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Race matters more than racial identity disclosure when evaluating applicant diversity statements

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Abstract

The present research investigated whether a target applicant's race and disclosure of their race in a personal diversity statement influenced White evaluators' perceptions of the applicant's egalitarian motivations and their likelihood of contributing to organizational diversity and inclusion outcomes. In Study 1 ($N = 206$), participants evaluated a diversity statement that was ostensibly written by a White or Black applicant who either referenced or did not reference his race within the statement. Participants judged Black applicants as more internally motivated to be egalitarian and White applicants as more externally motivated, regardless of whether they disclosed their race in the statement. Participants also judged Black applicants as more likely to contribute to diversity and inclusion outcomes than White applicants. Study 2 ($N = 257$) aimed to replicate Study 1 and tested a strengthened race disclosure condition. We again saw little evidence of race disclosure impacting evaluations of applicants: Black applicants were judged as more internally motivated, less externally motivated, and more likely to contribute to diversity and inclusion compared to White applicants. Study 3 ($N = 297$) aimed to further replicate and expand on these results by testing a disclosure manipulation wherein the applicant discussed the personal importance/centrality of his race. Once again, applicant race (and not disclosure) demonstrated consistent effects on applicant evaluations. Our results highlight flaws in the personal diversity statement evaluation process, such that factors beyond statement content (i.e., applicant race) influenced perceptions and outcomes of the applicants. Practical implications and solutions for applicant evaluation processes are discussed.

In a personal diversity statement, applicants are typically asked to explain their experiences with diversity and inclusion (such as working with diverse populations) and/or their plans for contributing to the inclusive environment of the prospective institution (Berkeley Office for Faculty Equity and Welfare, 2024). The request of such

statements has become particularly popular within institutions of higher education. For instance, some colleges and universities rely on personal diversity statements as a means by which to evaluate student applicants' values related to diversity and inclusivity (Paul & Maranto, 2021) and some ask faculty and staff to provide diversity

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statements as part of the hiring process or in support of promotion and tenure with the stated goal of cultivating a more diverse and inclusive campus community (see Carroll et al., 2022 for a more detailed discussion of the scope and purpose of personal diversity statements). The institution's ostensible goal in requesting personal diversity statements is to offer a way for applicants to communicate their egalitarian values and explain how their prior experiences will enable them to positively contribute to a diverse and inclusive community. However, the evaluation of these statements presents a unique challenge: The effectiveness of using personal diversity statements rests on the notion that evaluators can accurately assess an applicant's egalitarian motivations and potential contributions to diversity and inclusion based on their essay.

To our knowledge, no empirical research has directly tested the role of personal diversity statement evaluations in hiring and admission decisions. Moreover, no studies have investigated the impact of applicant characteristics, such as their race and willingness to disclose their race, in evaluations of diversity statements. In this paper, we investigated whether an applicant's race (revealed outside the diversity statement) and their choice to disclose (or not disclose) their race in a personal diversity statement influenced White evaluators' perceptions of the applicant's egalitarian motivations and their perceptions of the applicant's potential contributions to institutional diversity and inclusion outcomes.

1 | PERSONAL DIVERSITY STATEMENTS AND RACIAL PREJUDICE IN APPLICATION EVALUATIONS

The reception of terms such as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) varies widely in the current United States political-legal environment, with some states embracing these concepts while others act in opposition. At the time of this writing, nearly half the states have approved or introduced anti-DEI legislation (Bryant & Appleby, 2024). Several higher education institutions have accordingly fallen victim to political anti-DEI actions, such as withholding federal funding from diversity programs (e.g., Izaguirre, 2023). Nevertheless, it is important to evaluate the communication of an applicant's values during hiring and admissions processes, and many institutions still wish to increase the diversity of their membership despite legal parameters that limit the types of policies they may implement (Garces, 2014).

In June 2023, the Supreme Court ruled that colleges' consideration of race in admission decisions was unconstitutional (Students for Fair Admissions Inc. v. President & Fellows of Harvard College, 2023). This decision was made notwithstanding arguments that supported race-conscious admissions, citing their role in enhancing educational experiences, rectifying historical injustices, and in developing leadership that reflects the diversity of the people (Biden, 2023; Knox, 2023). Following this ruling, colleges and universities face the challenge of aligning their admissions practices with the Court's decision while emphasizing their continued commitment to fostering diversity within their communities. Nevertheless, the Court insists

that its ruling does not prohibit the consideration of race for admissions. Specifically, colleges and universities may consider "an applicant's discussion of how race affected his or her life, be it through discrimination, inspiration, or otherwise" (Students for Fair Admissions Inc. v. President & Fellows of Harvard College, 2023). Furthermore, racial self-identification must be tied to the applicant's courage, leadership, or unique ability to contribute to the university. In other words, institutions of higher education may still request or permit the submission of personal essays wherein applicants are encouraged to discuss how their personal experiences have shaped them in ways that will benefit others (Sloan, 2023). As one of the few—if not only—ways in which applicants are able to discuss the impact of race and/or ethnicity on their lives, it is increasingly important to ensure that personal diversity statements and their evaluation are effective at accomplishing institutional goals, particularly in the context of higher education.

Unfortunately, there is a current dearth of research on evaluations of personal diversity statements and diversity-focused outcomes in hiring and admissions, specifically. However, findings on racial bias in general hiring decisions may extend to more specific diversity-focused application materials. Despite the fact that diversity statements are often implemented to aid institutions in achieving their goals surrounding diversity and inclusion, diversity statements may present a complicated review process and could result in subjective selection decisions against people of color (particularly Black applicants) given prior research on the effects of race during the job applicant selection process (e.g., Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Pager et al., 2009; Quillian et al., 2017). Specifically, Black applicants are subject to racial discrimination and prejudice in the selection process, putting them at a disadvantage compared to White applicants (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000). For instance, past studies have manipulated applicant names on résumés to portray race, such that the content and quality of the résumés remained constant but ostensibly came from an applicant with either a stereotypically White name or a stereotypically Black name. The authors found that résumés with stereotypically White names had significantly higher callback rates than résumés with stereotypically Black names (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004). A similar study found that Black and Latino applicants with no criminal record were less likely to be hired than White applicants who had been to prison (Pager et al., 2009). Finally, a meta-analytic review of hiring practices indicated that racial biases favoring White applicants have persisted over time (Quillian et al., 2017). Thus, racial prejudice in hiring often puts people of color at a disadvantage compared to their White peers (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Hodson et al., 2002; Pager et al., 2009; Quillian et al., 2017).

Contrary to these findings, however, other research points to biased evaluations in race-related contexts that operate in the inverse direction—where evaluators actively positively evaluate Black individuals, perhaps in attempts to avoid seeming prejudiced (e.g., Axt et al., 2016; Croft & Schmader, 2012; Mendes & Koslov, 2013). For example, scholars have found that evaluators tend to over-compensate for their own biases in interracial interactions by

behaving effusively toward a Black partner (Mendes & Koslov, 2013) or withholding criticism of their written work (relative to work of equal caliber written by a White target; Croft & Schmader, 2012). Further, researchers have documented a robust pro-Black bias in a particular academic context: decisions regarding whether to admit Black versus White students to an academic honor society (Axt et al., 2016). More generally, scholars have also found White guilt to be predictive of support for affirmative action programs, such that White individuals with higher levels of White guilt more favorably evaluate programs, policies, and laws focused on the positive treatment of Black individuals (Swim & Miller, 1999). Importantly, none of these existing studies have looked at evaluations of applicants in the context of personal diversity statements. Taken together, this body of research seems to suggest that when the prospect of evaluator bias is salient among evaluators (as is likely the case when they are reviewing diversity statements), a pro-Black bias may emerge in their evaluations of applicants' perceived motivations and anticipated contributions.

Beyond applicant race effects, even less is known about the impact of racial identity disclosure in the evaluation of personal diversity statements. Applicants may be inclined to disclose their own race within a diversity statement, as prompts for these essays typically encourage applicants to discuss personal experiences of diversity, including their identities. For example, the University of California, Davis, gives graduate school applicants the following instructions for their required personal diversity statement (UC Davis Graduate Studies, 2023):

...Please describe how your personal background informs your decision to pursue a graduate degree. You may include any educational, familial, cultural, economic, or social experiences, challenges, community service, outreach activities, residency and citizenship, first-generation college status, or opportunities relevant to your academic journey; how your life experiences contribute to the social, intellectual, or cultural diversity within a campus community and your chosen field; or how you might serve educationally underrepresented and underserved segments of society with your graduate education.

These instructions may communicate to applicants (explicitly or implicitly) that disclosing their own marginalized identities is relevant to answering the prompt. Furthermore, disclosing marginalized identities within their essays may provide applicants with the opportunity to transform their identity into an advantage or contribute to positive identity representation in their field (Carlone & Johnson, 2007).

However, scholars have found that the self-disclosure of such identities is surprisingly uncommon in diversity-centric application materials (Schmalig et al., 2015, 2019). In a sample of 191 tenure-track academic faculty position candidates, only 24% of candidates self-disclosed ways they personally represented diversity in their

application materials, with only 30% of the individuals in this subset specifically disclosing a marginalized racial/ethnic identity (Schmalig et al., 2015). A separate investigation of 454 applications to academic research and teaching staff positions found that less than 10% of applicants self-disclosed a marginalized identity (Schmalig et al., 2019). This is perhaps because applicants are uncertain about how evaluators will judge their materials once a marginalized identity is explicitly disclosed and discussed in these essays. To our knowledge, the present research is the first to closely examine the role of racial identity self-disclosure in evaluations of personal diversity statements.

2 | PERCEPTIONS OF EGALITARIAN MOTIVATION AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Evaluators may unconsciously consider whether an applicant appears to be *internally* or *externally* motivated to act in an egalitarian manner when evaluating a personal diversity statement. Internal and external motivations to respond without prejudice assess the extent to which people are motivated to act in an egalitarian manner based on their personal values (internal motivation) and/or the social context (external motivation). An internal motivation to respond without prejudice reflects a personal, internalized commitment to be nonprejudiced, while an external motivation is conceptualized as a strong desire to avoid being viewed as prejudiced because one fears the negative public judgment that might accompany expressions of prejudice (Plant & Devine, 1998).

These sources of motivation have been linked to a variety of egalitarian outcomes: People who are highly internally motivated to respond without prejudice report lower prejudiced beliefs across both private and public settings, are more likely to act in an egalitarian manner when placed in diverse environments, and exhibit greater awareness of institutional racism compared to people who are primarily externally motivated (Devine et al., 2002; Gushue et al., 2017; Johns et al., 2008; Plant & Devine, 2009; Plant et al., 2003, 2010). Moreover, levels of internal and external motivations to respond without prejudice have implications for the quality and outcomes of interracial interactions. Individuals who are highly internally motivated have been found to engage in interracial interactions with the end goal of approaching a positive, egalitarian conversation, whereas people who are highly externally motivated navigate interracial interactions with the goal of avoiding the appearance of prejudice (Plant & Devine, 2009; Plant et al., 2010). Such differences in egalitarian motivation and approach versus avoidance orientation are evident to social partners. Plant et al. (2010) found that non-Black individuals with high internal motivation had more positive interactions with Black conversation partners because they engaged in greater approach-oriented behaviors. In contrast, non-Black people with high external motivation exhibited greater avoidant behaviors and were consequently viewed as being more prejudiced by their Black conversation partners. Taken in the

context of building inclusive institutions, these findings suggest that it may be beneficial to select applicants who are highly internally motivated to respond without prejudice given that these individuals are likely to contribute to an egalitarian climate and engage in behaviors that will result in more positive interactions between diverse institutional members.

