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Unmet Diversity and Inclusion Expectations in the Workplace

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ABSTRACT

Companies are increasingly advertising DEI as job seekers are looking for employers who are DEI friendly. We don't necessarily know everything that a job seeker is experiencing is what they would experience in their organization. Prior research suggests that this could be problematic- unmet expectations, and newcomers job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to stay. There were 708 survey participants in the survey launched on Prolific. The study supported each of the three hypotheses. This study provides organizations with some insight into the importance of DEI practices and programs for newcomers.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chapter 1 **: INTRODUCTION**

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964 in an effort to prohibit

discrimination in employment on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, and national origin.

Despite Title VII and various other legislation passed since, organizations continue to deal with

issues related to increasing diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI). DEI concerns within organizations

have therefore existed for a long time, and some employees have expressed concerns about the

extent to which organizations are increasing their DEI efforts. The events of 2020 – including

multiple events of police brutality against Black Americans as well as the effects of COVID-19 –

have catapulted DEI concerns to the forefront of organizations' focus and strategy. The

ramifications of these events pushed society in general, and employees in particular, to consider

whether the companies with which they interact take a stand to support DEI and, consequently,

to hold those organizations and top leaders accountable when they do not. As a result,

organizations have started to more publicly advertise their support for DEI as well as the various

DEI practices, programs, and initiatives they have put in place.

That companies now have to demonstrate that they are at least attempting to be more

diverse, equitable, and inclusive is thus a result of their current and potential employees

demanding support and action for traditionally underrepresented minority groups. Indeed, one

could argue that, in order to gain and maintain a competitive advantage in today's business

environment, organizations need to prove they are doing whatever is possible to be more diverse

and inclusive. Jobs seekers of all ages want to work for companies that are DEI friendly.

However, younger generations specifically have stressed their strong desire to work for companies who have a strong DEI focus. In other words, there are now baseline expectations that organizations have diversity at various levels and are inclusive to all people regardless of race, gender, age, sexuality, and ethnicity. If organizations are not where they would like to be yet in terms of diversity levels and inclusive practices, they must highlight where they are aiming to improve. If companies are "missing the mark" here, job seekers are not afraid to continue their job search to find an organization that will support them and their DEI preferences. If organizations do have DEI practices in place and publicize these efforts, they are more likely to attract and retain the next generation of workers as they search for their "perfect" employer.

Critical to this narrative is the extent to which there is alignment between what companies are actually implementing versus what they advertise that they are implementing for their DEI strategy. We would hope that organizations would be taking the right steps toward addressing their DEI issues, and not simply discussing them without any action attached to them. In expressing their DEI friendliness or their journey to DEI friendliness, we would hope that organizations would be taking steps toward actual improvement, in the form of specific DEI-related programs and practices. However, this is not always the case, as organizations have limited time and resources and, unfortunately, could be advertising diverse practices and values without following through on them internally. For example, companies could advertise themselves as DEI friendly, being inclusive and welcoming to all identities, but not actually have any programs or plans in place to promote inclusion or improve upon the current state of diversity in their organization. Alternatively, an organization may post their commitment to DEI in the form of a DEI statement, ostensibly including testimonials from their employees. Though clearly unethical, the organization could have created the testimonials themselves or provided an

incentive for employees to deliberately over-exaggerate the extent to which the company cares about DEI issues and implements DEI-related programs, practices, and initiatives to support underrepresented groups.

While companies' advertising DEI-friendly cultures might help to attract applicants in the short term, it can have pretty serious negative consequences if workers believe they are entering an organization that cares more about DEI issues than it actually does. If new hire expectations related to their company's investment in DEI does not match what they ultimately experience while working for the organization, both employees and organizations are likely to be negatively impacted. Indeed, research on unmet expectations demonstrates that workers whose expectations are not met upon entering an organization experience lower job satisfaction, lower commitment to the organization, lower trust in the organization, and increased intentions to leave the company (Major et at., 1995; Wanous et al., 1992). The expectations new hires develop could revolve around compensation, job tasks and responsibilities, or any aspect of work where the candidate was told about one reward or benefit but they ultimately did not experience what they expected once they were working at the organization for some period of time. Although one could argue that unmet expectations are a part of any newcomer's work experience, if new hires have developed very specific expectations about their future work environment, and ultimately do not enter into the environment "promised" by the company, they are much more likely to subsequently exit the organization, resulting in an entirely new recruitment and selection process, onboarding, and training – all of which require substantial investment by the company. Noted above, because job seekers have come to expect their potential organizations to care about DEI issues (and may even accept job offers based on the companies' DEI policies and practices), experiencing unmet expectations in this regard can be very detrimental.

I would therefore like to examine how the theory and logic behind the existing research on unmet expectations could be applied to DEI initiatives across various organizations. Since organizations have been forced to improve their DEI programs and practices due to competitive advantage pressures, as well as advertise these efforts, I believe it is possible that organizations may publicly showcase DEI support and initiatives without following through on them. More specifically, I suggest that some companies may not be implementing the DEI programs and practices they say they are implementing when highlighting the benefits of their organization to potential job seekers. I believe their lack of implementation can have unintended consequences on their applicants and employees. Importantly, new hires may have applied to and joined a company assuming certain DEI initiatives were in place when, in actuality, the company is not as invested in said DEI endeavors. Utilizing theories of unmet expectations, propose that employees who experience negative unmet expectations regarding their companies' DEI programs and practices are likely to report lower levels of job satisfaction, lower levels of organizational commitment, and lower levels of intentions to stay with the organization. In supplementary analyses, I consider the possibility that some employees may have positive unmet expectations (i.e., they experience more DEI friendliness from their company once they have joined than they expected when they applied). I suggest that it is possible that these employees may be more satisfied, committed, and likely to report higher intentions to stay than those with negative unmet expectations.

I explore these hypotheses using survey data collected from 708 employees across multiple organizations. I used Prolific to recruit participants and collect responses to the survey. The participants responded to 29 questions in the survey. I used 5 analyses and an OLS

regression to analyze the survey data. The data generally supports my propositions. I find that, if employees' pre-hire expectations related to their companies DEI efforts do not match their post-hire perceptions, they experience increased job dissatisfaction, decreased intentions to stay, and decreased organizational commitment.

My theory and findings provide multiple contributions for DEI research and companies hoping to improve DEI research and companies hoping to improve DEI. In particular, the findings suggest that companies cannot simply advertise that they are DEI- friendly without clearly making an effort to deliver on such promises. Next, if a company does have DEI programs and practices, they should be advertising them for potential job seekers. Additionally, if companies have DEI programs, they should develop stronger internal communication about them to current employees. Lastly, companies should continue to examine job seeker's expectations and feelings throughout recruitment.

Chapter 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining DEI Friendly

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) friendly can be defined as a characteristic of an organization that prioritizes DEI and creates and implements programs and practices that push the company to be more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. DEI prioritization and practices are an integral part of what it means to be a top-tier organization in 2023. Organizations need to be committed to all three values in order to be successful. First and foremost, diversity is the first pillar that companies must be passionate about. There are many definitions for diversity but, "diversity refers to who is represented in the workforce" ("What is diversity, equity, and inclusion", 2022). For organizations to embrace diversity means that they are giving space for their workforce to think and reflect on their similarities and differences. In addition to diversity, organizations must be dedicated to equity. Equity can be defined as, "fair treatment for all people, so that the norms, practices, and policies in place ensure identity is not predictive of opportunities or workplace outcomes" ("What is diversity, equity, and inclusion", 2022). Equity is instrumental in breaking down societal barriers and ensuring employees feel like their organizations are fair. Lastly, companies need to be inclusive, as employees want to feel included while at work. Inclusion is defined as, "how the workforce experiences the workplace and the degree to which organizations embrace all employees and enable them to make meaningful contributions" ("What is diversity, equity, and inclusion", 2022). Employees prioritize inclusion, as they want to feel seen, heard, and safe at work. They want to feel as though they are part of the group and greater organization.

