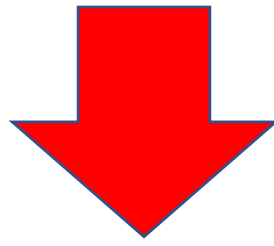# Strategies for Organizations to Attract More Demographically Diverse Job Applicants

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STEM Diversity Summit

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Talent Funnel

How should organizations talk about their commitments to diversity (particularly in job advertisements) to maximize the demographic diversity of job applicants?

#LOVE WHO YOU

50%

At least half of our global workforce will be **women**

25%

2025 Targets

People

Representation and Hiring

50% representation of women in global corporate workforce[1] and **45%** in leadership positions[2]

30% representation of U.S. racial and ethnic minorities[3] at Director level and above; increase pipeline of Black and Latinx talent at Director and above

35% representation of racial and ethnic minorities in our U.S. corporate workforce[4]

DI&B **ASPIRATIONS**

BY 2025:

GENDER PARITY:

50%

Increase female representation globally at Director level and above from 45% to 50%

MINORITY REPRESENTATION:

36%

Increase representation of minority employees in the U.S. from 29% to 36%

+

MIRROR

representation of VP and above positions to reflect overall U.S. minority populations

LGBTQ+ REPRESENTATION:

5%

Increase representation of LGBTQ+ employees in the U.S. from 2%[1] to 5%

How does including measurable diversity targets in job advertisements (e.g., "We aim to hire at least one woman for every man") influence the demographic diversity of job applicants?
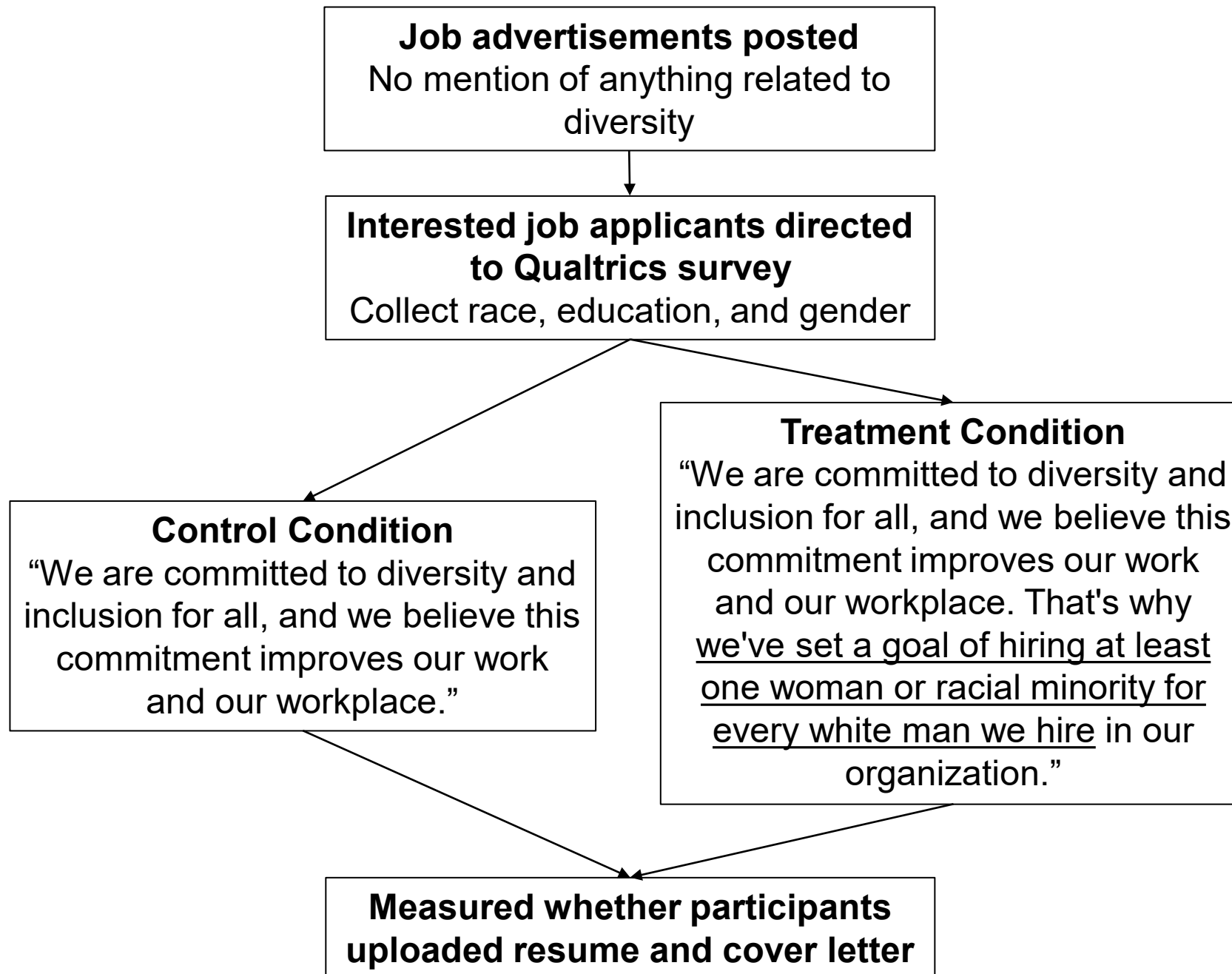
Measurable diversity targets might backfire