Because applicants' true attitudes toward diversity and commitments to institutional diversity and inclusion goals are unknown to evaluators, they must instead infer applicants' egalitarian motivations and potential contributions based on the information provided in their statements. However, research on perceived internal and external motivations suggests that factors irrelevant to a target's true motivation often influence how their intentions are interpreted (Cruz & Smith, 2021; LaCosse et al., 2015; Major et al., 2013). Specifically, people of color are more likely to perceive White people's behavior as being generally externally, rather than internally, motivated to respond without prejudice (Kunstman et al., 2016; LaCosse et al., 2015; Major et al., 2013). Although it is relatively unclear whether White individuals suspect other Whites of being primarily externally motivated, or whether White individuals believe that people of color hold particular motivations for being nonprejudiced, these results demonstrate that perceptions of egalitarian motivation are often influenced by demographic factors above and beyond the beliefs espoused by targets (e.g., race). One possibility is that White evaluators of diversity statements may assume that Black applicants are primarily internally motivated to be nonbiased based on the vague idea that "diversity" is synonymous with "race" (e.g., Banks, 2009), inferring that anyone who is not White must be guided by a desire for racial egalitarianism.

It would seem that a key reason for requesting personal diversity statements from applicants is to facilitate the institutional goal of building more diverse and inclusive environments. However, we found no published studies investigating the efficacy of this approach in the recruitment, hiring, or admission of candidates who appear to fulfill egalitarian goals. Further, based on the literature illustrating that White evaluators often show an overcorrection bias favoring Black targets in evaluative contexts, it is possible for race to be a particularly important factor in diversity statement evaluators' perceptions of an applicant's potential contributions to diversity and inclusion. If this is the case, we might expect evaluators to judge Black applicants as more likely to contribute to diversity and inclusion goals, and perhaps even show a bias toward higher admission scores. It is much less clear how an applicant's choice to disclose their racial identity within their essay would impact perceptions of their potential contributions to diversity and inclusion given that there is a dearth of prior research on this topic.

3 | THE PRESENT RESEARCH

The goal of this project was to examine how applicants' egalitarian motivations and anticipated contributions to diversity and inclusion are perceived by evaluators based on cues unrelated to the actual

content of their personal diversity statements—namely, their race and whether they chose to self-disclose their race in the statement. Moreover, we aimed to glean the insight that is necessary to make empirically-based recommendations regarding the best practices for whether to disclose marginalized racial identities in diversity-centric application materials.

In three pre-registered experimental studies, we examined whether an applicant's race (White vs. Black) and the nature of race self-disclosure within a personal diversity statement influenced White evaluators' perceptions of the applicant's egalitarian motivations and anticipated contributions to diversity and inclusion. We focused on how the diversity statements of graduate student applicants are perceived given the increasing popularity of diversity statements in higher education admissions (Paul & Maranto, 2021). The evaluators in our studies were self-identified White participants, lending ecological validity to the paradigm given that the faculty and university presidents who comprise hiring and admission committees in higher education are disproportionately likely to identify as White (American Council on Education, 2017; National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). For added experimental control and to isolate applicant race and race disclosure as our key manipulated variables, we held the gender and age of the applicants constant by portraying them both as men in their 3rd/junior year of university.

4 | STUDY 1

Our predictions and analytic plan for this study were pre-registered at <https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=pq3ij6>. We hypothesized that White evaluators would be more likely to perceive the White (vs. Black) applicant as higher in external motivation to respond without prejudice, while the Black (vs. White) applicant would be viewed as higher in internal motivation. Furthermore, we predicted that race disclosure would interact with applicant race to amplify the effect of race on the perceived motivations of applicants, in that the Black applicant who discloses his race within the statement would be viewed as even higher in internal motivation (vs. the Black applicant who does not disclose his race) and the White applicant who discloses his race would be viewed as even higher in external motivation (vs. the White applicant who does not disclose his race). Additionally, we measured evaluators' recommendations for applicant admission and their perceptions of the applicant's potential contributions to diversity and inclusion. We did not have a priori hypotheses for these variables due to their novelty and exploratory nature.

5 | METHOD

5.1 | Participants

A total of 273 White participants took part in the study. A portion of the sample included 153 undergraduate students at a large public

American university. The remaining 120 participants were recruited through Prolific Academic. As determined before data collection, the study was only available to individuals who self-identified as White Americans among both sample sources. A total of 67 participants were excluded from analysis: 48 for not identifying as White in the survey demographics, 16 for failing the applicant race manipulation check, 2 for completing less than 50% of the study, and 1 due to technical difficulties experienced during the study procedure.

The final sample consisted of 206 participants (undergraduate $N = 99$, Prolific Academic $N = 107$). The sample was mostly comprised of cisgender women (58.74%), followed by cisgender men (37.38%), transgender men (1.94%), and nonbinary individuals (1.94%). Participant ages ranged from 18 to 70 years ($M = 24.65$ years, $SD = 9.13$ years), with the Prolific sample being statistically significantly older ($M = 29.88$ years) than the sample of undergraduate students ($M = 18.89$ years), $t(109.79) = -11.27$, $p < .001$ with equal variances not assumed.

5.2 | Procedure and materials

We employed a 2 (applicant race: White vs. Black) \times 2 (disclosure: race disclosed in statement vs. race not disclosed in statement) between-subjects experimental design. The cover story stated that the researchers were interested in examining the efficacy of certain graduate school application preparation tools and that the participant would be evaluating the diversity statement of a real prospective graduate student who used one of the preparation methods (the method was unspecified to the participant) so that the researchers could determine its efficacy. Participants were told that the researchers were specifically interested in diversity statements because of "how new and often challenging the diversity statement requirement is for applicants." We then provided a brief description of the purpose of personal diversity statements and what content they might include to ensure that all participants had at least a baseline understanding of this application component. Complete participant instructions and stimuli are presented in the Online Supplement.

5.3 | Diversity statement stimuli

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four diversity statement conditions following the cover story. The diversity statement stimulus was created by integrating common themes pulled from real student-crafted diversity statements (see Carroll et al., 2022). The content included in each of the four diversity statement conditions was held constant, save for the applicant's race (White vs. Black) and whether they disclosed their race in the diversity statement. Each diversity statement condition was paired with a profile that included an image of the "applicant" that was manipulated to match the race condition. Images were taken from the Face Research Lab London Set database and depicted young men who were matched on attractiveness (DeBruine & Jones, 2017).

Participants were informed that the image did not depict the ostensible applicant to protect their anonymity but that the image did reflect the demographic information provided by the applicant (i.e., race and gender). Figure 1 shows the diversity statement stimuli presented to participants in the either the *Black applicant with race not disclosed* condition or the *Black applicant with race disclosed* condition as an example; the two White applicant diversity statement stimuli are included in the Online Supplement.

Participants were not able to advance the survey page from the diversity statement until 3 min had elapsed to facilitate their careful review of the statement. After reviewing the assigned diversity statement, participants evaluated the applicant on our dependent measures while still being able to view the diversity statement and profile on the same page (which included the race manipulation) for reference.

5.4 | Dependent variables

Consistent with our cover story, participants based their evaluations of the applicant solely on their assigned diversity statement and the brief profile information that accompanied each statement (i.e., we did not provide other standard application materials for evaluation).

5.4.1 | Perceived internal and external motivations of the applicant

Participants evaluated the applicant's Perceived Internal and External Motivations to Respond Without Prejudice using the 10-item Major et al. (2013) scale. Five items measured the applicant's level of perceived internal motivation (PIMS; $\alpha = .84$) with statements such as: "It is personally important to the applicant not to be prejudiced." Similarly, five items measured the perceived external motivation of the applicant (PEMS; $\alpha = .83$) with statements including: "The applicant feels pressure from others to act non-prejudiced." Both subscales were presented on a 7-point Likert scale anchored with 0 = *Completely disagree* and 6 = *Completely agree*.

5.4.2 | Applicant recommendations and outcomes

Participants answered three items related to applicant recommendations and outcomes that we developed for the present research. Participants indicated (1) their likelihood of recommending the applicant for university admission (*Recommendation for Admission*), (2) the likelihood that the applicant would contribute to the diversity of the university if admitted (*Perceived Contribution to Diversity*), and (3) the likelihood that the applicant would contribute to an inclusive university environment for students of other racial/ethnic minority groups if admitted (*Perceived Contribution to Inclusion*). All responses were provided on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *Very unlikely* to 7 = *Very likely*.

Black Applicant With Race Not Disclosed

Applicant Information



University Standing: Junior (3rd year)
 Major: Psychology
 Gender: Male
 Extracurriculars: Camp counselor, Student government
 GPA: 3.2
 Age: 21
 Race: Non-Hispanic Black

Applicant Diversity Statement

Throughout my undergraduate career, I have constantly incorporated diversity into my life. I am highly aware of the importance of inclusivity. My high school was populated with students of different cultures, religions, and racial and ethnic backgrounds. As a result, I was familiar and comfortable with the concept of diversity in my teenage years. Once I got to college, I decided to expand and incorporate more diversity into my life through volunteering and studying abroad.

During my freshman year of college, I volunteered at a local food bank that served disadvantaged populations in the community. Through preparing food for, serving, and holding conversations with the visitors, I learned much about those who were underprivileged in my community. I came to the realization that many visitors lacked several resources to support themselves, such as access to medical care and education. Through volunteering, I was introduced to diversity by meeting new people, and learned more about social disparities through the lens of community outreach.

I also enhanced my understanding of diversity by studying abroad in Europe. I made new friends with many of the locals and tour guides that aided the visiting students and staff on the trip. We explored many cities in different European countries. I was educated about the different customs, beliefs, religions, and values of many countries. Studying abroad revealed a world of diverse and different cultures that broadened my understanding of diversity.

After finishing my undergraduate education, I wish to work in the healthcare field. Not only is diversity significant and necessary in the healthcare team, but the team members must also be well-versed and familiar with diversity. Patients will benefit from a healthcare team and system that makes them feel comfortable and represented. My experiences and skills from volunteering and studying abroad allowed me to gain an understanding of diversity that will help me both add diversity to the healthcare field and establish inclusiveness within the field.

Black Applicant With Race Disclosed

Applicant Information



University Standing: Junior (3rd year)
 Major: Psychology
 Gender: Male
 Extracurriculars: Camp counselor, Student government
 GPA: 3.2
 Age: 21
 Race: Non-Hispanic Black

Applicant Diversity Statement

Throughout my undergraduate career, I have constantly incorporated diversity into my life. **As a Black man,** I am highly aware of the importance of inclusivity. My high school was populated with students of different cultures, religions, and racial and ethnic backgrounds. As a result, I was familiar and comfortable with the concept of diversity in my teenage years. Once I got to college, I decided to expand and incorporate more diversity into my life through volunteering and studying abroad.

During my freshman year of college, I volunteered at a local food bank that served disadvantaged populations in the community. Through preparing food for, serving, and holding conversations with the visitors, I learned much about those who were underprivileged in my community. I came to the realization that many visitors lacked several resources to support themselves, such as access to medical care and education. Through volunteering, I was introduced to diversity by meeting new people, and learned more about social disparities through the lens of community outreach.

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FIGURE 1 Example diversity statement stimuli: Black applicant with race not disclosed (left panel) and black applicant with race disclosed (right panel). Black applicant with race not disclosed. Black applicant with race disclosed. The race disclosure manipulation is highlighted in the righthand panel.

5.5 | Manipulation checks

After completing the dependent measures, participants answered two multiple-choice manipulation checks. To check comprehension of the applicant's race, we asked, "What was the race of the applicant?" and gave five response options: *Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latinx, White, or Not disclosed*. As mentioned, 16 participants selected a response option that did not match their assigned applicant race condition and were removed from analysis. We also checked comprehension of the applicant's gender with the question, "What was the gender of the applicant?" and gave three response options: *Male, Female, or Not disclosed*. All participants answered the applicant gender manipulation check correctly.

6 | RESULTS

Because the Study 1 data were collected using two sample sources (undergraduates and Prolific Academic users), we conducted preliminary analyses on our outcomes of interest with sample source as an additional factor to rule out potential differences in responding by source. The 2 (sample source: undergraduates vs. Prolific Academic users) × 2 (applicant race: White vs. Black) × 2 (disclosure: race disclosed in statement vs. race not disclosed in statement) factorial between-subjects ANOVAs revealed that sample source did not interact with

either of our manipulated factors (all p s > 0.150; see Tables S1–S5 in the Online Supplement for these results); thus, we collapsed across undergraduates and Prolific Academic users for the reported analyses.

