

# Show Don't Tell: Diversity Dishonesty Harms Racial/Ethnic Minorities at Work

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## Abstract

Organizations aim to convey that they are diverse and inclusive, in part, to recruit racial minorities. We investigate a previously unexamined downside of this recruitment strategy: *diversity dishonesty*, that is, belief that an organization is falsely or incorrectly inflating its actual diversity. In four studies (total  $N = 871$ ), we found that diversity dishonesty heightened minorities' concerns about fitting in, being authentic, and performing well at the organization. We also found that evidence-based cues (which “show” observers whether the organization has a positive or negative diversity climate), but not expressed cues (which “tell” observers about the organization's diversity), affect these expectations. Using correlational methodologies, Study 1 found these effects were pertinent to African American and Latinx participants' beliefs about their current workplaces, holding other diversity-related measures constant. Studies 2 to 4 used experimental methods to replicate these findings with African American participants, using a hypothetical workplace setting.

## Keywords

diversity, identity, race, performance, intergroup relations

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Diversity is commonly valued as a positive asset in the U.S. workplace, and organizations frequently portray themselves as committed to diversity and inclusion in promotional materials (e.g., marketing materials that depict photographs of diverse workforces; diversity statements that ostensibly reflect the organization's values). In the United States, many companies demonstrate some type of formal commitment to diversity (Ivancevich & Gilbert, 2000). Indeed, the desire to project a diverse organizational climate even caused one university to photoshop an African American student onto the front page of their admissions booklet (Prichep, 2013). However, the most commonly used strategies to increase organizational diversity are often not effective (Kalev et al., 2006), and pro-diversity organizational portrayals can be inaccurate or disconnected from the reality at the organization. For example, although 87% of all Fortune 500 companies have a dedicated webpage expressing their commitment to diversity, only 3% of those companies report their employee demographics (and 72% of the senior executives at those 16 companies that report this information are White men; Jones & Donnelley, 2017).

In addition, ethnic minorities experience discrimination in the job hiring process (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2003; Pager & Quillian, 2005), even by organizations that include pro-diversity statements in their job advertisements (Kang et al., 2016). Beyond hiring, in the workplace, minorities

endure microaggressions (e.g., brief, common indignities, such as subtle snubs or dismissive tones, directed at certain individuals on the basis of their social group identity; Holder et al., 2015; Sue, 2010), are excluded from networking opportunities (Dreher & Cox, 2000), receive negative competence and leadership evaluations (Ford et al., 1986; Heilman & Welle, 2006), are disadvantaged in promotion decisions (Powell & Butterfield, 1997), and experience turnover at higher rates than their White counterparts (Shurn-Hannah, 2000).

Thus, the discrepancy between the extent to which organizations “tell” versus “show” that they value racial and ethnic diversity can leave ethnic minorities concerned that the organization's pro-diversity claims are specious (McKay & Avery, 2005). We refer to these concerns as *diversity dishonesty*, that is, belief that an organization is inflating its actual level of diversity. Diversity dishonesty

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concerns are subjective but can be grounded in reality. We propose that the extent to which racial and ethnic minorities are aware of diversity dishonesty predicts their sense of organizational fit, as well as their belief that they can be their authentic selves and perform well at work. Specifically, when African American and Latinx employees believe an organization dishonestly advertises a pro-diversity message, they anticipate that they will be less likely to fit in, be themselves, and perform well at that particular workplace. We conduct four studies to examine diversity dishonesty among groups that are targeted by diversity efforts, and we explore how efforts to promote diversity may unintentionally harm the very diversity goals organizations aspire to achieve.

We also examine whether two distinct types of organizational diversity cues trigger minorities' diversity dishonesty beliefs: (a) *expressed* pro-diversity cues (e.g., written commitments to diversity on websites or promotional materials), which *tell* people about the organization's diversity, and (b) *evidence-based* diversity cues (e.g., demographics of employees, accounts of the racial climate by employees), which *show* people about the organization's diversity. Previous research has primarily examined the effects of either expressed *or* evidence-based cues on work-related outcomes (exception: Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). This work finds that ethnic minorities evaluate favorably companies that express pro-diversity cues (e.g., McKay & Avery, 2005; Perkins et al., 2000; Slaughter et al., 2002; Williams & Bauer, 1994), yet can feel psychologically vulnerable when evidence-based information (e.g., diversity representation) does not suggest diversity is valued (e.g., Chen & Hamilton, 2015; Sekaquaptewa & Thompson, 2002; Thompson & Sekaquaptewa, 2002; Unzueta & Binning, 2012). We examine both cues in tandem, because people often have access to both sources of discrepant information (i.e., expressed pro-diversity cues presented in the absence of evidence-based pro-diversity cues) when evaluating an organization.

## Organizational Pro-Diversity Portrayals

U.S. organizations may seek to recruit ethnic minority applicants to capitalize on the benefits of diversity, such as enhanced creativity (Maddux et al., 2010; Tadmor et al., 2012), problem solving, or information sharing (Crisp & Turner, 2011; Sommers, 2006). They may also do so to avoid either litigation related to preferential hiring of European Americans or a negative public image of the organization as discriminatory toward racial minorities (Collins, 2011). Regardless of the underlying reasons why organizations may seek to hire ethnic minorities, it is clear that specifically targeting racial minorities in employee recruitment materials is both a common hiring practice and, ultimately, a necessary step to begin addressing racial inequalities within organizations.

Scholars and practitioners agree that, to recruit minority applicants, organizations should communicate that they value diversity and have a fair, diverse, and inclusive environment (Avery & McKay, 2006). Organizations that feature targeted group members in advertisements or present diversity and inclusiveness statements create the expectation that the organization is fair and tolerant (Gündemir et al., 2017; Gündemir & Galinsky, 2018; Kaiser et al., 2013; Wilton et al., 2018), which can attract underrepresented applicants (McKay & Avery, 2005). Minority applicants are more attracted to organizations whose advertisements include photographs of racial minorities (Perkins et al., 2000), commitments to diversity (Highhouse et al., 1999; Slaughter et al., 2002), or information about a diversity management policy (Williams & Bauer, 1994), because they feel more similar to the employees working at the organization (Avery et al., 2004).

However, sometimes these organizational strategies to hire racial minorities can backfire, resulting in potential applicants ironically being deterred by promotional materials that address diversity. In a large-scale natural field experiment across 10 U.S. cities, Leibbrandt and List (2018) found that racial minorities were up to 30% *less* likely to apply to a job that included an equal employment opportunity (EEO) diversity statement, particularly in majority-White cities. The researchers theorized that minorities were concerned about being tokenized, or hired as an underrepresented group member to give the company the appearance of fairness and inclusion (e.g., Kanter, 1977), at the organizations that included an EEO statement. That is, they expected that the organizations would not actually be diverse and that their solo status (e.g., being the only member of their racial group; Thompson & Sekaquaptewa, 2002) would make for a negative workplace environment (Leibbrandt & List, 2018). This field study raises the possibility that minorities sometimes harbor doubts about whether pro-diversity organizations will actually offer positive diversity experiences. The present studies introduce and explore diversity dishonesty as a precursor to understanding when diversity efforts might produce less, rather than more, trust in an organization's commitment to diversity.

