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Joseph Zaragoza  
*University of Central Florida*



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THE IMPACT OF INDIVIDUAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE FAIRNESS OF PUBLIC  
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY STATEMENTS ON ATTITUDES TOWARD THE  
ORGANIZATION

by

JOSEPH G. ZARAGOZA  
B.A. Our Lady of the Lake University, 2009

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Science  
in the Department of Psychology  
in the College of Sciences  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

Fall Term 2012

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research project was to explore differences in perceptions of organizational justice and related attitudes. Through the use of a 3 x 2 experimental design, participants were randomly assigned to groups in which they were exposed to a fictitious organization's mock recruitment document publicizing different types of affirmative action programs and varying levels of information regarding the mechanics of such programs. Results did not demonstrate statistically significant differences across groups. Project implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research are discussed.

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research project is to examine the effects of various affirmative action programs (AAPs) on individual attitudes and perceptions. AAPs are utilized by organizations in an attempt to minimize discrimination in the workplace and to provide equal opportunities to historically disadvantaged groups. Individual judgments of organizational justice and fairness can impact employee performance (Williams, 1999) and hold potential negative implications for job acceptance intentions among other various work-related outcomes (Truxillo, Steiner, & Gilliland, 2004). Increasing diversity, exhibiting sensitivity to the importance of developing a diverse workforce, and providing equal employment opportunities are factors many organizations consider for their recruitment and selection processes. Therefore, it is logical to explore the variables associated with AAPs that affect perceptions and attitudes of organizations and to attempt to develop strategies that are perceived by others, especially the relevant labor market, as just and fair.

### *History of Affirmative Action*

In March of 1961, President John F. Kennedy signed Executive Order 10925 which established the President's Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity and demanded government contractors to take "affirmative action" to ensure fair treatment of applicants and employees. Therefore, an employer could not discriminate against individuals on the basis of color, race, gender, or national origin. Executive Order 10925 helped lead to the development of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Titles VI and VII are provisions within this piece of legislation that created new standards of practice for employers. Title VI forbids discrimination in federally assisted programs and Title VII forbids discrimination in employment and sparked the idea of



equal employment opportunity. Therefore, employers could not treat employees or potential employees differently on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Furthermore, this established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) which is a government body designed to serve as a mediator between the public and the government for issues related to discrimination in employment. The EEOC also oversees employment practices of independent contractors to ensure fair practice and elimination of any type of disparate treatment or impact upon historically disadvantaged demographic groups.

While the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a landmark piece of legislation, it was not until President Lyndon B. Johnson issued Executive Order 11246 that affirmative action plans were formalized and required for certain government contractors. Contractors doing at least \$50,000 per year with the government or with at least 50 employees were required to develop and implement an affirmative action plan. With this, the United States Department of Labor was held responsible for enforcing and regulating the president's order which led to the creation of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). The OFCCP is a branch within the Department of Labor and retains the right to review and revoke agreements between the government and contractors if they are found guilty of discriminatory practices.

The passing of the Civil Rights Acts of 1991 revitalized attention toward discriminatory practices in organizations from a variety of scientific and professional disciplines. This statute is an amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A series of laws and amendments have accrued regarding these issues since the late nineteenth century, and are referred to as guidelines for government regulatory agencies. Traditionally, this type of regulation was industry specific.

However, more recent developments have attempted to employ a set of uniform guidelines for all industries.

A regulatory model by Ledvinka and Scarpello (1991, see Figure 1) illustrates how agencies such as the EEOC came into being and how societal problems served as an impetus for government regulatory actions. An extensive series of laws and executive orders have been passed in an attempt to mitigate effects of discriminatory practices in human resource management. As a result of these various statutes, government regulatory agencies were created to enforce, oversee, and interpret their stipulations. Some activities of these agencies involve complaint processing, on-site inspections, and employing affirmative action programs. Under certain circumstances, organizational managers are required to negotiate with individuals filing claims of unfair treatment, keep detailed records of selection or promotion processes, employ particular training programs, or engage in other activities as a response to a government regulatory action.

The long history of the laws and executive orders presented in Figure 1 demonstrates the ever-evolving nature of this topic. Despite a series of reforms and amendments, much discord remains between legislators, human resource researchers and practitioners, courts, politicians, and citizens regarding the extent of government regulations and its methodologies. One particular method that has received much attention in professional research and popular press alike, especially since the ratification of the Civil Rights Act of 1991, has been the issue of AAPs. At the core of this debate lies one pivotal question: Does the utilization of an AAP rightfully mitigate the effects of discrimination and unjust employment practices or does it create an unfair advantage for members of certain demographic groups? Over the past few decades,

researchers have been trying to develop and explore methods that can be justified as fair without creating a double standard or sacrificing the overall quality of organizational performance. Thus, affirmative action programs have evolved through several, crucial court case rulings which have set the precedents for modern day affirmative action policies.

Generally, an AAP is defined as actions taken by organizations to actively seek out and eliminate unintended or unrecognized barriers to fair treatment to achieve equality of opportunity (Campbell, 1996). A major limitation to this broad definition is that the types of actions taken and the ways in which these programs are implemented are not specified and are left open to interpretation. Consequently, the United States Supreme Court has played an eminent role in settling disputes pertaining to affirmative action policies and determining “fair” practices.