To test our pre-registered hypotheses, we conducted a series of 2 (applicant race: White vs. Black) × 2 (disclosure: race disclosed in statement vs. race not disclosed in statement) factorial between-subjects ANOVAs. For each focal outcome variable, we first ran a model including the applicant race × disclosure interaction term with the main effects of applicant race and disclosure. If the interaction term was not statistically significant, we removed the interaction term and reran the model to examine only the main effects (Engqvist, 2005). Sensitivity analyses (G*Power; Faul et al., 2007) indicated sufficient power to detect effects of at least $f^2 = 0.25$ using a 2 × 2 ANOVA with $N = 206$, $\alpha = .05$, and $1 - \beta = .95$.

6.1 | Perceived internal and external motivations of the applicant

6.1.1 | PIMS

The applicant race × disclosure interaction on PIMS was not statistically significant, $F(1, 202) = 0.62$, $p = .433$, nor was the main effect of disclosure, $F(1, 203) = 1.79$, $p = .182$. The main effect of applicant race was statistically significant, $F(1, 203) = 29.69$, $p < .001$,

$\eta_p^2 = 0.13$. As shown in Figure 2 Panel A, Black applicants ($M = 5.02$, $SD = 0.75$) were rated as higher in PIMS compared to White applicants ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 0.82$).

6.1.2 | PEMS

The applicant race \times disclosure interaction did not yield a statistically significant effect on PEMS, $F(1, 202) = 0.35$, $p = .555$. Similarly, there was not a statistically significant main effect of disclosure on PEMS, $F(1, 203) < 0.01$, $p = .987$. There was a statistically significant main effect of applicant race, $F(1, 203) = 10.00$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.05$ (see Figure 2 Panel B), such that White applicants ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.16$) were rated higher in PEMS than Black applicants ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.29$).

6.2 | Applicant recommendations and outcomes

6.2.1 | Recommendation for admission

The applicant race \times disclosure interaction on participants' likelihood of recommending the applicant for university admission was not statistically significant, $F(1, 202) = 0.02$, $p = .879$, nor was the main effect of disclosure, $F(1, 203) = 0.16$, $p = .686$. There was a statistically significant main effect of applicant race on university admission recommendation, $F(1, 203) = 19.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.09$. As shown in Figure 3 Panel A, participants were more likely to recommend Black applicants ($M = 5.74$, $SD = 1.01$) for university admission compared to White applicants ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 1.38$).

6.2.2 | Perceived contribution to diversity

The applicant race \times disclosure interaction on the applicant's perceived contribution to diversity if admitted was not statistically significant, $F(1, 202) = 0.12$, $p = .727$, and there was no statistically significant main effect of disclosure, $F(1, 203) = 1.15$, $p = .285$. However, there was a statistically significant main effect of applicant race on contribution to diversity, $F(1, 203) = 88.63$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.30$ (see Figure 3 Panel B), such that Black applicants ($M = 6.27$, $SD = 0.78$) were viewed as contributing more diversity relative to White applicants ($M = 4.79$, $SD = 1.42$).

6.2.3 | Perceived contribution to inclusion

Finally, the applicant race \times disclosure interaction did not yield a statistically significant effect on the applicant's perceived contribution to inclusion if admitted, $F(1, 202) = 0.04$, $p = .846$. Unlike the null effects found with respect to our other outcome measures, the main effect of disclosure yielded a small yet statistically significant effect on contribution to inclusion, $F(1, 203) = 4.64$, $p = .032$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.02$. Applicants who disclosed their race in the diversity statement ($M = 5.83$, $SD = 1.28$) were rated higher in inclusive contributions compared to applicants who did not disclose their race ($M = 5.50$, $SD = 1.25$). In line with our other outcomes, there was a statistically significant effect of applicant race on perceived contribution to inclusion, $F(1, 203) = 88.46$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.30$ (see Figure 3 Panel C), in that Black applicants ($M = 6.33$, $SD = 0.85$) were viewed as contributing more inclusion compared to White applicants ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 1.27$).

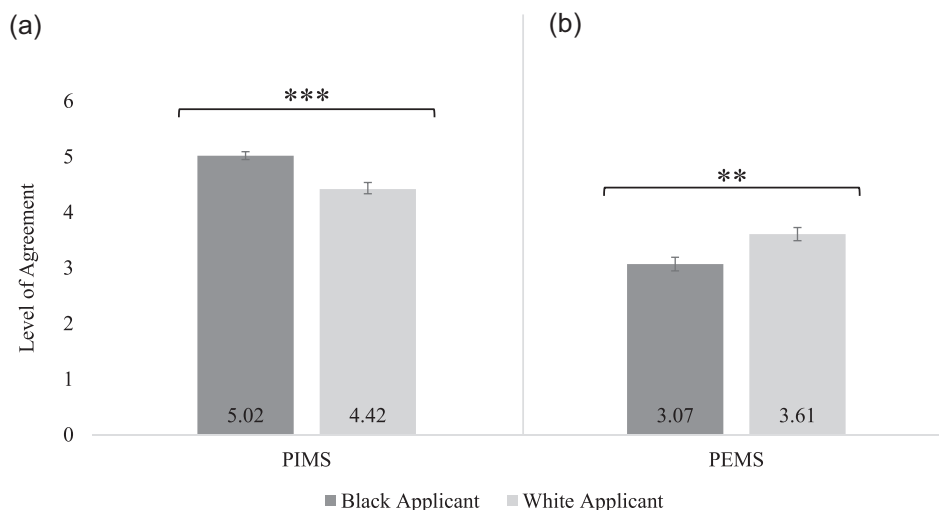


FIGURE 2 Mean differences in the perceived internal (PIMS) and external (PEMS) motivations of applicants by applicant race ($N = 206$). Error bars represent the standard error. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$. Items were presented on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 0 = *Completely disagree* to 6 = *Completely agree*.

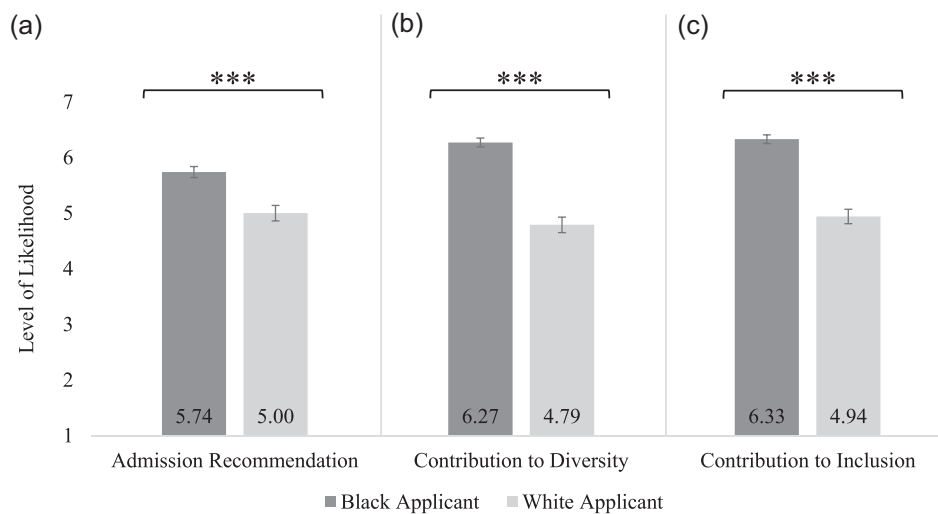


FIGURE 3 Mean differences in applicant recommendations and outcomes by applicant race ($N = 206$). Error bars represent the standard error. *** $p < .001$. Items were presented on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *Very unlikely* to 7 = *Very likely*.

7 | DISCUSSION

Our results partially supported our pre-registered hypotheses. The main effects of applicant race emerged in the expected directions, such that Black applicants were rated higher in PIMS compared to White applicants while White applicants were viewed as being higher in PEMS compared to Black applicants. However, the predicted applicant race \times race disclosure interactions were not statistically significant.

Our exploratory examinations of applicant recommendations and outcomes indicated that participants were more likely to recommend Black applicants for university admission and perceived Black applicants as more likely to contribute to the university's diversity and inclusivity if admitted compared to White applicants. None of these effects interacted with the race disclosure manipulation, which showed only one statistically significant main effect overall. Specifically, there was a statistically significant main effect indicating that applicants who disclosed their race in a diversity statement were perceived as more likely to contribute to inclusion if admitted (vs. those who did not disclose). This effect should be interpreted with caution, however, given that the magnitude of the effect was relatively small ($\eta_p^2 = 0.02$).

In sum, Study 1 supported the hypothesis that applicant race influences evaluators' perceived egalitarian motivations of applicants as judged from personal diversity statements. These findings may suggest that an applicant's displayed race is more influential than the actual content discussed by the applicant in their statement given that our disclosure manipulation occurred within the diversity statement narrative. However, one potential alternative explanation for disclosure's lack of effect could be that our race disclosure manipulation was simply too subtle. Our disclosure condition consisted of only a one-word reference from the applicant about their racial identity (see Figure 1 and the Online Supplement for the diversity statement stimuli), which may

have been too weak to influence the judgments of participants. We reasoned that an effect of race disclosure might occur if the applicant's race was repeatedly discussed throughout the diversity statement. In Study 2, we aimed to unpack the effects of applicant race and race disclosure on evaluators' perceptions of egalitarian motivation and other key diversity-related outcomes by testing a more salient race disclosure manipulation.

8 | STUDY 2

Study 2 re-examined the influence of applicant race and race disclosure in personal diversity statements by including a more impactful race disclosure condition in addition to the disclosure conditions employed in Study 1. Our predictions and analytic plan for Study 2 were pre-registered at https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=SN6_2H3. Replicating Study 1, we hypothesized that the Black applicant would be viewed as higher in PIMS compared to the White applicant, whereas the White applicant would be viewed as higher in PEMS compared to the Black applicant. Based on the results of Study 1, we additionally hypothesized that participants would be more likely to recommend the Black applicant for university admission, rate him higher in perceived contributions to diversity and inclusion, and, new to Study 2, believe that the Black applicant would devote a greater number of weekly work hours to diversity-related efforts compared to the White applicant. Given the inclusion of the new strong race disclosure condition in this study, we once again predicted that disclosure would interact with applicant race to exacerbate its effects on all outcomes. To be clear, following our findings in Study 1, we did not expect to find statistically significant differences between the no disclosure and subtle disclosure diversity statement conditions—rather, we expected any interactions to be driven by the strong disclosure condition.

9 | METHOD

The procedure and materials used in Study 2 closely mirrored those of Study 1, with two key exceptions. First, to strengthen our manipulation of race disclosure, we added a third self-disclosure condition wherein the applicant referenced his race repeatedly throughout the statement, thereby expanding to a 2 (applicant race: White vs. Black) \times 3 (disclosure: race strongly disclosed vs. race subtly disclosed vs. race not disclosed) between-subjects experimental design. We also made some minor edits to the subtle disclosure condition to ensure that it more closely matched the format and structure of the strong disclosure condition, but the original content remained unchanged (see the Online Supplement). Second, we included a new applicant outcome metric that asked participants to indicate the number of hours per week they believed the applicant would commit to the university's diversity efforts if admitted. All other conditions and outcome measures were the same as those employed in Study 1.

9.1 | Participants

Our a priori power analysis (G*Power; Faul et al., 2007) indicated that a total sample size of 251 participants was needed to detect effects of at least $f^2 = 0.25$ using a 2 \times 3 ANOVA with $\alpha = .05$ and $1 - \beta = .95$. As preregistered, we slightly oversampled to account for possible participant attrition. Thus, a total of 318 participants recruited from Prolific Academic took part in the study. We restricted the study to self-identifying White participants, though 15 participants identified as White and another race (i.e., they identified as two or more races including White) in the survey demographics. To meet the sample size suggested by our power analysis, we included these bi/multiracial participants who selected White as one of their racial identities in the analyses. The statistical significance of the results did not change when these participants were excluded from analysis.

We excluded 61 participants from data analysis: 30 for not identifying as White at all in the survey demographics, 27 for failing the manipulation checks, 2 for completing less than 50% of the study, 1 for duplicate entries, and 1 for indicating that they did not take the study seriously. The final sample consisted of 257 participants. Participant ages ranged from 18 to 68 years ($M = 34.79$ years, $SD = 12.99$ years). Participants mostly identified as cisgender women (63.42%), followed by cisgender men (32.30%), transgender individuals (4.28%), and genderqueer individuals (3.11%).

