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# The impact of gay-friendly recruitment statements and due process employment on a firm's attractiveness as an employer

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – Using early recruitment and workplace diversity literature, the purpose of this paper is to investigate how employee recruitment statements regarding employment-at-will moderate the effect that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT)-supportive recruitment statements have on job seekers' job pursuit intentions (JPI) and attraction toward a firm.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A between-subjects, cross-sectional experimental design was used where subjects answered self-report questionnaires after viewing mock recruitment web ads. The ads included statements where the condition for job security or at-will employment and GLBT-supportive or equal opportunity employment climates were manipulated.

**Findings** – The paper provides empirical insights about how gay-friendly work climate perceptions impact the organizational attractiveness and JPI of job seekers. Furthermore, the results suggest that the combination of recruitment strategies affect subjects differently based on their individual level of heterosexist attitudes.

**Research limitations/implications** – Because of the chosen research approach, research results may lack generalizability and be affected by social desirability effects. Because a cross-sectional design was used, causality cannot necessarily be inferred. Therefore, researchers are encouraged to test the proposed propositions further.

**Practical implications** – The implications of these findings will assist human resources managers in creating cultures of tolerance within their workforce by helping them better understand who their recruitment methods target, and how to effectively use statements in recruitment literature to attract tolerant workers.

**Originality/value** – There is limited research that investigates the effects that diversity statements supportive of sexual minorities have on job seekers. A major contribution of the current study is the empirical evidence supporting the understanding of how individuals are affected by recruitment literature containing statements in support of sexual orientation employee diversity.

**Keywords** Recruitment, Sexual orientation, Diversity climate, Job pursuit intentions, Organizational attraction

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

The workforce will increasingly include employees of greater sexual orientation diversity (Bell *et al.*, 2011). A growing number of US firms are promoting non-traditional forms of compensation in order to promote a welcoming climate for sexual orientation diversity (Button, 2001). For example, 62 percent of Fortune 500 firms offer domestic partner-benefits (Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2013) compared to 57 percent in 2009 (Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2009). Additionally, 88 percent of Fortune 500 firms have corporate policies that protect sexual minorities from discrimination at work (Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2013).

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“Gay-friendly” diverse work climates are intended by employers to promote tolerance and inclusiveness of sexual minority employees (Giuffre *et al.*, 2008). However, even in workplaces that promote policies that benefit the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) community, sexual minorities still receive differential treatment that impacts them negatively (Giuffre *et al.*, 2008; Kaplan, 2006). Because there are no federal laws in the USA to protect sexual minorities from employment discrimination, prejudice toward gays and lesbians is more overt than against racial minorities and women (Ragins *et al.*, 2003). Although sexual minorities have higher education levels than heterosexuals (Black *et al.*, 2000), hiring discrimination against gays and lesbians is common in the workplace (Ragins *et al.*, 2003; Tilcsik, 2011). Some employees of firms that embrace GLBT employee diversity view their work climate unfavorably (Kaplan, 2006). Just as some racially intolerant job seekers view positions at firms that hire racial minorities unattractive (Avery, 2003; Brown *et al.*, 2006; Walker *et al.*, 2007), job seekers who exhibit heterosexist attitudes may avoid pursuing jobs at firms that hire sexual minorities.

This study contributes to the literature by examining job seekers’ organizational attractiveness (OA) and job pursuit intentions (JPI) toward firms that target GLBT job seekers. Although research has demonstrated that termination policies are related to firms’ OA, there is scant attention paid to how these policies interact with perceived policies that promote a diverse climate. Although prior research demonstrates that some job seekers respond less positively to firms that value racial diversity (Avery, 2003; Kim and Gelfand, 2003; Thomas and Wise, 1999; Walker *et al.*, 2007), organizational attraction to firms that value GLBT work climates is understudied. Unless firms can utilize recruitment methods that promote climates of diversity without alienating other qualified job seekers, they may lose a competitive advantage by not being able to maintain a diverse labor pool (McMahan *et al.*, 1998; Thomas and Wise, 1999). Research demonstrates that job seekers consider both instrumental and symbolic factors during their job search (Cable and Judge, 1996; Lievens and Highhouse, 2003). Finding a proper balance between the two during the recruitment process may resolve this issue.

The current study investigates the relationships between employee recruitment statements regarding sexual orientation diversity, statements regarding termination policies, and sexual orientation attitudes on OA and JPI among job seekers. The sections that follow describe the study’s theoretical foundation and present the research hypotheses followed by the results, discussion of the research, conclusions, limitations, and needs for future research.

