhanced potential applicants' perceptions of organizational support and attractiveness. After completing this battery of measures and two manipulation check questions, participants navigated to the demographic portion of the study, where they responded to questions about their racial or ethnic heritage and employment.

Finally, participants could indicate if they felt their data was of good quality at the end of the survey. Participants were not penalized if they indicated that they did not pay attention or did not satisfactorily complete the study. If they indicated that the researcher should delete the data, the data was removed from analyses. Additionally, I employed the Qualtrics data quality package to screen for quality data.

Research Design

The present study utilized a randomly assigned two-group post-test design. Both groups viewed a version of the fictitious company vignette before completing the measures on organizational attraction and support. In this study, the predictor has two conditions: control and ERG.

Table 1 outlines the research design for the study. After randomly assigning participants to a condition, they viewed one of the two vignettes (denoted as X in Table 1).

Table 1.

Research Design

Group			
ERG	RA	X	O
Control	RA		O

Note. X = Views the ERG vignette

Manipulation and Measures

Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. Both conditions provided the same instructions to all participants:

> *Instructions: Imagine that you are currently searching for a new job and come across a role at Hoppe-Hudson. Carefully review the details in the following image.*

Both conditions presented participants with a screenshot of a fictional company's diversity webpage. In the control condition, they saw a screenshot of Hoppe-Hudson's diversity page with a diversity mission statement and commitment to diversity statement (See Appendix A). In the experimental condition, participants also viewed a Hoppe-Hudson diversity webpage. However, this condition described the importance of ERGs to the Hoppe-Hudson and a list of ERGs available at the organization (See Appendix B). Next, participants were asked to "envision [themselves] as a potential employee of Hoppe-Hudson. Simply do your best, using only information provide in the previous image to indicate the extent of your agreement." Then they responded to the survey measures discussed in the following sections.

The last two questions in the ERG condition served as a manipulation check to determine if participants in the ERG condition accurately comprehended the vignette. First, participants were presented with the list of ERGs in the image and asked, using a sliding scale of 1 to 10, "How many employee resource groups could you see yourself participating in at the organization?" They were then asked a yes/no question, "Have you ever been employed at an organization with employee resource groups as described on the diversity page?" Participants were not able to review their previous responses. In the following sections, I will detail the survey questions that all participants responded to.

Intentions to apply. Four items were used to evaluate the explicit behavioral intentions of participants concerning the company. Previous research has indicated that the original measure's use of several distinct factors may not differ enough to warrant differentiating between three factors (Allen et al., 2007; Phan-Armaneous, 2022).

All items reflected the potential forward-movement of working with or for the organization in the future. I adopted items from Highhouse et al. (2003), to gauge survey respondents' intentions to apply to Hoppe-Hudson as a job applicant. Specifically, I utilized one subscale from Highhouse's organization attraction scale. The subscale is considered to measure intentions to apply and consists of four items. An example of an original item states: "I would accept a job offer from this company." I modified the items to fit the context of the study: "If Hoppe-Hudson invited me for a job interview, I would go." Participants were asked to rate the statements on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Cronbach's alpha had scores equal to .97 (Allen et al., 2007).

Perceived organizational support. To measure perceived organizational support, I used a modified version of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS; Eisenberger et al., 1986). The initial version of the measure is 36 items with a reported Cronbach alpha coefficient of .97. Several studies have established shorter versions of the measure, dwindling the number of necessary items to six (Armeli, Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Lynch, 1998; Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997; Farh, Hackett, & Liang, 2007; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996; Shoss, Eisenberger, Restubog, & Zagenczyk, 2013). The factor loadings for the 6-item measure range from .71 to .84 (Bear & Hwang, 2015; Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006). Additionally, Cronbach's alpha has been reported to be .90 (Hellman, Fuqua, Worley, 2006). A

psychometric evaluation by Shore and Tetrick (1991) determined that SPOS is empirically distinct from affective and continuance commitment. Example items include: “If I worked at Hoppe-Hudson, management would care about my general satisfaction at work” and “If I worked at Hoppe-Hudson, management would really care about my well-being.” Participants are asked to rate each item on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Analyses

Preliminary analyses included the analysis and management of missing data; reporting typical data diagnostics; and presenting means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations of the focal variables. For the primary analysis, I used the manipulation check to determine if participants accurately interpreted the ERG condition. Finally, I assessed a model of simple mediation. The *a* path tested the hypotheses that exposure to the ERG condition would predict a stronger perception of organizational support (see Figure 1). The *b* path tested the hypothesis that perception of organizational support was positively related to intent to pursue employment. The *c* path (i.e., the total path) tested the hypothesis that exposure to the ERG condition would lead to a stronger intent to pursue employment. The indirect effect tested the hypothesis that exposure to the ERG condition influenced the intent to pursue through perceptions of anticipated organizational support. Data was analyzed using SPSS, version 28.0.1 (2023).

CHAPTER 3

Data Cleaning

Data screening suggested that 132 individuals opened the survey link. Of those, 126 participants granted consent and proceeded to the survey items. All 126 participants passed both screening questions of being over 18 years old and of the female sex, thus meeting the inclusion criteria. However, two participants did not complete survey questions beyond the screening questions, and they were removed from the sample. Additionally, five participants completed the survey in under 90 seconds and responses did not appear to be attentive because all responses were the same, and they were also removed from the dataset. The final total came to 119 participants.

Participants were evenly distributed to each of the scenario conditions, 61 in the ERG condition and 58 in the non-ERG condition. I checked the demographics of ethnicity, age, work status, industry, and work experience using crosstabs and independent *t*-tests. The tests revealed no statistically significant differences between the groups on these variables. The final sample was predominately White or Caucasian at 70.6%, and participants ranged from 19 to 70 years old with an average of about 36 years old. The average number of work experience had a wide range from 1 to 45 years of experience (M = 15.03, SD = 11.92). Most participants indicated they were currently employed (86.6%), but 13.4% were not currently employed. Upon closer examination of industry, the most common responses were Other/Not Listed at 29.7% and healthcare, dental, or medical at 11.9%. Please see Table 1 for more information on the participants' demographics represented in the sample.

