Insidious Procedures: Diversity Awards Legitimize Unfair Organizational Procedures

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Key words: diversity, discrimination, legitimacy, procedural justice, fairness

Abstract

Does the presence (versus absence) of an organizational diversity award increase the perceived

fairness of biased personnel procedures? Participants examined fair or unfair personnel

procedures at a company that had received a diversity award or an award unrelated to diversity.

When the company had received a diversity award (versus a control award), participants

perceived the unfair personnel procedure as fairer for minorities, and White participants were

more supportive of enacting the biased procedure. These findings suggest that organizations

perceived as successfully supporting diversity might be afforded particular legitimacy to enact

policies and procedures that disadvantage the very groups they are perceived as valuing.

  Keywords: diversity, discrimination, legitimacy, procedural justice, multiculturalism, fairness

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As the U.S. population becomes increasingly diverse, organizations are eager to express their commitment to diversity and showcase their success at attracting and retaining a diverse workforce (Dobbin, 2009; Edelman, Fuller, & Mara-Drita, 2001). Despite the pervasiveness of these pro-diversity messages, employment discrimination persists. For example, full-time working women and racial minorities still earn less than men and Whites, respectively, even when accounting for factors such as education and occupation (United States Census Bureau, 2012). Strikingly, the very companies that tout their pro-diversity messages sometimes still possess substantial disparities within their organizations (Kalev, Kelly, & Dobbin, 2006; Marques, 2010). Why do such disparities persist even in the presence of seemingly positive diversity messages? In the present paper, we explore the possibility that pro-diversity messages can ironically afford organizations greater legitimacy to enact procedures perpetuating, rather than mitigating, bias. As the implementation of even slightly biased procedures can lead to vast group-based disparities within organizations (Martell, Lane, & Emrich, 1996), it is critical to understand whether pro-diversity messages can cause people to place undue trust in the fairness of objectively unfair organizational procedures.

Pro-Diversity Messages Can Legitimize Discrimination

Understanding how pro-diversity messages may influence support for biased organizational practices can be informed by the procedural justice literature (Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler, 2006). When judging the fairness of procedures, people focus more on the consistent and principled application of those procedures than on distributive outcomes stemming from the procedures (Tyler, 2001, 2006). If pro-diversity messages increase

perceptions that organizational procedures are applied fairly, people may not raise objections

when organizations introduce procedures that disadvantage low status groups.

Indeed, recent research has shown that organizations touting pro-diversity messages (e.g.,

by offering diversity training) are perceived as fair, even in the face of evidence that they have

been discriminatory (Kaiser et al., 2013). For example, White men who learned about a company

with a diversity training program were less supportive of a sexism lawsuit against that company

compared to those who read that the company had a general employee training program. This

occurred even when they recognized that women at the organization were disproportionately

turned down for job interviews relative to men with identical qualifications or that women were

paid less than men for the same work (Kaiser et al., 2013). Similarly, individual employees can

become morally credentialed to engage in biased behavior when they have demonstrated past

moral behavior (Merritt, Effron, & Monin, 2010). For example, when hiring managers had

previously advocated for increased minority recruitment, people subsequently judged them less

harshly for neglecting to actually promote minority employees (Effron & Monin, 2010). These

studies show how organizations and individuals who express pro-diversity messages are

perceived as fair, even when there is good reason to question their actual fairness.

<p align="center">**Present Research**</p>

Perceptions of Procedures

While prior research has shown that pro-diversity messages lead high status group

members to perceive adverse *employment outcomes* for low status groups as fair (Kaiser et al.,

2013), this paper examines whether pro-diversity messages, in the form of diversity awards, can

change how people perceive and support the implementation of objectively unfair organizational

procedures. This builds on prior research in an important way. Specifically, while any given

individual's or group's employment outcomes could be attributed to subjective causes and thus perceived as fairer at an organization touting pro-diversity messages, it may be more difficult to change the way more concrete personnel procedures are perceived. Indeed, people are susceptible to overlooking unfair outcomes but are much more vigilant to procedural fairness cues (Tyler, 2001, 2006). If diversity messages can change the perceived fairness of objectively unfair procedures, however, this suggests that the effects demonstrated by Kaiser and colleagues (2013) may actually be more powerful than previously realized. This insight would have potential significance for understanding factors that contribute to the creation and persistence of systematic organizational bias and discrimination. Thus, we build on past research by examining whether pro-diversity messages can lead to the implementation of procedures that have negative consequences for minorities and whether both minorities and Whites will engage in this process.