9.2 | Procedure and materials

Study 2 was conducted using a 2 (applicant race: White vs. Black) \times 3 (disclosure: race strongly disclosed vs. race subtly disclosed vs. race not disclosed) between-subjects experimental design. The subtle disclosure condition refers to the race disclosure condition included in Study 1, whereas the strong disclosure condition was new to Study

2. The cover story and instructions were the same as those given in Study 1.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the six diversity statement conditions following the cover story. After reading their assigned diversity statement, participants evaluated the applicant on the dependent measures while still being able to view the diversity statement and profile (which included the race manipulation) for reference on the same page.

9.3 | Diversity statement stimuli

The same basic diversity statement contents from Study 1 were used in Study 2; statement contents were held constant across conditions with the exception of the applicant's race (White vs. Black) and their level of disclosure (strong, subtle, or no disclosure). The same profile information provided in Study 1 was paired with the diversity statement, which included an image of the "applicant" manipulated to reflect the race condition (we used the same matched faces from Study 1; DeBruine & Jones, 2017). Once again, participants were informed that the image did not depict the applicant to protect their anonymity but that the image did reflect the demographics of the applicant. The page displaying the diversity statement and profile information was time-locked such that participants were not able to advance the survey page until 3 min had elapsed. See the Online Supplement for the diversity statement stimuli.

9.3.1 | Pilot test of race disclosure strength manipulation

We revised the original diversity statement conditions to create strong race disclosure conditions for the Black and White applicants. Whereas the applicant only referenced his racial identity once in the subtle disclosure condition (same as Study 1), the strong disclosure condition referenced the applicant's racial identity four times throughout the one-page statement. To ascertain whether the salience of our race disclosure manipulation differed as intended, we piloted the six diversity statement conditions before Study 2 among a separate sample of undergraduates attending a large public American university. After exclusions, 74 participants completed the pilot study (70.27% women; 40.54% White; M age = 19.72 years). Our focal manipulation check asked participants to indicate their response to the question, "How often did the applicant disclose their race within their essay?" on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 6 = Very frequently) immediately after reviewing the diversity statement and its accompanying profile. A 1-way ANOVA examining the main effect of disclosure condition (collapsing across applicant race) demonstrated a statistically significant effect on the perceived frequency of disclosure, $F(2, 71) = 23.75, p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.38$. As shown in Table 1, Tukey's post hoc group contrasts revealed that the group differences between the three disclosure conditions were statistically significant, fell in the expected directions, and demonstrated large

TABLE 1 Tukey's honestly significant difference multiple comparison corrected group contrasts with 95% confidence intervals on disclosure frequency.

Group contrast	Mean Difference	95% CI of the mean difference		Adjusted <i>p</i> -value	Cohen's <i>d</i>
		Lower	Upper		
Subtle–no disclosure	1.13	0.33	1.93	.003	0.97
Strong–no disclosure	2.28	1.49	3.07	<.001	1.95
Strong–subtle disclosure	1.15	0.35	1.95	.003	0.98

Note: No disclosure: $M = 2.12$, $SD = 1.30$. Subtle disclosure: $M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.19$. Strong disclosure: $M = 4.40$, $SD = 1.00$.

effect sizes. Specifically, participants reported that the author disclosed their racial identity most often in the strong disclosure condition ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 1.00$), followed by the subtle disclosure condition ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.19$), and least in the no disclosure condition ($M = 2.12$, $SD = 1.30$). We were thus satisfied with our revised race disclosure manipulation and implemented the piloted diversity statements in Study 2.

9.4 | Dependent variables

The same dependent variables and evaluation instructions given in Study 1 were presented in Study 2.¹ One new item was included as an additional assessment of the applicant's anticipated contributions to diversity: The item asked, "If admitted, how many hours per week do you believe the applicant would be willing to commit to the University's diversity efforts?" and was presented on a slider scale ranging from 0 to 20 h.

9.5 | Manipulation checks

Participants completed three multiple-choice manipulation checks following their completion of the dependent measures. The same Study 1 applicant race and gender manipulation checks were given in Study 2. Eight participants were excluded for indicating that the applicant was not male, and six participants were excluded for selecting a racial identity response option that did not match their assigned applicant race condition.

To check disclosure condition comprehension, we added the binary Yes or No question, "Did the applicant mention their own race in their diversity statement?" Thirteen participants incorrectly indicated that the applicant did/did not disclose his race in the diversity statement and were thus removed from analysis. The manipulation checks resulted in the removal of 27 participants in total, as reported previously.

10 | RESULTS

The analyses were conducted using 2 (applicant race: White vs. Black) \times 3 (disclosure: race strongly disclosed vs. race subtly disclosed vs. race not disclosed) factorial between-subjects

ANOVAs. For each focal outcome variable, we began by running a model that included the applicant race \times disclosure interaction term with the main effects of applicant race and disclosure. If the interaction term was not statistically significant, we removed the interaction term and reran the model to examine the main effects on their own (Engqvist, 2005).

10.1 | Perceived internal and external motivations of the applicant

10.1.1 | PIMS

The applicant race \times disclosure interaction on PIMS was not statistically significant, $F(2, 251) = 0.78$, $p = .461$. Similarly, the main effect of disclosure was not statistically significant, $F(2, 253) = 0.64$, $p = .531$. Replicating Study 1, the main effect of applicant race was statistically significant, $F(1, 253) = 37.29$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.13$, such that Black applicants ($M = 5.21$, $SD = 0.63$) received higher PIMS ratings compared to White applicants ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 0.96$).

10.1.2 | PEMS

Similarly, there was not a statistically significant main effect of disclosure on PEMS, $F(2, 253) = 1.04$, $p = .354$, but there was a statistically significant main effect of applicant race on PEMS, $F(1, 253) = 34.73$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.12$. Unlike our Study 1 findings, however, this was qualified by a statistically significant applicant race \times disclosure interaction, $F(2, 251) = 3.22$, $p = .041$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.03$. Probing the interaction revealed that the main effect of race was driven by the no disclosure (adjusted $p = .001$) and subtle disclosure (adjusted $p < .001$) conditions. Participants rated the White applicant higher in PEMS compared to the Black applicant in the no disclosure condition (White applicant: $M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.17$; Black applicant: $M = 2.66$, $SD = 1.43$; $d = 0.74$) and in the subtle disclosure condition (White applicant: $M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.23$; Black applicant: $M = 2.66$, $SD = 1.31$; $d = 1.17$). Surprisingly, there was no difference in PEMS ratings between the Black and White applicant in the strong disclosure condition (adjusted $p = .076$; see Figure 4).²

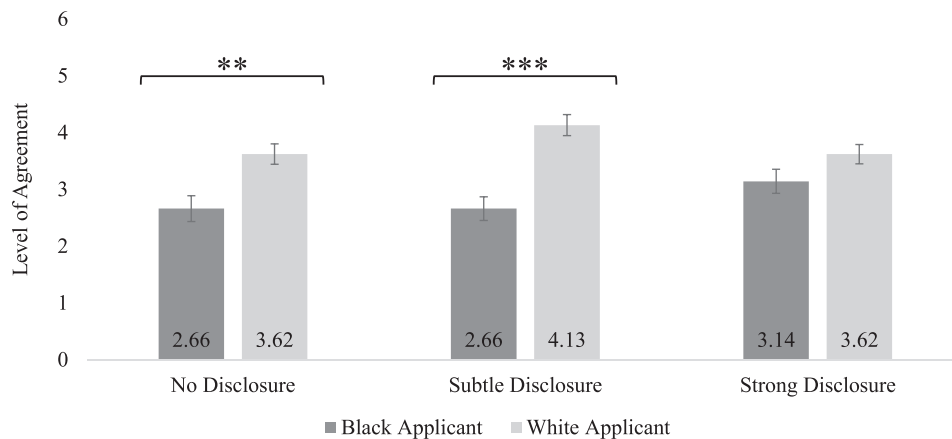


FIGURE 4 Applicant race by disclosure interaction on mean differences in perceived external motivation (PEMS) of applicants ($N = 257$). Error bars represent the standard error. $**p < .01$; $***p < .001$. Items were presented on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 0 = *Completely disagree* to 6 = *Completely agree*.

10.2 | Applicant recommendations and outcomes

10.2.1 | Recommendation for admission

The applicant race \times disclosure interaction on participants' likelihood of recommending the applicant for university admission was not statistically significant, $F(2, 251) = 0.64$, $p = .527$, nor was the main effect of disclosure, $F(2, 253) = 1.39$, $p = .250$. Replicating Study 1, there was a statistically significant main effect of applicant race on university admission recommendation, $F(1, 253) = 42.81$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.14$. Black applicants ($M = 5.98$, $SD = 1.07$) were recommended for university admission more than White applicants ($M = 4.92$, $SD = 1.48$).

10.2.2 | Perceived contribution to diversity

The applicant race \times disclosure interaction on the applicant's perceived contribution to diversity was not statistically significant, $F(2, 251) = 0.19$, $p = .825$. There was not a statistically significant main effect of disclosure, $F(2, 253) = 0.76$, $p = .469$; however, replicating Study 1, there was a statistically significant main effect of applicant race on contribution to diversity, $F(1, 253) = 97.79$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.28$. Black applicants ($M = 6.33$, $SD = 0.75$) were viewed as contributing more diversity than White applicants ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 1.74$).

10.2.3 | Perceived contribution to inclusion

The applicant race \times disclosure interaction on the applicant's perceived contribution to inclusion was not statistically significant, $F(2, 251) = 0.27$, $p = .763$. Unlike Study 1, the main effect of disclosure was not statistically significant, $F(2, 253) = 1.11$, $p = .330$. In line with Study 1, however, there was a statistically significant effect of applicant race on anticipated contribution to inclusion,

$F(1, 253) = 76.15$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.23$. Participants rated Black applicants ($M = 6.26$, $SD = 0.89$) as contributing more inclusion than White applicants ($M = 4.84$, $SD = 1.58$).

10.2.4 | Perceived hours committed to diversity efforts

The item assessing the anticipated number of weekly hours the applicant would commit toward the university's diversity efforts if admitted was unique to Study 2. The applicant race \times disclosure interaction was not statistically significant, $F(2, 251) = 0.37$, $p = .691$, nor was the main effect of disclosure, $F(2, 253) = 1.41$, $p = .246$. There was a small yet statistically significant main effect of race on anticipated hours to be committed to diversity efforts, $F(1, 253) = 3.97$, $p = .047$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.02$, such that participants believed Black applicants ($M = 8.24$ h, $SD = 4.69$ h) would commit more hours toward diversity efforts than White applicants ($M = 7.05$ h, $SD = 4.85$ h).

11 | DISCUSSION

Like the results of Study 1, the Study 2 findings supported our hypotheses that evaluators perceive Black applicants as more internally motivated than White applicants and White applicants as more externally motivated than Black applicants. We did find a statistically significant interaction between applicant race and race disclosure on PEMS, such that participants perceived White applicants as more externally motivated than Black applicants in the no disclosure and subtle disclosure conditions. However, this difference was not statistically significant in the strong disclosure condition. Despite a statistically significant interaction on PEMS, there was no significant interaction between our predictor variables on PIMS. Additionally, we replicated the statistically and meaningfully

significant main effects of race on the other dependent variables, in that evaluators were more likely to recommend Black applicants for university admission, perceived Black applicants to be more likely to contribute to diversity, and perceived Black applicants as more likely to create inclusive environments for other students of minority status. These patterns further extended to a new operationalization of contributions to diversity (i.e., anticipated time spent on diversity-related efforts).