We argue that the gap between how organizations portray their commitments to diversity and minorities' lived or expected realities in organizations could lead minorities to assess a company through the lens of diversity dishonesty. Relatedly, research on interracial interpersonal interactions suggests that White people can be motivated by the desire to appear likable and non-racist in the presence of racial minority interaction partners (Bergsieker et al., 2010; Monin & Miller, 2001), as well as patronize racial minorities by presenting themselves as less competent (Dupree & Fiske, 2019). As a result, minorities can therefore be suspicious of Whites' motives in interracial interpersonal interactions (Major et al., 2013) and attribute ambiguous behavior to bias (Crocker, Voelkl, Testa, & Major, 1991).

When ethnic minorities believe that White people are motivated by fear of appearing racist (as opposed to egalitarian ideals), they even interpret positive feedback as being disingenuous (Major et al., 2013). Most U.S. organizations are predominantly run by White people (Jones & Donnelley, 2017), so ethnic minorities may make similar attributions for organizational behavior as they do about White people in interracial interpersonal interactions. Specifically, minorities may construe pro-diversity organizational advertisements as specious attempts to signal diversity. And, given that organizations exert significant economic, social, and political influence in societies, these organizational perceptions can have far-reaching consequences.

We suggest that concern regarding organizational diversity dishonesty can harm minorities in the workplace. If minorities believe that an organization is speciously making a pro-diversity claim, they may also expect that they will not fit in, cannot be authentic, or will not be successful at work. To perform well in professional settings, people must not feel unsafe in these spaces (Cohen & Garcia, 2008; Emerson & Murphy, 2014; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008; Steele et al., 2002; Walton & Cohen, 2007; Wout et al., 2010). Yet, the more ethnic minorities attribute Whites' behavior toward them to insincere motives, the more cardiovascular threat, stress, and belonging uncertainty they experience (Major et al., 2013). In the workplace, minorities can feel vulnerable in response to certain organizational cues, even those that outwardly assert a pro-diversity message (Dover et al., 2019; Gündemir et al., 2017; Kirby & Kaiser, under review; Plaut et al., 2009). As such, we expect that believing that an organization is disingenuously promoting a pro-diversity environment is harmful for ethnic minorities, because it will reduce their beliefs that they will belong in the context.

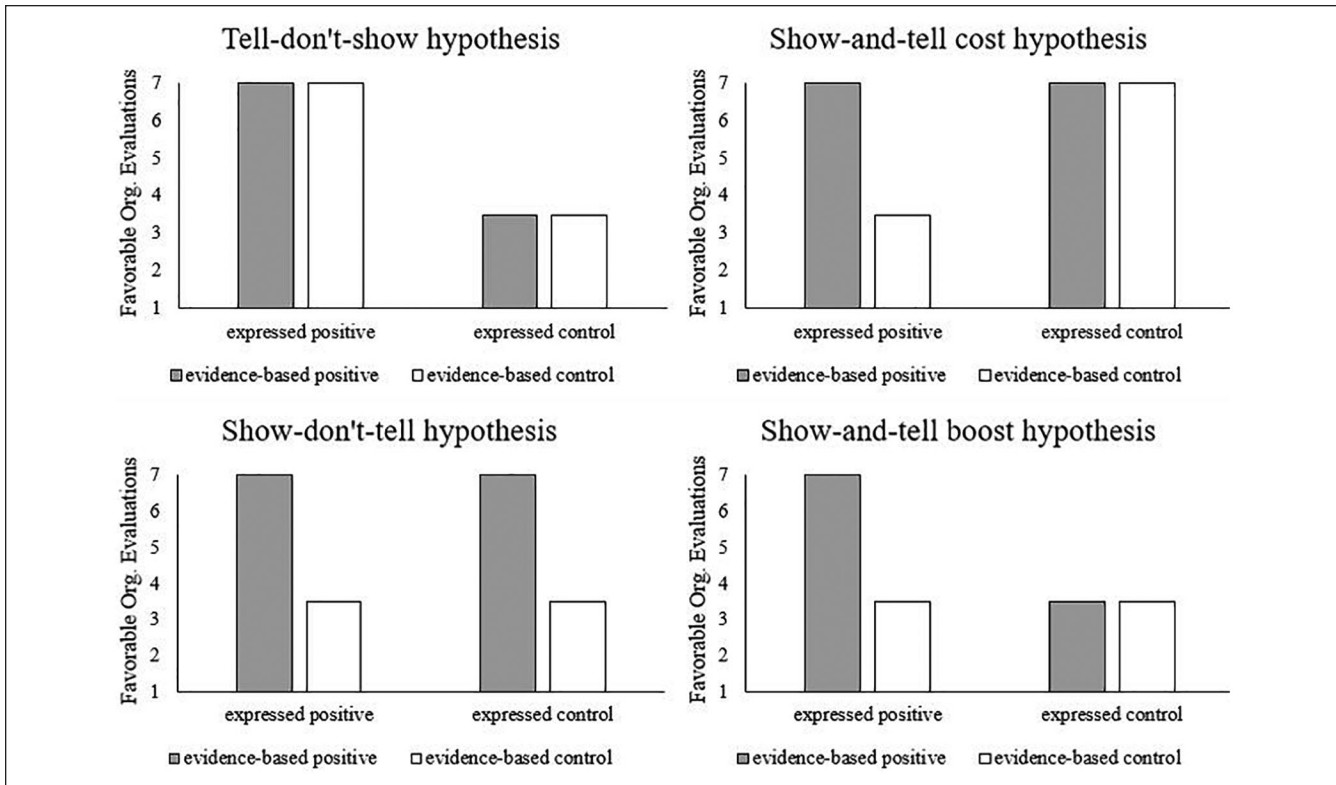
When ethnic minorities experience identity-related vulnerabilities in response to certain organizational cues, they expect professional spaces to be less diverse or egalitarian, and subsequently perform worse (Holoien & Shelton, 2012; Wilton et al., 2015). Ethnic minorities perform better when they feel that they will fit in and can be their authentic selves in professional spaces (Cohen & Garcia, 2008; Walton & Cohen, 2007, 2011), which suggests that these are two important psychological factors to explore in relation to work performance. For example, when Black students were made to feel like they had fewer friends, they reported significantly lower sense of fit and potential in an academic domain (Walton & Cohen, 2007). Together, these findings suggest that believing that an organizational pro-diversity statement is false may undermine ethnic minorities' beliefs that they can be successful at an organization, by decreasing their sense of organizational belonging and authenticity. Thus, we hypothesized that feelings of diversity dishonesty would heighten ethnic minorities' concerns about whether or not they would fit in, be their authentic selves, and perform well at the organization.