In the present research, we examined unstandardized interviewing as a type of biased procedure. *Unstandardized interviewing* is a procedure that allows interviewers to tailor interview questions to each applicant as they deem appropriate, while *standardized interviewing* requires asking candidates a standard set of pre-selected questions. Decades of research have shown that standardized interviewing procedures reduce race and gender disparities in hiring relative to unstandardized interviewing procedures (Huffcutt & Roth, 1998; Levashina, Hartwell, Morgeson, & Campion, 2014). For example, interviewers strongly preferred White over both Black and Hispanic applicants when conducting unstandardized interviews (Huffcutt & Roth, 1998). When interviewers engaged in standardized interviews, however, these disparities were significantly reduced, (Huffcutt & Roth, 1998), or completely eliminated (Levashina et al., 2014). Despite the superiority of standardized interviews in reducing bias, unstandardized interviewing remains a commonly used procedure because people erroneously believe that it

allows interviewers to consider the idiosyncratic characteristics of job candidates and assess their qualifications holistically (Dana, Dawes, & Peterson, 2013; Highhouse, 2008). However, research has unequivocally shown that this interviewing strategy leads to worse, rather than better, outcomes for minorities (Betcher, Bragger, & Kutcher, Huffcutt & Roth, 1998; Levashina et al., 2014) and that company or interviewer attributes, such as level of interviewer expertise, do not mitigate this bias (Highhouse, 2008).

Diversity awards

Organizations express pro-diversity messages in a variety of ways, but one of the more public ways in which they showcase their commitment to diversity is through obtaining and advertising diversity awards (Dobbin, 2009; Edelman, Fuller, & Mara-Drita, 2001). Of the top 10 Fortune 500 companies for 2014, 7 have diversity awards prominently displayed on their website. Due to their prevalence, diversity awards have been used as an instantiation of pro-diversity messages in past research examining the effects of pro-diversity messages on perceptions of discrimination (Dover, Major, & Kaiser, 2013; Kaiser et al., 2013). An advantage of examining diversity awards is that a wide variety of people (e.g., judges; see Dobbin, 2009; Edelman, Krieger, Eliason, & Albiston, 2011), may be particularly likely to assume that awards are a valid indicator of fair treatment of diverse groups. For that reason, companies may also be particularly likely to seek them out (see Marques, 2010). Unfortunately, diversity awards are often a reflection of how human resources departments portray their diversity initiatives rather than a true indication of whether they are actually effective in achieving their diversity goals, and many of the award criteria do not actually increase diversity or create better working conditions for members of disadvantaged groups (Dobbin, 2009).

Primary Hypotheses

Our primary hypothesis was that people would perceive company interviewing procedures, particularly those that are objectively unfair (unstandardized interviewing), as fairer to minorities and would be more willing to support the implementation of those procedures when a company had received a diversity award compared to an award unrelated to diversity. Although even fair procedures (standardized interviewing) might be perceived as fairer to minorities in an organization with a diversity award as compared to one without, any increase in fairness or support would likely be smaller in magnitude because these procedures may already be perceived as reasonably fair.

The Role of Employee Demographics

If diversity awards increase the perception that company procedures are fair to minorities, one alternative explanation is that diversity awards serve as a signal that the company is more demographically diverse. To examine the possibility that perceived diversity was responsible for any increase in perceptions of fairness, we included a manipulation of the racial homogeneity of the company. In one condition, the company was described as demographically homogenous; in the other condition, no information about demographic diversity was provided. By holding demographic information constant in the homogeneous condition, we could determine whether diversity awards affect perceptions of fairness to minorities even in the context of a company in which minorities are vastly underrepresented.

The Role of Participant Race

Although relatively little is known about how group status shapes interpretations of diversity awards on fairness, the presence of pro-diversity messages does lead women (Brady et al., 2014) and a subset of ethnic minorities (i.e., Latinos who endorse status legitimizing beliefs; Dover et al., 2013), to discount discrimination claims at a company. This paper contributes to the

emerging research on diversity initiatives and group status by examining whether Whites and

minorities differ in how diversity awards shape their perceptions of fairness and support of

procedures.

The Role of Target Race

In addition to examining how diversity awards shape evaluations of fairness to

minorities, we examined whether diversity awards shape perceptions of the fairness of

procedures for Whites, the high status group. One possibility is that judgments about procedural

fairness to Whites will be unaffected by the presence of diversity awards because organizational

procedures are often fair to Whites by default (Bayer et al., 2004; Huffcutt & Roth, 1998;

Levashina et al., 2014), leaving little opportunity for diversity awards to increase perceived

fairness. Alternatively, because Whites are sometimes perceived as excluded from diversity

(Plaut, Garnett, Buffardi, & Sanchez-Burks, 2011), participants might assume that a company

possessing a diversity award would have procedures that could be unfair to Whites.