These results generally supported our pre-registered hypotheses and replicated Study 1. Of note, the strengthened race disclosure condition did not emerge as a consistent predictor of perceived egalitarian motivations and diversity and inclusion outcomes—the applicant race \times race disclosure interaction statistically significantly predicted only one of the six dependent variables (PEMS). These findings gave further evidence that White diversity statement evaluators show a race-based overcorrection bias favoring Black applicants, though some key limitations regarding how and why applicant race (and not race disclosure) shapes evaluators' perceptions of personal diversity statements remained. While the strengthened race disclosure condition put greater emphasis on the applicant's race within the diversity statement, the manipulation did not explicitly convey whether the applicant's race was personally important to his sense of self. That is, without discussing the personal meaning of his race, the simple disclosure of race within the diversity statement may have added little information beyond what was conveyed by the applicant race picture manipulation. It may be the case that discussing how racial identity is a central component of one's self-concept is needed in order for race disclosure to matter, as added personal meaning behind the racial identity disclosure may give evaluators additional information on which to infer the applicant's diversity-centric motivations and goals.

In Study 3, we further explored the effects of applicant race and race disclosure on evaluators' perceptions of egalitarian motivation and diversity and inclusion outcomes by examining racial identity centrality as a component of race disclosure. In addition, we explored essentialist diversity and inclusion beliefs as a moderating variable.

12 | STUDY 3

Study 3 aimed to replicate the influence of applicant race on perceived motivations and outcomes from personal diversity statements while also exploring race centrality as a mechanism by which evaluators' views of applicants might be influenced. The study was pre-registered at https://aspredicted.org/GYK_35N.

In Studies 1 and 2, the main effects of applicant race disclosure and the applicant race \times disclosure interactions were largely nonsignificant. These findings were contrary to our hypotheses, as we predicted that the strong disclosure of one's racial identity would interact to amplify the main effects of race. In Study 3, we explored racial identity centrality—the personal importance of one's race (Sellers et al., 1998)—as a potential “amplifier” of the applicant race main effects. Specifically, it may be that disclosure of one's race within a diversity statement alone

does not influence perceptions of the applicant, but an applicant who discusses how his racial identity is important to his sense of self may receive heightened diversity- and inclusion-focused prescriptions that are consistent with expectations for members of his racial group. Specifically, we hypothesized that the strong disclosure with race identity centrality conditions would interact with applicant race to amplify (i.e., strengthen, exacerbate) the main effects of applicant race on the dependent variables, as documented in Studies 1 and 2. For example, we predicted that the White applicant who strongly discloses his race and discusses the personal centrality of his race in the diversity statement would be perceived as higher in EMS than the White applicant who does not disclose or only strongly discloses his race, and so on. We did not expect to find differences between the no disclosure and strong disclosure only conditions.

Similar to Studies 1 and 2, we hypothesized a main effect of applicant race, such that the Black applicant would be perceived as higher in PIMS compared to the White applicant, while the White applicant would be perceived as higher in PEMS compared to the Black applicant. Furthermore, participants would be more likely to recommend the Black applicant for university admission, rate him higher in perceived contributions to diversity and inclusion, and anticipate that he would contribute more weekly work hours to diversity-related efforts than the White applicant.

We also tested diversity and inclusion essentialism as a moderating variable to further explore underlying mechanisms that may influence evaluators' perceptions. Specifically, we reasoned that evaluators' individual differences in their belief that Black people are inherently committed to diversity and inclusion efforts might influence their perceptions of motivations to respond without prejudice and other diversity and inclusion outcomes. We did not state hypotheses for the diversity and inclusion essentialism moderations due to their novel and exploratory nature.

13 | METHOD

The procedure and materials used in Study 3 largely reflected those of Studies 1 and 2, though some core changes were made. First, to test racial identity centrality as a potential mechanism on which personal diversity statements are evaluated, we created a new self-disclosure condition wherein the applicant referenced his race repeatedly throughout the statement while also discussing how his racial identity is a central component of his self-concept. We did not employ the subtle disclosure condition in Study 3, keeping to a 2 (applicant race: White vs. Black) \times 3 (disclosure: race strongly disclosed with race centrality vs. race strongly disclosed only vs. race not disclosed) between-subjects experimental design. We also manipulated race by giving the applicant's name in place of their picture. Finally, we administered the diversity and inclusion essentialism scale to examine whether individual differences in essentialist beliefs moderate the influence of applicant race on perceptions of motivations and evaluation outcomes. All other conditions and outcome measures were the same as those employed in Studies 1 and 2.

14 | PARTICIPANTS

As with Study 2, the a priori power analysis (G*Power; Faul et al., 2007) indicated that a total sample size of 251 participants was needed to detect effects of at least $f^2 = 0.25$ using a 2×3 ANOVA with $\alpha = .05$ and $1 - \beta = .95$. We preregistered oversampling to $n = 300$ to ensure sufficient power for the exploratory moderations and to account for potential possible participant attrition.

We initially recruited a sample of 300 self-identifying White participants from Prolific Academic; however, a high number of individuals failed the applicant race manipulation check (described below). In total, 182 participants failed the applicant race manipulation check, with most fails occurring in the no disclosure conditions (the White applicant, no disclosure condition, specifically). This is not surprising given that participants in the no disclosure conditions had only the applicant's stereotypical name as the point of reference for their racial identity. The distribution of applicant race manipulation check fails by condition is presented in Supporting Information S1: Table S6 in the Online Supplement. Our results remained largely the same regardless of whether individuals who failed the applicant race manipulation check were excluded versus included in the analyses, save for two minor differences in relation to the main analysis of perceived hours committed to diversity efforts and the exploratory moderation on PIMS (see Supporting Information S1: Table S12 and Table S13 in the Online Supplement, respectively). Beyond condition, applicant race manipulation check failure appeared to occur at random and was not predicted by any participant demographics or survey descriptives.³ To ensure the effectiveness of the applicant race manipulation, the results reported here are based on the sample that excluded individuals who failed the race manipulation check. See Supporting Information S1: Tables S7–S18 and Figures S1–S4 in the Online Supplement for the results with individuals who failed the race manipulation check included.

To meet the recommended sample size, we continued data collection on Prolific Academic until each condition had approximately 50 usable participants. This resulted in a sample size of 502 before exclusions. In addition to the 182 individuals excluded for failing the applicant race manipulation check, 12 participants were removed from analysis for failing the disclosure manipulation check, 8 were excluded for not identifying as White in the survey demographics, and 3 participants were removed for indicating that the applicant was not male. The final sample consisted of 297 participants. Participant ages ranged from 19 to 76 years ($M = 40.02$ years, $SD = 11.95$ years). Participants mostly identified as cisgender men (55.89%), followed by cisgender women (40.74%), genderqueer or nonbinary individuals (2.02%), and transgender individuals (1.35%).

15 | PROCEDURE AND MATERIALS

Study 3 used a 2 (applicant race: White vs. Black) $\times 3$ (disclosure: race strongly disclosed with race centrality vs. race strongly disclosed only vs. race not disclosed) between-subjects experimental design. The no

disclosure condition was also used in Studies 1 and 2, the strong disclosure only condition was employed in Study 2, and the strong disclosure with race centrality condition was new to Study 3.

Study 3 used the same cover story as Studies 1 and 2, though we removed references to the applicant's picture (given the new race manipulation via applicant name). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the six diversity statement conditions and then evaluated the applicant on the dependent measures. Like the previous two studies, participants could reference the diversity statement and applicant profile (which included the race manipulation) while completing the dependent measures.

15.1 | Diversity statement stimuli

The same basic diversity statement contents from Studies 1 and 2 were used in Study 3; the statement contents were held constant across conditions with the exception of the applicant's race (White vs. Black) and their level of disclosure (strong disclosure with race centrality, strong disclosure only, or no disclosure). A student profile was paired with the diversity statement, which we altered in Study 3 to more accurately reflect the graduate school application materials evaluators would typically have at their disposal by removing the applicant profile picture. Instead, we manipulated race only by giving a masculine first name in the applicant's profile that was stereotypically "Black" or "White" depending on the randomly assigned condition. The Black applicant was named "Jamal Jones," borrowed from prior studies on racial bias in hiring that have successfully used the name to denote Black applicants (e.g., Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004). The White applicant was named "Jake Jones" based on prior research finding that the name Jake is frequently perceived as a distinctively White name (Gaddis, 2017). The last name Jones was kept for the White applicant conditions to achieve consistency with the Black applicant conditions. Other aspects of the applicant profile, such as the student's gender and school year, remained the same as in the previous studies. The page displaying the diversity statement and profile information was time-locked such that participants were not able to advance the survey page until 3 min had elapsed. See the Online Supplement for the diversity statement stimuli.

15.1.1 | Race centrality manipulation

The race strongly disclosed with race centrality condition was new to Study 3. This condition was a modified version of the strong disclosure only condition, in that racial identity centrality was incorporated to go beyond the simple race disclosures used in the previous two studies. The race centrality statements were based on the language used in the Identity Subscale of the Collective Self-Esteem Scale by Luhtanen and Crocker (1992). For instance, the strong disclosure with race centrality statement included phrases such as, "Studying abroad revealed a world of diverse and different

cultures that broadened my understanding of diversity beyond my status as a [Black/White] American while confirming that my racial identity is an important part of how I view myself." In so doing, the applicant both disclosed his race and noted the personal importance of his racial identity.

We tested the effectiveness of our race centrality and disclosure frequency manipulations on the Study 3 participants. To test differences in race centrality by disclosure condition, we asked, "Based on the information shared in the diversity statement, how personally important is the applicant's race to their sense of self?" on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = Very unimportant, 6 = Very important). A 1-way ANOVA examining the main effect of disclosure condition (collapsing across applicant race) demonstrated a statistically significant effect on the applicant's perceived race centrality, $F(2, 294) = 91.12, p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.36$. Tukey's post hoc group contrasts revealed that, as planned, the applicant in the strong disclosure with race centrality condition ($M = 5.53, SD = 0.76$) was rated higher in racial identity centrality than applicants in the no disclosure ($M = 3.53, SD = 1.29$) and the strong disclosure only ($M = 4.65, SD = 1.14$) conditions (both adjusted p s < 0.001).

We also checked perceived frequency of disclosure by asking participants to indicate their response to the question, "How often did the applicant disclose their race within their essay?" on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 6 = Very frequently). A 1-way ANOVA examining the main effect of disclosure condition (collapsing across applicant race) demonstrated a statistically significant effect on the perceived frequency of disclosure, $F(2, 294) = 368.00, p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.71$. Tukey's post hoc group contrasts revealed that the group differences between the three disclosure conditions were statistically significant and fell in the expected directions: Participants reported that the applicant disclosed his racial identity most often in the strong disclosure with race centrality condition ($M = 4.61, SD = 0.98$), closely followed by the strong disclosure only condition ($M = 4.12, SD = 0.92$), and least in the no disclosure condition ($M = 1.34, SD = 0.80$; all adjusted p s < 0.001).

15.2 | Dependent variables

The same dependent variables and evaluation instructions given in Study 2 were presented in Study 3.⁴

15.3 | Exploratory moderator

To examine whether individual differences in the belief that Black people are inherently committed to and embracing of diversity and inclusion contribute to more favorable outcomes for Black (vs. White) applicants based on their diversity statements, we created and administered the novel *Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Essentialism* scale. Nine items assessed endorsement of diversity essentialism, including "Black people are naturally motivated to promote diversity in their communities and workplaces," and "Black people possess a

natural ability to appreciate diversity in personal backgrounds."

Endorsement of inclusion essentialism was measured with nine items, such as "Black people are naturally welcoming of individuals from diverse backgrounds," and "Black people are inherently more likely to advocate for inclusive practices compared to White people." We initially planned to include the diversity essentialism and inclusion essentialism subscales as individual moderators in the exploratory analyses but ultimately combined the two into an 18-item measure of D&I essentialism endorsement ($\alpha = .95$) due to high correlation between the subscales ($r = .95$). All items were presented on a 7-point Likert scale anchored with 1 = Strongly disagree and 7 = Strongly agree. The full D&I essentialism scale materials are included in the Online Supplement.

15.4 | Manipulation checks

The same three multiple-choice manipulation checks given in Study 2 were administered in Study 3 following participants' completion of the dependent and exploratory measures. As mentioned, 197 participants were excluded due to manipulation check failures: 182 were removed for failing the applicant race manipulation check, 12 were removed for incorrectly indicating that the applicant did/did not disclose his race in the diversity statement, and 3 were removed for indicating that the applicant was not male.