Table 2

Participants' Ethnicity, Employed, Industry & Work Experience in each ERG Condition

Demographics		No ERG Condition		ERG Condition		Total	
		n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Ethnicity	Asian or Asian American	7	12.06	4	6.6	11	9.2
	Black or African American	6	10.34	4	6.6	10	8.4
	Hispanic or Latino	4	6.89	2	3.3	6	5.0
	White, Caucasian, etc.	39	67.2	45	73.7	84	70.6
	Multi-Racial	2	3.4	6	9.8	8	6.7
Employed	Yes					103	86.6
	No					16	13.4
Industry	Other/Not Listed	17	29.3	18	29.5	35	29.7
	Medical/Dental/Healthcare	10	17.2	4	6.6	14	11.9
	Not Working	7	12.1	4	6.6	11	9.3
	Education	3	5.2	7	11.5	10	8.5
	Wholesale/Retail/Distribution	5	8.6	5	8.2	10	8.5
	Business Services/Consultant	4	6.9	4	6.6	8	6.8
	Manufacturing/Process Industries	3	5.2	4	6.6	7	5.9
	Insurance/Real Estate/Legal	2	3.4	3	4.9	5	4.2
	State/Local Government	3	5.2	2	3.3	5	4.2
	Marketing/Advertising/Entertainment	1	1.7	2	3.3	3	2.5
	Federal Government (including military)	0	0	3	4.9	3	2.5
	Banking/Finance/Accounting	0	0	3	4.9	3	2.5
	Online Retailer	1	1.7	1	1.6	2	1.7
	Transportation/Utilities	1	1.7	0	0	1	.8
	Construction/Architecture/Engineering	0	0	1	1.6	1	.8
	Did not respond	1	1.7	0	0	1	.8

Note. $N = 119$

During the data cleaning phase, a missing analysis revealed .001% missingness across all the variables. Next, I looked for outliers (Olinsky et al., 2003) and evaluated if any assumptions were violated (Field, 2012; Hayes, 2018). Using histograms and scatterplots I conducted an ocular analysis for normal distribution of residuals and linearity. I followed this analysis by conducting the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality. I checked homoscedasticity using the corrections available in PROCESS. I also calculated descriptive statistics for both manipulation check questions. On average, people in the ERG condition identified two ERGs listed in the vignette that they would participate in if those ERGs were available at their own organization. When

asked if they had ever been employed at an organization with ERGs, 19% selected "yes." No participants were removed because of the manipulation check.

Next, I calculated descriptives and bivariate correlations for the relevant variables utilized in my hypotheses (Table 2). The correlations were consistent with the hypotheses. The presence of ERGs was significantly related to POS (r = .34, p < .001). Additionally, POS was significantly related to intent to apply (r = .74, p < .001).

Table 3
Descriptives and Bivariate Correlations

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3
1. Presence of ERGs	0	0.50			
2. Perceived Organizational Support			0.339*	(0.92)	
3. Intent to Apply			0.173	0.739*	(0.79)

Note. N = 119. ERG condition coded 1; no ERG coded 0. Correlations < |0.5| are significant at * p < .001, non-directional. Cronbach's alpha is on the diagonal.

A simple mediation examined the degree to which perceived organizational support mediated the relationship between the presence of ERGs in recruiting materials and intent to apply. Using PROCESS for SPSS (version 4.3.1), coefficients for each path, the indirect effect, and total effects were calculated. These values are presented in Table 3 and visualized in Figure 2. Results suggested that 11.5% of the variance in perceived organizational support and 55% of the variance in intent to apply were accounted for in the model. Results suggested that the presence of ERGs had statistically significant effects on perceived organizational support (B = .715, p < .001) and intent to apply (B = .624, p < .001). The indirect effect (B = 0.45, *CI95* = 0.22 to 0.70*)* was statistically significant. Further, the pattern observed in the total and direct

effects followed the traditional logic of mediation that when the mediator was added the direct effect (B = -0.15, p = 0.19) it was lower than the total effect (B = .30, SE = .16, p = .06).

Table 4

Model Coefficients Assessing POS as a Mediator Between Presence of ERGs and Intent to Apply

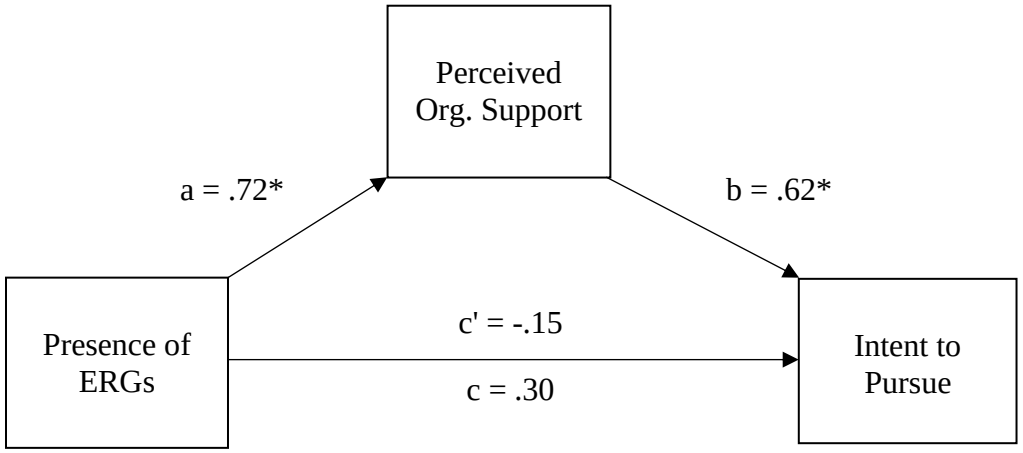
Predictor	*B*	SE_B	*p*	R^2
POS				.115
Constant	4.902	.131	.000*	
ERG Presence (a-path)	.715	.183	.000*	
Intent to Apply				.553
Constant	2.334	.273	.000*	
POS (b-path)	.624	.054	.000*	
ERG Presence (c'-path)	-.150	.113	.187	
Summary of Effects	*B*	SE_B	*P*	*95% CI*
Indirect Effect	.446	.123		.218, .700
Direct	-.150	.113	.187	-.373, .740
Total	.296	.156	.060	-.012, .605