Method

The present experiment examined whether the presence of a company diversity award

(versus a control award) would cause participants to perceive company procedures, particularly

unfair ones (unstandardized interviews), as fairer for minorities and increase support for the

procedure. We did not anticipate that the presence of a diversity award would affect perceptions

of fairness and support for the fair interviewing procedure (standardized interviews) as strongly

because the procedure would already be perceived as relatively fair. Consistent with past

research showing that pro-diversity messages increase perceptions of fairness even in the face of

clear discrimination (Kaiser et al., 2013), we expected that this effect of diversity awards would

occur even when the company was demographically homogeneous and minorities were

underrepresented.

Participants

Participants were all 1,098 University of Washington undergraduate students who were

participating in a mass testing session held during their introductory psychology courses. Given

that pro-diversity messages might be interpreted differently in different cultural contexts

(Guimond et al., 2013; Plaut et al., 2011; Unzueta & Binning, 2010), we did not include data

from 141 international students[1]. Of the remaining 957 participants, 52 were excluded for

providing incomplete data, and 54 were excluded due to responding incorrectly to the

manipulation check (see below for details), resulting in a final sample of 851. The final sample

(519 women, 332 men) had a mean age of 18.82 years ($SD = 1.55$), and was predominately

White (50.4%) and Asian American (28.9%). Non-Asian minorities reported Hispanic or Latino

(3.8%), African American (1.7%), American Indian or Alaska Native (0.2%), Native Hawaiian

or Pacific Islander (0.2%), Multi-racial (9.5%), or Other (5.3%) backgrounds.

Procedures

Design. This experiment was one of several paper and pencil studies administered during

mass testing sessions. Participants learned that this particular study addressed their perceptions

of workplace procedures. The design was a 2 (Diversity Condition: Diversity or Control Award)

x 2 (Procedural Fairness: Fair (Standardized Interviews) or Unfair (Unstandardized Interviews))

x 2 (Company Demographics: Racially Homogenous or No Information) between subjects

factorial, with participant race (White or non-White) as an additional factor.

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[1] Excluding international students was an a priori decision, but including them in analyses does
not change the pattern or significance of any of the reported results.

Diversity award manipulation. Participants were randomly assigned to read that a company, Patterson Group, had either won an "award for excellence in diversity and inclusion" in the diversity condition or an "award for excellence in customer care" in the control condition.

Interview fairness manipulation. Participants were also randomly assigned to read about a fair (standardized) or unfair (unstandardized) interviewing procedure that the company was considering implementing[2]. They learned that *standardized* interviewing involves asking candidates a standard set of pre-selected questions or that *unstandardized interviewing* allows the interviewer more freedom as to what questions are asked. After reading a description of the procedure, they read statements of positive justification for the interviewing procedure (see Appendix A for the descriptions).

Company demographic manipulation. Participants were also randomly assigned to learn that the company was racially homogenous and White dominated ("A majority of those employees are male (60%), White (92%), and American citizens (94%)") or were given no information about employee demographics in the control condition. The company description was otherwise identical.

Measures

Procedural fairness to racial minorities. The extent to which participants thought the procedure would be fair to minorities was assessed with the following item: *How fair will this policy be for racial and ethnic minorities at Patterson Group?.* They responded using a 5-point scale (1(Not at all) - 5(Extremely)). Unless otherwise noted, this same response scale was used for all dependent measures in this study.

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[2] In a pilot study, participants perceived unstandardized interviews ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.03$) as less fair to minorities than standardized interviews ($M = 3.63$, $SD = .89$), $t(40) = 2.01$, $p = .05$, $d = .31$.

Procedural fairness to Whites. Perceptions of the fairness of the interviewing procedure to Whites was assessed with the following item: *How fair will this policy be for White individuals at Patterson Group?*[3]

Support for procedure. Participants' support for implementing the interviewing strategy was assessed with the following: *How strongly do you support this policy at Patterson Group?*

Manipulation check. Finally, participants completed a diversity award manipulation check in which they indicated whether Patterson Group had received an award for excellence in diversity and inclusion, an award for excellence in customer care, or whether they couldn't recall which award. They also responded to "To what extent does Patterson Group value diversity?" on a 1(Not at all) - 5(Extremely) scale.

Results

Manipulation Check

A check on the diversity award manipulation revealed that 69% of participants correctly recalled whether they read that the company received a diversity award or customer care award, 25% were unsure, and 6% recalled incorrectly. Because this survey was one of several studies completed during a mass testing session that is typically somewhat chaotic, the high percentages of manipulation check inaccuracies is perhaps unsurprising. To avoid large attrition rates, we only excluded the 6% of participants who responded incorrectly to the manipulation check but retained those who said they could not recall the award. Results were unchanged, irrespective of whether we excluded only those who incorrectly responded on the manipulation check or both those who incorrectly responded and those who were unsure on this check.