- Research on affirmative action policies suggests that women and racial minorities tend to experience self-doubt and worry about being hired on the basis of their identity rather than their merit (Heilman, 1994; Niemann & Dovidio, 2005; Heilman, Simon, & Repper, 1987)

- Racial minorities sometimes have negative reactions to EEO statements because they worry about being tokenized (Leibbrandt & List, 2018)
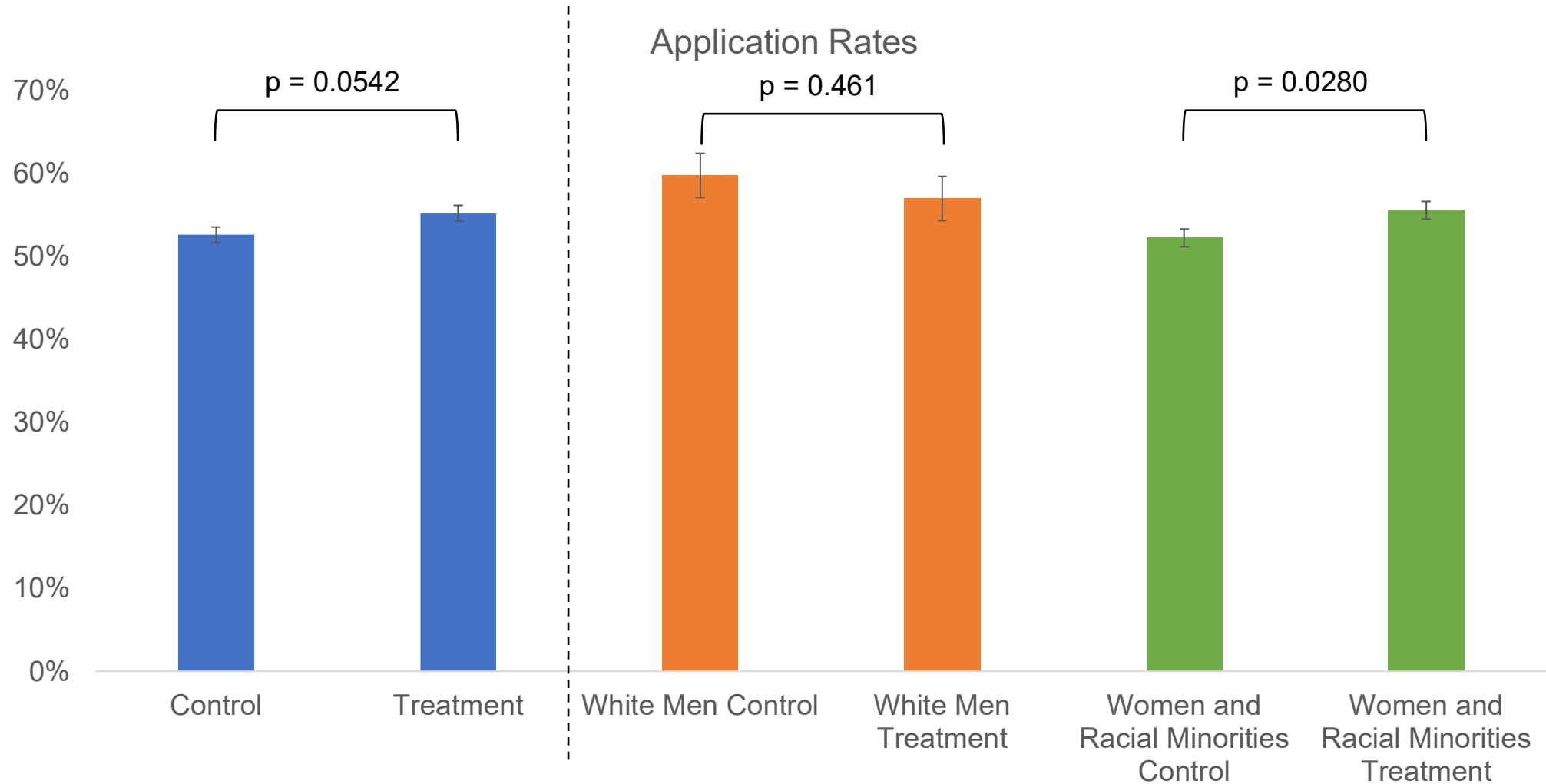
Measurable diversity targets might help