## The Current Research

In the present work, four studies explored how ethnic minorities' organizational *diversity dishonesty* assessments, or the belief that an organization was misleading about the extent to which racial diversity is valued and supported, influence their work-related experiences, as well as what environmental cues may increase or decrease participants' feelings of diversity dishonesty. In Studies 1 to 4, we tested the hypothesis that feelings of diversity dishonesty negatively predict racial minorities' expected feelings of fit, authenticity, and performance at work. Study 1 was a correlational study designed to create a measure of diversity dishonesty, and test whether it would predict outcomes we theorize to follow from this state. To capture the fact that diversity dishonesty assessments are rooted in minorities' awareness of organizational cues, we assessed African American and Latinx participants' assessments of their actual, current workplaces. In Studies 2 to 4, we presented participants with promotional materials that conveyed a hypothetical organization's expressed commitment to diversity (i.e., organizational diversity messages), along with evidence-based indicators of whether or not the organization actually is diverse (demographic representation in Studies 2 and 3; word of mouth accounts about diversity climate in Study 4). This design allowed us to examine four competing hypotheses concerning how expressed and evidence-based organizational cues might work in tandem to trigger African American participants' diversity dishonesty assessment (and its consequences for expectations of organizational fit, authenticity, and performance). For a visual representation of the pattern of hypothesized results, see Figure 1.

In the *tell-don't-show* hypothesis, we would expect that expressed cues (i.e., telling) alone would influence ethnic minorities' expectations about the work environment, regardless of the evidence-based information available, such that there would be a main effect of expressed cues only. Consistent with previous research documenting the positive effects of diversity cues (see above), we would specifically expect ethnic minorities to report lower expected organizational fit, authenticity, and performance in a control condition in which an organization did not address diversity, compared with an experimental condition in which an organization did express a commitment to diversity. An organization's expressed pro-diversity portrayal alone would be enough to induce more favorable anticipated work experiences, regardless of whether the evidence-based information was consistent or inconsistent with the expressed information.

In the *show-don't-tell* hypothesis, we would expect that evidence-based cues alone would influence minorities' expectations about the work environment, regardless of the information available from expressed cues, such that there would be a main effect of evidence-based cues only. Consistent with previous research documenting the positive



**Figure 1.** Graphical representation of the general patterns of data for the competing hypotheses.

effects of factors such as racial representation on ethnic minorities' work-related experiences (see above), we would specifically expect that an evidence-based cue demonstrating that the company values diversity (e.g., a racially diverse organizational chart) would lead ethnic minorities to report lower expected organizational fit, authenticity, and performance compared with a control in which racial diversity was absent (e.g., a racially homogeneous organizational chart with White employees). Relatedly, we also expect that an expressed cue demonstrating that the company does not value diversity (e.g., an account of poor diversity climate) would lead ethnic minorities to report lower expected organizational fit, authenticity, and performance, relative to a control condition (a negative account of the climate unrelated to diversity). Evidence-based information about a company's diversity alone would influence minorities' work-related experiences.

In the *show-and-tell cost* hypothesis, we would expect that both expressed and evidence-based cues in combination would uniquely shift ethnic minorities' feelings of diversity dishonesty, as well as organizational fit, authenticity, and performance expectations, such that there would be a significant interaction between expressed and evidence-based cues. Here, ethnic minorities' levels of perceived diversity dishonesty may be highest, and their feelings of organizational fit, authenticity, and work performance the lowest, if an organization provides expressed pro-diversity cues (i.e., *tell* people

they care about diversity) when evidence-based cues to support that commitment are absent (i.e., fail to *show* people that they care about diversity). In other words, when organizations claim to value diversity but lack any evidence to such an effect, ethnic minorities may perceive the organizations' diversity claims as specious, resulting in higher reported levels of diversity dishonesty and more negative anticipated work-related experiences.

In the *show-and-tell boost* hypothesis, we would similarly expect that both expressed and evidence-based cues in combination would uniquely shift ethnic minorities' feelings of diversity dishonesty, as well as organizational fit, authenticity, and performance expectations, such that there would be a significant interaction between expressed and evidence-based cues—but would lead to a different pattern of results. Ethnic minorities' diversity dishonesty expectations may be lowest, and their feelings of organizational fit, authenticity, and work performance the highest, if an organization provides both expressed and evidence-based diversity cues, such that the two types of cues have an additive effect when both are positive and present.

Full versions of all measures, manipulations, and exclusions are reported in the Supplemental Materials, as are additional data not included in this article. In all studies, we collected additional measures that generally followed the same pattern of results as the measures described in the main text. We report these measures in full in the Supplemental

Materials to simplify the reporting of results. The inclusion criteria required that all participants self-identify as being between the ages of 18 and 30 (because we wanted participants to envision what working in an entry level position at a particular company would be like), Black/African American (Studies 1–4) and Latinx (Study 1), and employed full-time at a U.S. organization. All exclusion criteria were established a priori, and no statistical analyses were conducted prior to concluding data collection. Studies 2 and 4 were preregistered and are available (see attached).

## Study 1

The objective of Study 1 was to develop and test the factor structure of a *diversity dishonesty scale*, based on ethnic minorities' assessments of their actual workplaces, and test the hypothesis that diversity dishonesty negatively predicts ethnic minorities' feelings of organizational fit, authenticity, and performance at work. We measured African American and Latinx participants' beliefs that their current workplaces exaggerated the extent to which they were diverse and inclusive, and explored whether these beliefs negatively predicted their actual feelings of organizational fit, authenticity, and performance in their jobs, above and beyond other diversity-related beliefs.

## Method

**Participants.** Using the research survey company Toluna ([www.toluna.com](http://www.toluna.com)), we aimed to recruit a nationally representative sample of 200 or more adult (18+), English-fluent, Black/African American and Latinx participants who were currently employed full-time at a U.S. organization. This sample size is suitable for structural equation modeling (Kline, 2005), and exceeds the minimum sample size of 168 required to capture 80% statistical power for a mixed within-between analysis of variance (ANOVA) design (based on an a priori power analysis assuming a small effect size of .10 and a correlation of .40 for repeated measures). The final sample ( $N = 249$ ) included 149 Black, 98 Latinx, and two multi-ethnic Latinx/Black individuals (142 women, 105 men, and two other genders;  $M_{\text{age}} = 40.18$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 12.93$ ). Participants received US\$0.75 in compensation. Additional demographics (e.g., education status) are reported in the Supplemental Materials.

**Procedure and measures.** Participants were invited to take part in a research study exploring people's experiences with racial/ethnic diversity at work. Toluna invited participants to complete the study online. After providing informed consent, participants answered both target (race/ethnicity, current work status, current country status; see above) and filler (gender, age) demographic questions to confirm they met the study criteria. Qualified participants were asked to "think about your organization's attitude and commitment towards

racial and ethnic diversity" and report their feelings of diversity dishonesty, perceived organizational fit, authenticity at work, and expected work performance in that order (see below). To test alternate predictors that may have alternately influenced participants' work diversity beliefs, participants also reported their personal identification as a racial/ethnic minority group member (i.e., *racial identification*, four items,  $\alpha = .54$ ; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), personal beliefs about ethnic diversity (i.e., *diversity beliefs*, four items,  $\alpha = .88$ ; Cross & Cross, 2008), and social dominance orientation (i.e., *Social Dominance Orientation–Short Form* [SDO], four items;  $\alpha = .61$ ; Ho et al., 2015). We focused on factors that can (or that we theorized would) influence the ways that racial/ethnic minorities experience organizations as a function of diversity cues: Weakly racially identified minorities can feel less authentic in organizations (e.g., Kirby & Kaiser, under review), and SDO can influence minorities' feelings of safety in an organization (e.g., Chaney et al., 2016). In addition, we expected that the more minorities personally believed racial/ethnic diversity is important, the more they may attend to diversity-related cues in their organizations (therefore influencing their evaluations of the organization). Participants provided additional information about their work (e.g., industry). Randomly embedded within the survey was an instructional attention check, which all participants passed, designed to identify participants who were not paying attention to the study directions (Oppenheimer et al., 2009). After completing all measures, participants read a debriefing statement and were thanked and compensated for their participation. All measures were assessed using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) unless otherwise noted, and are reported in full in the Supplemental Materials.