Over the past couple of years, DEI in the workplace has become an even more important priority for organizations. One of the major events that pushed organizations to adopt and promote more DEI practices was the murder of George Floyd in June of 2020. Prior to June 2020, one would argue that companies were not quite as thoughtful about their DEI efforts. In the wake of the murder of George Floyd and countless others, a handful of businesses tried to go from having few DEI practices in place to implementing as many as possible, seeking to match what other companies were doing in relation to DEI. For example, as quoted by Ella Washington, "leaders first tend to express deep concern and then ask if their company is instituting all the best diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs; they are eager to know what other companies are doing and how their own efforts stack up" (Washington, 2022). DEI practices and programs matter because they make employees feel welcome and safe in their workspace. For years, companies have talked about starting DEI programs and their commitment to DEI. Since 2020, companies have been focused on actually implementing practices to embrace and encourage DEI in the workplace.

Diversity training can be defined as training used to expose employees to diversity concepts and increase their knowledge of such concepts. Next, employee resource groups are when the company offers time for groups of people who may or may not have a similar characteristic to talk about their experiences and how it applies to the workplace. In addition to employee resource groups, organizations may also provide mentoring opportunities for underrepresented minority members. Mentoring for underrepresented minority members is when a company assigns a mentor to an underrepresented minority member to give them guidance and assistance as they navigate their career. Lastly, some organizations may also participate in targeted recruiting. Targeted recruiting is when organizations are very strategic with where they

advertise their job openings and the ways they attract job seekers in hopes of attracting diverse candidates.

Theory Development and Hypotheses Part

The Importance of DEI Programs and Practices

There are a variety of practices that are commonly used in organizations who aspire to become DEI friendly. Although DEI-friendly practices can take a multitude of forms, some common practices that companies implement include diversity training, employee resource groups, mentoring opportunities for underrepresented minority members, and targeted recruiting. While we now typically view the presence of DEI programs and practices as a baseline requirement for what it means to be an organization, there are also a variety of benefits of implementing DEI practices and programs. First, there are major financial benefits. In fact, reports indicate that "companies that are in the top quartile for ethnic diversity on executive teams were 36 percent more likely to have above-average profitability than companies in the fourth quartile" (Ellsworth et al., 2021). In another study that focused on the venture capital industry, they found that "the success rates of acquisitions and IPOs was 11.5% lower, on average for investments by partners with shared school backgrounds than those by partners from different schools. The effect of shared ethnicity was even stronger, reducing an investment's comparative success rate by 26.4% to 32.2%" (Gompers & Kovvali, 2018). This suggests that those organizations lacking ethnic diversity are less likely to excel financially. The benefits extend to gender diversity as well; one study showed that, "companies in the top quartile for

gender diversity within executive teams were 25 percent more likely than companies in the fourth quartile to have above-average profitability" ("What is diversity, equity, and inclusion", 2022). In essence, companies that are diverse seem to experience greater financial success due to having a diverse organization.

In addition to there being financial benefits from DEI programs and practices, there are also benefits to firm and group performance, innovation, and creativity. In addition to profitability, companies who prioritize and implement DEI policies and procedures see improvements in their overall firm performance. For example, data shows that "companies where more than 30 percent of the executives are women were more likely to outperform companies where this percentage ranged from only 10 to 30" ("What is diversity, equity, and inclusion", 2022). This research suggests that, if companies have a diverse group of people working for them, they are more likely to outperform companies who do not have as much diversity. Other studies have looked down a level at group performance, relying on what is referred to as the information processing perspective on diversity (Williams & O'Reilly 1998). This research suggests that diverse groups are more likely to be better at problem-solving because they have greater access to different types of information; this information advantage boosts their performance relative to non-diverse groups (Roberson, 2019). In addition to firm and group productivity, DEI programs and practices benefit innovation and creativity within a group. One study found that "cognitive diversity is estimated to enhance team innovation by up to 20%" (Alexander, 2021). A diverse workplace allows employees from different backgrounds and experiences to leverage those experiences and be creative together. Other studies focusing on group creativity have found that when companies put a team of multiple diverse perspectives

together, their team is more likely to outperform in terms of creativity and innovation (Sterling &

Abrahams, 2023)

In addition to the benefits to financial performance, group performance, and innovation

and creativity, DEI initiatives are also very beneficial to employee attitudes. One study from the

Wharton, for example, found that "access to education and training and internal diversity

partners are the most effective tools for empowering [employees] to engage in 'speaking up'

behavior at work" ("The Wharton School", 2021). Overall, employee attitudes were improved

by the presence and integration of DEI programs. In another study conducted by Deloitte,

researchers found that feelings of inclusion increase the extent to which employees feel engaged

and reduce the likelihood that employees will be absent from work, noting that "if just 10 percent

more employees feel included, the company will increase work attendance by almost one day per

year per employee" (Shufeldt, 2021). In fact, another study conducted by Deloitte researchers

found that, "it is the combined focus on diversity *and* inclusion which delivers the highest levels

of engagement (101%)" (Swiegers & Toohey, 2013). This research indicates more support for

the idea that DEI programs improve employee engagement. Lastly, DEI efforts have been shown

to increase retention rates across organizations. For example, when a major organization

implemented a program that free education and upskilling for their employees, they found that

the impact produced a "20 percent higher rate of retention among program participants"

(Ellingrud et al., 2023). In general, the research that has been conducted seems to indicate that

employees are more likely to stay their companies if their companies are seen as inclusive

(McKinsey & Company, n.d.) and, relatedly, are much less likely to leave their organizations if

they feel as though they have access to opportunities and are treated fairly within their

organizations (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013) - both of which are central to the logic surrounding why companies implement DEI programs and practices in the first place.

DEI Recruiting

While there are clearly a number of benefits for current employees, companies are also beginning to recognize the value in highlighting their DEI-friendly culture, policies, and practices for *prospective* employees (i.e., job seekers potentially looking to join their organization). The increase in a desire for organizations to implement DEI programs happened quite quickly and became an important factor in employment decisions when organizations may have been focused on other strategic programs. The National Association of Colleges and Employers wanted to investigate the factors that college graduates prioritize during their job search. They found that, in 2008, the diversity of a company's workforce ranked 12th out of 15; by the spring of 2020, "it had risen to seventh out of 19 options, and over 79 percent of respondents called it "very important" (Miller, 2021). DEI also seems to be increasingly important and valued for younger generations of the workforce. The new generation of employees puts DEI as one of the top factors on their list of what they are looking for in an employer, and they are not afraid to turn down a job due to a lack of DEI efforts within an organization. Indeed, one study showed, "39 percent of job seekers were more likely to turn down an opportunity due to a perceived lack of inclusion" (McKinsey & Company, 2021).

This data clearly indicates how important it is to job seekers for there to be DEI presence within organizations. If organizations do not have some sort of DEI program or set of practices, they are likely to miss out on not only the best job applicants but the future success of their

business. Repeatedly, "studies show that women and job seekers from historically marginalized communities are less likely to apply for a position if they don't feel 100 percent qualified" (Athanasakopoulos et al., 2022). Organizations have taken data like this and used it to continuously improve their recruiting practices in order to attract the best talent. If they are not attracting the best and the brightest, the future of their business is not guaranteed as they will struggle to stay competitive and be innovative without ideas from early talent. It is vital for the growth and success of an organization to have strong DEI programs or – at the very least – appear to have a well-built DEI program for the large portion of job seekers who want to participate in DEI efforts. Without the appearance or existence of DEI programs, employers could miss out on the best talent as the new generation of employees are not afraid to deny a job opportunity if the organization does not have everything they are looking for in an employer.

There are a handful of ways that companies have started to advertise their DEI efforts to job seekers. One of the main ways is through corporate diversity statements, these are typically posted on the company's website. They state the organization's commitment to DEI and their DEI promise to their current and future employees. As highlighted in research exploring the impact of diversity statements Kang and colleagues note that, "in trying to address discrimination, many organizations now explicitly advertise their dedication to diversity, identifying themselves as 'equal opportunity' or 'diversity-friendly' employers. The thinking, presumably, is that such statements will increase the diversity of their applicant pool and ultimately their workforce" (Kang et al., 2016). In addition to corporate diversity statements, organizations have been known to advertise their commitment to DEI on their career's websites. They will post their commitment to DEI in order to advertise this information to job seekers and persuade them to join the company. This can be a useful tool for those job seekers looking for

opportunities at specific companies rather than relying on postings on LinkedIn or Indeed, for example. On their careers pages, companies can supplement diversity statements with a lot of information about their commitment to DEI and the various programs and practices that their companies have to offer employees. They may include here, for instance, information about the different types of employee resource groups that they offer for their workers, as well as different website sections related more specifically to examples of how they are promoting inclusivity within their organizations.