For example, the significant Supreme Court case, *Gratz v. Bollinger* (2003), ruled that it was unconstitutional to use race as a factor in part of a mechanical selection system for college admissions. The University of Michigan used a 150-point scale to rank applicants with 100 points needed to grant admission. The admissions system granted a total of 20 points to members of underrepresented ethnic groups (e.g. African-American, Hispanics, and Native Americans). The judgment involved the interpretation of a “tailored use” of race as part of the admissions decision process. Judges assessed quota systems as “not narrowly tailored to achieve educational diversity,” and therefore, this type of selection system yielded an unfair advantage to members of ethnically diverse groups. A similar court case, *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003), was heard concurrently with *Gratz v. Bollinger* (2003) and questioned the admissions policy standards for The University of Michigan Law School. The *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003) case also involved the interpretation of a “tailored use” of race in consideration for admissions decisions. However, the

policies reviewed in the *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003) case differed from those in the *Gratz v. Bollinger* (2003) case in that the system did not adhere to a specific quota (Morfin, Perez, Parker, Lynn, & Arrona, 2006). Rather, it used a more holistic based system considering race as a single part of a larger assessment. In this instance, the Supreme Court ruled that University of Michigan's Law School "engages in a highly individualized, holistic review of each applicant's file and did not insulate each category of applicants with certain desired qualifications from competition with all other applicants" (*Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003; Naylor & Rosenbloom, 2004). Therefore, when a diversity initiative is operationalized in this manner, it is declared as legal and narrowly tailored to adhere to the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause which indicates that this method does not yield an unfair advantage to members of particular demographic groups. While these cases involve reviews of matriculation processes, the implications of these fairly recent decisions translate into the legality and development of diversity initiatives for selection processes in organizations as well. These examples serve to demonstrate that although diversity has been recognized as a compelling government interest (Morfin et al., 2006; *University of California v. Bakke*, 1978), society is still uncertain as to which methodologies can allow equal opportunities for all peoples.

#### *Role of AAPs in Organizational Selection Processes*

With the development of laws, possibilities of litigation regarding unfair or discriminatory selection practices, and an increasingly diverse workforce, the role of AAPs and their contextual factors within organizational selection processes has become a major issue in human resource management. Several studies have examined various contextual factors that pertain to perceptions and attitudes of AAPs such as the manner in which it is presented (Barnes

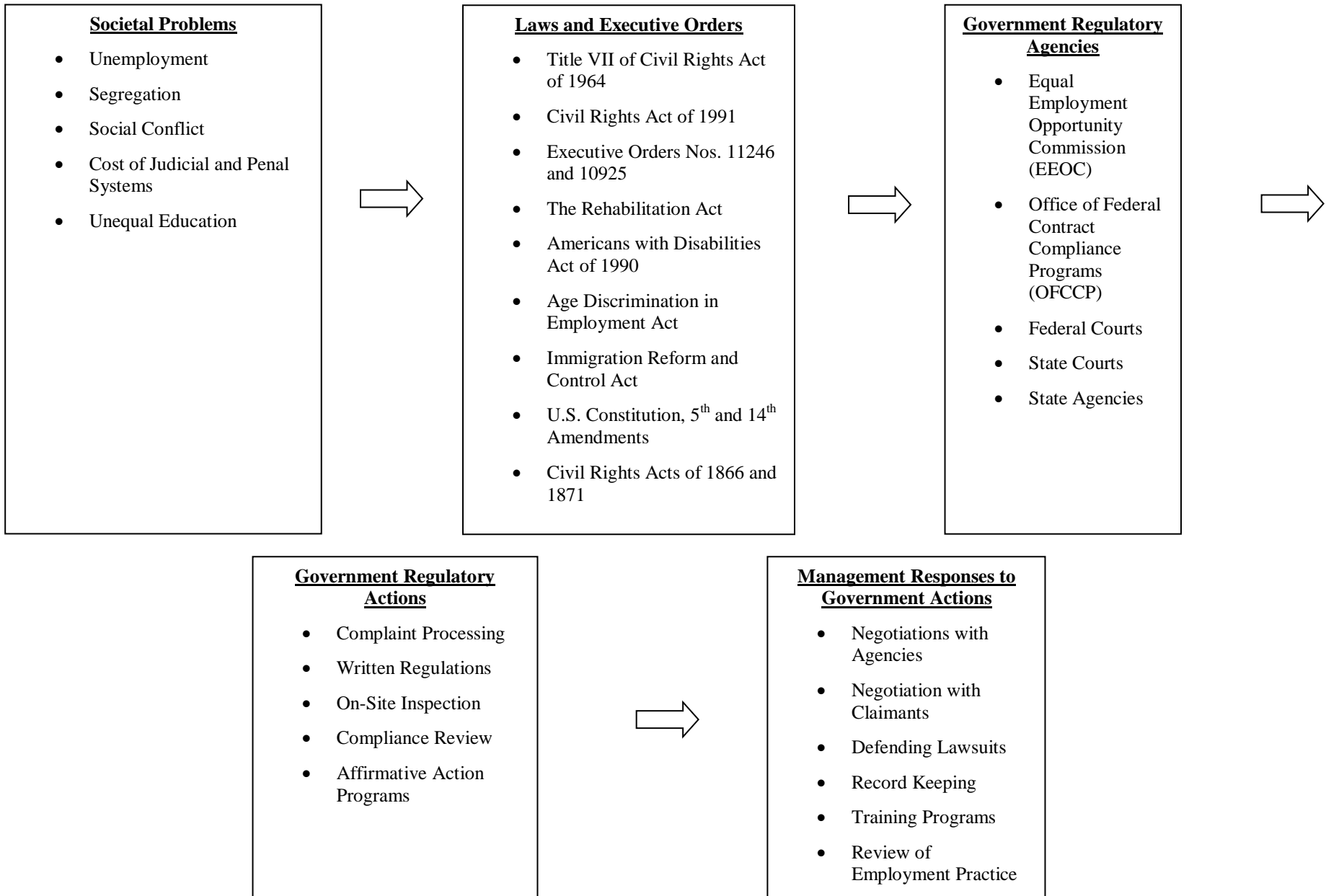


Figure 1: Regulatory Model Adapted from Ledvinka and Scarpello (1991)

Nacoste, 1994), the extent of information revealed regarding structural characteristics (Singer 1990, 1992; Arthur, Doverspike, & Fuentes, 1992), and the types of justifications (or lack thereof) used (Bobocel & Farrell, 1996; Heilman, McCollough, & Gilbert, 1996; Murrell, Dietz-Uhler, Dovidio, Gaertner, & Drout, 1994). For example, Heilman et al. (1996) revealed significant differences in participant fairness ratings of a selection procedure when justification for the decision was given as opposed to no justification given at all. A noteworthy caveat of this body of research is the use of preferential treatment programs. Current research should continue to explore these contextual factors and their effects on perceptions and attitudes, but should strive to distance itself from such abrogated practices in order to develop conclusions relevant to policy design and practitioners. Barnes Nacoste (1994) emphasizes this same principle in stating, “if all we offer are analyses that are social psychologically interesting but not linked to policy design, then it will continue to be possible for other policy analysts to say that psychological outcomes of affirmative action don’t really matter” (p.109). Therefore, the remainder of this section describes the current role of AAPs and the circumstances in which they are utilized.