**Diversity dishonesty.** This four-item scale assessed participants' assessment of whether or not their organization misled them about the extent to which diversity is valued and supported at work. The items were as follows: "My organization is not sincere about its pro-diversity messages to employees," "My organization overstates its actual commitment to diversity," "My organization acts like it is better about diversity-related issues than it really is," and "Ethnic minorities are promised more resources and support than is actually provided by my organization" ( $\alpha = .88$ ).

**Perceived organizational fit.** We adapted Walton and Cohen's (2007) 17-item scale of perceived fit and belonging. Sample items included the following: "I belong at my organization," and "I feel alienated from my organization [reverse coded]" ( $\alpha = .87$ ).

**Authenticity at work.** Our four-item measure assessed how autonomous participants felt with regard to expressing their racial/ethnic identity at work. Sample items included the following: "I feel I can be my authentic self at my organization,"

**Table 1.** Means, Standard Deviations, and Inter-Item Correlations Between All Variables in Study 1.

Variables		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	M	SD
1	Diversity dishonesty	—							4.23	1.92
2	Organizational fit	-.32***	—						5.03	0.94
3	Authenticity	-.35***	.53***	—					4.43	1.25
4	Perceived performance	.08	.55***	.44***	—				5.07	1.24
5	Beliefs about diversity	.14*	.42***	.16*	.32***	—			5.69	1.19
6	SDO	-.23***	.43***	.22**	-.002	.37***	—		7.21	1.89
7	Racial identification	-.12	.30***	.17*	.02	.33***	.48***	—	4.55	1.12

SDO = Social Dominance Orientation.

\* $p \leq .05$ . \*\* $p \leq .01$ . \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ .

and “I feel I need to ‘put on a mask’ to be successful at my organization [reverse coded]” ( $\alpha = .68$ ).

**Perceived work performance.** Our six-item measure assessed how participants felt they were performing at work relative to their true potential. Sample items included the following: “I am able to be successful at my organization,” and “I am able to live up to my full potential at my organization” ( $\alpha = .87$ ).

## Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and inter-item correlations between all primary variables.

**Confirmatory factor analysis of diversity dishonesty scale.** Because we developed the diversity dishonesty measure for this research, we first used maximum likelihood procedures to estimate the scale’s latent factor structure and verify that all items loaded appropriately on a single factor. We constrained the variance of the latent factor (diversity dishonesty) to 1, and allowed the variances of the four indicator items to be freely estimated. General guidelines for good model fit specify that  $\chi^2$  is non-significant (Hu & Bentler, 1999) and that the  $\chi^2/df$  ratio is less than 3.0 (Kline, 2005). Based on these criteria, the model demonstrated strong fit,  $\chi^2(2) = 1.69$ ,  $p = .43$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 0.85$ . The “goodness-of-fit” comparative fit index (CFI) was 1.00, and the “badness-of-fit” root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was 0.00. Both of these values indicate perfect fit and exceed Hu and Bentler’s (1999) suggested cutoffs of .95 (for CFI) and .06 (for RMSEA). The 90% RMSEA confidence interval [CI] = [0.00, 0.14] contained 0, providing further evidence that the model offered a good fit. All four-scale items loaded on a single factor, and we were satisfied with the scale properties (Table S1) (Hu and Bentler, 1999).

**Incremental validity of diversity dishonesty in predicting dependent variables.** Next, we tested the hypothesis that diversity dishonesty negatively predicts racial minorities’ feelings of

organizational fit, authenticity, and performance at work. We conducted separate regressions of perceived organizational fit, authenticity at work, and perceived work performance on our primary predictor (diversity dishonesty) and our alternate predictors (racial identification, beliefs about diversity, and SDO). Controlling for the effects of all alternate predictors, diversity dishonesty significantly predicted both perceived organizational fit,  $b = -0.19$ ,  $SE = 0.04$ ,  $t = -5.19$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = [-0.26, -0.12], and authenticity at work,  $b = -2.72$ ,  $SE = 0.05$ ,  $t = -5.02$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = [-0.38, -0.17], but not work performance,  $b = -0.01$ ,  $SE = 0.06$ ,  $t = -0.11$ ,  $p = .91$ , 95% CI = [-0.12, 0.10] (Table S2). These effects hold when excluding controls in the models (see Table 1 for inter-measure correlations). There were no significant effects of participant gender (all  $ps < .21$ ).

Because regression models are associated with inflated Type I error rates (Westfall & Yarkoni, 2016), we also constructed a series of structural equation models (SEMs) to test our main hypothesis. Results of the SEMs were entirely consistent with those from the separate regression models (Table S3). Diversity dishonesty,  $b = -0.41$ ,  $SE = 0.06$ ,  $t = -6.59$ ,  $p \leq .001$ , 95% CI = [-0.53, -0.28], significantly predicted perceived organizational fit, controlling for all other variables,  $\chi^2(14) = 18.83$ ,  $p = .17$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.34$ , CFI = 0.99, RMSEA = 0.04, 90% CI = [0.00, 0.09]. In addition, diversity dishonesty,  $b = -0.39$ ,  $SE = 0.07$ ,  $t = -5.56$ ,  $p \leq .001$ , 95% CI = [-0.53, -0.25], significantly predicted authenticity at work, controlling for all other variables,  $\chi^2(14) = 19.93$ ,  $p = .13$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.42$ , CFI = 0.99, RMSEA = 0.05, 90% CI = [0.00, 0.09]. Diversity dishonesty,  $b = -0.06$ ,  $SE = 0.08$ ,  $t = -0.84$ ,  $p = .40$ , 95% CI = [-0.21, 0.09], did not significantly predict perceived work performance,  $\chi^2(14) = 20.29$ ,  $p = .12$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.45$ , CFI = 0.99, RMSEA = 0.05, 90% CI = [0.00, 0.09].

## Discussion

In Study 1, we demonstrated that African American and Latinx people attend to diversity dishonesty in the workplace. We also received initial support for the main hypothesis that,

for minorities, diversity dishonesty is associated with a lower sense of fit and authenticity at their workplaces. Diversity dishonesty predicted these outcomes, controlling for other relevant measures. However, we did not find diversity dishonesty predicted their perceived ability to be successful at work. Thus, although organizations may make pro-diversity claims with the intention of attracting underrepresented group members, we document that these claims can backfire when minorities experience them as being specious.