16 | RESULTS

We conducted the main Study 3 analyses using a series of 2 (applicant race: White vs. Black) \times 3 (disclosure: race not disclosed vs. race strongly disclosed only vs. race strongly disclosed with race centrality) factorial between-subjects ANOVAs. As in Studies 1 and 2, we began by running a model that included the applicant race \times disclosure interaction term with the main effects of applicant race and disclosure for each outcome variable of interest. If the interaction term was not statistically significant, we removed the interaction term and reran the model to examine only the main effects (Engqvist, 2005).

16.1 | Perceived internal and external motivations of the applicant

16.1.1 | PIMS

The applicant race \times disclosure interaction on PIMS was not statistically significant, $F(2, 291) = 1.21, p = .299$, nor was the main effect of disclosure, $F(2, 293) = 0.69, p = .503$. Replicating findings from Studies 1 and 2, the main effect of applicant race was statistically significant, $F(1, 293) = 9.90, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = 0.03$, such that Black applicants ($M = 5.16, SD = 0.88$) were viewed as higher in PIMS compared to White applicants ($M = 4.81, SD = 1.08$).

16.1.2 | PEMS

Likewise, the applicant race \times disclosure interaction term on PEMS was not statistically significant, $F(2, 291) = 0.26, p = .768$, nor was the main effect of disclosure, $F(2, 293) = 0.26, p = .774$. However, there was a statistically significant main effect of applicant race on PEMS, $F(1, 293) = 21.89, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.07$, such that White applicants ($M = 3.65, SD = 1.53$) were rated higher in PEMS than Black applicants ($M = 2.81, SD = 1.54$).

These results align with the applicant race main effect found in Study 1, though we did not find an applicant race \times disclosure interaction as we did in Study 2. This is perhaps unsurprising, as the Study 2 interaction was driven by differences in the no disclosure and subtle disclosure conditions, and we did not employ the subtle disclosure manipulation in Study 3.

16.2 | Applicant recommendations and outcomes

16.2.1 | Recommendation for admission

There was not a statistically significant applicant race \times disclosure interaction on recommendation for admission, $F(2, 291) = 2.20, p = .112$, nor a statistically significant main effect of disclosure, $F(2, 293) = 0.82, p = .439$. Replicating Studies 1 and 2, however, there was a statistically significant main effect of applicant race on admission recommendation, $F(1, 293) = 14.77, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.05$. Black applicants ($M = 5.85, SD = 1.31$) were more likely to be recommended for admission than White applicants ($M = 5.23, SD = 1.52$).

16.2.2 | Perceived contribution to diversity

Similarly, the applicant race \times disclosure interaction term on the applicant's perceived contribution to diversity if admitted was not statistically significant $F(2, 291) = 0.46, p = .633$, nor was the main effect of disclosure, $F(2, 293) = 0.52, p = .593$. Replicating Studies 1 and 2, applicant race demonstrated a statistically significant main effect on contribution to diversity, $F(1, 293) = 47.78, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.14$. Again, Black applicants ($M = 6.10, SD = 1.28$) were perceived as contributing more diversity than White applicants ($M = 4.97, SD = 1.52$).

16.2.3 | Perceived contribution to inclusion

The applicant race \times disclosure interaction on perceived contribution to inclusion was not statistically significant, $F(2, 291) = 0.96, p = .382$, nor was the main effect of disclosure, $F(2, 293) = 0.27, p = .762$. Replicating Studies 1 and 2, however, the main effect of applicant race on applicants' perceived contribution to inclusion was statistically significant, $F(1, 293) = 32.07, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.10$. Participants rated Black applicants ($M = 6.01, SD = 1.34$) as more likely to contribute to inclusion than White applicants ($M = 5.11, SD = 1.39$).

16.2.4 | Perceived hours committed to diversity efforts

Lastly, the applicant race \times disclosure interaction on the anticipated number of weekly hours the applicant would commit toward the university's diversity efforts was not statistically significant, $F(2, 291) = 0.17, p = .845$. Unlike the Study 2 findings, the main effect of race was not statistically significant, $F(1, 293) = 3.43, p = .064$. Interestingly, the main effect of disclosure was statistically significant, $F(2, 293) = 7.13, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.05$, again differing from the results of Study 2. Tukey's post hoc group contrasts revealed that this main effect was driven by a statistically significant group difference between the no disclosure and strong disclosure with race centrality conditions (adjusted $p = .001, d = 0.54$). Specifically, applicants in the strong disclosure with race centrality condition ($M = 9.55, SD = 5.28$) were anticipated to commit more hours to diversity efforts than applicants who did not disclose their race ($M = 6.90, SD = 4.62$). There was no statistically significant group difference between the no disclosure versus strong disclosure only conditions (No disclosure: $M = 6.90, SD = 4.62$; Strong disclosure only: $M = 8.24, SD = 5.28$; adjusted $p = .148$), nor between the strong disclosure only versus strong disclosure with race centrality conditions (Strong disclosure only: $M = 8.24, SD = 5.28$; Strong disclosure with race centrality: $M = 9.55, SD = 5.28$; adjusted $p = .141$).

16.3 | Exploratory moderations with D&I essentialism

The secondary aim of Study 3 was to explore whether endorsement of D&I essentialism—the belief that Black people possess an innate commitment to and ability to promote D&I—plays a role in the consistent effect of applicant race on perceived applicant motivations and outcomes. Accordingly, we performed a series of moderated regression analyses to test the moderating role of D&I essentialism in the association between applicant race and disclosure on the examined dependent variables. We approached the moderation analyses by first running a model that included the 3-way interaction between applicant race, disclosure, and participants' endorsement of D&I essentialism (in addition to the 2-way interactions and main effects). If the 3-way interaction was not statistically significant, we removed the 3-way interaction term and reran the model to include only the 2-way interactions and main effects (Engqvist, 2005). D&I essentialism was mean-centered before analysis based on field recommendations (Aiken et al., 1991). Statistically significant interactions ($p < .05$) were probed using Johnson-Neyman regions of significance.

16.3.1 | PIMS

The applicant race \times disclosure \times D&I essentialism endorsement interaction on PIMS was not statistically significant, $F(2, 285) = 1.10$,

$p = .333$. Likewise, the 2-way interaction model indicated that the disclosure \times D&I essentialism interaction was not statistically significant, $F(2, 287) = 0.07, p = .928$. However, the applicant race \times D&I essentialism interaction was statistically significant, $F(1, 287) = 4.91, p = .027, \eta_p^2 = 0.02$. Probing of the interaction revealed that applicant race had no effect on PEMS at low levels (-1 SD) of D&I essentialism, $b = 0.36, SE = 0.23, p = .119$, but a statistically significant effect in favor of Black applicants among participants with average, $b = 0.63, SE = 0.21, p = .003$, and high levels ($+1$ SD) of D&I essentialism, $b = 0.89, SE = 0.25, p = .001$. This relationship is represented in Figure 6 Panel A.

16.3.2 | PEMS

The applicant race \times disclosure \times D&I essentialism endorsement interaction on PEMS was statistically significant, $F(2, 285) = 4.81, p = .009, \eta_p^2 = 0.03$. We conducted follow-up analyses by testing the disclosure \times D&I essentialism interactions on PEMS among participants who received the White applicant manipulation versus those who received the Black applicant manipulation.

Among participants who received the White applicant manipulation, the disclosure \times D&I essentialism interaction was statistically significant, $F(1, 142) = 3.99, p = .048, \eta_p^2 = 0.03$. However, probing of the interaction indicated that the simple slopes of disclosure were not statistically significant at low (-1 SD), average, and high ($+1$ SD) levels of D&I essentialism, all $ps > 0.100$.

Among participants who received the Black applicant manipulation, the disclosure \times D&I essentialism interaction was likewise statistically significant, $F(1, 147) = 4.50, p = .036, \eta_p^2 = 0.03$. Probing of the interaction revealed that disclosure had no effect on PEMS at average, $b = 0.15, SE = 0.16, p = .349$, and high levels ($+1$ SD) of D&I essentialism, $b = -.19, SE = 0.23, p = .411$. However, the effect of disclosure was statistically significant among participants with low levels (-1 SD) of D&I essentialism, $b = 0.48, SE = 0.22, p = .028$. As shown in Figure 5, the Black applicant who did not disclose his race within the diversity statement received the lowest PEMS ratings, followed by the Black applicant who only strongly disclosed his race. The Black applicant who strongly disclosed his race while conveying racial identity centrality received the highest PEMS ratings among participants with low levels of D&I essentialism, relative to the two other disclosure manipulations.

16.4 | Recommendation for admission

The applicant race \times disclosure \times D&I essentialism endorsement interaction on applicant university admission recommendation was not statistically significant, $F(2, 285) = 1.97, p = .141$. The 2-way interaction model indicated that the disclosure \times D&I essentialism interaction was also not statistically significant, $F(2, 287) = 1.88, p = .154$. The applicant race \times D&I essentialism interaction was statistically significant, $F(1, 287) = 5.13, p = .024, \eta_p^2 = 0.02$. Probing of the interaction revealed that applicant race had no effect on admission recommendation at low levels (-1 SD) of D&I essentialism,

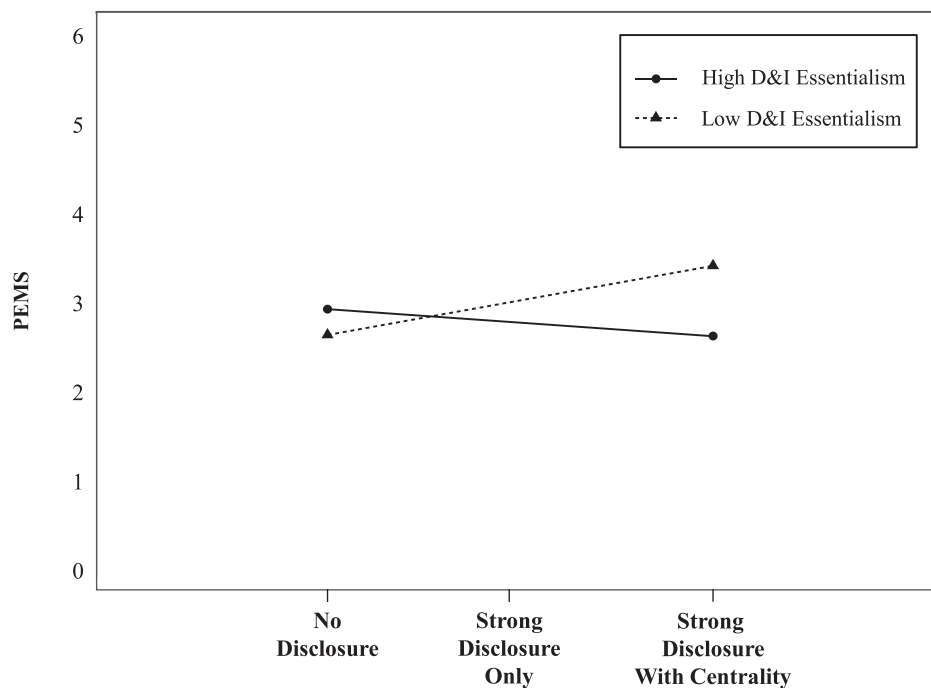


FIGURE 5 Simple slopes of disclosure at high and low levels of diversity and inclusion (D&I) essentialism predicting perceived external motivation (PEMS) of applicants among black applicant manipulation participants ($N = 151$). High levels = 1 SD above the mean of D&I essentialism. Low levels = 1 SD below the mean of D&I essentialism. PEMS was presented on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 0 = *Completely disagree* to 6 = *Completely agree*.

$b = 0.47$, $SE = 0.32$, $p = .146$, while applicant race showed a statistically significant effect in favor of Black applicants among participants with average, $b = 0.86$, $SE = 0.30$, $p = .004$, and high levels (1 + SD) of D&I essentialism, $b = 1.24$, $SE = 0.36$, $p = .001$. This relationship is represented in Figure 6 Panel B.