## Literature review

### *Early recruitment*

Firms want to be attractive enough to develop a potential pool of applicants (Barber, 1998). Early recruitment methods include symbolic antecedent factors such as reputation and workplace environment attributes, and instrumental antecedent factors such as job security (JS) characteristics of a firm (Aiman-Smith *et al.*, 2001; Cable and Judge, 1996; Lievens and Highhouse, 2003; Thomas and Wise, 1999). The effectiveness of early recruitment methods can be measured by OA and JPI. OA is a reflection of job seekers’ attitudes about a firm during the earliest recruitment stage when there is barely any formal contact between job seekers and the organization (Aiman-Smith *et al.*, 2001). It is a strong predictor of job acceptance decisions (Powell and Goulet, 1996), and also captures job seekers’ affective reaction to an organization they are considering joining (Aiman-Smith *et al.*, 2001). JPI is more active and reflects the

behavioral intent of job seekers' willingness to pursue employment at a firm (e.g. actively seek out more information) (Aiman-Smith *et al.*, 2001).

Attracting diverse and qualified candidates to an organization is challenging because different people are attracted to different things (Schneider, 1987). Some people are attracted to organizations based on shared values (Cable and Judge, 1996; Chatman, 1989). Others are attracted to organizations that reward performance based on merit (Turban and Keon, 1993). Additionally, attributes such as pay (Lievens and Highhouse, 2003; Rynes, 1987), JS (Amar, 1995), and personal goals (Turban and Keon, 1993; Pervin, 1989) may influence a person's attraction to a firm. Using the instrumental-symbolic framework (Lievens and Highhouse, 2003) applicants are attracted to firms in two ways. The instrumental perspective of the applicant suggests that OA is influenced by an applicant's perceptions of tangible characteristics such as pay, opportunities for advancement, location, career programs, or organizational structure (Lievens and Highhouse, 2003). The symbolic perspective suggests that prospective applicants ascribe traits to firms based on the image that firms project to potential recruits (Lievens and Highhouse, 2003). An example of a symbolic attribute could be a firm's organizational climate or reputation. Both types of job attributes, instrumental and symbolic, are used by applicants when selecting a job.

The study of instrumental job attributes has answered a number of important questions concerning what makes firms attractive to job applicants. However, there is limited research regarding the interaction effect between instrumental and symbolic job factors on OA or JPI. Specifically, questions remain unanswered concerning the coupled effect that termination policies and promoted diversity initiatives has on job seekers' OA or JPI toward a firm. Understanding how these instrumental and symbolic attributes interact to affect OA and JPI may contribute to discovering ways to attract sexual minority job seekers.

#### *The impact of valuing GLBT diversity*

A review of research on the experiences of sexual minorities at work found that between 25 and 66 percent of gay, lesbian, and bisexual employees have experienced discrimination because of their sexual orientation (Croteau, 1996; Lyons *et al.*, 2005). On the other hand, some firms have put forth efforts to attract and retain sexual minorities with great success by targeting gay and lesbian applicants, and creating supportive work environments (e.g. City turns pink as firms start to accept diversity, 2007; Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2013; Wilke, 1996). In fields where the number of graduating college students and job seekers is scarce, firms can respond to labor market competition by specifically recruiting sexual minorities (Wilke, 1996).

Because currently there is no US federal legislation that protects the rights of sexual minorities, some areas in the USA have passed local or state sexual orientation anti-discrimination laws which have been shown to reduce incidents of workplace discrimination (Barron and Hebl, 2013). This same effect has occurred when firms adopt policies that protect the rights of sexual minority employees (Button, 2001).

Many firms advertise to the GLBT community using print media outlets that they patronize such as OUT or The Advocate in order to not offend or displease their heterosexual consumers (Oakenfull *et al.*, 2008) although these outlets reach less of the GLBT population than mainstream magazines such as *Newsweek*, *Time*, *People*, etc. (Oakenfull *et al.*, 2008). Although firms understand the benefit of attracting sexual minorities as employees and protecting their rights at work, managing a work climate that values GLBT workers is challenging as backlash may still develop from heterosexual

employees (Kaplan, 2006). Some heterosexual employees believe that minority sexual orientations are morally wrong while others feel that their right to religious freedom and religious accommodations is violated (Kaplan, 2006). Heterosexual employees also may not wish to work alongside sexual minorities simply because they are socially attracted to others like themselves (Byrne, 1971). They may also perceive working in a GLBT-friendly work environment socially uncomfortable due to limited experience interacting with members of the GLBT community.

Individuals seek settings that affirm their identity (Saylor and Aries, 1999) and are therefore more likely to identify with a group with whom they share similarities (van Knippenberg and van Schie, 2000). Demographic characteristics such as race, age, gender, and sexual orientation are examples of identity groups into which individuals categorize themselves (McKay and Avery, 2006). Individuals will sacrifice personal gain in order to maintain the identity and status of the collective and to remain distinct from the perceived out-group (Turner, 1978; Hogg and Terry, 2000):

*H1a.* GLBT diversity statements are inversely related to the OA of a firm.

*H1b.* GLBT diversity statements are inversely related to the JPI of a firm.