AAPs are not necessarily mandatory by law. Typically, an organization employs an AAP for one of the following reasons. The organization is: 1) a federal contractor employed by the United States government 2) acting under a court order and consent decree or 3) voluntarily enacting an AAP (Gatewood, Feild, & Barrick, 2008). The most common types of programs are created voluntarily or as a result of a federal contract (Crosby, Iyer, Clayton, & Downing, 2003).

Businesses engaged in a federal contract must adhere to specific AAP designs and stipulations designated by the federal government. Government agencies, such as the Department of Labor, interact with agency managers to ensure AAPs are implemented appropriately

according to their standards. Some of the interactions between bodies of the federal government and individual organizations include activities like utility analysis, specific goal setting, selection procedure reviews, publicizing policies, and specifying other requirements.

In some cases, organizations may be implementing an AAP as a result of a court order and consent decree. However, an organization must be found guilty of either disparate treatment or disparate impact in order for a court to have legitimate reasoning for its orders. Disparate treatment and disparate impact both provide sufficient, legal reasoning for a court to order the adoption of an AAP. Although the two concepts differ slightly, both are construed as signs of discrimination or unequal treatment to members of demographic groups. Disparate treatment occurs when different standards are applied to members of different groups based upon demographics. For example, using different cut-off scores on a selection test for Native Americans and Caucasian Americans would constitute discrimination in the form of disparate treatment. Disparate impact involves the use of uniform selection standards that result in disproportionate representation of various groups. In some cases, disparate impact may be inadvertent, but it is still regarded as a cause for action on behalf of the federal government. If selection standards are not supported by empirical evidence such as a thorough job analysis, then they can be subject to scrutiny if disparate impact occurs. For example, an educational requirement of a Bachelor's degree without proper justification could result in disparate impact since it may disqualify demographic groups that are less likely to graduate from college such as minority group members.

Some organizations voluntarily use AAPs. This third case tends to be the most controversial (Gatewood et al., 2008) since governmental agencies do not directly oversee the

process. The responsibility of using a “narrowly tailored” AAP to achieve specific goals and outcomes rests upon the organization and its management. Specific characteristics of an effective method to accomplish a diversity initiative without violating law and giving unfair advantages are not free from debate and controversy. Researchers continue to explore AAPs and other related topics in an attempt to determine their appropriate roles in human resource management.

### *Features of AAPs and Levels of Prescriptiveness*

One recent meta-analysis by Harrison, Kravitz, Mayer, Leslie, and Lev-Arey (2006) categorizes AAPs into four different levels of prescriptiveness according to their structural features. Prescriptiveness is a term used to describe the extent to which an AAP gives weight to membership within particular demographic groups. In this particular analysis, prescriptiveness is also determined as a function of the time in which the intervention takes place within the recruitment-selection process. Therefore, a high level of prescriptiveness relates to a strong weighting of demographic group membership in a selection process. From these data, researchers established four different types of AAPs: opportunity enhancement, equal employment opportunity, tiebreak procedure (or weak preferential treatment), and strong preferential treatment. Opportunity enhancement AAPs offer assistance prior to selection and strive to increase diversity usually by focusing recruitment efforts or training. These types of programs aim to increase the number of underrepresented groups in an applicant pool, or they may offer special training or assistance to individuals in order to overcome barriers to opportunity for employment. An example of an opportunity enhancement AAP would be an organization recruiting applicants at a college with a large minority population to increase its applicant pool with more members of a particular demographic. Some consider these types of AAPs to be the



least prescriptive because they occur within the recruitment/applicant stage as opposed to the selection/decision stage. Equal opportunity AAPs prohibit employers from assigning a negative weight to women and minorities in making a selection decision. Unlike the opportunity enhancement AAP, this program occurs in the selection/decision stage of a hiring process, and therefore, can be considered more prescriptive than an opportunity enhancement program. In this case, an employer cannot refuse to hire someone on the basis of a demographic characteristic (i.e. race, gender). Tiebreak or weak preferential treatment AAPs give preference to members of protected minority groups over majority group members with equivalent qualifications. For example, if a male and female have equivalent qualifications for a job, an employer would select the female over the male on the basis of a proportional lack of representation for this group and a value for creating a diverse organization. Strong preferential treatment AAPs give preference to minority group members regardless of qualifications. These types of AAPs are usually manifested in the form of quota systems and are often regarded as illegal as a result of the University of Michigan court cases. In other instances, some tiebreak AAPs may be regarded as illegal, also (Harrison et al.), depending upon the degree to which consideration of race, gender, etc. is narrowly tailored to enhance diversity. A prime example of this is illustrated in the University of Michigan court cases. Tiebreak AAPs also occur during the selection/decision stage of a hiring process, and are regarded as the most prescriptive type of program that maintains the current legal standards.

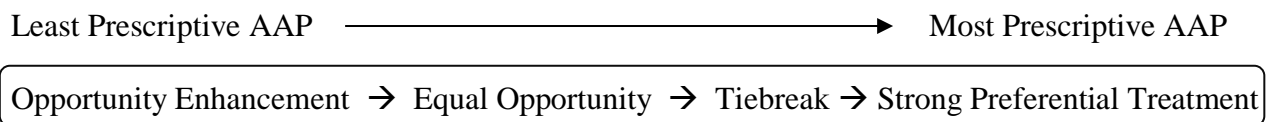


Figure 2: Prescriptiveness Continuum as outlined by Harrison et al. (2006)