In Studies 2 to 4, we experimentally induced diversity dishonesty—as well as decreased expectations of organizational fit, authenticity, and work performance—in African American participants (one of the largest marginalized demographic groups in the workplace; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). We exposed them to a hypothetical company's *expressed* (i.e., organizational messages) and *evidence-based* (i.e., representation, word of mouth) organizational diversity cues. By doing so, we simultaneously tested whether diversity dishonesty assessments (and their resulting consequences for perceived fit, authenticity, and performance) are triggered by expressed cues alone (show-don't-tell hypothesis), evidence-based cues alone (tell-don't-show hypothesis), or the interaction of the two (show-and-tell hypothesis, either cost or boost).

## Study 2

### Participants and Design

The study employed a 2 (expressed diversity cue: organizational diversity statement present vs. absent)  $\times$  2 (evidence-based diversity cue: organizational racial/ethnic diversity high vs. low) between-subjects design. We recruited 200 working African American/Black participants (approximately 50 per condition;  $M_{\text{age}} = 25.52$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 3.57$ ; 148 cisgender women and 52 cisgender men) through a Qualtrics panel in exchange for US\$0.75. Power analyses indicate this sample size is sufficient to detect a small-to-medium effect size,  $f(.22)$ , at 80% power (given  $\alpha = .05$  and four groups). All participants passed an attention check.

### Procedure and Materials

The study was described as an exploration of impressions of companies based on their online presence. After providing informed consent, all participants were “randomly” assigned to view a company called CAST Technologies. First, participants were presented with an organizational advertising brochure that *expressly stated* CAST's company values and featured stock photographs of businesspeople (the expressed cue). For participants in the expressed diversity cue present condition, the materials highlighted the core values of “integrity, smart solutions, and diversity,” and contained a short paragraph that affirmed that diversity was integral to their organizational mission and products. For participants in the

expressed cue control condition, diversity was not highlighted in the brochure; the materials highlighted the core values of “integrity, smart solutions, and client focus,” and contained a short paragraph that affirmed that client focus was integral to their organizational mission and products. An independent sample of 63 African American/Black participants ( $M_{\text{age}} = 26.06$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 3.21$ ; 41 cisgender women, 21 cisgender men, one no gender selected) previously confirmed that CAST was viewed as more interested in diversity when the company values included diversity, as opposed to client focus ( $ts > 4.63$ ,  $ps \leq .001$ ).

After reviewing CAST's advertising materials, participants were presented with an overview of CAST's actual organizational chart, our *evidence-based diversity cue*, which they were told provided a glimpse of CAST's actual workforce. In the high racial/ethnic diversity evidence condition, the chart included photographs of both Black/African American and White/Caucasian women and men in various positions at the company. In the low racial/ethnic diversity evidence condition, the workforce included photographs of only White/Caucasian employees. Participants next completed measures of diversity dishonesty ( $\alpha = .76$ ), perceived organizational fit ( $\alpha = .89$ ), work authenticity ( $\alpha = .76$ ), perceived performance ( $\alpha = .91$ ), and racial identification ( $\alpha = .76$ ), as described in Study 1, except relevant scale items were reworded to reflect the hypothetical nature of the job (e.g., “I would feel . . . at this company”) and the performance measure was abbreviated to four items. We focused on racial identification as a potential control variable in Studies 2 to 4, because it can moderate minorities' experiences in organizations (e.g., Kirby & Kaiser, under review). Participants also reported personal (e.g., age, gender) and professional (e.g., current job industry) background information (see Supplemental Materials). Finally, participants were debriefed and compensated for their participation.

### Results and Discussion

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics and inter-item correlations between all primary variables. We computed 2 (expressed diversity cue: diversity statement in brochure present vs. absent)  $\times$  2 (evidence-based diversity cue: high vs. low racial/ethnic diversity in workforce) between-subjects ANOVAs on each dependent measure (diversity dishonesty, perceived organizational fit, racial/ethnic authenticity, and perceived performance). Because we planned four ANOVAs, we used a Bonferroni adjustment resulting in a critical  $\alpha = .013$ . Consistent with the show-don't-tell hypothesis, we found that only the evidence-based cue shaped African American perceivers' expectations about what it would be like to work at the organization. When evaluating a company that presented a diverse organizational chart as evidence of diversity, participants reported lower diversity dishonesty belief,  $F(1, 196) = 7.32$ ,  $p = .007$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .04$ , 95% CI = [0.25, 1.30], Cohen's  $d = .41$

**Table 2.** Means, Standard Deviations, and Inter-Item Correlations Between Primary Variables in Studies 2 to 4.

Study 2 variables		1	2	3	4	5	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	Diversity dishonesty	—					4.23	1.35
2	Organizational fit	-.29***	—				4.55	0.99
3	Authenticity	-.32***	.63***	—			4.04	1.40
4	Racial identification	.07	-.07	-.10	—		4.55	1.29
5	Perceived performance	-.17*	.74***	.61***	-.14	—	4.79	1.47
Study 3 variables		1	2	3	4	5	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	Diversity dishonesty	—					4.00	1.56
2	Organizational fit	-.43***	—				4.78	1.08
3	Authenticity	-.48***	.71***	—			4.24	1.55
4	Racial identification	.10	.04	-.10	—		4.70	1.20
5	Perceived performance	-.29***	.72***	.64***	.02	—	4.83	1.57
Study 4 variables		1	2	3	4	5	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	Diversity dishonesty	—					4.51	1.35
2	Organizational fit	-.40***	—				4.16	1.05
3	Authenticity	-.41***	.70***	—			3.68	1.55
4	Racial identification	.08	-.17***	-.31***	—		4.84	1.41
5	Perceived performance	-.37***	.77***	.69***	-.18***	—	4.46	1.60

\* $p < .05$ . \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ .

(see Figure 2), and expected greater organizational fit,  $F(1, 195) = 19.63, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .09, 95\% \text{ CI} = [-0.96, -0.21]$ , Cohen's  $d = .68$ , greater authenticity at work,  $F(1, 195) = 21.81, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .10, 95\% \text{ CI} = [-1.22, -0.16]$ , Cohen's  $d = .57$ , and greater perceived work performance,  $F(1, 195) = 14.21, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .07, 95\% \text{ CI} = [-1.49, -0.36]$ , Cohen's  $d = .57$ , as compared with when evaluating a company that presented a non-diverse organizational chart. These impressions were consistent regardless of the expressed diversity cue provided; there were no significant main effects of (all  $F_s < 3.81, p_s > .05$ ) or interactions with (all  $F_s < 1.88, p_s > .17$ ) the expressed diversity cue on our dependent variables. The results remained consistent when controlling for racial identification (which did not vary by condition; all  $p_s > .40$ ) in analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs). There were no significant effects of participant gender (all  $p_s > .04$ ; adjusted critical  $\alpha = .013$ ).

Means and standard deviations of the dependent variables by study condition are presented in Table 3 for the main effects and in Table S4 interactions. Although organizations frequently use expressed cues to attract minorities, we did not find that it significantly affected participants' diversity dishonesty assessments, or beliefs about organizational fit, authenticity, and perceived work performance, either holding the evidence-based cue constant (the show-don't-tell hypothesis) or in conjunction with the evidence-based cue (the show-and-tell hypothesis).