16.5 | Perceived contribution to diversity

The applicant race × disclosure × D&I essentialism endorsement interaction on perceived contribution to diversity was not statistically significant, $F(2, 285) = 2.40$, $p = .092$. The 2-way interaction model indicated that the disclosure × D&I essentialism interaction was not statistically significant, $F(2, 287) = 1.20$, $p = .303$. However, the applicant race × D&I essentialism interaction was statistically significant, $F(1, 287) = 5.55$, $p = .019$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.02$. Probing of the interaction showed that applicant race had a statistically significant effect in favor of Black applicants among participants with low (−1 SD), $b = 0.90$, $SE = 0.32$, $p = .006$, average, $b = 1.30$, $SE = 0.29$, $p < .001$, and high levels (1 + SD) of D&I essentialism, $b = 1.70$, $SE = 0.35$, $p < .001$. This relationship is depicted in Figure 6 Panel C.

16.6 | Perceived contribution to inclusion

The applicant race × disclosure × D&I essentialism endorsement interaction on perceived contribution to inclusion was not statistically significant, $F(2, 285) = 0.66$, $p = .519$. Similarly, the 2-way interaction model showed that the disclosure × D&I essentialism interaction was not statistically significant, $F(2, 287) = 0.58$, $p = .563$. However, the applicant race × D&I essentialism interaction was statistically significant, $F(1, 287) = 9.56$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.03$. Probing of the interaction indicated that applicant race had a statistically significant effect in favor of Black applicants among participants with low (−1 SD), $b = 0.74$, $SE = 0.31$, $p = .017$, average, $b = 1.24$, $SE = 0.28$, $p < .001$, and high levels (1 + SD) of D&I essentialism, $b = 1.74$, $SE = 0.34$, $p < .001$. See Figure 6 Panel D for the visualization of this relationship.

16.7 | Perceived hours committed to diversity efforts

The applicant race × disclosure × D&I essentialism endorsement interaction on anticipated hours toward diversity efforts was not

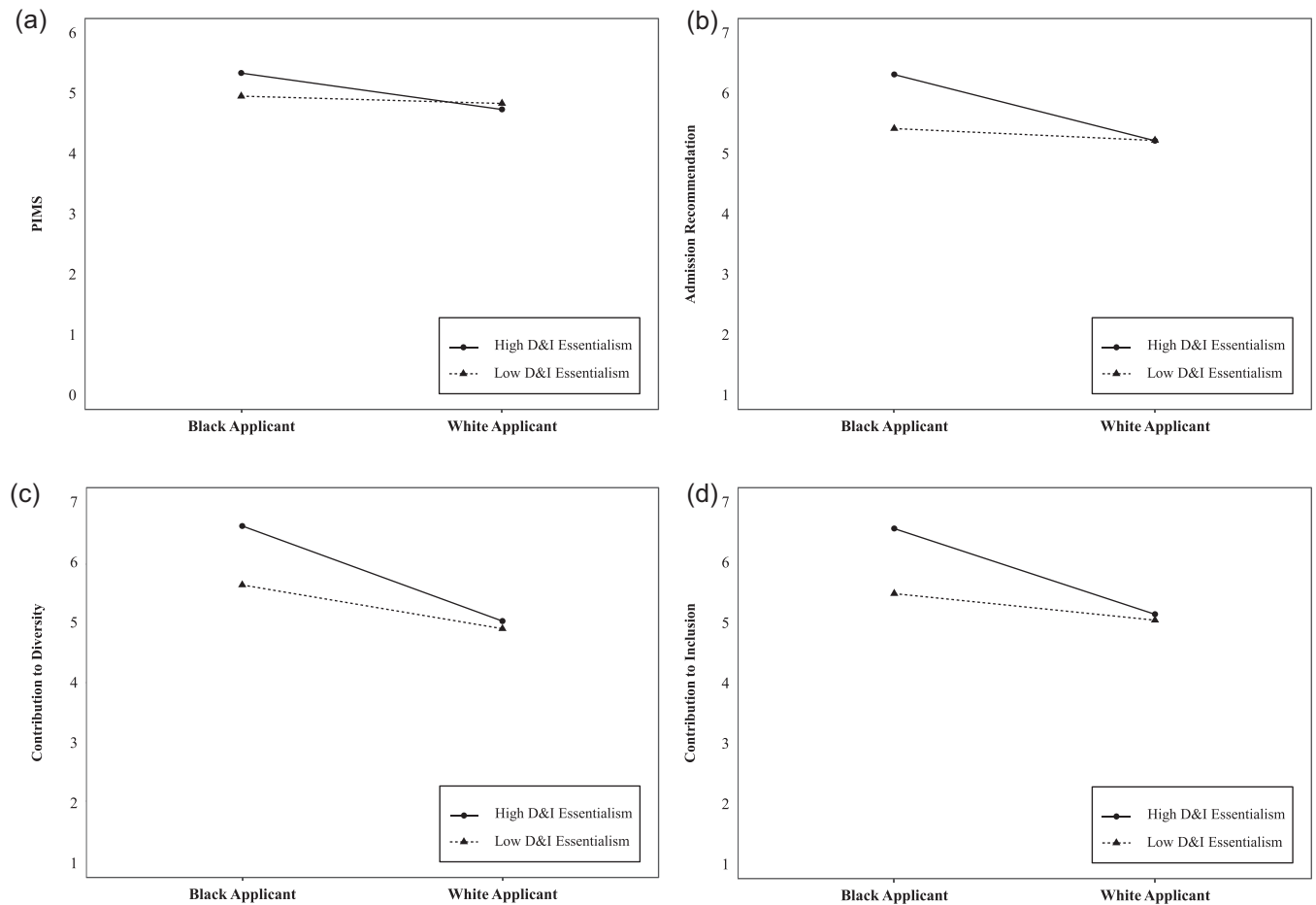


FIGURE 6 Simple slopes of applicant race at high and low levels of diversity and inclusion (D&I) essentialism predicting perceived internal motivation (PIMS) of applicants, admission recommendation, perceived contribution to diversity, and perceived contribution to inclusion (N = 297). High levels = 1 SD above the mean of D&I essentialism. Low levels = 1 SD below the mean of D&I essentialism. Items were presented on 7-point Likert scales, with higher numbers indicating greater belief that the applicant represents the given quality.

statistically significant, $F(2, 285) = 0.17, p = .845$. The disclosure \times D&I essentialism interaction was also not statistically significant, $F(2, 287) = 1.80, p = .167$, nor was the applicant race \times D&I essentialism interaction, $F(1, 287) = 0.08, p = .781$. However, the three main effects emerged as statistically significant predictors of the applicant's anticipated hours committed to the university's diversity efforts.

Disclosure was a statistically significant predictor of anticipated diversity effort hours, $F(2, 292) = 4.89, p = .008, \eta_p^2 = 0.03$. Tukey's post hoc group contrasts indicated that this effect was driven by a statistically significant group difference between the no disclosure and strong disclosure with race centrality conditions (adjusted $p < .001, d = 0.45$), with applicants who disclosed their race while conveying race centrality ($M = 9.55, SD = 5.28$) receiving a greater number of anticipated diversity effort hours than applicants who did not disclose their race ($M = 6.90, SD = 4.62$). There was no statistically significant group difference between the no disclosure versus strong disclosure only conditions (No disclosure: $M = 6.90, SD = 4.62$; Strong disclosure only: $M = 8.24, SD = 5.28$; adjusted $p = .138$), nor between the strong disclosure only versus strong disclosure with race centrality conditions (Strong disclosure only: $M = 8.24, SD = 5.28$; Strong disclosure with race centrality: $M = 9.55, SD = 5.28$; adjusted $p = .131$).

Endorsement of D&I essentialism was a statistically significant and positive predictor of anticipated hours toward diversity efforts, $F(1, 292) = 12.40, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.04$, such that participants with greater D&I essentialism endorsement believed applicants would devote more hours to diversity efforts relative to participants with lower endorsement of D&I essentialism, $b = 0.89, SE = 0.25, p < .001$. With D&I essentialism included in the model, applicant race similarly emerged as a statistically significant predictor of diversity effort hours, $F(1, 292) = 4.62, p = .032, \eta_p^2 = 0.02$. More specifically, participants believed Black applicants ($M = 8.75, SD = 5.21$) would contribute slightly more hours toward the university's diversity efforts than White applicants ($M = 7.79, SD = 5.12$).

17 | DISCUSSION

Consistent with Studies 1 and 2, Study 3 supported the hypotheses that evaluators perceive Black applicants as more internally motivated than White applicants, and White applicants as more externally motivated than Black applicants. Additionally, our findings replicated the main effects of race on the other dependent variables, as evaluators were more likely to recommend Black applicants for university admission, perceived Black applicants to be more likely to contribute to diversity, and perceived Black applicants as more likely to create an inclusive environment for other minority students. Importantly, the main effects of race replicated with the more subtle and ecologically valid race manipulation used in Study 3. Studies 1 and 2 manipulated race by presenting participants with images of the applicant to ensure the manipulation's efficacy. Application materials typically do not request images of the applicant, though hiring and

admission committee members may be aware of an applicant's assumed racial identity through prior face-to-face interactions or reviewing their social media profiles. Nevertheless, Study 3 employed a more subtle, nonimage applicant race manipulation to expand the known boundaries of the present findings and increase the ecological validity of the paradigm.

Unlike Study 2, we did not find a statistically significant main effect of applicant race on anticipated hours committed to diversity efforts, but rather a main effect of disclosure. Specifically, participants believed that applicants who strongly disclosed their race with references to racial identity centrality would commit more hours than those who did not disclose their race. There were no other main effects of disclosure in Study 3.

Furthermore, we explored whether endorsement of diversity and inclusion essentialism influenced perceived motivations to respond without prejudice and other diversity-centric outcomes. We found consistent interactions between applicant race and diversity and inclusion essentialism. In particular, average and high levels of diversity and inclusion essentialism moderated the relationship between applicant race and PIMS, such that participants with average and high levels of diversity and inclusion essentialism believed Black applicants to be more internally motivated than White participants, while this effect was not found among participants with low essentialist beliefs. As for PEMS, we found that diversity and inclusion essentialism moderated the relationship between both race and disclosure. Specifically, among participants with low levels of diversity and inclusion essentialism, the Black applicant who did not disclose his race was least likely to be perceived as externally motivated, followed by the Black applicant who only strongly disclosed his race, and the Black applicant who strongly disclosed his race with race centrality.

Diversity and inclusion essentialism also moderated the relationships between applicant race and recommendation for admission, contribution to diversity, and contribution to inclusion: Participants who had average and high levels of diversity and inclusion essentialism endorsement were more likely to recommend the Black applicant for admission, and participants with high levels of diversity and inclusion essentialism perceived Black applicants as contributing more to diversity and inclusion. Individuals with low essentialist beliefs did not demonstrate these effects. No statistically significant interactions were found regarding the moderating role of diversity and inclusion essentialism on perceived hours committed to diversity efforts; however, the results did indicate that diversity and inclusion essentialism itself predicted anticipated hours toward diversity efforts, in that the more participants endorsed diversity and inclusion essentialism, the more hours they perceived applicants would commit toward diversity. Furthermore, the main effect of applicant race on perceived hours committed to diversity efforts found in Study 2 was replicated when diversity and inclusion essentialism was included in the model, such that participants perceived Black applicants as contributing more hours to diversity efforts than White applicants.

18 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

Across three pre-registered experiments, the present research demonstrated and replicated that White evaluators of personal diversity statements generally perceive Black graduate school applicants as higher in internal egalitarian motivation, whereas they generally perceive White applicants as higher in external egalitarian motivation. Furthermore, evaluators were consistently more likely to recommend the Black applicants for university admission, believe that the Black applicants would contribute more diversity to the university, and believe that the Black applicants would create a more

inclusive environment compared to White applicants. These findings largely supported our hypotheses. However, we predicted that the aforementioned patterns would be exacerbated by applicant race disclosure, which showed no consistent effects across studies despite the implementation of a stronger disclosure manipulation in Study 2 and a racial identity centrality manipulation in Study 3. The main findings and descriptive statistics of Studies 1–3 are summarized in Table 2.

As noted above, the observed results occurred consistently based on applicant race, largely irrespective of race self-disclosure (though we found one interaction where participants viewed White

TABLE 2 Overview of main findings and descriptive statistics.