### *Alternative View of Prescriptiveness Continuum*

While many researchers agree with the continuum proposed above (e.g. Gatewood, et al., 2008), others hold alternative perceptions of opportunity enhancement and equal opportunity programs regarding the extent to which they assist women and minorities (e.g. Crosby et al., 2003; Crosby, 1994). Some do not consider equal opportunity programs to be a form of affirmative action because it does not necessitate the investment of either time or money on the behalf of the organization, and it is considered to be a passive approach to the elimination of discriminatory practices. Therefore, in ranking prescriptiveness, other researchers consider the degree of action taken by the organization to prevent unfair treatment or practices. Equal opportunity AAPs are thought of as remedial rather than preventative in nature, and opportunity enhancement and tiebreak procedure AAPs are more proactive measures. Consequently, affirmative action is defined as an organization devoting resources to ensure the elimination of discrimination on the basis of gender or ethnicity (Crosby, 1994). Equal opportunity AAPs can be described as the absence of discriminatory behavior in making a selection decision. Under this definition, equal opportunity AAPs would be less prescriptive than opportunity enhancement programs. While previous research involving reactions to different types of AAPs has found support for tiebreak procedures being viewed as less fair and favorable than others, there is mixed support regarding fairness perceptions of equal opportunity and opportunity enhancement AAPs (Slaughter, Sinar, & Bachiochi, 2002). An alternative rationale for the AAP prescriptiveness continuum is outlined in Table 1 which describes varying properties that differentiate AAPs. Strong preferential treatment AAPs are not used here for two reasons. First, one would not be able to derive practical implications from such research as these types of

programs have been deemed unlawful. Secondly, use of such a program in research may perpetuate current misconceptions about AAPs and their associations with quota systems.

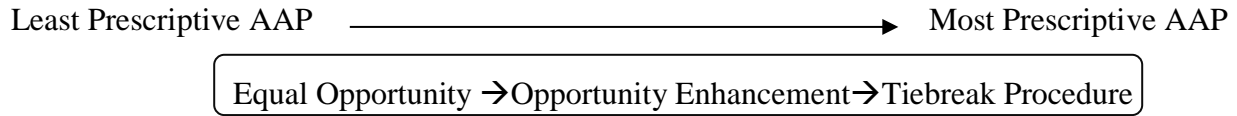


Figure 3: Alternative AAP Prescriptiveness Continuum

*Diversity and Organizations*

As the labor market becomes increasingly diverse, many organizations strive to communicate an image of tolerance and acceptance of personal differences such as ethnicity, gender, and religion. Employers often design recruitment advertisements or parts of a company website to convey these ideals to potential employees or their market base in an attempt to create a more favorable image of the organization. However, the amount of information exposed to a potential applicant regarding an AAP can vary by organization or type of program. Past research

Table 1 - Varying Properties of AAPs

|  | Equal Opportunity | Opportunity Enhancement        | Tiebreak Procedure      |
|--|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Does weight given to demographic characteristics yield an advantage in recruitment or selection? | No                | Yes, in recruitment phase only | Yes, in selection phase |
| Is positive weight given to demographic characteristics in decision-making process?              | No                | No                             | Yes                     |

has examined the effects of AAP policy statements on attitudes and perceptions of organizations (e.g. Kravitz, 1995; Walker, Field, Giles, Bernerth, & Jones-Farmer, 2007; Brooks, Guidroz, &

Chakrabarti, 2009). A study by Walker et al. (2007) revealed an inverse relationship between ratings of organizational attractiveness and AAP prescriptiveness. Kravitz (1995) also found empirical support for the hypothesis that attitudes toward AAPs were inversely related to the weight given to race in the policy.

### *AAPs and Organizational Justice Theory*

Adopting and implementing an AAP can have effects on individual perceptions of organizations (Hausknecht, Day, & Thomas, 2004; Kravitz, 1995; Walker et al., 2007; Brooks et al., 2009; Harrison et al., 2006). A recently conducted meta-analysis by Hausknecht et al. (2004) has developed an updated theoretical model of applicant reactions to selection. “Applicant reactions” are defined as the attitudes, affect, or cognitions an individual might hold regarding a hiring process (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). Hausknecht et al.’s meta-analysis provides five main reasons for studying applicant reactions which are outlined in the following bullet points.

- Maintaining a reputable company image will help attract well-qualified candidates
- Candidates with negative reactions may dissuade others from applying
- Likelihood to accept an offer could decrease for an individual with unfavorable reactions
- When individuals feel hiring procedures are unfair, they are more likely to bring suit to an organization.
- Individuals with negative reactions to a hiring process may be less likely to purchase products from an organization and to reapply although the empirical data supporting this point is minimal.

Hausknecht et al.'s model was adapted from Gilliland's (1993) work on organizational justice theory. Essentially, Gilliland explains individual reactions during and after hiring through perceptions of fairness with a selection process. These perceptions are influenced by various organizational factors such as procedural justice rules. It is also partially derived from a previous study by Ryan and Ployhart (2000) which examines past literature related to the formation of applicant perceptions of selection procedures. Their examination reveals a model in which various individual characteristics and perceived procedure characteristics operate as antecedents to the formation of applicant perceptions. These applicant perceptions in turn affect various outcomes within the organization such as behaviors and attitudes toward an organization. The model depicted in Figure 4 was adapted from Hausknecht et al.

### *Antecedents*

The antecedents are defined as factors related to perceived procedure characteristics, personality characteristics, and demographic characteristics. For the purposes of this project, procedural justice rules will be manifested through the different types of AAPs which will be a manipulated variable. The following section aims to provide a foundation for organizational justice theory, and to help define procedural justice and informational justice for the context of the current study.

### *Organizational Justice Theory*

Organizational justice is defined as an individual's perception or evaluation of the appropriateness of some process or outcome (Burton, Sablinski, & Sekiguchi, 2008). Several studies have concluded that perceptions of organizational justice can affect various individual

behaviors and other important organizational outcomes such as lower levels of performance (Williams, 1999), increased absenteeism (Gellatly, 1995), and decreased organizational citizenship behaviors (Moorman, 1991). Perceptions of justice have also yielded negative relationships with intent to file discrimination claims (Goldman, 2001). Additionally, they can affect retention of an organization's applicants and various other factors related to organizational attractiveness (Truxillo, Steiner, & Gilliland, 2004). Organizational attractiveness relates to the desirability of working for a particular body. Several facets of the organization, including organizational justice, contribute to the development of an individual's perception of an organization and its other general characteristics.