While companies use corporate diversity statements and their careers page to advertise their DEI efforts directly on their websites, companies will also use job descriptions and affinity groups to promote their DEI programs. Indeed, companies are increasingly thoughtful about what content and language they are including in their job descriptions in order to attract a more diverse pool of candidates. Research shows that gendered wording in job descriptions influences who applies for certain roles, with women much less likely to apply if they read a more stereotypically masculine posting – regardless of their ability or qualifications to do the job (Gaucher et al., 2011). To address this, companies are increasingly using more neutral wording to make sure they are not unintentionally removing diversity from applicant pools. Beyond the individual job descriptions for certain roles, many companies have started to build affinity groups, pipelines with universities, and talent slates to attract certain demographic groups and make sure they are providing a fair and equitable hiring process. For example, Ernst & Young (EY) has started to build physical/mental ability affinity groups in order to attract more diverse candidates. "EY's abilities-focused groups are highlighted in orientation for new hires, at affinity group fairs, on the firm's intranet and in online newsletters and leader messaging" (EARN, n.d.). Companies have also started using talent slates in their DEI recruiting. A talent slate is when

companies set quotas on how many candidates must make it to the first round of interviews, a certain amount of these candidates must be diverse. One company, "began implementing diverse talent slates at first round interviews" (Ellsworth & Goldstein, 2022). These talent slates ensured that at least half the candidates in the first-round interview were diverse. It also pushed the recruiting team to improve their process in such a way that they were able to improve their support of diverse applicants who are going through the job interview process.

The research presented above indicates that companies are investing increasingly large buckets of resources into showcasing their DEI initiatives for potential employees. We would hope that, in highlighting DEI to attract potential applicants, companies would also be putting forth as much effort and investment into actually implementing those DEI practices and policies for their current workforce. Indeed, while companies are likely to reap the benefits of a large and high-quality applicant pool when showcasing their DEI efforts, it means little if they are not implementing those efforts once employees have entered the organization. Indeed, it is not difficult to imagine cases where companies may – at worst – be overstating how DEI-friendly their cultures and practices are and where new employees – at best – are not experiencing and/or perceiving their organizations as DEI-friendly as the company believes it is. This is problematic, as prior research emphasizes the negative outcomes associated with new hires' unmet expectations following entry into their organizations.

Unmet Expectations

Over the past couple of decades, there have been many studies conducted on the idea of unmet expectations. Most of the research about unmet expectations has been related to

employees' pre-hire expectations of what their position entails and post-hire experiences of their job not matching their expectations. Early studies of unmet expectations, in general, suggest that unmet expectations are associated with a number of negative outcomes, including unsuccessful socialization (as measured by lower commitment to the firm and decreased satisfaction with the job), lower intentions to stay with the organization, and actual turnover (Major et al., 1995; Wanous et al., 1992). The logic is straightforward: if a new hire develops certain expectations about the organization and the job they are entering prior to officially joining the organization, and they do not experience what they expected once they have joined the organization, they are likely to be much more dissatisfied than if they experience what they had expected. Other research on psychological contract violations shows similar effects. In a more recently published study than those highlighted above, researchers found that "individuals with higher expectations for supervision were more likely to experience psychological contract violations after they commenced the job" (Sutton & Griffin, 2004). Their study reaffirmed that there are negative consequences for employees who have unmet expectations in their current position. For all of these reasons, recent reviews of the recruiting literature have highlighted "the importance of providing realistic job information (e.g., via employee referrals or realistic job previews" so that organizations can reduce the likelihood that employees will have unmet expectations upon entering their companies (Breaugh & Starke, 2000).

Unmet Expectations and DEI

While the majority of research on unmet expectations focuses on expectations related to the job newcomers are entering, there is reason to believe that the same logic can be applied to

newcomers' expectations about their organizations' level of DEI friendliness. In this study, I aim to explore how an employee's unmet expectations in the context of DEI affect their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intent to remain with the organization. Employees have been affected by their organization not meeting their expectations in the workplace and DEI has become a very important factor to job seekers in recent years. Since DEI and the presence of DEI programs and practices is such a priority to job seekers, it seems that an organization following through on these efforts may be important to new employees. As research has shown in the past, the way the company advertises itself to job seekers has an effect on future and current employees and their tenure with the organization. As noted above, studies have shown that providing realistic job previous (RJPs) might lower employees' expectations of their jobs prior to entering the firm, but having been provided an RJP positively affects job satisfaction, as employees have a better sense of what to expect from their jobs and organizations (Breaugh & Starke, 2000).

If organizations choose to advertise DEI efforts to job seekers, but decide not to follow through on said efforts, they may create unmet DEI expectations for their employees. Once an employer advertises DEI programs or practices, employees would have reason to expect that these DEI programs are in place and have some impact on their day-to-day positions. For example, as highlighted above, some companies might choose to advertise an employee resource group for women as part of their recruiting efforts. A female job seeker might therefore join the company in large part for the benefits associated with that employee resource group. Because employee resource groups help employees to feel connected to other employees across the organization, this specific female job seeker might anticipate that belonging to the employee resource group may be particularly helpful for her as she navigates learning the "ins and outs" of

her new job (e.g., who to go to for information about projects, how certain supervisors like work

to be completed, and what performance standards exist for someone working in the role). If this

employee were to find out, after joining the organization, that the group does not look like how it

was advertised – or, worse, that the company does not actually provide the advertised employee

resource at all – she would experience high levels of unmet expectations regarding her

company's DEI friendliness and investment. Because she anticipated that this employee resource

group (and, more generally, her company's DEI initiatives) would help her better understand and

enjoy different aspects of her job, experiencing such unmet expectations would likely lead to

lower levels of job satisfaction. Indeed, noted above, several studies of unmet expectations have

established that newcomers' feelings that their expectations have not been met experience greater

dissatisfaction with their jobs (e.g., Major et al., 1995; Wanous et al., 1992). I therefore propose

the following:

> ***Hypothesis 1:*** *Employees with unmet DEI expectations are likely to*
>
> *report lower levels of job satisfaction (compared to employees with met DEI*
>
> *expectations).*

Noted above, prior research also explores the effect of unmet expectations on

organizational commitment and intentions to remain with the company. Similar logic can be

applied if we are thinking about newcomers' DEI expectations. If a job seeker accepted a

position in an organization with DEI programs but found out the company did not follow through

with delivering those DEI programs, the employee may feel less committed to the organization

overall. Highlighted previously, one particularly early study found that unmet expectations were

problematic even for employees who were successful in socializing with their coworkers (Major

et al., 1995). In other words, despite employees being able to get to know others in the organization and forming meaningful relationships at work, a part of them was disengaged due to the company failing to live up to expectations (Major et al., 1995). One could easily apply this same logic to newcomers' expectations of their organization's level of DEI friendliness and subsequent feelings of commitment and intentions to stay with the company. Even if new hires are able to integrate into the organization and make personal and professional connections, if their expectations regarding their organizations' DEI friendliness and investment are not met, they are likely to feel less engaged, excited, committed, and willing to stay with that company. This is especially likely given how central companies' investment in DEI is for what job seekers value and are looking for in a potential employer.

Additionally, it is worth noting that the majority of prior studies of unmet expectations have focused on expectations relating more specifically to newcomers' job attributes and responsibilities and their subsequent commitment and intentions to stay attitudes. In this study, I am focusing on DEI-friendliness as an organization-level phenomena likely to shape potential employees' pre-hire expectations. There is therefore reason to believe that the effect of unmet expectations on organizational commitment and intentions to stay may even be stronger than the effects reported in prior studies. In, job seekers' expectations about a company's DEI initiatives could shape whether they chose to apply or enter the organization at all. We should expect to see powerful negative effects of DEI unmet expectations on organizational commitment and intentions to stay, both constructs that are considered attitudes toward the organization as a whole as opposed to a newcomer's individual job.