#### *Termination policies and recruitment*

Procedural justice refers to the belief that policies used to make decisions regarding an outcome are fair (Leventhal, 1980). Procedural justice also serves as an incubator for developing trust (Konovsky and Pugh, 1994). Justice theories demonstrate that perceptions of procedural justice are related to firm outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment (Lowe and Vodanovich, 1995), citizenship behaviors (Lavelle *et al.*, 2009), and workplace deviance (Skarlicki and Folger, 1997). There is much overlap between procedural justice theories and due process concerning their characteristics (Posthuma, 2003). Promoting due process employment to job seekers using “termination with good cause” statements, to offset employment-at-will doctrines, may have a positive impact on recruitment (Roehling and Winters, 2000) and employee loyalty (Amar, 1995) as it signals to them the firm’s perceived level of procedural justice.

According to expectancy theory, people are motivated based on three components: first, valence – the perceived value of an outcome, including the perceived value of other outcomes associated with it and potentially derived from that outcome; second, instrumentality – the belief that the outcome will in fact lead to the other outcomes; and third, expectancy – the belief that the effort to pursue an outcome (force of action) will lead to it being attained (Vroom, 1964). Manipulations of those three components, in turn, affect the motivation outcome of an individual.

The valence of an outcome is based on the needs, values, goals, or preferences of the individual (Vroom, 1964). Two outcomes exist in preceding order to motivate individuals. Both outcomes must be highly valent to the individual, and the desire for the second and final outcome is contingent upon the valence toward the first one. Assuming the final outcome is the job seekers’ desire for employment, and the first outcome includes their perceived fit with the firm, the valence toward obtaining employment (the final outcome) will be influenced by the valence toward the advertised job attributes (the first outcome) that serve as cues to job seekers regarding what outcomes they can expect if hired. Advertised attributes, including statements about both instrumental and symbolic characteristics such as perceived JS and diversity climate, signal to job seekers information about the potential outcomes associated with pursuing employment at that firm.

Perceptions of organizational justice signal to individuals that a company trusts (Konovsky and Pugh, 1994) its employees which may build feelings of reciprocity between job seekers and firms via implied social exchange mechanisms. Due process employment statements may signal procedural justice to job seekers, thereby strengthening their attraction to the firm. "Good cause" or due process termination policies concerning JS may be viewed by job seekers as an assurance that employee termination or lay-off decisions will be managed fairly based on merit. Their level of expectancy for desired outcomes at the firm may also strengthen due to their positive evaluations of employment policies.

Prior research demonstrates that individuals who are less comfortable around other identity groups are less attracted to work settings perceived to be diverse (Avery, 2003). Therefore, recruitment statements promoting GLBT climate of diversity may reduce the valence of a firm for some job seekers. However, since due process employment policies are viewed positively by job seekers, firms that offer them may increase their overall valence. As a result, explicit agreements regarding the level of due process concerning employment policies may increase the attraction of job seekers to a firm although it promotes a diverse climate that would otherwise be viewed unfavorably by them:

*H2a.* Termination policy statements moderate the effect of diversity statements on OA such that due process statements will ameliorate the inverse relationship between GLBT statements and OA.

*H2b.* Termination policy statements moderate the effect of diversity statements on JPI such that due process statements will ameliorate the inverse relationship between GLBT statements and JPI.

#### *Heterosexism and early recruitment*

It is important to note that not all heterosexuals are prejudiced against the GLBT community. The backlash that GLBT-friendly firms experience from employees is due to the level of heterosexist attitudes some individuals may hold. Heterosexism refers to individual attitudes or systems that denigrate, stigmatize, and deny environments and individuals that are not heterosexual including gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people (Herek, 1992). It also reflects a belief that heterosexuality is the only legitimate sexual orientation (Ragins and Wiethoff, 2005).

According to Herek (1994), heterosexist attitudes exist within individuals at varied degrees. If job seekers are representative of the general population comprised of individuals who hold varying degrees of heterosexist attitudes, plausibly some job seekers will react unfavorably to job recruitment ads that target GLBT job seekers. As mentioned earlier, this may cause challenges for firms trying to attract a larger pool from which to select job candidates as some heterosexuals may self-select from the labor pool of firms that promote gay- and lesbian-friendly work climates. In other words, the strength of heterosexist attitudes held by individuals may be the driving cause of the inverse relationship between GLBT statements and OA and JPI:

*H3a.* The strength of heterosexist attitudes is inversely related to the OA of a firm.

*H3b.* The strength of heterosexist attitudes is inversely related to the JPI of a firm.