Organizational justice theory has identified distributive and procedural justice as the two major components which comprise organizational justice. Distributive justice, also known as equity theory, has received more attention in the literature than its more recently developed counterpart. Distributive justice can be defined as the appropriate distribution of equity among employees as is justified by the appropriate determinant such as performance. This type of justice is usually more relevant to current employees of an organization as the cues regarding its assessment are more readily available to an employee as opposed to an applicant (i.e. relative performance). For example, employees may have more knowledge of a typical, high, and low work performance, the types of resources allocated by the company to individuals, and to whom these resources are given. Low levels of distributive justice have been associated with negative outcomes such as theft (Greenberg, 1990) and sabotage (Giacalone, Riordan, & Rosenfeld, 1997).

Procedural justice pertains to the procedures used to determine specific organizational outcomes (Goldman, 2001). Therefore, this may include the manner in which promotion and selection decisions are made and the extent to which an individual can voice his opinion about an organizational aspect or the “voice effect.” This type of justice is considered to be relevant to employees and applicants alike and can indirectly affect other organizational outcomes as well, such as discrimination claiming (Goldman, 2001). Cues regarding procedural justice are fairly salient to a current or potential applicant through different avenues of communication and interactions (e.g. “word of mouth” endorsements, interviews). Therefore, an organization should be cognizant of the various factors which directly affect the types of cues given to current and potential future members. This also illustrates the importance of procedural justice within a hiring and selection context and gives some implications as to the role perceptions of this type of justice play upon the formation of applicant or public perceptions. The three different types of AAPs will represent three distinct sets of procedural justice rules. A study by Colquitt (2001) performed a confirmatory factor analysis which identifies two additional forms of organizational justice known as interpersonal and informational.

Interpersonal justice, also known as interactional justice, relates to the ways individuals are treated, and typically pertains to personal interactions between members of the organization and individuals engaged in the hiring process. Informational justice refers to information given to an applicant or a potential applicant that justifies a decision or provides an explanation. Generally, informational and interpersonal justice are relatively salient to applicants and potential recruits as the individual and organization communicate within the different phases of the hiring process. Specifically, informational justice is salient to members of the general public

and potential applicants, whereas perceptions of interpersonal justice are formed in the post-application phase such as in the form of an interview. This project is concerned with the effects of varying levels of information on perceptions of AAPs, and therefore, the focus lies on informational justice as an antecedent to the development of attitudes and perceptions toward an organization.

*Explicit vs. Vague Information regarding AAPs and Individual Perceptions*

When organizations have adopted an AAP, it is common practice to publicize this information to some extent. The type of program and the extent of information presented to individuals can affect various perceptions and attitudes toward an organization (Cropanzano, Slaughter, & Bachiochi, 2005; Golden, Hinkle, & Crosby, 2001; Greenberg, 1994; Shaw, Wild, & Colquitt, 2003; Truxillo, Bodner, Bertolino, Bauer, & Yonce, 2009; Aberson, 2003; Kravitz & Klineberg, 2000). For example, Aberson (2003) found that affirmative action programs were supported when participants were provided with justification. Additionally, results from a study by Kravitz and Klineberg (2000) revealed that White participants were more likely to assume an AAP was a form of strong preferential treatment when it was not explicitly defined. Conversely, beneficiary groups rated vaguely defined AAPs more favorably than Tiebreak AAPs. Researchers attributed these results to the notion that individuals equate a vaguely defined AAP as a form of strong preferential treatment for women and minorities. These findings support Nacoste's (1994) argument that individuals hold certain schemas about AAPs which can affect attitudes. Typically, such schemas become prevalent when an AAP is vaguely defined. Based on these previous findings, the following is hypothesized.



*Hypothesis 1a:* Participants will differentially rate the three types of AAP policy statements, with the most prescriptive AAP (tiebreak procedure) being rated as less fair than the other two procedures.

*Hypothesis 1b:* Participants will express differential attitudes toward organizations based on AAP policy, with organizations with the most prescriptive AAP (tiebreak procedure) receiving less favorable ratings.

*Hypothesis 2a:* Study participants will rate vaguely described AAP policy statements, (regardless of policy type) as less fair than explicitly described AAP policy statements.

*Hypothesis 2b:* Study participants will express less favorable attitudes toward organizations with vaguely described AAP policy statements, (regardless of policy type) than organizations with explicitly described AAP policy statements.

*Hypothesis 3a:* Study participants will rate explicit tiebreak procedure AAP policy statements as more fair than vague tiebreak procedures, but less fair than any other AAP policy statement.

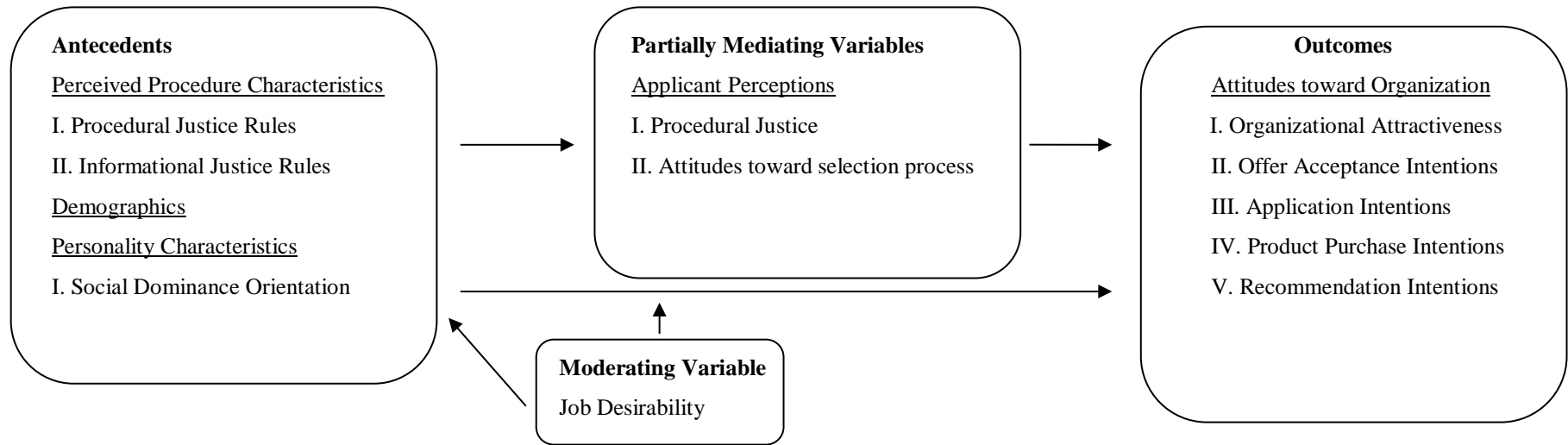
*Hypothesis 3b:* Study participants will express more favorable attitudes toward organizations with explicitly described tiebreak procedure AAP policy statements compared to vaguely described tiebreak procedure AAP policy statements, but will express less favorable attitudes toward organizations with explicitly described tiebreak procedure AAP policy statements compared to all other types of AAP policy statements.