***Hypothesis 2:** Employees with unmet DEI expectations are likely to report lower levels of organizational commitment (compared to employees with met DEI expectations).*

***Hypothesis 3**: Employees with unmet DEI expectations are likely to report lower levels of intentions to stay with their organization (compared to employees with met DEI expectations).*

Chapter 3 : RESEARCH METHODOLGY

This study was designed, conducted, and implemented by a senior at The Pennsylvania State University. Data collection was completed in the United States and took place in February of 2023. The survey was approved for distribution by the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

The study was communicated to potential participants through Prolific. Prolific is an online survey platform that recruits eligible participants for survey studies and invites participants to take part in those studies. Through Prolific, the researcher clearly communicated that participation in the study was voluntary and there would be no repercussions if the participant did not respond to questions throughout the survey. Participants also knew that their responses to the survey would be anonymous. To be eligible to participate in the study, participants had to be 18 years of age and be working for their current employer for more than 3 months. The survey intended to look at the relationship between unmet DEI expectations and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to stay. Therefore, the target audience for the survey was people who could potentially be aware of the DEI programs/practices their organizations have in place as they have been working for them for more than 3 months.

Sample Description

Survey responses were collected from 850 participants. Of these 850 responses, 142 were excluded and not used in the data analysis process because they did not fully complete the survey and therefore contained missing data. As a result, 708 responses were utilized. The survey was completely anonymous, but participants were asked to share demographic information such as age, gender, ethnicity, and highest level of education completed.

Survey Description

The survey contained four sections. The first section asked participants to verify they met the inclusion criteria necessary to participate in the study. In the second section, participants were asked about the DEI efforts within their current companies. I asked questions about specific DEI initiatives and if the participant was aware of their company having such programs and initiatives. I then asked the participant to rate the degree to which they participated in each of the DEI initiatives that I had asked about prior and if their company increased their DEI efforts in the last couple of months. I then asked them to think about the expectations they had for DEI prior to entering the organization and to rate how well their expectations were met upon entering the organization and experiencing the organization as a new hire. The third section contained survey matrices that asked participants to respond about their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intention to stay with the company. Participants rated the extent to which they agreed with statements related to those three dependent variables. Lastly, in the fourth section, participants were asked to fill out questions related to their demographic information like gender, age, ethnicity, tenure, occupation, industry, and the highest level of education completed.

The survey is designed to test the three hypotheses: (1) employees with unmet DEI expectations are likely to report lower levels of job satisfaction (compared to employees with met DEI expectations); (2) employees with unmet DEI expectations are likely to report lower levels of organizational commitment (compared to employees with met DEI expectations); and (3) employees with unmet DEI expectations are likely to report lower levels of intentions to stay with their organization (compared to employees with met DEI expectations). Please refer to Appendix A for the entirety of the survey.

Dependent Variables

      Job Satisfaction. This variable captures a level of happiness that an employee feels in their current position (Gerhart, 1990). In order to measure job satisfaction, participants responded to 8 items adapted from the scale created by Gerhart (1990). Examples of items reflecting participants' job satisfaction included "I get a chance to do the things I do best", "the physical surroundings are pleasant", and "the skills I am learning would be valuable in getting a better job". Participants were asked the extent to which they agreed with each item using a 4-point Likert scale: 1= "not at all true", 2= "not very true", 3= "somewhat true", and 4= "very true".

      The participants of the study were asked to respond to each of the 8 items once during the survey. The variable's scale appeared in section three, where I asked participants to indicate their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to stay. The results of job satisfaction will be used to test **Hypothesis 1.**

      Organizational Commitment. This variable can be defined as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (Mowday et al., 1979). To measure organizational commitment, participants responded to 9 items adapted from the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire developed by Mowday, Steers, & Porter (1979). Examples of items reflecting participants' organizational commitment were "I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful", "I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for", and "I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization". Participants were asked to report the extent to which they agreed with each of the items on a 5-

point Likert scale: 1= "strongly disagree", 2= "somewhat disagree", 3= "neither agree nor disagree" , 4= "somewhat agree", and 5= "strongly agree".

The participants responded to these 9 items once in the survey. The variable's scale appeared in section three, where I asked participants about their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to stay. The results of organizational commitment will be used to test **Hypothesis 2**.

Intentions To Stay. This variable can be defined as the employees' willingness to remain with the company they currently work for. In an effort to measure intentions to stay, participants responded to 5 items adapted from Kehoe and Wright (2010). Examples of items reflecting participants' intentions to stay were "I would turn down a job with more pay to stay with my current company", "I plan to spend my career at my current company", and "I intend to stay at my company for at least the next 12 months". Participants were asked to report the extent to which they agreed with each of the items on a 5-point Likert scale: 1= "strongly disagree", 2= "somewhat disagree", 3= "neither agree nor disagree", 4= "somewhat agree", and 5= "strongly agree".

The participants responded to these 5 items once during the survey. The variable's scale appeared in section three, the section where participants were assessed on their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to stay. The results of intentions to stay will be sued to test **Hypothesis 3**.

Independent Variables

   Average Unmet Expectations. Met expectations can be defined as, "the discrepancy between what a person encounters on the job in the way of positive and negative experiences and what he expected to encounter" (Porter & Steers, 1972). Unmet expectations are when a person has high expectations, and those expectations are not met. To measure participants' average unmet expectations, participants were asked to consider the expectations they had prior to entering their current organization and rate the degree to which they felt that their expectations had not been met regarding each of the following 8 DEI-related practices. These 8 DEI-related practices

included "email announcements related to DEI practices and activities", "meetings for conversations related to DEI", "employee resource groups", "mandatory diversity training", "voluntary diversity training", "formal mentoring for underrepresented employees", "recruiting for underrepresented employees", and "specific benefits and benefit programs for underrepresented employees". Participants were asked to rate the degree to which their expectations had been met on a 6-point Likert scale: 1= "extremely well", 2= "very well", 3= "moderately well", 4= "slightly well", 5= "not well at all", 6= "my company does not have this practice, and I did not expect them to". An *average unmet expectations* score was for participants' responses to each of the 8 practices. Those responses that reported "6" for any practice were excluded from the analyses; the variable therefore only has a range from 1 to 5.

   Negative Unmet Expectations. In addition to having respondents indicate the extent to which their expectations were met regarding the 8 DEI practices noted above, I also collected

information about participants' "DEI expectations" and "DEI experiences" on a scale from 0-100. This was meant to more broadly assess participants' unmet expectations related to their companies' DEI friendliness overall. To measure "DEI expectations", participants were asked "On a scale of 0-100, to what extent did you expect your organization to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion prior to entering the organization? (0 = no promotion of DEI, 100 = very heavy promotion of DEI). To measure "DEI experiences", participants were asked "On a scale of 0-100, having worked at your company for some time, to what extent do you believe your organization promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion? (0 = no promotion of DEI, 100 = very heavy promotion of DEI).I then calculated the negative unmet expectations score by subtracting the DEI experiences score from the DEI expectations score. Higher values therefore reflect that respondents reported higher DEI expectations prior to joining the organization than they experienced once they entered. The primary analyze excludes people who experienced positive unmet expectations (i.e., they experienced greater promotion of DEI once they entered the organization than they expected prior to entering the organization). In supplementary analyses, I explore the effect of positive unmet expectations on my three dependent variables.

Control Variables

Age. In the fourth section of the survey, participants were asked to enter their age in years. Participants had an opportunity to write in their answers for this question.

Gender. In the fourth section of the study, the participants were asked to share their gender in the form of a multiple-choice question. Participants selected one of four options: male, female, intersex, prefer not to say.

Ethnicity. Participants were asked to share their ethnicity via a multiple-choice question. There were nine categories available for the participants to choose from: "Hispanic or Latino",

"Caucasian (European descent, non-Hispanic)", "Caucasian (Middle Eastern or Indian descent)", "Black/African American", "American Indian/Native American", "Alaska Native or Aleut", "Asian/Asian-American", "Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander", and "An ethnicity not listed". I coded this variable as the participant being a minority member (i.e., 0 = Caucasian (European descent, non-Hispanic), 1 = all other ethnicity categories).

Tenure. Participants were asked how long they have been working for their current employer in a multiple-choice question. 4 options were provided: "0-3 Months", "3-6 Months", "6-12 Months" and "12+ Months".

Education Level. Study participants were asked to indicate the highest level of education they have received via a multiple choice question. Participants were provided 7 options: "less than high school", "high school graduate", "some college", "2 year degree", "4 year degree", "professional degree", and "doctorate".