Job seekers who hold strong heterosexist attitudes may opt out of a firm's labor pool as a means to maintain their social identity and values regardless of other job attributes present. Although promoted policies regarding due process may attract more job

seekers, negative attitudes and beliefs held by job seekers toward sexual minorities may discourage them from seeking a job at firms that value workplace diversity. They may not view working for a firm that values sexual minorities as being a valued place for them to work due to their weak identification with dissimilar others. The valence of due process termination policies may not be perceived as positively greater than or comparable to their perceived negative valence of a diversity climate. Therefore, such policies may not motivate them to pursue a job at a diversity valuing firm. Although the goal of most job seekers conceivably is to obtain employment, job seekers with strong heterosexist attitudes may prefer to forego perceived benefits in order to avoid working with gay and lesbian employees. Consequently, regardless of any job traits offered, they may choose to opt out of the recruitment process of a firm that values diversity because their decision is based solely on heterosexist attitudes. On the other hand, tolerant job seekers would not mind working at an organization that is diverse and they may actually be less attracted to firms that do not value diversity. Therefore, the promotion of a GLBT-supportive climate should strengthen the attraction that tolerant job seekers have for that firm, but weaken the attraction of job seekers who are intolerant. This “filtering process” should be beneficial for firms because it will discourage applicants who do not wish to work with sexual minorities from pursuing employment even when valued job attributes are offered:

*H4a.* Heterosexist attitudes will moderate the effect of GLBT diversity statements on OA such that the OA among heterosexist job seekers will weaken.

*H4b.* Heterosexist attitudes will moderate the effect of GLBT diversity statements on JPI such that the JPI among heterosexist job seekers will weaken.

## Method

### *Participants*

In total, 119 undergraduate business students from a US southern university were recruited to participate as a requirement for their class. College students are generally targeted by organizations to recruit talent for their workforce (Powell and Goulet, 1996) making college student samples an appropriate proxy for job seekers. Subjects with missing data related to the variables being investigated were removed resulting in 83 valid responses ( $N = 83$ ). Assuming a sample size of 80 subjects and anticipating a large effect size using three predictor variables (Cohen and Cohen, 1983), power level was calculated to be 0.99 for performing linear multiple regression meeting the minimum requirements (Cohen, 1988).

Respondents were 39.8 percent female with an average age of 23.39 ( $SD = 6.23$ ), and most were White (51.8 percent), followed by Hispanic (18.1 percent), Asian (16.9 percent), and Black (10.8 percent). Only one respondent identified as someone who engages in sexual behavior with the same sex only. More than half (70 percent) indicated that they were currently seeking employment.

### *Manipulation*

Four web-based recruitment advertisements were developed for a fictitious firm, LEJ Management & Consulting, based upon those found on the web sites of popular businesses. All advertisements were identical in name, but varied in descriptive paragraphs and images based on the condition presented to participants. The text was adapted from recurring text found from a number of Fortune 500 company recruitment

web sites and adapted from text used in prior studies on OA (e.g. Avery, 2003; Kim and Gelfand, 2003; Schwoerer and Rosen, 1989; Walker *et al.*, 2007; Williams and Bauer, 1994).

The experimental conditions of the ads were manipulated based on information about the firm regarding its termination policies and diversity statements. The conditions included the firm's representation as an equal opportunity employer (EOE), a GLBT-supportive firm, an employment-at-will policy holder, or a firm that has a policy of using a termination policy that follows a system of due process. Overall, a 2 × 2 factorial design resulted in the following condition statements: EOE × at-will; EOE × due process; GLBT-supportive × at-will; GLBT-supportive × due process. The two EOE conditions served as a control in the manipulations.

The EOE statement condition included the following text: "LEJ Management & Consulting is an Equal Opportunity Employer." The GLBT-supportive statement condition included two photos, one of two men standing closely together, and one of two women standing closely together. These images were used because more companies are using polysemy to "covertly" market to minorities, thereby not affecting their mainstream market (Puntoni *et al.*, 2011). A paragraph detailing how the firm values diversity was also included in this condition ending with the following statement: "Our organization has been listed on Diversity Inc. Magazine's Top 10 list for having an environment supportive of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees."

The due process policy condition included the following text: "In order to foster a culture of innovation and expression, LEJ is committed to the fair treatment to all employees and protection from arbitrary management action through the company grievance and appeals process. Using this process, employees can only be terminated for good cause. We have had no layoffs in the past 10 years." The employment at-will policy condition included the following text: "LEJ operates in a competitive business environment that often requires difficult decisions. LEJ ascribes to the employment-at-will doctrine of the state of Texas. Employment can be terminated, with or without cause, and with or without notice, at any time, at either the employee's option or the company's option."

### *Measures*

*Heterosexism.* Heterosexism was measured using a ten item five-point Likert scale that measures the attitudes toward gays and lesbians with a prior coefficient  $\alpha = 0.90$  (Herek, 1994). For the current study  $\alpha = 0.93$ . Sample items include "Sex between two women is not natural" and "Male homosexuality goes against human nature."