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[3] Although the present study focused on race, we included two exploratory items about fairness to women and fairness to men. Fairness to women showed similar results as fairness to racial minorities, and fairness to men showed similar results as fairness to Whites.

Participants also perceived that the company valued diversity more in the presence of a diversity award ($M = 3.43$, SD = 1.12) relative to a control award ($M = 2.74$, SD = 1.09), $F(1, 897) = 94.53$, $p < .001$, $d = .62$. However, this main effect was moderated by participant race, $F(1, 897) = 11.47$, $p = .001$. Minorities perceived that the company valued diversity more in the presence of a diversity award ($M = 3.30$, SD = 1.17) relative to a control award ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 1.07$), $F(1,897) = 21.78$, $p = < .001$, $d = .41$, but this effect was stronger among Whites (Diversity $M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.06$; Control $M = 2.61$, $SD = 1.11$), $F(1,897) = 79.68$, $p < .001$, $d = .89$.

Data Analytic Strategy

We examined the effect of diversity condition separately for perceived fairness to minorities, perceived fairness to Whites, and support for the procedures using a 2 (Diversity Condition: Diversity or Control Award) x 2 (Interview Fairness: Fair (Standardized Interviews) or Unfair (Unstandardized Interviews)) x 2 (Company Demographics: Racially Homogenous or No Information) ANOVA, with participant race (White or non-White) as an additional factor (see Table 1 for correlations between variables).

We hypothesized that there would be an interaction between diversity condition and interview fairness such that participants who viewed the diversity award (relative to a control award) would perceive the company's interviewing procedures, particular unfair ones (unstandardized interviews), as fairer for racial minorities and would be more supportive of implementing the procedure. We did not anticipate that the presence of a diversity award would affect assessments of and support for the fair interviewing procedure (standardized interviews) as strongly because these procedures would already be perceived as relatively fair.

Do Diversity Awards Increase Perceptions of Procedural Fairness to Racial Minorities?

Importantly, a main effect of interview fairness confirmed that participants perceived the fair procedure (standardized interviewing; $M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.01$) as fairer to minorities than the unfair procedure (unstandardized interviewing; $M = 2.78$, $SD = 1.11$), $F(1, 835) = 86.12$, $p < .001$, $d = .61$, Additionally, there was an overall main effect of diversity condition, whereby participants perceived both interview procedures as fairer to minorities in the presence of a diversity award ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 1.10$) relative to a control award ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.12$), $F(1, 835) = 4.16$, $p = .04$, $d = .12$. This main effect was qualified by the predicted two-way interaction between diversity condition and interview fairness (see Figure 1), $F(1,835) = 5.33$, $p = .02$. When the company considered adopting fair procedures (standardized interviews), participants' perceptions of fairness to minorities did not differ as a function of whether the company had a diversity award ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.04$) or a control award ($M = 3.44$, $SD = .99$), $F(1,835) = .01$, $p = .91$. However, when the company was considering an unfair procedure (unstandardized interviews), participants perceived the unfair procedure as fairer to minorities when the company had a diversity award ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.11$) compared to a control award ($M = 2.63$, $SD = 1.09$), $F(1,835) = 8.32$, $p = .004$, $d = .26$.

To examine the two-way interaction another way, we also broke it apart by diversity condition. In the presence of a control award, participants perceived unstandardized interviewing as less fair to minorities than standardized interviewing, $F(1,835) = 65.02$, $p < .001$, $d = .78$. This effect was weaker, but still substantial, in the presence of a diversity award, $F(1,835) = 25.13$, $p < .001$, $d = .47$. Importantly, this two-way interaction was not moderated by company demographics, $F(1,835) = 1.48$, $p = .22$, or participant race, $F(1,835) = .008$, $p = .93$. These findings suggest that among both White and minority participants, diversity awards can increase the perception that unfair workplace procedures are fairer to minorities, even when companies

are demographically homogeneous and dominated by Whites (see Table 2 for complete

inferential tests).

Do Diversity Awards Increase Support for Company Procedures?

We hypothesized that the presence of a diversity award (relative to a control award)

would also increase support for a company's unfair interview procedure (unstandardized

interviews). We found partial support for this prediction. There was an unexpected interaction

between diversity condition and participant race, $F(1, 835) = 5.25$, $p = .02$ and a marginal

interaction between diversity condition, interview fairness, and participant race (see Figure 2),

$F(1, 835) = 3.03$, $p = .08$. We first broke apart the marginal three-way interaction by interview

fairness, revealing a two-way interaction between diversity condition and participant race for

unfair procedures, $F(1, 835) = 8.01$, $p = .005$, but not fair procedures, $F(1, 835) = .16$, $p = .69$.