Chapter 4 : RESULTS

The total collected sample of the study is 708 (n=708). The main analytical procedure used was the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression, used to produce a linear regression of the data set. The standard deviation, means, and correlations among all the variables in the study are included in the table below (**Table 1).**

Table 1: Inter-item correlation matrix of variables

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations for main study variables.

VARIABLES	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Avg unmet expectations	3.08	1.17	1											
2. DEI expectations	54.40	28.68	-0.41	1										
3. DEI experience	57.15	29.95	-0.58	0.65	1									
4. Unmet expectations score	19.46	19.22	0.45	0.18	-0.53	1								
5. Avg job satisfaction	3.16	0.57	-0.37	0.24	0.39	-0.30	1							
6. Avg intentions to stay	3.26	1.08	-0.32	0.20	0.36	-0.24	0.63	1						
7. Avg commitment	3.41	1.03	-0.39	0.30	0.43	-0.25	0.74	0.73	1					
8. Age	37.14	10.31	0.03	-0.05	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.13	0.03	1				
9. Gender	0.49	0.50	0.08	0.02	-0.05	0.20	-0.04	0.00	-0.03	0.09	1			
10. Minority member	0.31	0.46	0.06	-0.06	-0.03	-0.05	-0.07	-0.11	-0.07	-0.12	-0.06	1		
11. Company tenure	3.81	0.55	-0.03	0.00	0.01	-0.03	0.02	0.05	-0.03	0.17	0.07	-0.03	1	
12. Education level	4.63	1.27	-0.11	0.15	0.10	0.01	0.05	0.02	0.02	-0.03	-0.03	0.04	0.02	1

As mentioned above, **Hypothesis 1** predicts that employees with unmet DEI expectations are likely to report lower levels of job satisfaction (compared to employees with met DEI expectations). I examined this hypothesis using the two different independent variables mentioned above. The first independent variable is *average unmet expectations*. This score was derived from the scale matrix in the survey that asked respondents to indicate the extent to which their expectations were not met. Model 1 of **Table 2** shows the effect of unmet expectations on job satisfaction without controlling for any of the other variables. The table indicates a

significant negative effect of unmet expectations on job satisfaction ($p < .001$). This means that for every unit increase in unmet expectations, respondents reported a 0.182 decrease in job satisfaction. Model 2 includes the control variables and shows the same effects of unmet expectations on job satisfaction. As shown in Table 2, there is a significant negative effect of unmet expectations on job satisfaction ($p < .001$); for every unit increase in unmet expectations, respondents reported a 0.175 decrease in job satisfaction.

Table 2: Relationship between unmet expectations and average job satisfaction

Table 2. Relationship between unmet expectations and average job satisfaction.

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	Dependent variable: Average job satisfaction			
Average unmet expectations	-0.182***	-0.175***		
	(0.017)	(0.018)		
Negative unmet expectations score			-0.009***	-0.008***
			(0.002)	(0.002)
Participant age		0.001		0.004
		(0.002)		(0.004)
Participant gender		0.001		-0.040
		(0.043)		(0.082)
Participant minority member		-0.059		-0.019
		(0.044)		(0.082)
Participant company tenure		-0.002		-0.059
		(0.038)		(0.073)
Participant education level		0.007		0.035
		(0.018)		(0.037)
Participant occupation controls		Y		Y
Participant industry controls		Y		Y
Constant	3.728***	3.748***	3.211***	3.246***
	(0.056)	(0.221)	(0.051)	(0.431)
Observations	708	708	249	249
R-squared	0.139	0.168	0.089	0.177

Standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.10

The second independent variable that was used to test Hypothesis 1 is the *negative unmet expectations score*. Mentioned above, this score was calculated by subtracting respondents' "DEI experience" score from their "DEI expectations" score. Because my primary arguments are focused on the effect of negative unmet expectations, this analysis uses a sub-sample of those included in the analysis using the average unmet expectations scale (Model 1 and Model 2 of Table 2); I focus here only on those respondents who reported higher expectations than what they experienced (n=249). Model 3 of **Table 2** showcases the effect of the negative unmet expectations score on job satisfaction without controlling for the other variables. The table shows a significant negative effect of negative unmet expectations on job satisfaction ($p < .001$); for every unit increase in negative unmet expectations, respondents reported a 0.009 decrease in job satisfaction. Model 4 of **Table 2** includes the control variables, showing a similar effect of negative unmet expectations on job satisfaction. As shown in the table, there is a significant negative effect of unmet expectation on job satisfaction ($p < .001$); for every unit increase in unmet expectations, respondents reported a 0.008 decrease in job satisfaction. Therefore, **Hypothesis 1** is supported.

Table 3: Relationship between unmet expectations and average organizational commitment

Table 3. Relationship between unmet expectations and average organizational commitment.

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	Dependent variable: Average organizational commitment			
Average unmet expectations	-0.345***	-0.357***		
	(0.031)	(0.032)		
Negative unmet expectations score			-0.014***	-0.012**
			(0.003)	(0.004)
Participant age		0.006		0.011
		(0.004)		(0.007)
Participant gender		-0.020		-0.222
		(0.077)		(0.143)
Participant minority member		-0.070		-0.048
		(0.079)		(0.145)
Participant company tenure		-0.081		-0.171
		(0.068)		(0.128)
Participant education level		-0.018		0.064
		(0.032)		(0.065)
Participant occupation controls		Y		Y
Participant industry controls		Y		Y
Constant	4.479***	4.581***	3.419***	3.364***
	(0.101)	(0.397)	(0.092)	(0.757)
Observations	708	708	249	249
R-squared	0.151	0.185	0.063	0.169

Standard errors in parentheses *** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$, + $p<0.10$

Hypothesis 2 predicts that employees with unmet DEI expectations are likely to report

lower levels of organizational commitment (compared to employees with met DEI expectations).

I evaluated this hypothesis by using the same two independent variables used to test job

satisfaction. The first independent variable is *average unmet expectations*. Model 1 of **Table 3**

shows the effect of average unmet expectations on organizational commitment without including

any control variables. The table indicates a significant negative effect of average unmet

expectations on organizational commitment ($p < .001$). This means that for every unit increase in

unmet expectations, respondents reported a 0.345 decrease in organizational commitment. Model

2 of **Table 3** includes the control variables and shows a similar effect of average unmet expectations on organizational commitment. As shown in the table, there is a significant negative effect of average unmet expectations on organizational commitment ($p < .001$); for every unit increase in average unmet expectations, respondents reported a 0.357 decrease in organizational commitment.

The second independent variable used to test Hypothesis 2 was the *negative unmet expectations score*. Model 3 of **Table 3** showcases the effect of negative unmet expectations score on organizational commitment without including any control variables. The table shows a significant negative effect of the negative unmet expectations score on organizational commitment ($p < .001$); for every unit increase in negative unmet expectations, respondents reported a 0.014 decrease in organizational commitment. Model 4 of **Table 3** includes the control variables and shows a similar effect of negative unmet expectations on organizational commitment. As shown in the table, there is a significant negative effect of negative unmet expectation on organizational commitment ($p < .001$); for every unit increase in negative unmet expectations, respondents reported a 0.012 decrease in organizational commitment. Therefore, **Hypothesis 2** is supported.

Table 4: Relationship between unmet expectations and average intentions to stay

Table 4. Relationship between unmet expectations and average intentions to stay.

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	Dependent variable: Average intentions to stay			
Average unmet expectations	-0.295***	-0.288***		
	(0.033)	(0.034)		
Negative unmet expectations score			-0.013***	-0.011**
			(0.004)	(0.004)
Participant age		0.014***		0.020**
		(0.004)		(0.007)
Participant gender		0.023		-0.163
		(0.082)		(0.150)
Participant minority member		-0.141+		-0.209
		(0.084)		(0.152)
Participant company tenure		0.020		0.050
		(0.072)		(0.134)
Participant education level		-0.009		0.077
		(0.034)		(0.068)
Participant occupation controls		Y		Y
Participant industry controls		Y		Y
Constant	4.173***	3.445***	3.222***	2.200**
	(0.108)	(0.422)	(0.097)	(0.793)
Observations	708	708	249	2489
R-squared	0.103	0.148	0.055	0.173

Standard errors in parentheses *** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$, + $p<0.10$

Hypothesis 3 predicts that employees with unmet DEI expectations are likely to report lower levels of intentions to stay with their organization (compared to employees with met DEI expectations). The first independent variable used to test this hypothesis again is *average unmet expectations*. Model 1 of **Table 4** shows the effect of average unmet expectations on intentions to stay without including any control variables. The table indicates a significant negative effect of average unmet expectations on intentions to stay ($p < .001$). This means that for every unit increase in unmet expectations, respondents reported a 0.295 decrease in intentions to stay with their companies. Model 2 of **Table 4** includes the control variables and shows a similar effect of unmet expectations on intentions to stay. As shown in the table, there is a significant negative

effect of average unmet expectations on intentions to stay ($p < .001$); for every unit increase in average unmet expectations, respondents reported a 0.288 decrease in intentions to stay.