*Sexual orientation.* Sexual orientation is measured using two items adapted from the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid (KSOG) (Klein *et al.*, 1985). The KSOG assesses seven dimensions including sexual attraction, sexual behavior, sexual fantasies, emotional preference, social preference, self-identification, and heterosexual/homosexual life-style. Weinrich *et al.* (1993), using factor analysis, found that all seven dimensions of the KSOG measured the same construct. Similar to what prior researchers have done, I limited the number of dimensions measured to the first two (sexual attraction and sexual behavior) for practical purposes (Sell, 1997). Two items listed as "sexual attraction" and "sexual behavior" were measured using a seven-point Likert scale ("0 – other sex only" to "6 – same sex only"). The scale yielded a coefficient  $\alpha = 0.86$ .

*OAs.* The dependent variable OA was measured using a five item, five-point Likert scale adapted from the Attraction, Image and Compatibility (AIC) Scale with a prior coefficient  $\alpha = 0.90$  (Perkins *et al.*, 2000). The AIC consists of three subscales. Participants are asked questions that assessed their perceived image of the company,



their perceived level of compatibility with the company, and their level of attraction to the company. The subscale measuring attraction was used for the current study and yielded a coefficient  $\alpha = 0.90$ . Sample items include “I would request additional information regarding the possibility of employment with this company” and “I think this organization is attractive.”

*JPI.* The dependent variable, JPI was measured using a six item, seven-point Likert scale with a prior coefficient  $\alpha = 0.91$  (Aiman-Smith *et al.*, 2001). Participants are asked questions that assessed their possible future actions to pursue employment with the organization. The JPI scale yielded a coefficient  $\alpha = 0.96$ . Sample items include “I would attempt to gain an interview with this company” and “If this company was at a job fair I would seek out their booth.”

### *Procedure*

The data were collected using online surveys. To minimize respondents' bias and reactivity, the surveys were administered in two phases. The first phase included the manipulations and measured the dependent variable. The second phase included a battery of surveys, including the moderator variables such as heterosexism and sexual orientation. Participants replied to a link sent to their e-mail address after having signed up to be a part of the research study. Upon clicking on the link participants were redirected to an introductory web page where they were instructed to evaluate a fictitious recruitment web site for a fictitious consulting firm partnered with the university. Prior research has used this method for similar research on OA (Kim and Gelfand, 2003; Goltz and Giannantonio, 1995).

Participants created a unique identification number to proceed and were informed that their responses would remain anonymous. Only after submitting an identification number were the participants able to continue to the first phase of the study. They were then randomly assigned to one of four fictitious web pages, and asked to complete survey questions measuring their opinion about the web site. At this phase their basic demographic information, strength of organizational attraction, JPI, work attitudes, and perceptions about the web site and the company were measured. A week later, participants were emailed a link for the second phase of the study. Upon clicking on the link they were required to verify their unique identification number created for the first phase of surveys, were redirected to an online questionnaire that included questions about their demographic information and level of heterosexism. An open-ended question asking if they had comments about the study was also included.

### **Results**

Statements were included at the end of the surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of the ad diversity manipulations and instrumental job attribute manipulations presented. Further analysis confirmed that the manipulations were successful. Similar to Avery (2003), I performed an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to determine if job-seeking status exhibited any statistically significant effect on the dependent variable OA or JPI. There were no significant effects for job-seeking status on the dependent variables indicating that active and inactive job seekers responded similarly. A simple regression was also performed to determine if sexual orientation or religious fundamentalism exhibited any statistically significant effect on OA or JPI. There were no significant effects for either, therefore, both variables were omitted from the analysis of the full model.

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### Statistical analyses

The main analysis used for testing the hypotheses was hierarchical multiple regression. ANOVA was used to obtain supplemental information, and was not used as the main method of analysis. The due process variable was dummy coded as 0 and 1 to compare at-will and due process. The diversity condition variables were coded as 0 and 1 to represent the absence of diversity statements or the presence of diversity statements for each study. Table I shows means, standard deviations, correlations, and  $\alpha$ s for all variables.

*H1a* and *H1b* proposed that GLBT diversity statements are negatively related to OA and JPI, respectively. *H2a* and *H2b* proposed an interaction effect between termination policies regarding due process and GLBT diversity statements on OA and JPI, respectively. The hypotheses were tested by entering the diversity statement variable and due process statement variable in Step 1 and the two-way interaction term in Step 2. These steps are shown in Table II. This procedure was conducted independently for each dependent variable, OA and JPI. There was a main effect for the GLBT diversity statement ( $\beta = -0.25$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) on JPI which supports *H1b*, but *H1a* proposing a relationship between GLBT diversity statements and OA was not supported. Results indicated that the GLBT  $\times$  due process interaction effect on OA was

**Table I.**  
Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for OA and JPI and predictor variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Religious fundamentalism	4.89	1.60	(0.92)							
2. Sexual orientation	0.23	0.77	-0.08	(0.86)						
3. Employed	0.55	0.30	-0.26*	-0.09						
4. GLBT	0.43	0.50	0.19	-0.03	-0.03					
5. Due process	0.51	0.50	0.10	0.08	-0.16	0.14				
6. Heterosexism	2.78	1.05	0.53**	-0.23*	-0.16	0.15	-0.04	(0.93)		
7. OA	3.45	0.95	-0.02	-0.02	0.12	-0.11	0.18	-0.20	(0.90)	
8. JPI	4.89	1.62	-0.09	-0.02	0.14	-0.23*	0.12	-0.22*	0.88**	(0.96)