Study 1	No race disclosure				Race disclosure			
	White applicant (N = 48)		Black applicant (N = 52)		White applicant (N = 50)		Black applicant (N = 56)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
PIMS ^R	4.39	0.86	4.90	0.80	4.45	0.80	5.13	0.70
PEMS ^R	3.56	1.24	3.12	1.31	3.67	1.09	3.03	1.28
Admission ^R	5.02	1.48	5.79	0.87	4.98	1.29	5.70	1.13
Diversity ^R	4.73	1.51	6.15	0.83	4.84	1.33	6.37	0.73
Inclusion ^{DR}	4.79	1.09	6.15	1.02	5.08	1.41	6.50	0.63

Study 2	No race disclosure				Subtle race disclosure				Strong race disclosure			
	White applicant (N = 42)		Black applicant (N = 40)		White applicant (N = 44)		Black applicant (N = 39)		White applicant (N = 48)		Black applicant (N = 44)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
PIMS ^R	4.72	0.88	5.20	0.65	4.52	0.98	5.32	0.65	4.53	1.02	5.12	0.58
PEMS ^{RX}	3.62	1.17	2.66	1.43	4.13	1.23	2.66	1.31	3.62	1.18	3.14	1.41
Admission ^R	5.21	1.22	6.03	0.92	4.66	1.60	5.92	1.20	4.90	1.56	6.00	1.10
Diversity ^R	4.79	1.60	6.35	0.58	4.43	1.90	6.26	0.85	4.73	1.72	6.39	0.81
Inclusion ^R	5.02	1.47	6.43	0.59	4.66	1.71	6.23	0.90	4.85	1.56	6.14	1.09
Diversity Effort Hours ^R	7.24	5.22	7.78	3.98	6.50	4.56	7.67	4.79	7.40	4.84	9.18	5.14

Study 3	No race disclosure				Strong race disclosure only				Strong race disclosure with race centrality			
	White applicant (N = 43)		Black applicant (N = 51)		White applicant (N = 48)		Black applicant (N = 51)		White applicant (N = 55)		Black applicant (N = 49)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
PIMS ^R	4.73	1.07	5.25	0.90	4.85	1.07	4.96	0.93	4.83	1.10	5.29	0.80
PEMS ^R	3.65	1.37	2.65	1.50	3.73	1.42	2.87	1.43	3.59	1.75	2.92	1.69
Admission ^R	5.09	1.60	5.76	1.31	5.42	1.61	5.61	1.42	5.18	1.38	6.20	1.15
Diversity ^R	5.02	1.42	6.08	1.37	4.94	1.55	5.92	1.25	4.96	1.60	6.31	1.23
Inclusion ^R	5.07	1.24	6.06	1.39	5.19	1.50	5.78	1.39	5.07	1.43	6.18	1.22
Diversity Effort Hours ^D	6.49	4.03	7.25	5.07	7.77	5.81	8.69	4.74	8.82	5.09	10.37	5.42

Note: ^DIndicates a statistically significant main effect of disclosure. ^RIndicates a statistically significant main effect of applicant race. ^XIndicates a statistically significant interaction between applicant race and race disclosure.

applicants as higher in external egalitarian motivation than Black applicants in the no disclosure and subtle disclosure conditions). This pattern indicates that participants' judgments of the applicants were perhaps based on extraneous profile information (i.e., his race) and not on the information provided within the statement itself. It is worth noting that, based on Study 3's exploratory moderations, the aforementioned effects were predominately driven by high and average levels of diversity and inclusion essentialism endorsement, suggesting that evaluators' racialized prescriptions of egalitarianism may "leak into" diversity statement evaluations.

The lack of evidence supporting the influence of race disclosure on evaluators' perceptions of applicants' egalitarian motivations may indicate that disclosing racial identities in a diversity statement is not an effective means of communicating applicants' diversity and inclusion values. Rather than simply self-disclosing one's race, applicants may find it helpful to provide specific contextual information that ties their identities and relevant diversity and inclusion experiences together. Moreover, applicants may find it advantageous to write about how these personal identities would allow them to contribute to diversity and inclusion through the role to which they are applying (Schmaling et al., 2015). Doing so could allow applicants to better express their egalitarian motivations and goals, which may align more closely with institutions' aims of using personal diversity statements as an assessment of applicants' experiences with diversity and motivations to create a more inclusive climate.

The finding that Black applicants were perceived as more likely to endorse internal, personally-motivated egalitarian goals than White applicants and were more likely to be recommended for admission to the hypothetical graduate program provides insight into how White diversity statement evaluators may assess applicants (and consequently make admission decisions) differentially based on applicant race. This is also reflected in the fact that applicant race determined evaluators' perceptions of the applicants' anticipated contributions to the diversity and inclusivity of the university, with Black applicants being viewed as more beneficial to institutional diversity and inclusion efforts. Despite a wealth of evidence showing an anti-Black bias in hiring and admission decisions (e.g., Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Hodson et al., 2002; Pager et al., 2009; Quillian et al., 2017), these patterns are more consistent with a positivity bias when evaluating Black candidates, especially in a context wherein intergroup considerations (such as diversity and inclusion) are salient (e.g., Axt et al., 2016; Mendes & Koslov, 2013). A key caveat to this interpretation, however, is that the patterns of results observed in the present research are based on evaluations of diversity statements only. It is possible that if White evaluators were judging candidates based on a complete package of application materials, of which diversity statements were just one component, the traditionally robust anti-Black biases may emerge. Future studies might consider testing the role of personal diversity statements in forming judgments of applicants when they are included in a full packet of application materials (e.g., résumés, letters of recommendation).

The implications of these findings are somewhat mixed. On the one hand, our results may appear to highlight a positive diversity statement evaluation outcome—Black applicants were rated higher in perceived internal motivation to be nonprejudiced, and being viewed as someone with highly internalized egalitarian values should ostensibly increase one's likelihood of being selected for a position. Black applicants also received more positive evaluations on their perceived contributions to diversity and inclusivity after admission. On the other hand, these results may allude to prior research demonstrating that White people tend to react positively in intergroup interactions by overcorrecting their biased responses in attempts to appear nonprejudiced toward the minority group (Mendes & Koslov, 2013). Additionally, these findings could highlight broader assumptions about Black members' roles within institutions. Although the White and Black applicants had identical diversity statements, participants believed that Black applicants were higher in internal egalitarian motivation simply due to their race. This belief was particularly robust among participants with greater endorsement of diversity and inclusion essentialism. These results suggest that evaluators may favor Black applicants' diversity statements for admission to programs and hiring—assuming that they are more intrinsically motivated to contribute to the diversity and inclusion goals set by the institution—especially if the evaluator holds essentialist beliefs regarding diversity and inclusion.

Viewing Black applicants as more committed to egalitarianism compared to White applicants could serve as a mechanism to justify overburdening Black individuals with an institution's diversity and inclusion initiatives rather than holding Whites responsible for advancing these efforts. Indeed, the results of Study 2 showed that evaluators expected Black applicants to devote more time contributing to diversity-related initiatives than White applicants—a discrepancy of approximately one full hour per week. Of note, time spent on diversity-focused work often goes unpaid by institutions (Williams, 2022). If a Black individual works 48 weeks during the calendar year, then, our findings indicate that they would be expected to devote 48 more (likely unpaid) cumulative hours per year on diversity-related initiatives at their institution relative to a White counterpart. This finding did not replicate outright in the main Study 3 analysis, though we found an analogous pattern when diversity and inclusion essentialism was included in the model. This difference in anticipated diversity-related work hours has meaningful and practical significance beyond its statistical significance, as overburdening Black individuals with the task of increasing the diversity and inclusivity of an institutional environment because of their presumed internalized egalitarianism places added pressure on these individuals.

Making decisions based on evaluations that are influenced by race further maintains a trend of disregarding the capability of Black students. To ensure that all organizational members are able to uphold the institution's values of diversity and inclusion, hiring and selection committees would benefit from evaluating the content of applicants' diversity statements—irrespective of the applicants' stated

identities—rather than assuming that all Black applicants will naturally espouse internalized egalitarian motivations. One practical solution for combatting the negative effects of biased diversity statement evaluations (or even those that are positively biased) could be to ensure that application materials are submitted and reviewed anonymously, such that the identities of applicants would be unknown to evaluators. This solution is simple, cost effective, and would prevent even well-intentioned evaluator biases from affecting applicant judgments and outcomes.

19 | LIMITATIONS

An important consideration for future research on this topic is to expand the applicants' demographic characteristics. For this initial investigation into evaluations of diversity statements, we opted to maintain experimental control by matching the target candidates on characteristics like gender and age. It would be beneficial to know whether self-disclosure in diversity statements interacts with other demographic factors and what role intersectional identities play in this process. For instance, it is possible that the self-disclosure of one's nontraditional gender identity or sexual orientation would be viewed as more stigmatized compared to racial identity self-disclosure because such identities are more often assumed to be “chosen” or “optional” than one's race. Future studies could examine these empirical questions by testing disclosure in such cases and by comparing other types of identity disclosures to race self-disclosure as a baseline condition.

Moreover, it should be noted that our diversity statement stimuli lacked specificity regarding the applicant's prior and planned contributions to diversity and inclusion, particularly in terms of racial/ethnic diversity and inclusion. Moving forward, future research should explore evaluations of personal diversity statements that include concrete, measurable diversity and inclusion goals in addition to applicant race. This could involve developing diversity statements that explicitly outline the applicant's plans for contributing to the diversity and inclusivity of the prospective institution, for example. Such an approach would shed light on whether White individuals shift evaluations of strong versus weak diversity statements depending on whether the statement comes from a Black or White applicant. A study of this nature would help document the boundaries of applicant race influence in the context of personal diversity statement evaluations.

Furthermore, the recent Supreme Court ruling against affirmative action in higher education (*Students for Fair Admissions Inc. v. President & Fellows of Harvard College*, 2023) that effectively barred race-conscious admission practices could alter the personal diversity statement evaluation process. Specifically, institutions may require evaluators to review application materials without knowing an applicant's racial identity. To examine the potential effects of a race-conscious versus race-unconscious diversity statement evaluation process, future research could employ race known versus race unknown conditions.

20 | CONCLUSIONS

The present research demonstrated that applicant race may influence evaluators' perceptions of applicant motivations and egalitarian outcomes as ascertained through a personal diversity statement, regardless of whether an applicant chooses to self-disclose this information in their essay. Specifically, White evaluators perceived Black applicants as more committed to egalitarian goals and values than White applicants, rated them as more likely to contribute to an institution's diversity and inclusivity, and were more likely to indicate that Black applicants should be admitted to a hypothetical graduate program than White applicants. Such patterns were generally driven by individual evaluators with high and average levels of essentialist beliefs about Black individuals' commitment to diversity and inclusion.

These evaluation processes and assessments may subsequently subject Black applicants to inequitable expectations, which could overburden them with the assumed responsibility of shouldering institutions' diversity and inclusion efforts.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this research are openly available in the OSF at <https://osf.io/mjxu4/>.

ETHICS STATEMENT

An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at the University of Arizona reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research (IRB #1909952402).

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ENDNOTES

¹ The continuous measures, PIMS and PEMS, demonstrated good reliability (PIMS $\alpha = .87$; PEMS $\alpha = .88$).

² By strange coincidence, some of the mean-scored values appear the same when rounded to the hundredth decimal place but are indeed minimally distinct from one another. The unrounded means by relevant condition are as follows: *Black* × *No Disclosure* $M = 2.66000$; *Black* × *Subtle Disclosure* $M = 2.656410$; *White* × *No Disclosure* $M = 3.619048$; *White* × *Strong Disclosure* $M = 3.620833$.

³ We tested participant gender, level of education, political affiliation, age, time spent reviewing the diversity statement stimuli, and overall

time spent on the survey as predictors of failing the applicant race manipulation check. None of the predictors statistically significantly predicted applicant race manipulation check failure (all $ps > 0.450$).

⁴ The continuous measures, PIMS and PEMS, once again demonstrated good reliability (PIMS $\alpha = .88$; PEMS $\alpha = .89$).

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

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