Note. N = 119. * $p < .001$

Discussion

ERGs continue to be an HR trend with little empirical evidence to evaluate the impact of the groups in organizations. To better understand the role of ERGs in an organization, I sought to understand if and how ERGs can benefit both the organization and the applicant. This study examined the causal effects of the presence of ERGs in recruiting materials on women's intentions to apply to an organization through perceived organizational support. WIWF (N = *119*) participated in a between-subjects experiment in which they were randomly assigned to the control condition or ERG condition. Results indicated that the relationship between ERGs in recruiting materials and intentions to apply is mediated by POS. The current study contributes to the body of research that measures organizational attractiveness of experimentally manipulated forms of resources that encourage applicants to perceive that an organization is supportive.

Figure 2
Model of the Relationship Between ERGs, Perceived Organizational Support, & Intent to Pursue



Note. Results of the hypothesized model where perceived organizational support mediates the relationship between presences of ERGs and intentions to pursue. Path coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients; in parentheses: total effect. Indirect effect significant with $B = .45$ ($.22 < 95\%$ CI $< .70$). * $p < .001$.

For organizations, retaining employees can benefit culture, performance, and the bottom line. The Society for Human Resource Management established benchmarking data which estimated that the average cost per new hire was about $4,700 (Miller, 2022). However, employers estimate that the total cost to hire and onboard a new employee can be three to four times the salary of the position (Navarra, 2022). Therefore, if organizations can attract the right employees to the right organizations the result may be an increase in other important variables like productivity, retention, and profit margins.

If applicants can identify an organization that is a good fit, then they may experience increased well-being and satisfaction in the workplace. I specifically was interested in women employees as there continues to be a need for increasing women in leadership, improving well-being, and fostering inclusion (McKinsey & LeanIn, 2021).

Summary of Findings

To test my hypotheses, I conducted a simple mediation. Hypothesis 4, the evaluation of the indirect effect, is the primary hypothesis of the study, while hypotheses 1 through 3 are considered secondary hypotheses. In this section, I will review the results according to each hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1 (a-path): Applicants will perceive organizations with ERGs as more supportive than organizations without ERGs.

Hypothesis 1 was supported, indicating that the participants in the experimental condition were more likely to view an organization with ERGs as more supportive than the participants in the control condition that reviewed the organization with no ERGs. Signal theory can be used to explain the results. In this case, the ERGs served as a successful signal to potential applicants that the organization was supportive (Grover & Crooker, 1995; Spence, 1973). The results of this study are in line with other studies that have studied other signals of perceived organizational support, including signals like organizational policies, characteristics, recruiting activities, and recruiters (Aiman-Smith et al., 2001; Cable & Turban, 1993; Casper & Buffardi, 2004; Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005; Lievens et al., 2001; Ru & Hyland, 2002; Thompson & Aspinwall, 2009).

Hypothesis 2 (b-path): Applicants that perceive higher levels of organizational support will be more likely to apply to an organization than those with a lower perception of organizational support.

Hypothesis 2 was also supported. Regardless of the assigned condition, if participants perceived the organization as supportive then they were more likely to apply to the organization. If the participants did not perceive the organization to be supportive, then they were less likely to intend to apply to the organization. Previous research has established a relationship between

perceived organizational support, organizational commitment, and performance (Allen, 2001; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Other research also suggests that perceived organizational support is negatively correlated with turnover intentions and turnover (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). These findings paired with my results suggest that regardless of where a person is at in the employee lifecycle, there is a desire to feel supported by their employer.

Hypothesis 3 (c-path): Applicants will be more likely to apply to an organization with ERGs than organizations without ERGs.

Hypothesis 3 was supported. That is, participants that are in different conditions (i.e., ERG vs no-ERG), but are equal on POS, are estimated to differ by .30 units on intention to apply.

Previous research has demonstrated there to be a relationship between diversity management practices and intentions to apply for all applicants (Williams & Bauer, 1994); and specifically Black applicants (Avery, 2003; Highhouse et al., 1999). Research has also demonstrated greater success at recruiting women and minorities when organizations advertised diversity management practices (Cox & Blake, 1991; Ng & Burke, 2005).

*Hypothesis 4(indirect effect a*b): ERGs will positively influence intentions to pursue through perceived organizational support.*

Hypothesis 4, the primary hypothesis, was supported. When the model accounted for perceived organizational support, the results indicated POS mediated relationship between ERGs and intentions to apply. Importantly, the direct effect was not significant. This result is in line with the traditional recommendations of Baron and Kenny (1986) where the independent and dependent variables are no longer correlated in the presence of the mediator.

As stated in the literature review, to ascertain whether an organization is inclusive, potential applicants must rely on signals to inform their attitude (Spence, 1973). Moreover,

WIWF are looking for workplaces that offer more opportunities, flexibility, and a commitment to inclusion (McKinsey & LeanIn, 2022). For example, InHerSight conducts an annual survey to determine the best places to work for women and what makes those places great. According to the 2022 survey results, the greatest workplaces for women offered better family growth and paternal leave policies; leadership opportunities for women; competitive pay and benefits for all; flexibility; and diversity, equity, and inclusion (Shannon, 2023).