- Women and racial minorities sometimes engage in strategic behaviors regarding diversity and representation when choosing between groups or organizations (Kirgios, Chang, and Milkman, 2020)
- Specific goals are more likely to be achieved than ambiguous goals (Locke & Latham, 1991; Latham & Locke, 1984), so women and racial minorities may perceive organizations with these goals to be more likely to hire them

Study 1: Field Experiment

- Tested how including measurable diversity targets in job advertisements influences candidate application rates

- Worked with a non-profit looking to hire remote part-time workers

- Posted the non-profit's job advertisements in 113 U.S. cities between February 2020 and December 2020

- Participants were 5,557 job seekers (49.6% White, 72.7% women) who expressed interest in learning more about the job
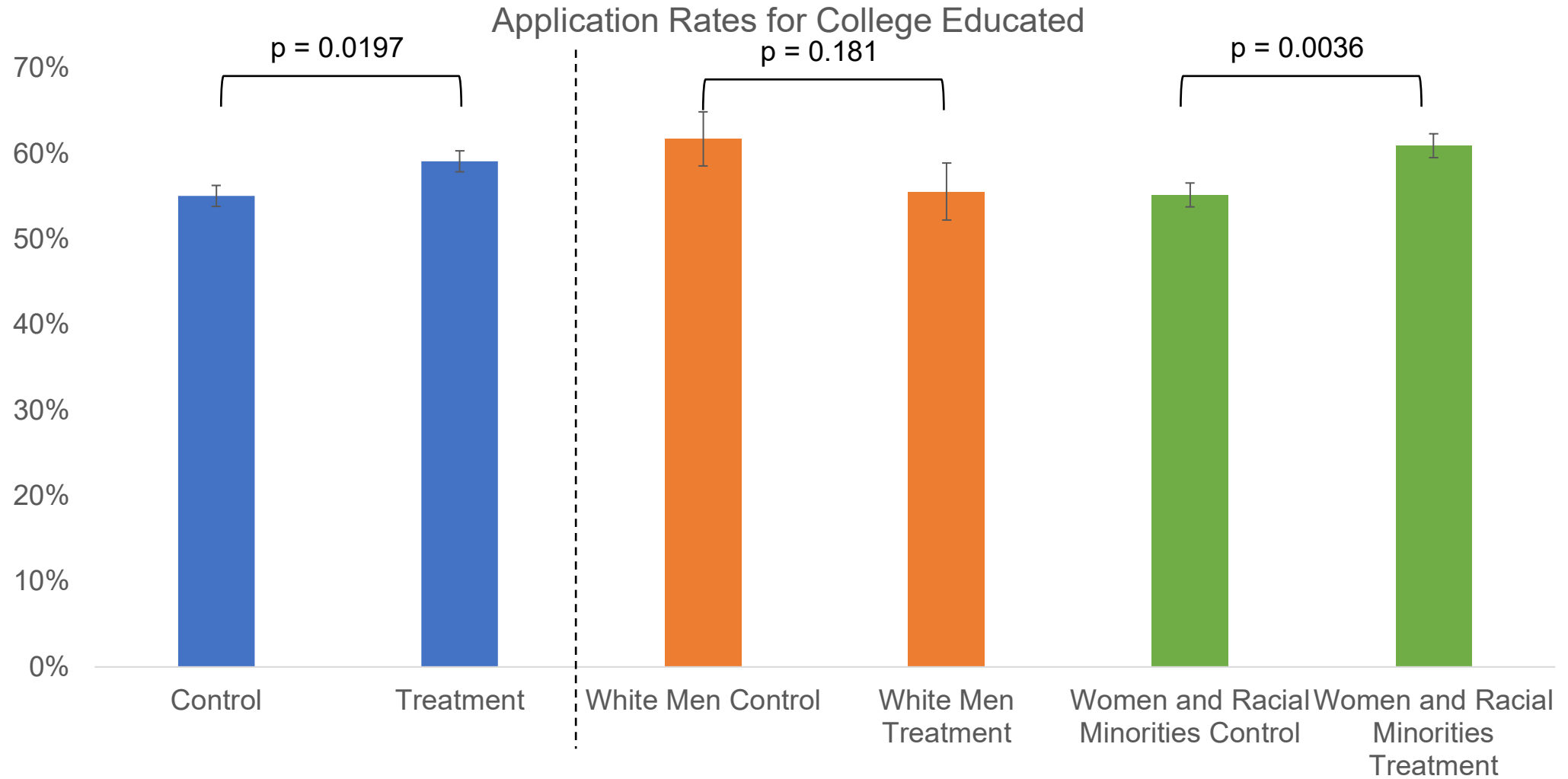
AS PREDICTED