We next broke apart the two-way interaction by participant race for unfair procedures. Among

Whites, the diversity award led participants to increase their support for an unfair interviewing

procedure ($M = 3.12$, $SD = .95$) compared to a control award ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.01$), $F(1,835) =$

6.11, $p = .01$, $d = .17$. Among minority participants, however, the presence of a diversity award

($M = 2.91$, SD $= .89$) compared to a control award ($M = 3.14$, $SD = .94$) did not affect support for

either procedure, $F(1,835) = 2.36$, $p = .12$. This three-way interaction was not moderated by any

other higher order interactions, ps $> .41$ (see Table 3 for complete inferential tests).

Do Diversity Awards Increase Perceptions of Procedural Fairness to Whites?

We also examined whether the presence of a diversity award (relative to a control award)

would affect the perception that a company's interview procedure is fair to Whites. There was no

main effect of diversity condition, $F(1,835) = .08$, $p = .77$, or interaction between diversity

condition and procedural fairness, $F(1,835) = .01$, $p = .93$, on perceptions of fairness to Whites

(see Figure 3). Additionally, participant race did not moderate these effects, ps > .33 (see Table 4 for complete inferential tests). These findings suggest that diversity awards increase perceptions of fairness of unstandardized interviews specifically for minorities and not for Whites, who are already typically advantaged by unstandardized interviewing procedures.

Do Increased Perceptions of Procedural Fairness to Minorities Explain Support for Procedures?

Whereas the presence of a diversity award increased both Whites' and minorities' perception that unstandardized interviewing is fair to minorities, only White participants also more strongly supported implementation of the procedures. These discrepant findings precluded a mediated moderation analysis examining whether perceptions of procedural fairness mediated support for procedures. For exploratory purposes, however, we excluded analyses to White participants learning about an unstandardized interviewing policy[4] and examined whether perceptions of fairness to minorities mediated support for the unfair policy. We also collapsed analyses by the company demographics manipulation because it did not moderate the effects of diversity condition.

We tested whether perceptions of fairness to minorities mediated the effect of diversity condition (control award = 0, diversity award = 1) on support for procedures using the SPSS Process macro provided by Hayes (2013). Consistent with previous analyses, the diversity award compared to the control award increased both support for the unfair interviewing procedure, $b = .31$, $SE = .14$, $t(212) = 2.29$, $p = .02$, and perceptions of fairness to minorities, $b = .39$, $SE = .15$, $t(212) = 2.59$, $p = .01$, among Whites. When entering diversity condition and perceptions of

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[4] We were unable to exclude to Whites and examine mediated moderation for the two-way interaction between interview fairness and diversity condition because the interaction was not significant for procedural support, $F(1,835) = 1.80$, $p = .18$.

fairness to minorities simultaneously, perceptions of fairness to minorities predicted support for the procedure, $b = .56$, $SE = .05$, $t(211) = 11.70$, $p < .001$, but diversity condition was no longer a significant predictor, $b = .09$, $SE = .11$, $t(211) = .84$, $p = .40$. Using 10,000 bootstrap resamples of the data, we confirmed a significant indirect effect of diversity condition through perceptions of fairness, $b = .11$, $SE = .04$, $CI_{95} = 03$ to $.20$.

Discussion

The current research demonstrates that the mere presence of a diversity award leads both White and minority participants to perceive biased company procedures as more fair to minorities. This occurred even in the context of a company in which minorities were vastly underrepresented (92% White). In terms of support for implementing unstandardized interviews, White, but not minority, participants were more willing to support the implementation of the biased procedure when the company had won a diversity award compared to when it had not.

This study provides new evidence that diversity awards legitimize unfairness by not only altering people's perceptions of employment outcomes, but also changing the way people view concrete *procedures* that have implications for how fairly minority employees are treated. Even when participants have adequate information to judge the fairness of company procedures, the presence of diversity awards changes perceptions of unfair procedures. Thus, pro-diversity messages may inadvertently lead people to overlook bias introduced by unfair workplace procedures. Although blatantly biased procedures may be easy to detect, procedures such as unstandardized interviewing represent a subtle mechanism for bias that may be easily masked in the presence of cues to organizational fairness. For instance, even highly progressive companies commonly use procedures such as employee referral programs (Schwartz, 2013), often drawing upon their White employees' networks, which creates less, rather than more, diverse workforces

(see Bayer, Ross, Topa, Bayer, & Ross, 2004). The present research and social psychology more generally may play an important role in reducing employment discrimination by understanding factors that help mask subtle, systematic bias in procedures.