Additionally, previous research also recommends diversity management practices be emphasized to increase attraction (Ng & Burke, 2005). For example, company policies, continued inclusion trainings for managers, and ERGs are all considered key indicators women look for when looking for their next company (McCrary-Ruiz-Esparaza, 2023). While ERGs may not be the primary factor for applicants, ERGs can serve as a signal of an inclusive workplace, creating the opportunity for an organization to be perceived as supportive. The results of this study suggest that ERGs increase the probability that WIWF will apply to an organization and the reason this relationship exists is because they view the organization to be supportive. There should be information about the ERGs that can cue to job seekers that the ERGs are a tool that is truly supportive for the employees. Since websites like Glassdoor and LinkedIn make it possible for job seekers to investigate the accuracy of statements made by organizations, making it critical that organizations create reliable signals to their external stakeholders.

Value congruence. The results could also be interpreted as a matter of value congruence. Past research has demonstrated positive impacts of value congruence on job satisfaction (Chatman, 1991; O'Reilly et al., 1991; Bretz & Judge, 1994), organizational commitment (Meglino et al., O'Reilly et al., 1991), OCBs (Goodman & Svyantek, 1999), and turnover intentions and actual turnover (Chatman, 1991; O'Reilly et al., 1991). The literature on value

congruence has illustrated that job seekers are attracted to organizations that have values that fit with their own (Ren & Hamann, 2015). Discerning true value congruence at the selection phase of employment is difficult because applicants can feign that there is a good fit between themselves and the organization, or they may possess varying levels of value congruence with the organization (Ren & Hamann, 2015).

The study was designed to eliminate potential pre-conceived attitudes towards organizations, so the scenario and organization in the vignette were fictitious. While there are certainly drawbacks to this method, there is also an opportunity to capture value congruence. First, participants were not put under pressure to find a job, like they may experience in real life. Bills did not have to be paid. Rent was not due. Kids did not need to be fed. In other words, there was not an immediate need to fake interest in the organization. Second, the organization did not exist in the real world, which eliminated external factors from adding or detracting from the values depicted in the vignette. If participants perceived the organization to be supportive, it is also possible that they determined the organizational shared similar values to themselves. Therefore, I can infer that the combination of factors presented in both vignettes are positively related to participants' intentions to apply.

Practical Implications

A goal of this study was to add empirical research to the very practical and trendy topic of ERGs. Results from this study suggest that organizations may benefit from integrating information about their ERGs throughout the recruiting process. There are several points of contact that may be considered. First, employers can include ERG information in the benefits section of job descriptions. Second, recruiters and hiring managers can be provided with information about ERGs to share with applicants during the interview process. As stated in the

literature review, applicants are increasingly concerned with diversity efforts at organizations and are likely to ask about programs, policies, and other diversity management strategies during interview process (Bhattacharya et al., 2008; Eger et al., 2019). Hiring managers can convey diversity efforts by informing applicants of ERGs and specific goals, achievements, and activities associated with these groups.

I also recommend that ERGs emphasize inclusion and support for minority employees. Schlachter and colleagues (2023) suggested that to maintain a mutual employee and employer benefit, ERGs should have a multi-faceted approach. Today's ERGs look quite different from the original affinity group that was started in the 1950's. The role of the ERG in organizations is much more integrated than it used to be. ERGs are now involved in changing policies, creating programs, and modifying benefits (Bryant, 2023; Schlachter et al. 2023). Creating organizational change through ERGs can be transformational for organizations, but it should still be only one portion of the mission of ERGs. For employees to perceive that they are being supported in their ERGs, they will also need to be given the opportunity to develop skills, network, and be provided with a safe place to explore difficult topics related to the group's minority status. If the employee becomes less of a focus than the larger organization, the ERG is at risk of no longer being perceived as supportive.

Limitations and Future Directions

As previously discussed, there were limits to the methodology utilized in this study. For example, asking people to imagine themselves in a scenario is necessarily different from an actual lived experience. The external pressure of seeking employment is a burden that cannot be ethically recreated in an experimental setting. Additionally, it is likely that the type or level of position a person is seeking can also influence their decision to apply to an organization. For

instance, if you are being recruited for an executive position, you have more capacity to exercise discernment on the whether you will pursue the role or not. If you are looking to enter an organization at an entry level, you may not be able or willing to exercise the same level of discretion when selecting your next organization (Ren & Hamann, 2015). We cannot create the internal state an applicant may experience in real life which could be a threat to external validity. However, given the lack of quantitative studies on ERGs, I decided it was reasonable to create a simulated environment to determine if there is a relationship between the three variables.

Regardless of the results of the present study, there is not likely to be a negative effect if ERGs were to be incorporated into an organization. Employees continue to identify ERGs as a positive component of their work environment citing opportunities for networking, cultural appreciation, leadership development, innovation, and fostering inclusion (Bryant, 2023). However, to increase relevancy for practice and for the employees that are supposed to benefit most from ERGs, future studies may investigate the relationship of these variables in the presence of potential moderators like industry, sexual orientation, or race.

Furthermore, the vignettes could have been more realistic. An applicant or job seeker may have a variety of behaviors when going through the application process. They may visit a website multiple times throughout the application process. They may click on various parts of the website and may or may not ever enter a diversity webpage. For example, Walmart provides a link to their diversity page on their job listings. From the diversity webpage, a job seeker can learn more about each of the ERGs offered at Walmart and exactly the activities and mission of each group. Since it is not ethical to recreate external pressures in an experimental setting, creating a webpage that is explorable could potentially compensate for this threat to external validity by replicating the actual resources that are available to real applicants.

It is also worth noting that ERGs are still a novel concept for people. Many workplaces still do not utilize ERGs, or if they do, they may be called something else. Therefore, it is possible that participants did not fully understand the function of ERGs described in the vignette. A lack of understanding of ERGs may have been a threat to construct validity. Again, introducing an explorable webpage could encourage participants to engage with the ERG information within a webpage, which could create a possibility of a better understanding of the construct, thereby increasing construct validity.