**Notes:**  $n = 79$ . GLBT statements and due process statements. Coefficient  $\alpha$ s are reported on the diagonal. The variables employed, GLBT and due process are dummy variables. For the GLBT variable, GLBT-neutral = 0 and GLBT-supportive = 1. For the due process variable, at-will = 0 and due process = 1. \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$

**Table II.**  
The effect of GLBT diversity statements and due process statements on organizational attractiveness and job pursuit intentions

Variable	Organizational attractiveness ( $\beta$ )		Job pursuit intentions ( $\beta$ )	
	Main effects Step 1	Interaction Step 2	Main effects Step 1	Interaction Step 2
GLBT statement	-0.14	0.64	-0.25*	0.10
Due process statement	0.20	0.42**	-0.15	0.25
GLBT $\times$ due process		-0.87*		-0.40
$\Delta R^2$	0.05	0.06*	0.07*	0.01
$R^2$	0.05	0.12	0.07	0.09
Full model <i>F</i>	2.18	3.41*	3.32*	2.61
df	80	79	80	79

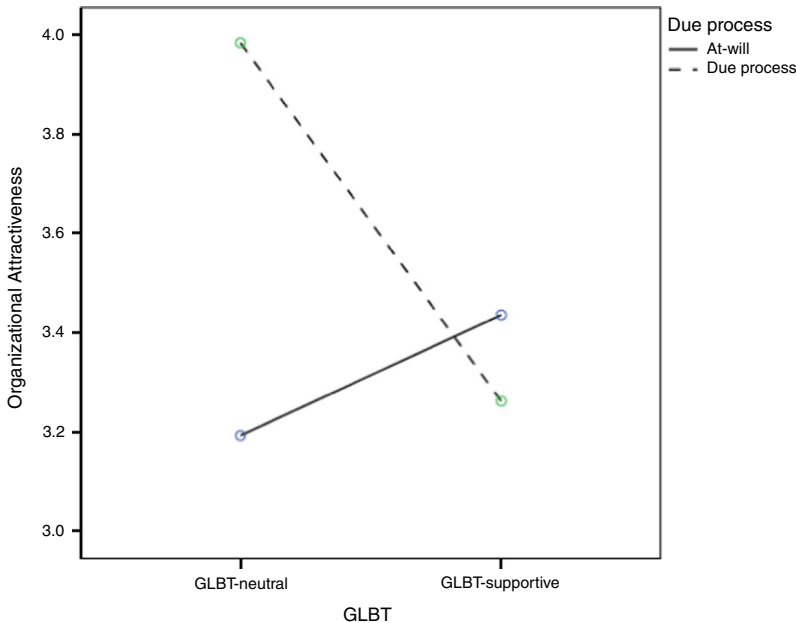
**Notes:**  $n = 82$ . The variables GLBT and due process are dummy variables. GLBT-neutral and at-will are coded as 0 and GLBT-supportive and due process are coded as 1. \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$

statistically significant ( $\beta = -0.87, p < 0.05$ ), suggesting that due process statements moderated the effect of GLBT diversity statements on OA. Hence, *H2a* was supported.

The graphing of the GLBT  $\times$  due process interaction depicted a pattern that was counterintuitive. As depicted in Figure 1, the at-will conditions containing GLBT-supportive statements ( $M = 3.44$ ) were rated by participants as more attractive than those containing GLBT-neutral statements ( $M = 3.17$ ). Recruitment ads that included GLBT-supportive statements were rated less attractive when due process statements were also promoted ( $M = 3.18$ ) vs when GLBT-neutral statements were promoted ( $M = 3.98$ ). Overall, the presence of GLBT-support weakened the positive relationship between fair procedures concerning employment policies and OA. The interaction effect between due process statements and GLBT diversity statements on JPI was not significant. Hence, *H2b* was not supported.

*H3a* and *3b* proposed that heterosexist attitudes are inversely related to OA and JPI, respectively. There was no support for *H3a*. However, *H3b* was supported with a main effect for heterosexist attitudes ( $\beta = -0.22, p < 0.05$ ) on JPI.