The present research in particular used an ecologically valid approach to this issue, examining two different interviewing strategies that are frequently employed in the workplace (Dana, Dawes, & Peterson, 2013; Highhouse, 2008). Despite extensive evidence that unstandardized interviewing systematically introduces bias into hiring decisions (Betcher, Bragger, & Kutcher, Huffcutt & Roth, 1998; Levashina et al., 2014), companies continue to pursue this strategy because of an erroneous belief that experienced hiring managers can accurately identify applicant qualities and idiosyncrasies that will predict job success (Highhouse, 2008). Unfortunately, the presence of pro-diversity messages may exacerbate these problematic beliefs.

The Role of Target Race

Although the presence of a diversity award altered perceptions of the procedures' fairness to minorities, it did not alter perceptions of fairness to Whites. This may have occurred because people do not associate diversity with Whites (Unzueta & Binning, 2010). Additionally, as can be seen in Figure 3, participants on average perceived both interviewing procedures as relatively fair to Whites, perhaps reflecting the reality that workplace policies generally favor Whites.

Future Directions

The presence of a diversity award increased both Whites' and minorities' perceptions of procedural fairness to minorities. This is consistent with research showing that pro-diversity messages lead both high status and low status groups to discount discrimination claims at a company (Brady et al., 2014; Dover, Major, & Kaiser, 2013; Kaiser et al., 2013). However, only

White participants also more strongly supported implementation of the procedures in the presence of a diversity award, consistent with research showing that Whites support procedures that help minorities as long as they do not hurt Whites in the process (Lowery, Unzueta, Knowles, & Goff, 2006). Given that minorities are the intended beneficiaries of pro-diversity messages (Triana & Garcia, 2009) and that they generally support ostensibly fair procedures, regardless of the fairness of outcomes (Tyler, 2001, 2006), we expected that they would also more strongly support procedures they perceived as fairer to minorities. However, minorities weight fairness less heavily in their support for procedures in contexts in which they are underrepresented, seeking out more evidence that actual outcomes are fair (Tyler, 2000). Because evidence of fair outcomes was lacking in the present study, procedural fairness may not have been enough to translate into support for procedures. Interestingly, our manipulation check also showed that minorities perceived that the company valued diversity more in the presence of a diversity award relative to a control award, but less strongly than Whites did. This raises the possibility that minorities believe that the procedures will be fairer to minorities at a pro-diversity company but are less convinced that the company sincerely values diversity and that minorities will do well at that company.

Additionally, the minorities in this study were primarily Asian American, a group whose reactions to pro-diversity messages have not been closely examined. Another possibility is that Asian Americans may not think that pro-diversity messages directly benefit their group because they are not associated with diversity to the same extent as other minority groups (Rheinschmidt, Plaut, & Rios, 2014). They may even see pro-diversity messages as *disadvantaging* them in contexts in which their group is already well-represented (Rheinschmidt, Plaut, & Rios, 2014). In other words, they may have been thinking primarily about non-Asian minorities in this study

when responding about ethnic minority groups. Future research should more directly examine

the extent to which Asian Americans and other low status groups support pro-diversity messages

and initiatives[5].

Limitations

One limitation of the present research was the assumption that undergraduate student

participants would be able to detect the biased nature of unstandardized interviewing that is

reflected in the reality of this practice in the real world. Our data in the control award condition

confirmed this assumption (see Figures 1 and 3). Participants exposed to the control company

recognized that unstandardized interviewing was much less fair to minorities than standardized

interviewing ($d = .78$; see Figure 1) but that it was only somewhat unfair to Whites ($d = .21$; see

Figure 3). Nonetheless, it will be important to explore additional types of organizational policies

than can introduce biases into the workplace and to extend these findings beyond an

undergraduate student sample, as those with more workplace experience may be more vigilant at

detecting biased procedures.

On a related note, an alternative explanation for the effect of diversity awards on unfair

interviewing procedures is that diversity awards allowed participants to envision an entirely

different unstandardized interviewing procedure that was unbiased or even favored minorities.

For example, participants could have assumed that the flexible nature of unstandardized

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[5] As an initial examination of this possibility, we excluded non-Asian minorities from analyses to more directly compare White and Asian Americans. For fairness to minorities, we replicated the interaction between diversity condition and interview fairness, $F(1,711) = 6.79$, $p = .009$, where unfair procedures, $F(1,711) = 11.57$, $p = .001$, but not fair procedures, $F(1,711) = .07$, $p = .79$, were perceived as fairer to minorities in the presence of a diversity award. For procedural support, there was an interaction between diversity condition and race, $F(1,711) = 3.68$, $p = .055$, where Whites, $F(1,711) = 4.56$, $p = .03$, but not Asian Americans, $F(1,711) = .53$, $p = .47$, supported the procedures more when the company had a diversity award compared to a control award.

interviews would permit interviewers to ask questions better tailored to racial or ethnic

minorities' cultural backgrounds. This seems unlikely, however, given that unstandardized

interviewing was perceived as substantially less fair to minorities than standardized interviewing,

even within companies with a diversity award ($d = .47$). Additionally, participants reported that

unstandardized interviews were fairer to Whites ($M = 3.64$) than minorities ($M = 2.92$) in the

diversity condition, suggesting that participants did not assume that unstandardized interviewers

in companies winning diversity awards would favor minorities.