Furthermore, the study was only conducted on women. As of 2022, women occupied 58.4% of the US workforce, but that still a sizable portion of workers whose voices are not represented in the current study (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). ERGs serve minority groups and their allies and can be safe spaces for employees to explore vulnerability while feeling supported in their workplace. Future studies should investigate other facets of employees' identities like race, age, or sexual orientation, as well as the role of intersectionality. The current study also only studied the application stage of employment. A cross-sectional simple mediation is limited in the amount of knowledge that can be extracted from the findings. Future studies could benefit from investigating the role of various levels of positions within an organization, types of industry, or the intersectionality of job seekers. For example, the results of this study indicated there was a positive relationship between ERGs and POS, but the sample was primarily White. Research could benefit from increasing our understanding of how people of color perceive ERGs. To drive toward inclusion research should also represent those that continue to be underrepresented in research and practice.

Conclusion

The present study contributes to the literature on diversity management practices and organization attraction by providing empirical evidence about women workers' preferences for organizations with ERGs versus organizations without ERGs. I determined that the relationship between ERGs and intent to apply to an organization is mediated by perceived organizational support. Given the results of the study, I recommend organizations continue to utilize ERGs as a supportive diversity management tool and convey the ways ERGs are supporting employees in external facing resources (e.g., company websites, LinkedIn, job listings). Job seekers will continue to have unlimited information about organizations at their fingertips, so it will continue to be of utmost importance that organizations match their words with actions—especially as it pertains to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

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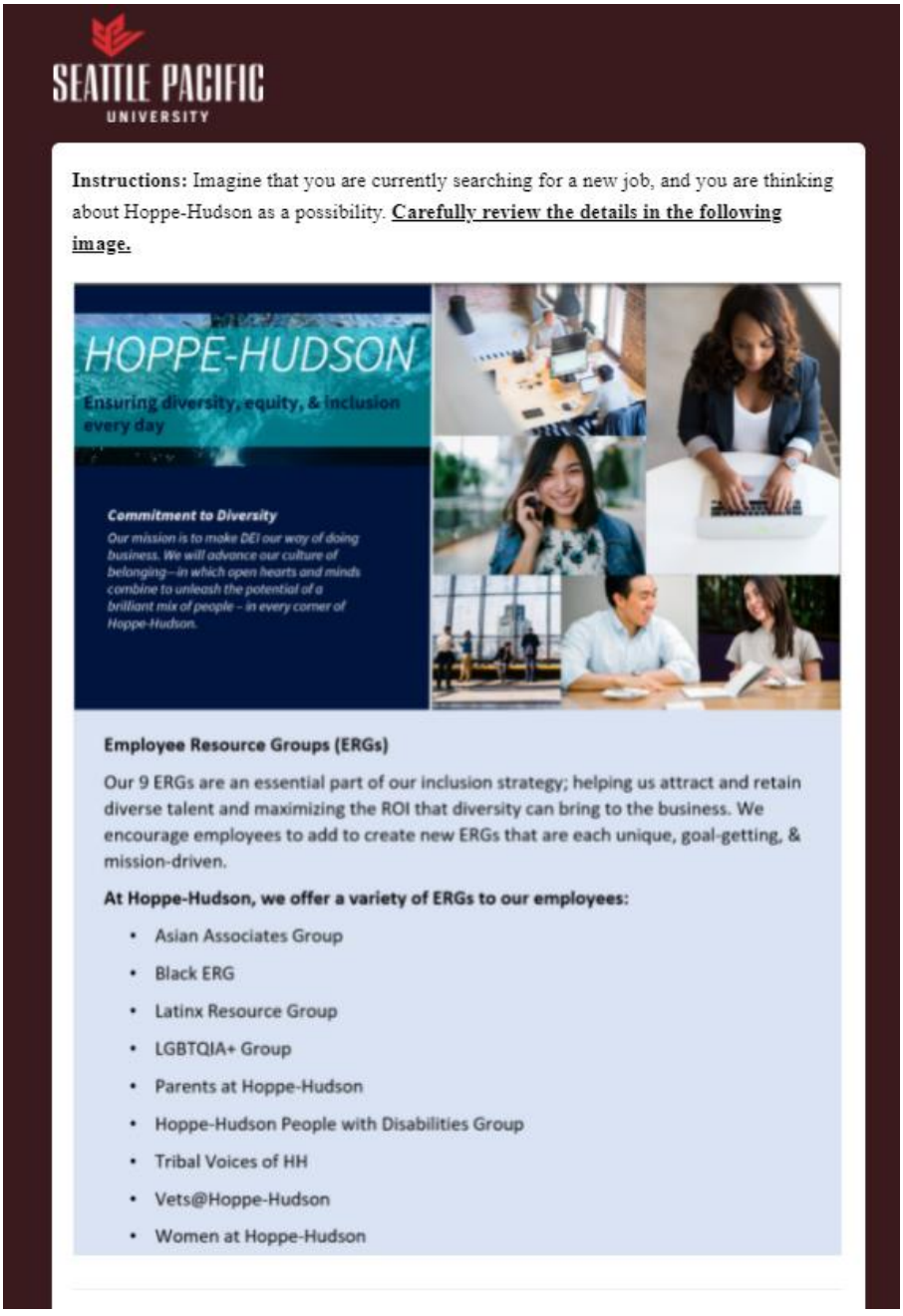
Appendix A: Survey Screenshots

ERG Condition



Control Condition

Instructions: Imagine that you are currently searching for a new job, and you are thinking about Hoppe-Hudson as a possibility. **Carefully review the details in the following image.**

Appendix B: Tables & Figures

Table 1. Research Design

Group			
ERG	RA	X	O
Control	RA		O

Table 2. Participants' Ethnicity, Employed, Industry, & Work Experience in Each ERG Condition.