The second independent variable used to test **Hypothesis 3** was the *negative unmet expectations score*. Model 3 of **Table 4** showcases the effect of negative unmet expectations score on intentions to stay without including any control variables . The table shows a significant negative effect of negative unmet expectations on intentions to stay ($p < .001$); for every unit increase in negative unmet expectations, respondents reported a 0.013 decrease in intentions to stay. Model 4 of **Table 4** includes the control variables and shows a similar effect of negative unmet expectations on intentions to stay. As shown in the table, there is a significant negative effect of negative unmet expectations on intentions to stay ($p < .001$); for every unit increase in negative unmet expectations, respondents reported a 0.011 decrease in intentions to stay with their organizations. Therefore, **Hypothesis 3** is supported.

Table 5: Supplementary analysis: Effect of positive unmet expectations

Table 5: Supplementary Analysis: Effect of positive unmet expectations.

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	DV: Job satisfaction	DV: Organizational commitment	DV: Intentions to stay
Positive unmet expectations score	0.001	-0.001	0.004
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Participant age	-0.005+	-0.007	0.002
	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.006)
Participant gender	0.008	0.075	0.082
	(0.061)	(0.116)	(0.122)
Participant minority member	-0.066	-0.095	-0.109
	(0.063)	(0.119)	(0.125)
Participant company tenure	-0.033	-0.077	-0.041
	(0.055)	(0.103)	(0.108)
Participant education level	-0.008	-0.055	-0.022
	(0.025)	(0.048)	(0.050)
Participant occupation controls	Y	Y	Y
Participant industry controls	Y	Y	Y
Constant	3.656***	3.984***	2.696***
	(0.301)	(0.566)	(0.594)
Observations	350	350	350
R-squared	0.088	0.078	0.065

Standard errors in parentheses

*** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$, + $p<0.10$

Supplementary analysis: The effect of positive unmet expectations. After reviewing

the results, I wanted to look at the effect of positive unmet expectations on each of the dependent

variables. Although recent data indicate that job seekers now expect some level of DEI

investment from companies, it is possible that some new hires actually experience more DEI

friendliness having entered their organization than they expected prior to entering. In these cases,

it's possible that those respondents actually feel, for example, greater job satisfaction,

organizational commitment, and intent to stay once they join the company. To explore this

possibility, I calculated the positive unmet expectations score in the same way I calculated the

negative unmet expectations score and included in this analysis only those respondents who

reported greater scores of "DEI experience" than "DEI expectations" (n=350). I first looked at the effect of the positive unmet expectations score on job satisfaction. Model 1 of **Table 5** showcases the effect of positive unmet expectations score on job satisfaction while controlling for all other main study variables. Although the effect is in the expected direction (i.e., the effect of positive unmet expectations on job satisfaction is positive), it is not significant. Next, I looked at the dependent variable of organizational commitment. Model 2 of **Table 5** showcases the effect of positive unmet expectations score on organizational commitment while controlling for the other variables. Although the effect is in the expected direction (i.e., the effect of positive unmet expectations on organizational commitment is positive), it is not significant. Lastly, I looked at the dependent variable of intentions to stay. Model 3 of **Table 5** showcases the effect of positive unmet expectations score on intentions to stay while controlling for the other variables. Although the effect is in the expected direction (i.e., the effect of positive unmet expectations on intentions to stay is positive), it is not significant. Overall, these results suggest that, somewhat surprisingly, if employees are positively surprised by their companies' DEI investment, it does not have a significant positive or negative effect on their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, or intentions to stay. That said, according to the primary analyses and results, when employees expected more than their company actually provided in terms of DEI, it had a substantial and negative impact on these three outcome variables.

Chapter 5 : DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore whether newcomers' unmet expectations regarding their companies' DEI programs and practices had any effect on their various job and organizational attitudes – in particular, their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to stay with their companies. To study this relationship, current employees across different occupations and industries in the United States completed a survey about their expectations related to their companies' DEI investment prior to entering the organization, as well as their actual experiences after entering the organization. The two different independent variables I used to test these relationships were an average unmet expectations Likert scale variable and negative unmet expectations (on a score from 0 to 100). There were seven control variables about which participants provided information: age, gender, ethnicity, tenure, education level, industry, and occupation category. The survey was designed to study the three hypotheses: (1) employees with unmet DEI expectations are likely to report lower levels of job satisfaction (compared to employees with met DEI expectations); (2) employees with unmet DEI expectations are likely to report lower levels of organizational commitment (compared to employees with met DEI expectations); and (3) employees with unmet DEI expectations are likely to report lower levels of intentions to stay with their organization (compared to employees with met DEI expectations).

Outcomes

Overall, the final collected sample size was 708 (n=708). About 850 individuals started the survey, but the number of participants who finished the survey dwindled to 708 participants.

After running the OLS analytical procedure the three hypotheses were supported. As predicted in Hypothesis 1, greater unmet expectations were associated with lower levels of reported job satisfaction. As predicted in Hypothesis 2, greater unmet expectations were associated with lower levels of organizational commitment. As predicted in Hypothesis 3, greater unmet expectations were associated with lower levels of intentions to stay.

Theoretical Contribution

To my knowledge, this study is the first to apply the theories behind unmet expectations to the DEI space. In today's society, job seekers are continuously looking for information about the company as a whole. Job seekers are no longer solely concerned about the job they are entering, they are more concerned about learning the most about the organization and their practices. As an organization, it is important to recognize that the advertisement of DEI practices and programs could create expectations for job seekers. If the organization fails to follow through on those programs or practices, it could be detrimental for the newcomers in the organization, as well as the organizations themselves who would then need to recruit, hired, and train more new hires should those employees with negative unmet expectations choose to leave to pursue job elsewhere. From a theoretical perspective, this study presents researchers with an opportunity to think more broadly about which factors potential applicants and organizational newcomers develop expectations and which job and organizational attitudes and behaviors are likely to result if expectations are not met.

Practical Implications

In terms of the practical implications of my research, I have four points I would like to make to organizations. First, I ask that organizations refrain from marketing themselves as super DEI friendly if they are not actually DEI friendly. This likely leaves job seekers feeling as though they have been led on about how much the company cares about DEI-related issues. The results of this study suggest that it is actually potentially very negative for both employees and organizations if newcomers come into organizations, immediately have their expectations be unmet, and then subsequently want to leave the organization. As prior research indicates, it is better to be realistic with job seekers about where your company currently stands. If a DEI practice or program is advertised, the organization needs to provide it because job seekers/newcomers will check to make sure those programs or practices are in place.

Second, if an organization does have DEI friendly programs but does not advertise them, companies should invest more in advertising their DEI programs and practices to the extent that they have the resources to do so. While this study did not find significant effects for the analyses exploring the effects for positive unmet expectations, the direction of the results was still positive. This suggests that if job seekers and employees are pleasantly surprised by their organizations' DEI investment and/or friendliness, the outcome of advertising DEI programs is likely to only be helpful for companies. That said, as noted above, companies should be "right sized" about what they do and do not provide, such that potential applicants and newcomers have a very clear understanding of what is and is not provided by the company.