Job advertisements posted
No mention of anything related to diversity

↓

Interested job applicants directed to Qualtrics survey
Collect race, education, and gender

Control Condition
"We are committed to diversity and inclusion for all, and we believe this commitment improves our work and our workplace."

Treatment Condition
"We are committed to diversity and inclusion for all, and we believe this commitment improves our work and our workplace. That's why we've set a goal of hiring at least one woman or racial minority for every white man we hire in our organization."

Measured whether participants uploaded resume and cover letter

Study 1: Results for College-Educated

Application Rates for College Educated

Error bars +/- 1 standard error

Study 1: Summary

- In a field experiment, including measurable diversity targets in job advertisements increased the demographic diversity of job applicants
  - No negative effects on application rates of White men
- Candidate quality also increases (as measured by educational attainment)
  - Driven by women and racial minorities
  - No negative effects on candidate quality among White men

Why aren't measurable diversity targets more commonly advertised?

Only 16% of Fortune 100 companies publicly state measurable diversity targets on their websites

Potential reasons

- People may mispredict the effects of measurable diversity targets
  - They could think they won't attract more diversity
  - They could think they will deter White men
  - They could think they'll have negative effects on candidate quality
- People may find measurable diversity targets morally repugnant
  (Jackson, 2021)

Study 2: Online Survey of Hiring Managers

- Recruited a panel of 298 hiring mangers (49.3% women, 86.2% White)

- Told to imagine they were designing an online job ad for an open role

- Also told the company had set a target of hiring at least one woman or racial minority for every White man hired in the coming year

Study 2: Measures

Asked to choose between two diversity statements to use:

"We are committed to diversity and inclusion for all, and we believe this commitment improves our work and our workplace."

OR

"We are committed to diversity and inclusion for all, and we believe this commitment improves our work and our workplace. That's why we've set a goal of hiring at least one woman or racial minority for every white man we hire in our organization."

Study 2: Measures

Made (separate) predictions about application rates and applicant quality for:

1) White women

2) Racial minorities

3) White men

Asked about moral aversion to measurable diversity targets using three items adapted from Tepe and Aydinli-Karakulak (2019):

- e.g., "Posting the job ad that includes the specific diversity target feels **more morally wrong** than posting the job ad that does not include the specific target"

Study 2: Results (all p's < 0.001)

- Hiring managers chose measurable diversity target 15.8% of time (almost identical to percentage of Fortune 100 companies that advertise measurable diversity targets)

- Hiring managers predict that measurable diversity targets will lead to more applications from women and racial minorities, but fewer applications from White men
  - Incorrect prediction about White men

- Hiring managers predict that measurable diversity targets will decrease candidate quality among all groups
  - Incorrect predictions across the board

Study 2: Results (all p's < 0.001)

- Hiring managers find measurable diversity targets morally repugnant

- When regressing whether the hiring manager chose to use the measurable diversity target on all other measures, the only significant predictors were:

  - Whether they expected the measurable target to attract more racial minorities (+)

  - Their moral discomfort with measurable diversity targets (-)

Takeaways

- Organizations should communicate measurable diversity targets in job advertisements to increase demographic diversity of job applicants and increase applicant quality

- Organizations looking to increase diversity need to understand how to overcome moral discomfort around effective DEI practices and policies

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