### Study 3

Study 3 sought to replicate Study 2 to provide confirmatory evidence in support of our finding that the expressed cue did

not influence minorities' organizational work expectations. To test the generalizability of this finding, we used videos (Dover et al., 2016) instead of brochures to manipulate the expressed diversity cue.

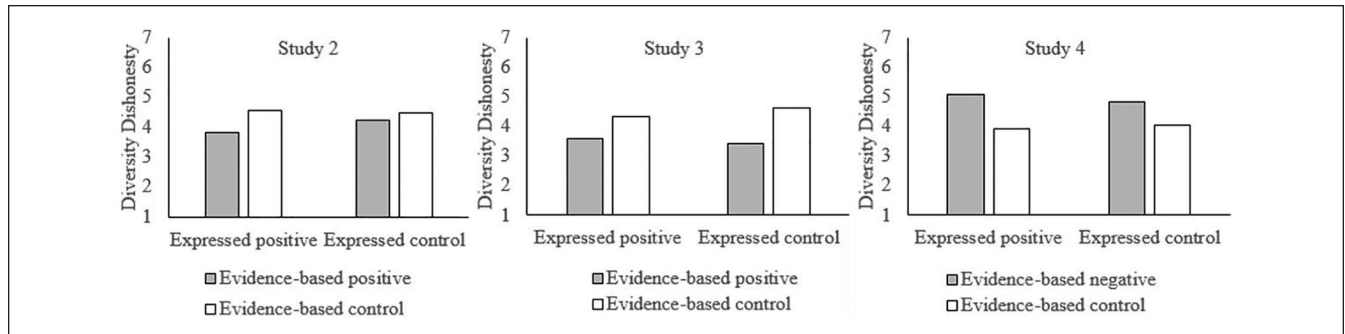
### Participants and Design

We again sought to recruit 200 participants (sufficient to detect a small-to-medium effect size,  $f(.22)$ , at 80% power; see Study 2) to a 2 (expressed diversity cue: organizational video diversity message present vs. absent)  $\times$  2 (evidence-based diversity cue: organizational racial/ethnic diversity high vs. low) between-subjects design; 211 African American/Black participants ( $M = 26.03, SD = 3.02$ ; 156 cisgender women, 53 cisgender men, one transgender individual, and one self-identified "another gender") were recruited through a Qualtrics panel in exchange for US\$0.75. All participants passed the attention check.

### Procedure and Materials

Study 3 followed the same procedure described in Study 2. We measured diversity dishonesty ( $\alpha = .85$ ), perceived organizational fit ( $\alpha = .92$ ), perceived authenticity ( $\alpha = .83$ ), and perceived performance ( $\alpha = .93$ ) as described in Study 2, and racial identification ( $\alpha = .55$ ) as described in Study 1. To manipulate the expressed cue, we used videos designed and validated by Dover and colleagues (2016), which claimed the organization valued either "diverse" (expressed diversity cue present condition) or "unique" (expressed diversity cue absent condition) "experiences, perspectives, and cultural backgrounds." In addition, we asked participants to complete





**Figure 2.** Diversity dishonest by experimental conditions.

Note. The evidence-based cues were organizational charts (Studies 2 and 3) and “Glassdoor.com” reviews (Study 4). The expressed positive cues were organizational diversity messages across studies.

**Table 3.** Means and Standard Deviations for Dependent Variables by Study Condition in Studies 2 to 4.

Study 2 variables	Expressed cues		Evidence-based cues	
	Diverse statement	Control statement	Diverse organizational chart	Control organizational chart
Diversity dishonesty	4.11 (1.36)	4.36 (1.34)	3.97 (1.36)	4.51 (1.29)
Organizational fit	4.73 (1.05)	4.37 (0.88)	4.86 (0.88)	4.22 (0.99)
Authenticity	4.24 (1.39)	3.84 (1.39)	4.49 (1.27)	3.56 (1.38)
Perceived performance	4.98 (1.47)	4.60 (1.45)	5.18 (1.26)	4.37 (1.56)
Study 3 variables	Diverse video	Control video	Diverse organizational chart	Control organizational chart
Diversity dishonesty	3.97 (1.51)	4.05 (1.59)	3.52 (1.35)	4.49 (1.59)
Organizational fit	4.84 (1.01)	4.74 (1.16)	5.06 (0.94)	4.52 (1.16)
Authenticity	4.31 (1.47)	4.18 (1.64)	4.67 (1.44)	3.83 (1.56)
Perceived performance	4.87 (1.50)	4.79 (1.62)	5.11 (1.39)	4.56 (1.67)
# Anagrams correct	7.90 (6.12)	7.46 (6.55)	7.76 (6.12)	7.60 (6.56)
# Anagrams attempted	9.57 (6.56)	8.76 (6.82)	8.83 (6.32)	9.48 (7.05)
Study 4 variables	Diverse statement	Control statement	Diversity review	Control review
Diversity dishonesty	4.56 (1.46)	4.47 (1.06)	4.99 (1.22)	3.98 (1.25)
Organizational fit	4.19 (1.05)	4.05 (1.03)	3.74 (0.99)	4.61 (0.91)
Authenticity	3.70 (1.56)	3.57 (1.49)	3.17 (1.51)	4.23 (1.37)
Perceived performance	4.52 (1.63)	4.26 (1.54)	3.99 (1.65)	4.95 (1.38)

up to 35 anagrams as a measure of actual performance. Participants were allowed to work on as many or few anagrams as they liked for an unlimited amount of time, and were told that the activity would help determine where they would best fit in at the company. The total number of anagrams attempted and completed correctly were totaled to create each participant’s *actual performance* scores.

**Results and Discussion**

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics and inter-item correlations between all primary variables. Consistent with our previous study, 2 (expressed diversity cue: diversity statement in organizational video present vs. absent) × 2

(evidence-based diversity cue: high vs. low racial/ethnic diversity in workforce) ANOVAs using a Bonferroni adjustment (critical  $\alpha = .013$ ) found evidence in support of the tell-don’t-show hypothesis. When evaluating a company that presented a diverse (vs. non-diverse) organizational chart, participants reported significantly lower diversity dishonesty beliefs,  $F(1, 210) = 22.73, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .10, 95\% CI = [0.17, 1.31]$ , Cohen’s  $d = .66$  (see Figure 2), and higher ratings of perceived fit,  $F(1, 210) = 14.01, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .06, 95\% CI = [-0.92, -0.10]$ , Cohen’s  $d = .51$ , perceived authenticity,  $F(1, 210) = 16.37, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .07, 95\% CI = [-1.32, -0.16]$ , Cohen’s  $d = .56$ , and perceived work performance,  $F(1, 210) = 6.65, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .03, 95\% CI = [-1.22, -0.03]$ , Cohen’s  $d = .36$ . There were no significant

main effects of (all  $F_s < 0.50$ ,  $ps > .48$ ) or interactions with (all  $F_s < 1.27$ ,  $ps > .26$ ) the expressed diversity cue (i.e., organizational video) on any of the dependent variables. The means and standard deviations for the main effects are presented in Table 3, and by all four conditions in Table S4. The results remained consistent when controlling for racial identification (which did not vary by condition; all  $ps > .11$ ) in ANCOVAs. There were no significant effects of participant gender (all  $ps > .03$ ; adjusted critical  $\alpha = .013$ ). Thus, Study 3 again finds that, when presented with both expressed and evidence-based cues, African Americans' feelings of fit, authenticity, and perceived performance were influenced only by the evidence-based cue.