Demographics		No ERG Condition		ERG Condition		Total	
		n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Ethnicity	Asian or Asian American	7	12.06	4	6.6	11	9.2
	Black or African American	6	10.34	4	6.6	10	8.4
	Hispanic or Latino	4	6.89	2	3.3	6	5.0
	White, Caucasian, etc.	39	67.2	45	73.7	84	70.6
	Multi-Racial	2	3.4	6	9.8	8	6.7
Employed	Yes					103	86.6
	No					16	13.4
Industry	Other/Not Listed	17	29.3	18	29.5	35	29.7
	Medical/Dental/Healthcare	10	17.2	4	6.6	14	11.9
	Not Working	7	12.1	4	6.6	11	9.3
	Education	3	5.2	7	11.5	10	8.5
	Wholesale/Retail/Distribution	5	8.6	5	8.2	10	8.5
	Business Services/Consultant	4	6.9	4	6.6	8	6.8
	Manufacturing/Process Industries	3	5.2	4	6.6	7	5.9
	Insurance/Real Estate/Legal	2	3.4	3	4.9	5	4.2
	State/Local Government	3	5.2	2	3.3	5	4.2
	Marketing/Advertising/Entertainment	1	1.7	2	3.3	3	2.5
	Federal Government (including military)	0	0	3	4.9	3	2.5
	Banking/Finance/Accounting	0	0	3	4.9	3	2.5
	Online Retailer	1	1.7	1	1.6	2	1.7
	Transportation/Utilities	1	1.7	0	0	1	.8
	Construction/Architecture/Engineering	0	0	1	1.6	1	.8
	Did not respond	1	1.7	0	0	1	.8

Note. $N = 119$

Table 3. Descriptives and Bivariate Correlations.

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3
4. Presence of ERGs	0	0.50			
5. Perceived Organizational Support			0.339*	(0.92)	
6. Intent to Apply			0.173	0.739*	(0.79)

Note. N = 119. ERG condition coded 1; no ERG coded 0. Correlations

Table 4. Model Coefficients Assessing POS as a Mediator Between Presence of ERGs Intent to Apply

Predictor	*B*	SE_B	*p*	R^2
POS				.115
Constant	4.902	.131	.000*	
ERG Presence (a-path)	.715	.183	.000*	
Intent to Apply				.553
Constant	2.334	.273	.000*	
POS (b-path)	.624	.054	.000*	
ERG Presence (c'-path)	-.150	.113	.187	
Summary of Effects	*B*	SE_B	*P*	*95% CI*
Indirect Effect	.446	.123		.218, .700
Direct	-.150	.113	.187	-.373, .740
Total	.296	.156	.060	-.012, .605

Note. N = 119. * $p < .001$

Figure 1. Model of the Relationship Between ERGs, Perceived Organizational Support, & Intent to Pursue.

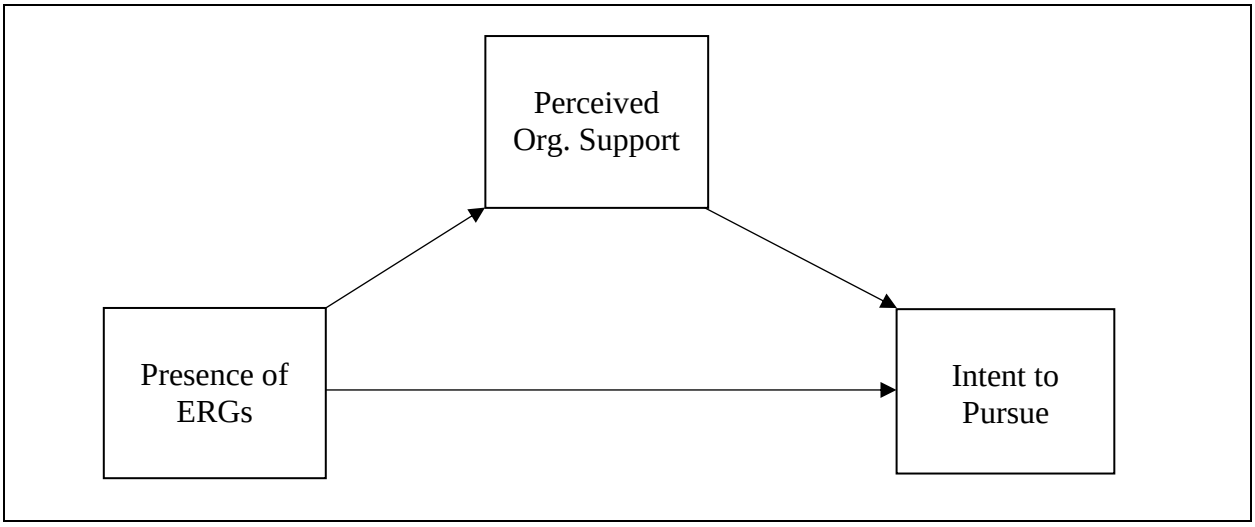


Figure 2. Explanation of the Relationship Between Theory of Reasoned Action and the Organization Attractiveness Measure.

