

**A Picture Worth a Thousand Words: How Career Website Images Influence Application  
Intentions**

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## ABSTRACT

Organizations are motivated to persuade qualified applicants to apply for open positions so they can identify and select higher-quality candidates (Phillips & Gully, 2015). As organizations realize the value of a diverse workforce, they have deployed recruitment strategies to attract underrepresented applicants (Greenberg, 2015). Studies conducted in 2003 and 2006 by Avery and McKay suggested that targeted recruitment advertisements positioning non-White employees as recognized and included in the organization increased non-White job seeker attraction to the organization. It has not yet been examined if this same effect extends to White members of other marginalized groups - specifically White and non-White members of the LGBTQ+ community (Avery & McKay, 2006; Walker et al., 2011).

This study will examine the effects that images on a company's "Careers Page" web page have on the application intentions of applicants of different race/ethnic and LGBTQ+ identities. We will test four hypotheses with this study:

**Hypothesis One (H1):** Images portraying a racially and ethnically diverse workforce will positively affect application intentions of non-White applicants

**Hypothesis Two (H2):** Images portraying a LGBTQ+ symbolism will positively affect application intentions of LGBTQ+ applicants.

**Hypothesis Three (H3):** Images representing one marginalized group will have positive, but slightly smaller effects on the application intentions of other marginalized groups.

**Hypothesis Four (H4):** Application intentions of White applicants will remain unaffected by images portraying a racially and ethnically diverse workforce.

These hypotheses will be tested in a 2x2x2 quasi-experiment, where we will measure the application intentions between groups of non-White job applicants and White job applicants. The application intentions of those who identify as LGBTQ+, or not, will also be examined. Study participants will be presented with one of four different images on a mock web page: an image portraying no racial or ethnic diversity, an image portraying no racial or ethnic diversity with LGBTQ+ symbolism, an image portraying a racially and ethnically diverse workforce, or an image portraying a racially and ethnically diverse workforce with LGBTQ+ symbolism. Participation will be solicited from students completing their undergraduate degree at universities or community colleges.

Findings from this study will quantify the effect elements of website images supporting diversity and inclusion have on different applicants' application intentions. We will be able to better understand if the perception of any marginalized identity in the workforce, whether or not it is the applicant's identity, increases the perception that one would be welcomed and included there.

## References

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