#### *Other Related Variables*

Other variables of peripheral interest are those of demographics and the participant's job search process status. Since AAPs can contain structural features that examine differences in gender and ethnicity, we expect individual differences in attitudes and perceptions to occur based

upon various demographic characteristics such as ethnicity and gender (i.e. Harrison et al., 2006; Kravitz & Klineberg, 2000; Kravitz, Bludau, & Klineberg, 2008; Hughes & Bigler, 2010; Klineberg & Kravitz, 2003). For example, Harrison et al.'s (2006) meta-analysis found evidence for the hypothesis stating that AAP attitudes are more positive among African-Americans and Hispanic Americans than White Americans. African-Americans tended to yield the most positive attitudes toward AAPs followed by Hispanic Americans. Furthermore, their analysis revealed that these differences in attitudes were greater between African-Americans and White Americans rather than Hispanic Americans and White Americans. Researchers found that the relationships between perceiver demographics and attitudes were moderated by the level of explicitness in an AAP's description such that a less detailed description yielded a stronger effect. Also, as prescriptiveness increased, the differences in attitudes were widened between target group members and non-target group members. Previous research provides mixed support for gender differences in attitudes toward AAPs (i.e. Konrad & Linnehan, 1995; Kravitz & Platania, 1993; Summers, 1995; Ozawa, Crosby, & Crosby, 1996; Kravitz et al., 2000). For example, a study by Summers (1995) found significant differences between male and female attitudes toward AAPs. However, when controlling for differences in self-interest among the groups, there was no significant difference between males and females in attitudes toward AAPs. Furthermore, Kravitz et al. (2000) concluded that relationships between gender and attitudes toward AAPs were nonsignificant.

Based on previous research, it is expected that women and minorities will have a tendency to rate more prescriptive programs more favorably in the pursuit of self-interests, but differences between genders may not be as vast as those between various ethnic groups.



Note: Model adapted from Hausknecht, Day, & Thomas (2004).

Figure 4: Theoretical Model of Applicant Reactions to Selection

Conversely, one can expect to see a reverse-effect for males and non-minorities. Due to expected limitations in the demographic variability of the sample population, separate hypotheses speaking to these individual differences are not projected.

Job desirability is presented as a moderating variable in this model because Hausknecht et al. (2004) found some support for the hypothesis stating that relationships between variables may differ upon the context of the study. Therefore, the strength of the relationships in the model may be dependent upon the degree to which an individual is actively seeking employment such that manipulations may not have the same effect for currently employed individuals. Generally, studies in a hypothetical selection context, as opposed to an authentic selection context which solicits individuals actively seeking employment, may not yield as strong of a relationship between variables. Although authors failed to identify consistent patterns with regards to this variable, results concluded that average correlations between organizational justice variables and various outcomes such as offer acceptance intentions tended to be stronger in a hypothetical context rather than in an authentic context. Job desirability will be explored by surveying participants on their current employment status (i.e. full-time, part-time, unemployed, etc.). However, due to projected limitations in the sample population, separate hypotheses are not constructed concerning this moderating variable.

Though several personality characteristics may play a role in the development of perceptions and attitudes toward organizations and their policies, one of particular interest is social dominance orientation (SDO). SDO is a concept derived from social dominance theory and addresses the degree to which an individual feels motivated to maintain a social inequity and one's dominant position in a society (Edwards, 2008). It implies an established social hierarchy

based upon group membership and disproportionate access to and allocation of resources among different groups. Therefore, non-beneficiaries of AAPs are more likely than beneficiaries to have higher ratings of SDO. A study by Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, and Malle (1994) established a measure of SDO and explored several relationships between other related variables. Authors found significantly positive correlations between SDO and political-economic conservatism, subscription to cultural elitism, and ethnic prejudice among other variables. Alternatively, SDO showed significantly negative correlations with attitudes toward various social issues such as support for gay rights, women's rights, social welfare programs, ameliorative racial policy, and environmental policy. Additionally, Edwards (2008) found support for the inverse relationship between SDO and attitudes toward affirmative action although only tiebreak procedure AAPs were used in the study. Other previous research has demonstrated that individual perceptions of AAP policies can be partly driven by one's level of SDO (Haley & Sidanius, 2006). In order to obtain measures that would not be confounded by this extraneous influence, SDO will be employed as a covariate. Additionally, no previous research, to the knowledge of the investigator, has utilized SDO as a covariate in this particular context. The current experiment will explore relationships between SDO and applicant perceptions of organizational justice and attitudes toward an organization that chooses to adopt and publicize an AAP such that higher ratings of SDO will yield lower ratings of the dependent variables.

### *Summary*

In summation, this study will examine the effects of affirmative action policy statements on individuals' perceptions and attitudes. It is expected that AAP type and level of description will yield main effects and an interaction effect on dependent variables such as organizational

outcomes and applicant perceptions of organizational justice. Generally, vague descriptions should be rated lower than explicit descriptions. Tiebreak procedure statements will most likely yield the least favorable results, but using more explicit descriptions may produce somewhat more favorable results compared to a vaguely described program of the same type. According to the adapted theoretical model, participants' attitudes on various organizational outcomes should be partially mediated by their perceptions of organizational justice. Other demographic variables (i.e. gender, ethnicity) may play a role in the formation of these attitudes and perceptions and will be explored. Job desirability and social dominance orientation could also potentially moderate the proposed relationships and will be analyzed in an exploratory fashion depending upon results from the sample population. Social dominance orientation will be measured and is expected to yield negative correlations with dependent variables.