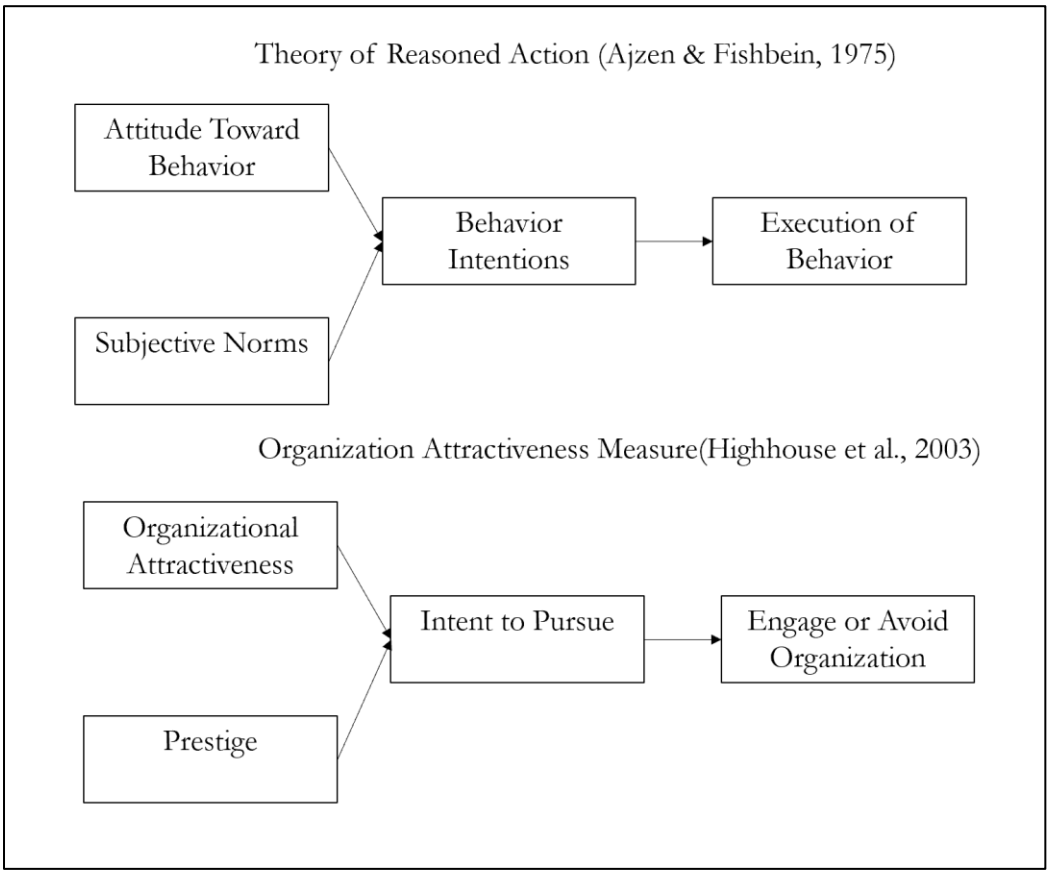
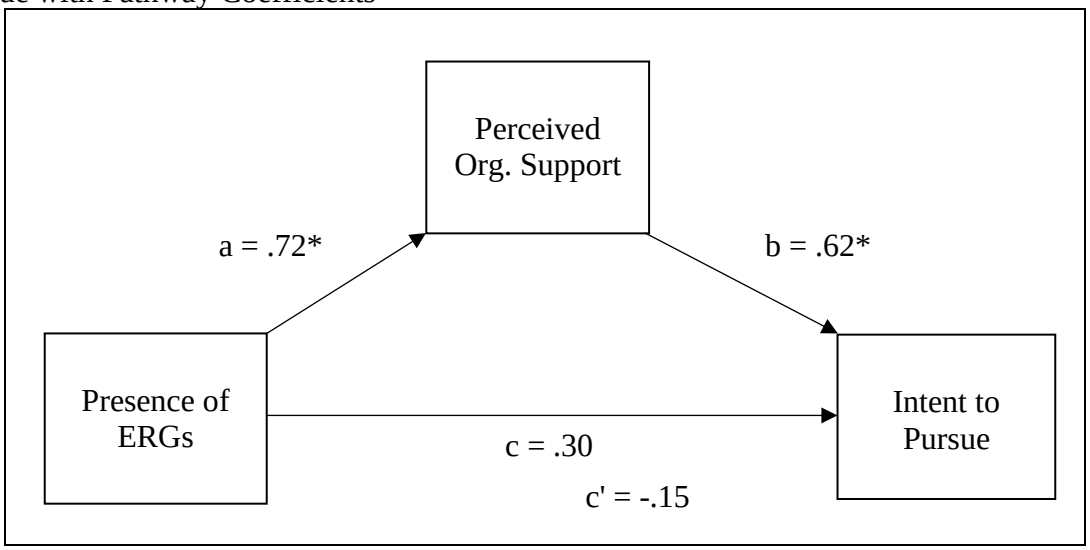


Figure 3. Model of the Relationship Between ERGs, Perceived Organizational Support, & Intent to Pursue with Pathway Coefficients



Appendix C: Measures

Instructions: Imagine that you are currently searching for a new job, and you are thinking about Hoppe-Hudson as a possibility.

Obviously, in real life, you would probably have more information available about Hoppe-Hudson to take into consideration.

For the following statements, envision yourself as a potential employee of Hoppe-Hudson. Simply do your **best, using the information provided earlier, to indicate the extent of your agreement.**

Perceived Org support	1. Hoppe-Hudson would value my contribution if I worked there.	7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).	Eisenberger, 1986
	2. If I worked at Hoppe-Hudson, management would really care about my well-being.		
	3. If I worked at Hoppe-Hudson, management would care about my general satisfaction at work.		
Intent to Apply	4. I would make Hoppe-Hudson one of my first choices as an employer.	7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).	Highhouse et al., 2003
	5. If Hoppe-Hudson invited me for a job interview, I would go.		

	6. I would exert a great deal of effort to work for Hoppe-Hudson		
	7. I would recommend Hoppe-Hudson to a friend who is also looking for a job		

Manipulation Check (ERG condition only)

On the Hoppe-Hudson diversity page you just viewed, there were the following employee resource groups:

- Asian Associates Group
- Black ERG
- Latinx Resource Group
- LGBTQIA+ Group
- Parents at Hoppe-Hudson
- Hoppe-Hudson People with Disabilities Group
- Tribal Voices of HH • Vets@Hoppe-Hudson
- Women at Hoppe-Hudson

How many employee resource groups could you see yourself participating in at the organization?