*H4a* and *H4b* proposed that the strength of job seekers' heterosexist attitudes moderates the effect of GLBT diversity statements on OA and JPI, respectively. For both hypotheses the GLBT diversity variable, due process variable, and heterosexism variable were entered in Step 1. The composite two-way interactions between the variables were entered in Step 2. These steps are shown in Table III. This procedure was conducted independently for each dependent variable, OA, and JPI. The interaction effect between GLBT diversity and heterosexism on OA was not significant. Hence, *H4a* was not supported. The GLBT  $\times$  heterosexism ( $\beta = -0.71, p < 0.05$ ) two-way interaction effect on JPI was found to be significant. Hence, *H4b* was supported. The interaction between GLBT statements and heterosexism on JPI was graphed to further investigate the nature of its effect on JPI (see Figure 2). The graph of the relationship



**Figure 1.** Graphical representation of GLBT diversity statements  $\times$  due process statements interaction effect on organizational attractiveness

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indicates that high-rated heterosexist subjects exhibit stronger intentions to pursue a job with firms that do not promote GLBT climates ( $M=5.08$ ) vs firms that do ( $M=3.93$ ). Furthermore, low-rated heterosexist subjects have stronger JPI toward GLBT-supportive climates ( $M=5.21$ ) than do high heterosexist subjects ( $M=3.93$ ).

520

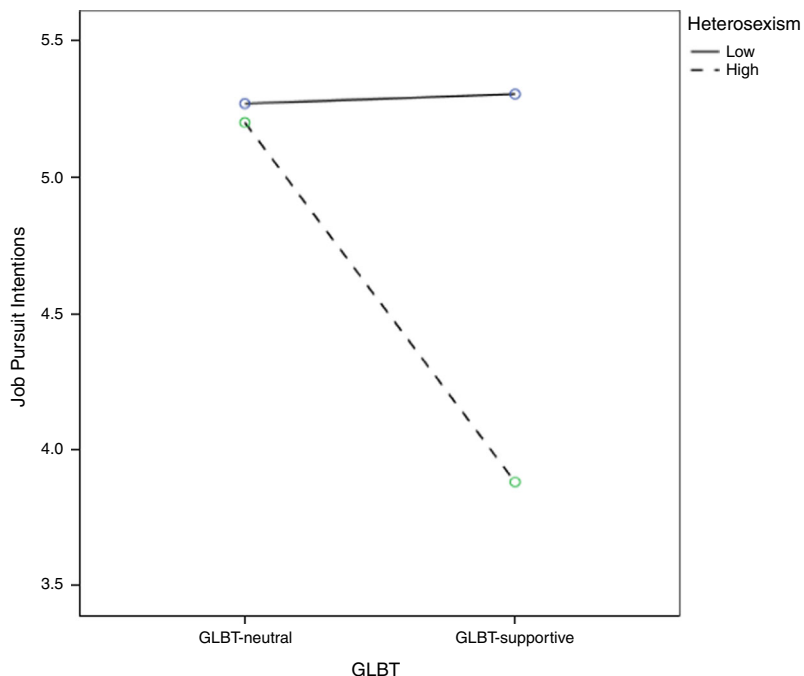
### Discussion

The current study contributes to the literature covering early recruitment by demonstrating the effect that GLBT diversity recruitment statements have on the

**Table III.**  
The GLBT  
× heterosexism  
and due process  
× heterosexism  
two-way interaction  
effects on job  
pursuit intentions

Variables	Main effects ( $\beta$ )	
	Step 1	Interaction ( $\beta$ ) Step 2
GLBT statement	-0.22	0.94*
Due process statement	0.15	-0.38
Heterosexism	-0.18	-0.77*
GLBT × due process		-0.62
GLBT × heterosexism		-0.71*
Due process × heterosexism		1.06*
$\Delta R^2$	0.11*	0.11*
$R^2$	0.11	0.22
Full model $F$	3.19*	3.55**
df	78	75

**Notes:**  $n = 82$ . The variables GLBT and due process are dummy variables. GLBT-neutral and at-will are coded as 0 and GLBT-supportive and due process are coded as 1. \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$



**Figure 2.**  
Graphical  
representation of  
GLBT diversity  
statements  
× heterosexism  
interaction effect  
on job pursuit  
intentions

recruitment efforts of a firm. Recruitment ads containing statements regarding work diversity induced weaker JPI than ads without diversity statements. They also weakened the effect that perceived due process had on OA. Additionally, strong heterosexual attitudes influenced the effect of diversity statements on JPI, but not OA.

There was an overall negative main effect for the GLBT-supportive condition on JPI suggesting that GLBT diversity recruitment statements affect job seekers' behaviors. This is not surprising given that discrimination against sexual minorities is prevalent (Black *et al.*, 2000). As results from the current study suggest, most individuals are averse to pursuing employment at firms that support GLBT climates. However, the study did not demonstrate a relationship between GLBT diversity statements and OA. One possible explanation is that JPI are more action-oriented attitudes compared to OA. OA is an affective reaction expressed through job seekers' attitudes toward a firm's image, while JPI involves a more active role where job seekers express behavioral intentions, for example, to either contact or gather more information about a firm (Aiman-Smith *et al.*, 2001). In essence, job seekers could be indifferent about their attraction to a firm but still have strong pursuit intentions, albeit positive or negative.