Conclusion and Implications

Although pro-diversity messages and initiatives often fail to increase numeric diversity

(Dobbin, 2009; Kalev et al., 2006) or reduce discrimination at companies (Roberson, Kulik, &

Tan, 2013), people do believe that they increase opportunities and fairness for minorities. This

has considerable implications in real company contexts (Schwartz, 2013). As bias against

members of disadvantaged groups is already often difficult to detect (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995)

and small amounts of bias can lead to unexpectedly large disparities in the real world, any extra

barrier to equality and bias detection is problematic. Because pro-diversity messages mask the

unfairness inherent in biased procedures, the very symbols intended to communicate an

appreciation of minorities might inadvertently lead to decreased minority representation and

other unfair treatment.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

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Appendix A: Standardized and Unstandardized Interviewing Procedure Descriptions

[Standardized (fair) interviewing procedure:]

Patterson Group is debating whether to conduct *standardized* interviews when interviewing job candidates, which involves asking candidates a standard set of pre-selected questions in the same order for each candidate.

Supporters of *standardized* interviews argue:
- They allow the interviewers to get an accurate representation of each candidate independent of what interview questions are asked.
- They result in treating all candidates similarly because all interviewers ask questions the same way.

[Unstandardized (unfair) interviewing procedure:]

Patterson Group is debating whether to conduct *unstandardized* interviews when interviewing job candidates, which gives the interviewer freedom as to what questions are asked. Questions can be included or excluded depending on the potential employee's individual situation or responses to questions.

Supporters of *unstandardized* interviews argue:
- They allow the interviewers to get an accurate representation of each candidate as questions can be created to address candidates' unique attributes.
- They result in treating all candidates as unique individuals because all interviewers ask questions that reflect the individual's work history.

Dependent variable	Control condition			Diversity condition		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
1. Fairness to minorities	-	0.51**	0.31**	-	0.62**	0.48**
2. Support for procedure	0.54**	-	0.53**	0.57**	-	0.45**
3. Fairness to Whites	0.23**	0.32**	-	0.17*	0.30**	-

Table 1. Intercorrelations between dependent variables split by condition and race. Correlations for Whites are above the diagonal, and correlations for minorities are below the diagonal. $Df =$ 835.
** $p \leq .001$ * $p \leq .01$

	F	p	d
Fairness of procedures to minorities			
Diversity condition	4.16	.04	.12
Procedural fairness	86.12	10^{-19}	.61
Demographics	15.00	10^{-4}	.23
Race	3.44	.06	.11
Diversity X fairness	5.33	.02	
Diversity X demographics	.44	.51	
Diversity X race	.37	.54	
Fairness X demographics	1.18	.28	
Fairness X race	.02	.88	
Demographics X race	2.54	.11	
Diversity X fairness X demographics	1.48	.22	
Diversity X fairness X race	.008	.93	
Diversity X demographics X race	.03	.86	
Fairness X demographics X race	.47	.49	
Diversity X fairness X demographics X race	.97	.33	

Table 2. ANOVA results for fairness to minorities. $Df = 835$.

	F	p	d
Support for procedures			
Diversity condition	.59	.44	.04
Procedural fairness	20.70	10^{-5}	.30
Demographics	.55	.46	-.04
Race	.67	.41	-.05
Diversity X fairness	.02	.89	
Diversity X demographics	.39	.53	
Diversity X race	5.25	.02	
Fairness X demographics	.45	.50	
Fairness X race	.005	.94	
Demographics X race	.63	.43	
Diversity X fairness X demographics	.002	.96	
Diversity X fairness X race	3.03	.08	
Diversity X demographics X race	10^{-5}	.99	
Fairness X demographics X race	.51	.47	
Diversity X fairness X demographics X race	.43	.51	

Table 3. ANOVA results for support for procedures. *Df* = 835.