Sliding scale between 0-10

Have you ever been employed at an organization that has employee resource groups as described on the diversity page?

Yes/no

OCB Scale (Both Conditions)

Category	Question/statement	Scale	Citation
Instructions: The following items are about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Diversity is the mix of people at your company (i.e., the blend of different employee identities, traits, views, etc.). Equity is everyone getting what they need to succeed. Equity also includes getting rid of barriers that keep people from fully joining in. Inclusion is creating a workspace where historically underrepresented groups can thrive. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the statement below.			
Civic Virtue	1.I attend DEI meetings that are not mandatory but are considered important.	7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).	Podsakoff et al. (1990)

	2.I attend functions that are not required, but help the company's DEI image (e.g., DEI guest speaker events, employee DEI learning events, etc.).		
	3. I stay well-informed on DEI changes in the organization.		
	4.I read and keep up with organizational DEI announcements, memos, and so on.		
Courtesy	5.I take steps to try to prevent DEI problems with other workers (e.g., speaking up if I witness offensive behavior, taking action if I see someone at work being harassed, etc.).	7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).	Podsakoff et al. (1990)
	6.I am mindful of how my behavior relating to DEI affects other people's jobs.		
	7.I make every effort to uphold the DEI rights of others.		
	8.I try to keep DEI problems from increasing between my coworkers.		
	9.I consider the impact of my actions relating to DEI on coworkers.		
Altruism	10. I help others who have heavy DEI work assignments (e.g., creating questions for DEI surveys, editing work materials to have inclusive language, giving suggestions for DEI trainings, etc.).	7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).	Podsakoff et al. (1990)

	11. I help orient new people to the organization's DEI norms even when it is not required (e.g., explaining the company's DEI goals, sharing where the company needs to improve with DEI efforts, etc.).		
	12. I willingly help others who have DEI work-related problems (e.g., coaching others on DEI behaviors, suggesting ideas for DEI workplace practices, etc.).		
	13. I am always ready to provide help to those around me when it comes to DEI.		

Demographics (Both Conditions)

Category	Questions	Specifics	Notes
Demographics	1. What is your age?	Whole numbers fill in	
	2. What best represents your racial or ethnic heritage?	• American Indian or Alaska Native • Asian • Black / African American • Hispanic / Latinx • Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander • White or Caucasian • Multi-Racial • Other _____ • Prefer not to say	Multiple-choice
Employment questions	3. Are you currently employed?	• Yes/no	
	4. What is the principle industry of your organization?	Dropdown list: • Education • Banking/finance/accounting • Insurance/real estate/legal	

		• Federal government (including military) • State/local government • Medical/dental/healthcare • Transportation/utilities • Construction/architecture/engineering • Manufacturing/process industries • Online retailer • Aerospace • Wholesale/retail/distribution • Research/ development lab • Marketing/advertising/entertainment • Business services/consultant • Other/not listed • Not working	
	5. How many years of professional experience do you have?	Whole numbers fill in	

Data Quality Check (Both conditions)

Category	Question	Specifics
Data Quality	Realistically, I know that some Prolific respondents do not pay close attention to the questions they are answering for a number of reasons. This affects the quality of the data. Please select one of the following options honestly. Your answer is confidential. It will not affect whether or not you receive payment and will not affect any rating given to you for your work.	Yes/no

Appendix D: Participant Informed Consent

Greetings!

Thank you so much for your participation in this survey. This survey aims to understand job applicants' perceptions of organizations better. It should take you a maximum of 8 minutes to complete.

INFORMED CONSENT

Applicant Attitudes & Preferences

Investigators
Jamie Crites, Seattle Pacific University, critesj@spu.edu, 509.438.3988
Dr. Lynette Bikos, Seattle Pacific University, lhbikos@spu.edu, 206.281.2017

This research is sponsored by Seattle Pacific University, 3307 3rd Ave. West, Seattle, WA 98119.

PURPOSE
You are invited to take part in a research study. This survey aims to understand job applicants' perceptions of organizations better. To participate, you must be at least 18 years of age and female or female-identifying.

You have been invited to participate in this research study because you meet the study's eligibility criteria (list). The number of people who can participate in this study is a maximum of 120.

PROCEDURES
You will participate in a single survey that will be open until July 30, 2023. The total participation time for the survey is expected to be a maximum of 8 minutes.

RISKS and DISCOMFORTS
This study does not involve risks beyond those encountered in everyday life. However, you can decline to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable, and you may skip the question and/or withdraw from the study at any time.

BENEFITS
There are no direct benefits for participation.

PARTICIPATION
Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be destroyed. Likewise, the researcher may terminate your participation in the study at any time.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information in the study records will be kept confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting the study unless you specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. No names will be collected in the surveys. All identifying information about participants (e.g., IP addresses, longitude and latitude data) will be destroyed after the data has been collected and screened for duplicate responses.

COMPENSATION
You will be compensated $1.67 for completing this survey.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS
If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study), you may contact the Principal Investigator, Jamie Crites (critesj@spu.edu, 509.438.3988), or Dr. Lynette Bikos (bikosl@spu.edu, 206.) at any time. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the SPU Institutional Review Board: IRB@spu.edu or 206.281.2201.

CONSENT
Your consent below indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in this research project and agree to participate in this study. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities.

Additionally, your consent indicates that you are at least 18 years of age or older.

IRB#
Expiration Date:

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study.
O I agree O I do not agree

Appendix E: Training Certifications

Jamie Crites-

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Jamie Crites** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 04/23/2017.

Certification Number: 2381882.

Dr. Lynette Bikos

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Lynette Bikos** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants."

Date of Completion: 07/28/2018

Certification Number: 2871342

NIH National Institutes of Health
Office of Extramural Research

Appendix F: Qualtrics Terms of Service

Qualtrics Terms of Service