Further analysis suggested that job seekers with strong heterosexual attitudes possessed weak JPI toward firms perceived to value GLBT diversity. Heterosexual attitudes had no effect on OA. Prior research focussing on cultural diversity suggested that whites were less attracted to firms perceived to value diversity, yet subsequent research revealed that beliefs and attitudes, regardless of race (Avery, 2003), shared greater variance as a predictor of OA (Brown *et al.*, 2006; Thomas and Wise, 1999; Walker *et al.*, 2007). The current study is analogous to prior research on cultural diversity by identifying how beliefs and attitudes of job seekers, namely their degree of heterosexism, affect their JPI toward firms that promote a GLBT-friendly climate.

As further evidence of the effect of heterosexual attitudes on recruitment, JPI strengthened among job seekers with weak heterosexual attitudes when climates were supportive of GLBT diversity. Additionally, JPI weakened among job seekers with strong heterosexual attitudes when climates were supportive of GLBT diversity. These results are analogous to prior research where the effect of race on the OA of firms that value diversity was contingent on the subjects' openness to racial diversity (Avery, 2003).

Surprisingly, results demonstrated that the presence of GLBT-supportive statements greatly weakened the effect of due process statements on OA, but slightly strengthened the effect of at-will statements on OA. There are some possible explanations for this result based on the subjects' individual characteristics. First, subjects who are intolerant of sexual minorities may be more attracted to at-will employers because they perceive that an at-will employer will terminate gay and lesbian employees. Unless other provisions are made between the employee and the employer, firms located in employment-at-will states have the right to terminate an employee for good cause, bad cause, or no cause at all (Muhl, 2001). At-will statements may signal to job seekers that the firm's efforts to support diversity are insincere due to the lack of due process which would offer protection for employees, including sexual minorities who would need it the most.

Another possible explanation for is that subjects were willing to forgo due process in order to avoid working in a GLBT-friendly work climate. Although a firm that promotes due process policies may be attractive to job seekers, the firm's perceived

commitment to diversity may also lower its attractiveness to job seekers who hold heterosexist attitudes. Although, the mean for heterosexism of the study participants was 2.76 (SD = 1.03), indicating that few subjects in the current study measured either very high or low for heterosexism, it is possible that individuals answered in a socially desirable manner and did not fully express their heterosexist attitudes. In prior literature on perceived justice, due process policies serve as an incentive or motivator toward positive outcomes. Contrary to prior research, the current study suggests that the valence of justice depicted in statements of due process is weakened when combined with the presence of GLBT-supportive statements.

#### *Limitations and future research*

The most notable limitation of this study is the experimental use of recruitment ads. Although the recruitment ads were presented as if they belonged to an actual company, the results are only measures of reactions to scenarios and not real-life situations. The subjects were also university students and not actual job seekers, although 70 percent indicated that they were currently seeking employment. College students are typically targeted by companies as potential recruits (Rynes and Boudreau, 1986). However, the sample is not completely representative of the actual labor market, limiting the generalizability of the results.

The state in which the study was conducted provides no legal protection for sexual minorities regarding employment or marriage (i.e. Texas Labor Code, 1993; Texas Family Code, 1997). Prior research demonstrates that states with no laws prohibiting sexual orientation discrimination incur higher rates of interpersonal employment discrimination (Barron and Hebl, 2013). The type of legislation governing the state in which the current study was conducted may have affected the results, thereby limiting its generalizability. For future research, the study should be conducted in additional areas within the USA to investigate geographical differences due to local legislation.

The current study also used self-report measures which could be a limitation. Although subjects were informed that their responses would be anonymous and remain confidential, social desirability may have affected the results of the data due to the nature of the study. Possible evidence of potential social desirability effects and discomfort were observed by reviewing open-ended responses from subjects that seemed emotionally charged when asked if they had any comments about the study. Some of those statements are as follows:

“Very difficult to answer some of these questions.”

“It made me slightly uncomfortable [...].”

“These are super personal questions [...].”

“I did not expect to be talking about such touchy subjects such as sex, and religion [...].”

#### **Conclusion**

This study examined how potential job seekers pursue, or are attracted to firms based on how they identify themselves via in-(out-) group status when a firm's recruitment statements promote GLBT employee diversity. Results demonstrated that GLBT recruitment statements overall weaken the JPI of job seekers, and that individuals may forego due process in order to avoid working at a firm that supports sexual minorities. Signaling theory suggests that job seekers must interpret any available information

about a company when there is limited information available (Spence, 1973). Hiring strategies that include both termination policies and diversity statements in recruitment literature may be used to repel undesirable job seekers. An implication of these findings is that it may enable human resources managers to create cultures of tolerance within their workforce by better understanding who their recruitment methods target. The way termination policies are promoted or governed, in some regards, may serve as a filter to sort out intolerant job seekers. More research is needed in this area to identify what other types of recruitment statements result in unexpected outcomes when combined in recruitment literature.

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