However, we did not observe any effects of study conditions (main effects or interactions) on participants' actual anagram performance in terms of the total number of correct completions (all  $ps > .61$ ) and the number of anagrams attempted (all  $ps > .39$ ), perhaps because the anagram task was not viewed by participants as relevant to the information provided about the organization. Of note, both the number of correct completions and attempts were uncorrelated with participants' self-reported performance, as well as the other study variables (all  $ps > .08$ ). For interested readers, an exploratory moderation analysis examining the effects of ethnic identity and diversity dishonesty on actual anagram performance is reported in the Supplemental Materials.

## Study 4

In Study 4, we developed ostensibly real GlassDoor (a website where current and former employees can provide anonymous reviews of companies) reviews about an organization, to manipulate organizational climate perceptions using a novel evidence-based cue. Scholars have noted that word-of-mouth accounts of company diversity can shift organizational impressions, but little work has experimentally tested these ideas in relation to workplace diversity. We also provided an evidence-based diversity cue about the organization that had a negative valence (i.e., poor racial climate), rather than a positive valence (i.e., brochure showing racial diversity in workforce) as in Studies 2 and 3; we did not include a positive evidence-based diversity cue in the form of a positive GlassDoor review because type of feedback is not common. We predicted that, consistent with the show-don't-tell hypothesis, an expressed cue demonstrating the company does not value diversity would increase diversity dishonesty (and decrease organizational fit, authenticity, and perceived performance) expectations, regardless of the expressed cue.

### Participants and Design

The study employed a 2 (expressed diversity cue: organizational brochure diversity message present vs. absent)  $\times$  2 (evidence-based diversity cue: negative organizational racial climate vs. negative clients) between-subjects design.

African American/Black participants ( $N = 364$ ;  $M_{\text{age}} = 25.69$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 2.61$ ; 275 cisgender women, 79 cisgender men) were recruited through a Qualtrics panel in exchange for US\$0.75. Based on an a priori power analysis assuming a small effect size,  $f(\sim .15)$ , 80% power,  $\alpha = .05$ , a numerator  $df$  of 1, and four groups, we aimed to have a minimum of 351 participants in our analytic sample. Ten participants were excluded for failing a manipulation check, because they incorrectly reported the company addressed diversity in their promotional materials when they did not, resulting in an analytic sample of  $n = 354$ .

### Procedure and Materials

We followed the procedures outlined in Studies 1 to 3, and participants completed the same measures of diversity dishonesty ( $\alpha = .82$ ), fit ( $\alpha = .91$ ), authenticity ( $\alpha = .86$ ), perceived work performance ( $\alpha = .93$ ), and racial identification ( $\alpha = .73$ ). Because we did not observe any effects of the diversity statements in Studies 2 and 3, in Study 4 we adapted the procedure in two ways. First, before evaluating the company, participants completed a "Work Skills and Preferences Survey" to "match people with a company based on their personalities." Our goal in doing so was to facilitate participant engagement with the materials by providing them with feedback that the company was particularly suited to their skills and personality. Second, we developed new diversity brochure materials to be sure the effects were not specific to those materials. To manipulate our evidence-based diversity cue, we created employee reviews from the popular workplace review website, [www.GlassDoor.com](http://www.GlassDoor.com), to communicate to participants the actual racial climate of the hypothetical organization. In the evidence-based diversity cue condition, the review tagline stated, "I was the token black employee who they dragged around to meetings," and the poster stated, "I would not recommend this company to a friend—it's not a respectful environment for people of color." In the evidence-based cue control (e.g., client services) condition, the review tagline stated, "management just wants to complete projects and move on" and the poster stated, "Not a good place to build a name for yourself with clients."

### Results and Discussion

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics and inter-item correlations between all primary variables. Consistent with Studies 2 and 3, we found evidence in support of the show-don't-tell hypothesis. There were significant main effects of our evidence-based diversity cue (i.e., organizational racial climate) on perceptions of diversity dishonesty. When evaluating a company whose GlassDoor reviews presented a negative organizational racial climate, participants reported more negative diversity dishonesty assessments,  $F(1, 350) = 47.54$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .12$ , 95% CI =  $[-1.47, -0.83]$ , Cohen's  $d = .82$  (see Figure 2), and lower ratings of

perceived fit,  $F(1, 350) = 59.65, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .15$ , 95% CI = [0.76, 1.25], Cohen's  $d = .91$ , perceived authenticity,  $F(1, 350) = 42.54, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .11$ , 95% CI = [0.71, 1.46], Cohen's  $d = .74$ , and perceived work performance,  $F(1, 350) = 31.39, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .08$ , 95% CI = [0.62, 1.42], Cohen's  $d = .63$ , as compared with when evaluating a company whose GlassDoor reviews presented a negative organizational client environment. Participants reported that they would fit in better at the organization with the diversity (vs. client services) brochure,  $F(1, 350) = 3.89, p = .049, \eta_p^2 = .01$ , 95% CI = [-0.31, 0.27], Cohen's  $d = .14$ . Given the 95% CIs included zero, the small effect size, the relatively large  $p$  value, and the failure to replicate this finding in other studies, we do not interpret this finding as meaningful. There were no other significant main effects of ( $F_s < 3.75, p_s > .054$ ) or interactions with (all  $F_s < 3.08, p_s > .08$ ) the expressed diversity cue (i.e., organizational brochure) on any of the dependent variables. The results remained consistent when controlling for racial/ethnic identification (which did not vary by condition; all  $p_s > .65$ ) in ANCOVAs. There were no significant effects of participant gender, with the exception that women reported significantly more authenticity than men ( $p = .01$ ); results remained consistent when controlling for participant gender in ANCOVA. Means and standard deviations of the dependent variables by study condition are presented in Table 3 for the main effects and in Table S4 for the interactions.

### Studies 1 to 4: Exploratory Mediation Analyses

We also explored whether the relation between overall diversity dishonesty (across all conditions) and perceived work performance was mediated by participants' perceived organizational fit and authenticity at work (Figure S1). We first used Hayes's (2018) PROCESS macro for bootstrapping mediation analysis (Model 4; 10,000 bootstrap samples) to examine mediation. We centered all continuous predictors and added diversity dishonesty as the predictor, perceived fit, and authenticity as the mediators, and perceived performance as the outcome. We also tested this serial mediation in an SEM with latent variables using the SAS Proc CALIS and EffPart procedures in Study 1, and using a path model incorporating the effect of the evidence-based diversity cue (0 = non-diverse workforce, 1 = diverse workforce) using the "EffPart" procedure in SAS. All four studies demonstrated support for the hypothesis that lower levels of overall diversity dishonesty (across all conditions) were associated with higher perceived fit and authenticity, which, in turn, were associated with better perceived performance (see Tables S5–S7). We did not explore this mediation model on the actual anagram performance variables measured in Study 3. These effects were also consistent across studies when adding racial

identification to the models as a control variable. Because these analyses were exploratory, and because we did not manipulate our predicted mediators to provide support for a causal relationship between the variables, we interpret these results with caution. We report this information here (and direct interested readers to read more about these findings in the Supplemental Materials) to be transparent in communicating this interesting and consistent post hoc finding. These data suggest that diversity dishonesty can harm minorities' perceived ability to perform at work, because they feel like they have concerns about fitting in and being themselves in the workplace.