## **METHOD**

### *Participants*

Data was collected from a total of 348 undergraduate students at a large, public university in the southeastern United States. The majority of participants were female (71.9%) and Caucasian (58.0%). Other participants identified themselves as Hispanic (19.3%), Black or African-American (12.9%), Asian (4.0%), American Indian or Alaska Native (.3%), or members of some other demographic group (4.9%). Most participants were in the 18-24 age group (75.3%). Others identified themselves as members of the 25-39 (17.0%) or 40 or over (6.0%) age groups.

### *Instruments*

A series of instruments were used to measure various constructs. A basic demographic and job desirability questionnaire was used to ascertain information regarding the participant's race, gender, and age. Additionally, this questionnaire contained items that asked if the participant is currently employed or seeking employment.

To measure SDO, this study employed the measure previously developed by Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, and Malle (1994). In order to determine the soundness of the psychometric properties for all scales, Cronbach's alpha was used to compute reliability coefficients. Only instruments with a coefficient reliability of .70 or higher were used for analysis. This 16-item questionnaire yielded a reliability coefficient of .93. A sample item from this questionnaire is "To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups." Responses were given on a 7-point Likert-type scale.

An additional instrument used was the “General Reactions to Organization and Selection Policy” questionnaire. This measure was adopted from Brooks, Guidroz, and Chakrabarti (2009), and yielded a reliability estimate of .79. It is a three-item measure and utilizes a 7-point Likert-type scale. The use of this instrument provided insight to the participant’s opinions of the fairness of the organization’s selection procedure as well as the extent to which a job at the company is appealing.

A four-item, “Procedural Justice Questionnaire” used a 7-point Likert-type scale to assess perceptions toward procedural justice with regard to the organization. This measure has been adopted from Gilliland (1994) and was slightly modified to fit the context of the current study. The sample yielded a reliability estimate of .82 for this questionnaire. Due to a glitch in the computer software used to collect data, only a portion of participants were able to submit responses on this questionnaire. Therefore, analyses concerning this measure were conducted using a subsample.

A separate measure entitled “Organizational Attractiveness and Job Pursuit Intentions” was used to gather and reinforce information regarding opinions and perceptions about being employed with an organization. It also utilizes a 7-point Likert-type scale and assesses the extent to which an individual would pursue employment with the organization. Therefore, this includes attempting to gain an interview and potentially speaking with a representative at an employment event such as a career fair. This measure has been used in previous research by Aiman-Smith, Bauer, and Cable (2001) who have reported reliability estimates for the organizational attractiveness and job pursuit intentions subscales of .98 and .91, respectively. This sample



revealed reliability estimates of .90 for both organizational attractiveness and job pursuit intentions subscales.

Two measures were created specifically for this research project, titled “Job Application Intentions Measure” and “Product Purchase Intentions Measure.” The first questionnaire was used to examine the extent to which a participant would be willing to submit an application to the organization. The second was a four-item measure used to solicit information regarding the extent to which a participant would be willing to purchase products from an organization. The “Job Application Intentions Measure” yielded a reliability coefficient of .88. However, the “Product Purchase Intentions Measure” had a reliability coefficient of .54 which did not meet the minimum level acceptable for analysis. Therefore, this measure was excluded from analyses.

A final measure titled “Recommendation Intentions” was used to examine the extent to which an individual would recommend employment with an organization to a friend or other person. This questionnaire uses a 5-point Likert scale and has been adopted from a previous study by Van Hove (2008) which reports a reliability estimate of .96. This sample demonstrated a reliability estimate of .92.

### *Procedure*

Participants accessed the study via Internet. Each participant was randomly assigned to one of six groups (see Table 2) in this 3x2 factorial design exposing them to one type of AAP embedded within a mock recruitment document for an artificial organization (see Appendix F). After obtaining informed consent, participants were asked to read the mock recruitment materials, and fill out the related, subsequent questionnaires. In exchange for participation, students received extra credit toward part of their coursework.

Table 2 – Research Design Outline

|                                 | <i>Equal<br/>Employment<br/>Opportunity</i> | <i>Opportunity<br/>Enhancement</i> | <i>Tiebreak<br/>Procedure</i> |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Explicit<br/>Description</i> |   |                                    |                               |
| <i>Vague<br/>Description</i>    |   |                                    |                               |

## RESULTS

### *Descriptive Statistics*

Composite scores on each measure were computed for individuals such that greater values correspond to a stronger presence of each construct. For example, higher scores on the “General Reactions to Organization and Selection Policy Questionnaire” indicate a more favorable response to the stimulus. Means, standard deviations, reliability estimates, and correlation coefficients for all dependent variables in the overall sample are presented in Table 3. SDO revealed significantly negative correlations with all variables as predicted whereas all other correlations were positive. The largest negative correlation was between procedural justice and SDO.

### *Hypothesis Tests*

Due to the use of multiple dependent measures and SDO as a model covariate, a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) test was used in order to test hypotheses. Previous literature has supported the use of multivariate analysis of variance testing in repeated measures designs (Hadzi-Pavlovic, 2010; Harlow, 2005). This type of analysis also helps to control for the increase in Type I error rate associated with conducting multiple tests for group differences across several dependent variables. Group sizes ranged from 47-69, and for the analysis involving procedural justice group sizes ranged from 13-19. About 33% of participants were able to correctly identify the type of AAP description that was read based on item 3 of the manipulation check (see Appendix H). In order to examine normality assumptions, Levene’s test of equality of error variances and Box’s test of equality of covariance matrices were performed. Levene’s test revealed normal distributions of error variances for all dependent variables.

However, Box's test of equality of covariance matrices revealed that covariances were not equal across groups. Therefore, Pillai's trace criterion was used as opposed to Wilk's Lambda because it is generally robust to violations of assumptions for the MANOVA statistical analysis (Harlow, 2005). Results demonstrated significant results for the SDO model parameter,  $F_{5,337} = 6.86, p < .001, \eta^2 = .09$ . Table 4 illustrates the effects of SDO on the dependent variables along with effect size estimates.