Third, and relatedly, there is some research on employee benefits which shows that some employees within an organization may not use certain policies or practices because they are

actually unaware that those policies and programs exist and are an option. In the case of DEI programs and practices, newcomers to an organization may have lower experiences related to their companies' DEI efforts if they are not provided the necessary information during onboarding or orientation to indicate that such resources are available. Therefore, in addition to being as clear as possible with potential applicants and job seekers about what programs and practices are provided, companies should also develop stronger internal communications with their *current* employees about those programs and practices. Such efforts could prevent misunderstandings between employees who feel as though they had high expectations that are not being met and companies that are DEI-friendly but are not reaching their target audiences. Lastly, as prior research on recruitment has highlighted, it is likely to be beneficial for companies to continue to examine job seekers' expectations and feelings throughout the recruitment process. In particular, organizations might consider asking their applicants about their DEI expectations specifically so that they can better understand what those applicants are looking for and what the associated outcomes might be related to applicant expectations and perceptions. Importantly, if a company were to take the time to assess job seekers' feelings about DEI, then they may receive useful information for improving their DEI programs and practices or – at the very least – how they can better communicate about those programs and practices

Limitations

There are a few limitations of the current study. The first limitation is that all of the survey data was collected at the same time. This means that participants were asked about expectations at the same time that they were asked about their job and organization attitudes. A

number of studies have documented the problems associated with collecting the independent variable at the same time as the dependent variable; specifically, having respondents think about their job satisfaction, for example, at the same time as their experience with a program or practice can lead to inaccurate on conflated results. We can therefore not assume causality in this study.

Additionally, for this study's survey, participants were asked to think retroactively about their expectations prior to joining the organization, as well as their experiences once they entered the organization. This approach can present some difficulty for participants, especially if they have trouble remembering what their expectations were prior to joining the company; this can create inaccurate responses and bias from respondents as they may not have been able to think back to the time period to which the survey was referring. Ideally, to better isolate the effect of unmet expectations on the three dependent variables, we would want to assess job seekers' expectations during the recruitment process, assess their actual experiences upon entering the company, and then assess their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to stay in a final third wave of data collection.

Finally, the survey was distributed through Prolific, which has its own limitations as well. Prolific is great for reaching participants working in a variety of companies and industries and who come from a variety of different backgrounds. That said, I was not able to collect as much information about where those participants work as have liked if, for example, the survey was conducted within one organization. Collecting data at one company allows researchers to control for a number of factors that could influence participants DEI expectations and experiences, as well as their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to stay – which is almost impossible to do using Prolific.

Future Research

To my knowledge, there was not much prior research conducted on the relationship between unmet expectations and DEI friendliness and newcomers' job and organizational attitudes. This study aimed to start the conversation about these relationships. For future research, it would be interesting to see a study look at the expectations related to DEI during the application process and then a second wave of data looking at newcomers' actual experiences. If the data were to be collected at two different times, this would limit inaccurate responses and bias. Next, I suggest that future researchers collect their data within one organization. If the data is collected within one company, the researchers could collect a lot of information about participants in the survey. Otherwise, researchers may be limited in the amount of information they can collect.

Chapter 6 : CONCLUSION

The current study focused on the relationship between unmet expectations related to company's DEI friendliness and newcomers' job and organizational attitudes. Specifically, the study looked at the relationship between DEI unmet expectations and three particular dependent variables: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to stay. An online survey was conducted through Prolific and was used to test three hypotheses. **Hypothesis 1**: Employees with unmet DEI expectations are less likely to experience job satisfaction, **Hypothesis 2:** Employees with unmet DEI expectations are more likely to be uncommitted to their organization and **Hypothesis 3:** Employees with unmet DEI expectations are less likely to stay with their organization. The results of the study supported each of the three hypotheses. The study is important for organizations as they understand the importance of using DEI friendliness to attract job seekers and the effects of unmet expectations on their current and future workforce.

Appendix A: SURVEY

Thesis Survey

Q1

You are being invited to volunteer to participate in a research study. This summary explains information about this research.

• The objective of the project is to assess individual employee characteristics, work-related job attitudes and behaviors, and demographics, as well as company practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

• You are invited to participate in a 10-15 minute survey. If you are under the age of 18 you will be ineligible to participate in this study. After reading the consent form, you will click the "choose to participate" option if you give your consent to participate in the study. You will then begin the survey by answering a group of questions. You will be compensated $3.00 for completing the survey.

• There is a risk of loss of confidentiality if your information or your identity is obtained by someone other than the investigators, but precautions will be taken to prevent this from happening. The confidentiality of your electronic data created by you or by the researchers will be maintained as required by applicable law and to the degree permitted by the technology used. Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

• Efforts will be made to limit the sharing of participants' personal information to people who have to review the research information. The research team will try their best to keep your personal information private, but we cannot guarantee confidentiality. As a participant in the study, your records will be given a randomized code and they will be kept in a password protected file on OneDrive. We will do our best to keep your participation in this research study confidential to the extent permitted by law. However, it is possible that other people may find out about your participation in this research study. For example, the

following people/groups may check and copy records about this research. The Office for Human Research Protections in the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services The Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies) and Penn State's Office for Research Protections. Your information collected as part of this research will not be used by anyone outside of this research team, even if all of your identifiers are removed. • Information collected in this project may be shared with other researchers, but we will not share any information that could identify you.

You will be compensated for participating in this study via Prolific. If you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you should contact Lauren Cleaver at 484-985-5155 or Kathryn Dlugos. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject or concerns regarding your privacy, you may contact the Human Research Protection Program at 814-865-1775.

Your participation is voluntary and you may decide to stop at any time. You do not have to answer any

questions that you do not want to answer.

○ I acknowledge the consent material and choose to participate (1)

○ After reading the consent material, I choose to not participate in the survey/study (2)
Q10 Are you 18 years of age or older?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)
Q11 Have you been employed with your current employer for more than 3 months?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)
Q17 Are you aware of whether your company sends out email announcements related to DEI

(i.e., Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion)?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

○ Unsure (3) _____
Q18 Does your company provide mandatory diversity training?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

○ Unsure (3)
Q28 Does your company provide voluntary diversity training?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

○ Unsure (3)

Q19 Does your company provide a formal mentoring program for underrepresented employees?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

○ Unsure (3)

Q20 Does your company have employee resource groups?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

○ Unsure (3)

Q42 Does your company have meetings for conversations specifically related to DEI?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

○ Unsure (3)

Q27 Does your company make a point of recruiting underrepresented individuals for specific

open jobs?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

○ Unsure (3)

Q28 Does your company provide specific benefits for underrepresented employees?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

○ Unsure (3)

Q40 Rate the degree to which you engage with each of these DEI practices at your current

company:

	Never (1)	Sometimes (2)	About half the time (3)	Most of the time (4)	Always (5)	Not applicable (6)
Email announcements related to DEI practices and activities (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Meetings for conversations related to DEI (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Employee Resource Groups (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Mandatory Diversity Training (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○

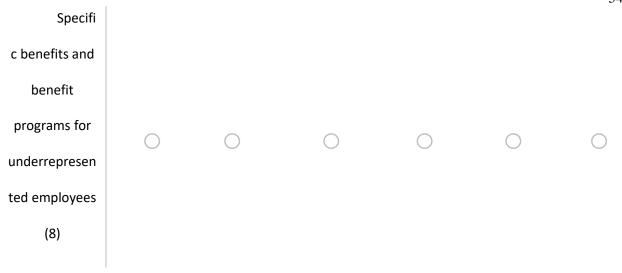|						
Voluntary Diversity Training (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Formal Mentoring for underrepresented employees (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Recruiting for underrepresented employees (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Specific benefits and benefit programs for underrepresented employees (8)	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q38 Has your company increased their DEI efforts in the past 3 months?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

○ Unsure (3)
Q25

For this question, please consider the expectations you had about your company **prior to joining that**
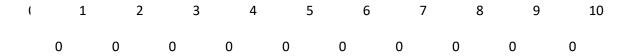
company (i.e., just before being officially employed by your company). Please rate the degree to which your expectations have been met regarding the amount of investment you believe your company makes in each of the following DEI-related practices.
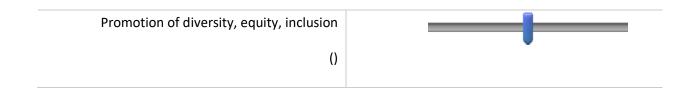
	Not well at all (1)	Slightly well (2)	Moderately well (3)	Very well (4)	Extremely well (5)	My company does not have this practice, and I did not expect them to (6)
Email announcements related to DEI practices and activities (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Meetings for conversations related to DEI (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○

Employee Resource Groups (3)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Mandatory Diversity training (4)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Voluntary Diversity Training (5)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Formal Mentoring for underrepresented employees (6)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Recruiting for underrepresented employees (7)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Specifi

c benefits and

benefit

programs for   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○
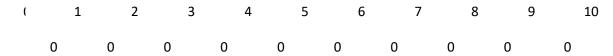
underrepresen

ted employees

(8)

Q41 On a scale of 0-100, to what extent did you expect your organization to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion prior to entering the organization? (0 = no promotion of DEI, 100 = very heavy promotion of DEI)

(	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Promotion of diversity, equity, inclusion ()	

Q30 On a scale of 0-100, having worked at your company for some time, to what extent do you believe your organization promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion? (0 = no promotion of DEI, 100 = very heavy promotion of DEI)

(	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

| Promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion () | |

Q32 Thinking of your present job, to what extent are each of the following statements true?