### General Discussion

Although most U.S. organizations express commitment to diversity and inclusion, such efforts may backfire if they are inaccurate or disconnected from the organization's actual diversity climate. In the current research, we investigate how diversity dishonesty, an assessment that an organization is falsely or incorrectly inflating its diversity in promotional materials, affects racial and ethnic minorities in the workplace. In Study 1, we documented that African American and Latinx participants report diversity dishonesty with their current workplaces, which significantly decreases their sense of fit and authenticity (but not performance) at their organization. In Studies 2 to 4, we examined whether two types of organizational cues—expressed cues that ostensibly tell observers about the organization's diversity, and evidence-based cues that show observers a glimpse of what the organization's diversity is like—influence diversity dishonesty beliefs. We consistently found, when provided with both expressed and evidence-based cues about workplace diversity, that evidence-based cues affect African Americans' diversity dishonesty assessments, in both positive and negative directions. Evidence that an organization is diverse (a racially diverse organizational chart) reduced diversity dishonesty, whereas evidence that an organization is not diverse or inclusive (negative employee review of racial climate) increased diversity dishonesty, relative to control conditions. These experimentally induced increases or decreases in diversity dishonesty coincided with respective increases or decreases in perceived organizational fit, authenticity, and perceived work performance at the hypothetical organization (but not actual performance on an anagram test). These effects were mainly associated with medium-to-large effect sizes (Cohen's  $d$ s ranging from .36 to .91), which suggests that they are both statistically and practically significant (Lakens, 2013). They were also robust to individual differences (in racial identification, SDO, and beliefs about diversity), evidenced across both actual and imagined scenarios, and generalized across various types of expressed and evidence-based cues (i.e., brochures, videos, organizational charts, employee reviews).

The current research deepens our understanding of how diversity messages shape ethnic minorities' beliefs about organizations and themselves in organizational contexts. To maximize ethnic minorities' experiences at work, our findings suggest that organizations should strive to "show," rather than "tell," current and potential racial minority employees how they value diversity and inclusion. And, while it is important to acknowledge people's subjective experiences, our data underscore the need for companies to truly foster diversity throughout all levels of the company, because the observed diversity dishonesty assessments reflected accurate assessments of the company's objective reality (i.e., the evidence-based cues). Most extant work examines how various factors shape minorities' preference for an organization, which is mostly relevant for initial organizational impressions affecting recruitment. We examined minorities' beliefs about how they experience and anticipate performing in said organization; diversity efforts begin with, but must be sustained beyond, recruitment. Of course, we do not suggest that organizations should cease portraying themselves as diverse and inclusive spaces in promotional materials. However, our data underscore the complexities associated with advertising diversity specifically and facilitating organizational diversity generally. Beyond making public statements about being pro-diverse, organizations instead should focus on being able to provide authentic evidence-based information that they truly do foster a diverse and inclusive climate where minorities can work and be successful. This challenging work may require organizational introspection or temporary discomfort while shifting or recommitting to efficacy-based diversity management efforts. Yet, companies can commit to developing, applying, and examining the impact of diversity efforts (Kaiser & Quintanilla, 2014; Kalev et al., 2006) and, in doing so, demonstrate evidence-based information that may help minorities feel welcome and perform well in certain spaces.

A particularly important question stemming from the current research is how companies that truly wish to become more diverse can avoid triggering minorities' diversity dishonesty beliefs if they do not yet have a racially diverse workplace (or another evidence-based cue that signals a diverse climate). One potential way to accomplish this goal is for an organization to emphasize its *diversity goals* in their messaging, as opposed to claiming they already have positive diversity climates if they do not. In other related work, organizational messages that emphasize that a human characteristic (intelligence) can "increase over time as a function of environmental factors and effort" influence people's judgments about the organization and themselves, compared with organizational messages that focus on the same characteristic as being rooted to a current and unchanging position (i.e., malleable vs. fixed construals of intelligence; Murphy & Dweck, 2010, p. 285). In a similar manner, by emphasizing a diversity goal that includes a clear and actionable *plan* to move toward diversity goals, companies may increase the

perceived authenticity of their diversity claims and reduce the extent to which racial and ethnic minorities expect to feel vulnerable in the context. Organizations that lack diversity, but are working toward achieving greater diversity, therefore might benefit from communicating transparent, tangible diversity-related goals and demonstrating that they are taking the concrete steps to address diversity issues.

In our data, we generally did not find that expressed cues, either regardless of ("show-don't-tell hypothesis") or in conjunction with (both "show-and-tell hypotheses") explicit cues, were the main drivers shifting ethnic minorities' expectations about how they will fit in, feel about being their authentic selves, or perform at an organization. Because diversity messages have become so commonplace in the U.S. workforce, ethnic minorities may be less sensitive to them than they were in the past (e.g., Dover et al., 2019). Alternately, because we told participants they were reviewing only part of the company's materials, they may have assumed the organization had a diversity message that they did not review. There may also be an important individual difference that we did not explore—such as chronic suspiciousness (e.g., Major et al., 2013)—that might moderate the extent to which expressed cues have a positive effect on ethnic minorities' impressions of a workplace.

Future research should continue to examine how other expressed and evidence-based cues influence diversity dishonesty perceptions, fit, and performance, as well as other outcomes that may follow from this state. This work could explore whether other evidence-based cues that have been shown to be more (e.g., Chief Diversity Officer) or less (e.g., diversity training) effectively facilitate diversity goals (e.g., Kalev et al., 2006) trigger similar diversity dishonesty perceptions among minorities. It should also aim to replicate this research with other racial and ethnic minority groups (e.g., Native Americans, Asians) or other social groups (e.g., women, sexual minorities) that experience disadvantage in the workplace. Future work could also build on Study 1's finding that minorities can experience diversity dishonesty in their current workplaces, by examining how diversity dishonesty beliefs develop over time (in longitudinal designs) and link to real-world outcomes, such as retention and negotiation strategies.

## Conclusion

To address the systematic underrepresentation and undervaluation of racial and ethnic minorities in the workplace, as well as to help organizations benefit from a diversity of people and perspectives, organizations often aim to recruit racial and ethnic minorities. Organizations may elevate their diversity claims to achieve these important objectives. Yet we found consistent evidence across four studies that doing so may have little impact on African Americans' expectations about the organization. Instead of merely "telling" people that their workplace is diverse and inclusive, companies

should also commit to “showing” authentic evidence-based indicators of effective diversity management processes.

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### Supplemental Material

Supplemental material is available online with this article.

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