	F	p	d
Fairness of procedures to Whites			
Diversity condition	.08	.77	.02
Procedural fairness	9.47	.002	.21
Demographics	14.31	10^{-4}	.26
Race	.53	.47	-.02
Diversity X fairness	.009	.93	
Diversity X demographics	.22	.64	
Diversity X race	.03	.86	
Fairness X demographics	2.05	.15	
Fairness X race	1.41	.24	
Demographics X race	.93	.34	
Diversity X fairness X demographics	.08	.78	
Diversity X fairness X race	.94	.33	
Diversity X demographics X race	.76	.38	
Fairness X demographics X race	.20	.66	
Diversity X fairness X demographics X race	.12	.73	

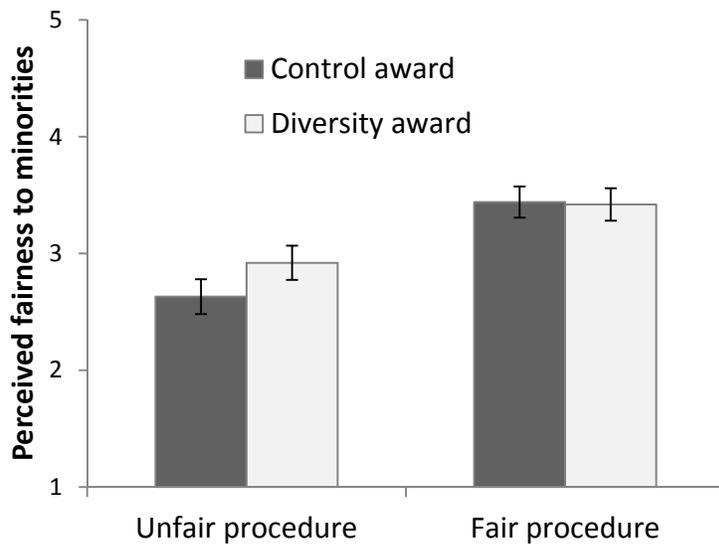**Table 4.** ANOVA results for fairness to Whites. $Df = 835$.

Figure 1. Perceived fairness of procedures to minorities at a company with a diversity or a control award.

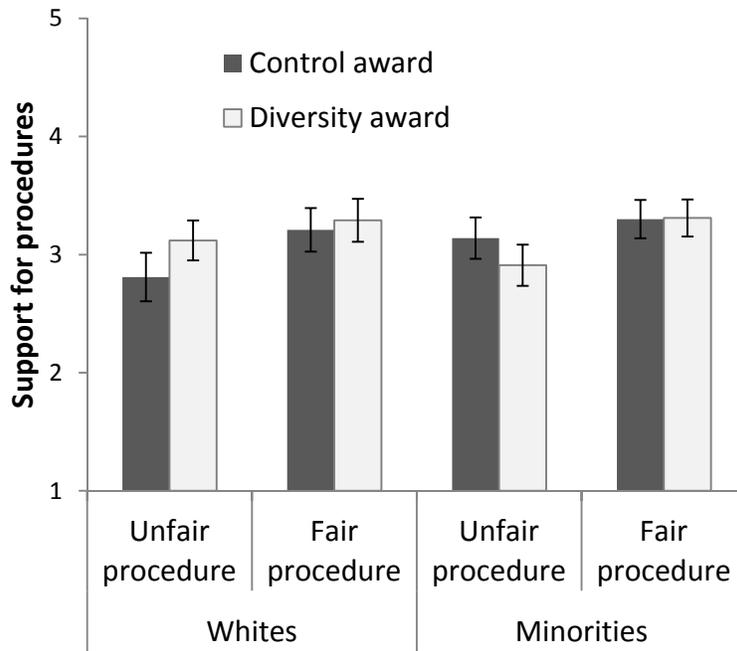Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 2. Support for company procedures among White and minority participants at a company with a diversity or a control award. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.
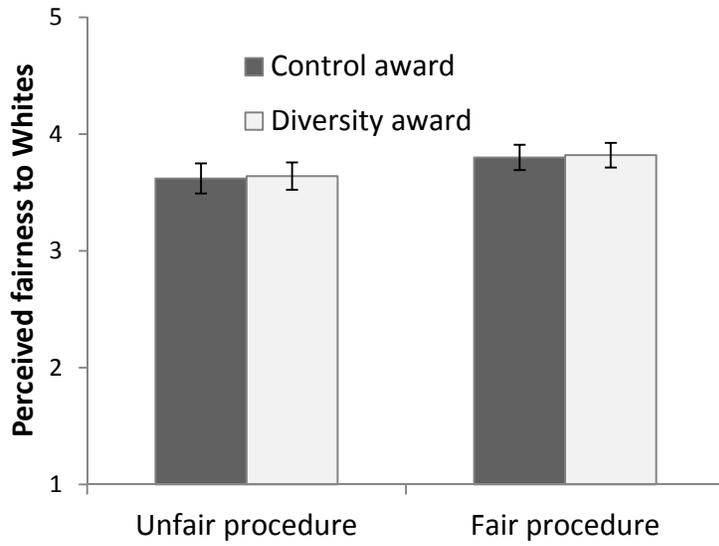
Figure 3. Perceived fairness of procedures to Whites at a company with a diversity or a control award. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.