	Not at all true (1)	Not very true (2)	Somewhat true (3)	Very true (4)
I get a chance to do the things I do best (1)	○	○	○	○
The physical surroundings are pleasant (2)	○	○	○	○
The skills I am learning would be valuable in getting a better job (3)	○	○	○	○
The pay is good (4)	○	○	○	○
The job security is good (5)	○	○	○	○

My coworkers are friendly (6)	○	○	○	○
My supervisor is competent (7)	○	○	○	○
My chances for promotion are good (8)	○	○	○	○

Intention to stay Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I would turn down a job with more pay to stay with my current company (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I plan to spend my career at my current company (2)	○	○	○	○	○

I intend to stay at my company for at least the next 12 months (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I plan to look for a job outside my company in the next 6 months (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Plea se select strongly agree (5)	○	○	○	○	○

OC Please indicate your agreement with each statement regarding your current job.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful. (1)	○	○	○	○	○

I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization. (3)	○	○	○	○	○

I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar. (4)

◯　　　◯　　　◯　　　◯　　　◯

I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization. (5)

◯　　　◯　　　◯　　　◯　　　◯

This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performanc e. (6)

○　　　○　　　○　　　○　　　○

I am extremely glad I chose this organization to work for, over others I was considering at the time I joined. (7)

○　　　○　　　○　　　○　　　○

I really care about the fate of this organization. (8)

○　　○　　○　　○　　○

For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work. (9)

○　　○　　○　　○　　○

Affective Please indicate your agreement with each statement regarding your current job.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I really enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it (2)	○	○	○	○	○

I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own (3)

○   ○   ○   ○   ○

I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one (4)

○   ○   ○   ○   ○

I feel like "part of the family" at my organization (5)	○	○	○	○	○
I feel "emotionally attached" to this organization (6)	○	○	○	○	○
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me (7)	○	○	○	○	○

I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization (8)

Continuance Please indicate your agreement with each statement regarding your current job.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up (1)	○	○	○	○	○
It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to (2)	○	○	○	○	○

Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization right now (3)

○   ○   ○   ○   ○

It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my organization now (4)

○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire (5)

○　　　○　　　○　　　○　　　○

I feel I have too few options to consider leaving this organization (6)

○　　　○　　　○　　　○　　　○

One of the few serious consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives (7)

○   ○   ○   ○   ○

One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice – another organization may not match the overall benefits I have here (8)

○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Normative Please indicate your agreement with each statement regarding your current job.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I think that people these days move from company to company too often (1)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I do not believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her organization (2)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Jumping from organization to organization does not seem at all unethical to me (3)

○   ○   ○   ○   ○

One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that I believe that loyalty is important and therefore feel a sense of moral obligation to remain (4)

○   ○   ○   ○   ○

If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere I would not feel it was right to leave my organization (5)

    ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization (6)

    ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Things were better in the days when people stayed with one organization for most of their careers (7)

○   ○   ○   ○   ○

I do not think that wanting to be a 'company man' or 'company woman' is sensible anymore (8)

○   ○   ○   ○   ○

Age What is your age, in years?

_____

Q12 What sex were you assigned at birth?

◯ Male (1)

◯ Female (2)

◯ Intersex (3)

◯ Prefer not to say (4)

Q13 What is your ethnicity?

◯ Hispanic or Latino (1)

◯ Caucasian (European descent, non-Hispanic) (2)

◯ Caucasian (Middle Eastern or Indian descent) (3)

◯ Black/African American (4)

◯ American Indian/Native American (5)

◯ Alaska Native or Aleut (6)

◯ Asian/Asian-American (7)

◯ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (8)

◯ An ethnicity not listed (9)

Q6 How long have you worked for your current employer?

◯ 0-3 Months (1)

◯ 3-6 Months (2)

◯ 6-12 Months (3)

◯ 12+ Months (4)

Q28 What is your occupational category?

○ Professional, Technical, or Managerial (1)

○ Clerical and Sales (2)

○ Service (3)

○ Machine Trades (4)

○ Benchwork (5)

○ Structural Work (6)

○ Agricultural and Processing (7)

○ Other (please describe) (8) _____
Q37 What is your industry category?

○ Accommodation and food services (1)

○ Administrative and support services (2)

○ Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting (3)

○ Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (4)

○ Construction (5)

○ Education Services (6)

○ Finance and Insurance (7)

○ Government (8)

○ Health Care and Social Assistance (9)

○ Information (10)

○ Management of Companies and Enterprises (11)

○ Manufacturing (12)

○ Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (13)

○ Non-profit and/or Public Administration (14)

○ Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (15)

○ Real Estate and Rental Leasing (16)

○ Retail Trade (17)

○ Transportation and Warehousing (18)

○ Utilities (19)

○ Wholesale Trade (20)

○ Other Services (Except Public Administration) (21)

Q29 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

○ Less than high school (1)

○ High School Graduate (2)

○ Some college (3)

○ 2 year degree (4)

○ 4 year degree (5)

○ Professional degree (6)

○ Doctorate (7)

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    diversity-equity-and-inclusion.

ACADEMIC VITA

EDUCATION
The Pennsylvania State University   ***Expected Graduation: May 2023***
Schreyer Honors College
Bachelor of Arts in Criminology| Bachelor of Science in Labor and Human Resources
INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE
Caterpillar Inc.   **Peoria, IL**
Corporate Human Resources Intern   *May 2022 - Present*
- Process owner for production onboarding rapid improvement workshop at manufacturing facilities
  - Benchmark with 5 U.S. facilities
  - Add 3 feedback mechanisms
  - Implement 8 Best Practices Policies across all facilities
  - Gain 50% efficiency with the pilot of the project
  - Provide training and coaching to Human Resources teams to prepare them for the pilot
  - Research and recommend automation tools for the onboarding process (power automate)
  - Travel to 3 states to administer an onboarding needs assessment at various facilities
- Complete targeted selection training and assist with interviews at production level to efficiently fill hiring needs at manufacturing facilities
- Create leader crucial conversations training for section managers at Maintenance Components facilities, including Italy and the United Kingdom
- Develop a D&I training to be given to all payrolls at 9 facilities, encompassing our European locations
- Participate in employee investigations at the production level
- Complete a project focused on team effectiveness and collaboration alignment within the building

Morgan Truck Body, LLC.   **Morgantown, PA**
Human Resources Intern   *May 2021 - August 2021*
- Maintained detailed employment records related to events such as hiring, termination, leaves, transfers, or promotions using Dayforce (HRIS) software
- Advised over 50 employees through harassment and discrimination training
- Developed diversity, equity, and inclusion recruiting strategies to meet current and anticipated staffing needs
- Executed background checks on 50 job applicants using the HireRight's system
- Collected information for a new feature of our HRIS system, Dayforce, to improve communication with employees
- Learned and interacted with our Dayforce system on a regular basis

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE
Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon (THON)   **University Park, PA**
Greek Fundraising Liaison   *April 2022- Present*
- Ensure that Greek Organizations are fundraising effectively and following the rules in the THON rulebook
- Collaborate with counterparts on the Communications committee to support paired organizations
- Create new resources for including fundraising workshops, How-To guides, and communication documents
- Lead the Liaison in Training program for Rules and Regulations with the Special Interest Organization Liaison

Penn State Lyrical Line   **University Park, PA**
Co-THON Chair
     June 2021 - March 2022
- Created fundraisers and coordinated these efforts with local businesses and other leaders
- Communicated fundraisers and events to the rest of the team
- Assisted fellow THON chairs with their daily tasks
- Coordinated the entire team during THON weekend to support our three dancers for 46 hours
- Aided in designing our team DonorDrive page that was utilized by 40 dancers and their donors