Hypothesis 1a predicted that participants would differentially rate organizations adopting AAPs with varying levels of prescriptiveness with regard to fairness. Pillai's trace criterion revealed that there were no significant differences across groups exposed to different AAPs for the procedural justice measure,  $F_{12,174} = .66, p = .79, \eta^2 = .04$ . Hypothesis 1b predicted that participants would express differential attitudes toward organizations based on AAP policy with tiebreak procedure AAPs receiving less favorable ratings. Pillai's trace criterion also demonstrated no significant differences across all other dependent measures,  $F_{10,676} = .83, p = .60, \eta^2 = .01$ . Hypothesis 2a predicted that participants would rate organizations with vaguely described AAP policy statements as less fair than those that had explicitly described AAP policy statements. This hypothesis was not supported,  $F_{6,86} = .61, p = .72, \eta^2 = .04$ . Hypothesis 2b predicted that participants would rate organizations with vaguely described AAP policy statements less favorably than organizations with explicitly described AAP policy statements. Results of the statistical analysis revealed no significant differences across groups with respect to outcome variables,  $F_{5,337} = .40, p = .85, \eta^2 = .01$ . Hypothesis 3a predicted that individuals exposed to vaguely described tiebreak procedure AAPs would yield the lowest ratings of fairness followed by those exposed to explicitly described tiebreak procedure AAPs. Results did not

Table 3 – Sample Descriptive Statistics

| <i>Variable</i>                           | <i>N</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>SD's</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>7</i> |
|---|----------|-------------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. SDO                                    | 348      | 36.58       | 15.47       | (.93)    |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| 2. Reactions to Org. and Selection Policy | 348      | 13.91       | 3.43        | -.23     | (.79)    |          |          |          |          |          |
| 3. Procedural Justice                     | 98       | 17.90       | 4.59        | -.39     | .54      | (.82)    |          |          |          |          |
| 4. Org. Attractiveness                    | 348      | 23.91       | 5.93        | -.27     | .74      | .60      | (.90)    |          |          |          |
| 5. Job Pursuit Intentions                 | 348      | 29.21       | 6.50        | -.26     | .61      | .45      | .71      | (.90)    |          |          |
| 6. Job Application Intentions             | 348      | 18.13       | 4.82        | -.18     | .60      | .37      | .68      | .80      | (.88)    |          |
| 7. Recommendation Intentions              | 348      | 10.83       | 2.20        | -.18     | .65      | .51      | .69      | .65      | .65      | (.92)    |

*Notes: 1) All correlations are significant at the .01 level (two-tailed)  
 2) Cronbach's alpha is presented in parentheses along the diagonal*

show support for this hypothesis,  $F_{12,174} = 1.17, p = .31, \eta^2 = .08$ . Finally, hypothesis 3b, which stated that participants exposed to vaguely described tiebreak procedure AAPs would yield the least favorable attitudes followed by those exposed to explicitly described tiebreak procedure AAPs, was not supported,  $F_{12,174} = 1.72, p = .07, \eta^2 = .03$ .

Table 4 – Effects of SDO Covariate on Dependent Variables†

| <b>Dependent Variable</b>                   | <b><i>F</i></b> | <b><math>\eta^2</math></b> |
|---|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Gen. Reactions to Org. and Selection Policy | 18.99**         | .05                        |
| Procedural Justice                          | 16.39**         | .15                        |
| Org. Attractiveness                         | 27.23**         | .07                        |
| Job Pursuit Intentions                      | 25.31**         | .07                        |
| Job Application Intentions                  | 11.63*          | .03                        |
| Recommendation Intentions                   | 11.15*          | .03                        |

†All effects have  $df = (1,341)$  except procedural justice  $df = (1,91)$

\* $p < .01$

\*\* $p < .001$

## DISCUSSION

Although hypotheses were not supported, results illustrated several points which merit elaboration. Descriptive statistics revealed information regarding the nature of relationships between variables. However, the absence of significant findings illustrates limitations in aspects of this research. Furthermore, SDO as a covariate demonstrated statistically significant relationships with all outcome variables. Suggestions for future research and overall implications for theory and practice are discussed.

### *Variable Relationships*

Information presented in Table 3 shows significant correlations between all variables used in this investigation. Generally, intercorrelations were relatively consistent with those found in previous research. The most notable trend is that SDO had a significantly negative correlation with all measures such as “Procedural Justice” and “Job Application Intentions.” While previous studies have explored relationships between SDO and similar variables such as social and political ideologies and the endorsement of government social programs designed to remedy inequities among various demographic groups (e.g. Pratto, et al., 1994), few studies have examined SDO in the context used in this particular investigation. Therefore, results affirm notions presented in previous research indicating that increases in an individual’s level of SDO is associated with less favorable attitudes toward policies that strive to decrease social inequity. SDO had the strongest correlation with procedural justice suggesting that individuals with higher levels of SDO yielded negative perceptions of fairness regardless of study manipulations.

Some significantly positive correlations between measures used in this investigation may suggest relatively low levels of discriminant validity (i.e. “Job Pursuit Intentions” and “Job

Application Intentions”). However, results do suggest that perceptions of procedural justice hold significant relationships with relevant job applicant attitudes. For example, those with higher levels of procedural justice would be more likely to apply to an organization and would be significantly more likely to find the organization attractive. Procedural justice correlation coefficients were found to be quite similar to those produced in previous research with similar measures. Cropanzano, Slaughter, and Bachiochi (2005) reported significantly positive correlation coefficients for procedural justice and organizational attractiveness (.73) and willingness to apply for a job (.65). Similar replication of these findings suggests that there is a prevalent and relatively strong correlation between these variables.

Results regarding the relationship between organizational attractiveness and job application intentions were consistent with those found in previous research (i.e. Roberson, Collins, & Oreg, 2005; Gomes & Neves, 2011) reinforcing the notion that these variables share a significant relationship. The same holds true for previous results regarding job pursuit intentions and organizational attractiveness (i.e. Schreurs, Derous, Proost, & De Witte, 2010). The “Job Application Intentions” measure originally created for this study yielded a reasonably high reliability coefficient indicating that this instrument can be considered sound from a psychometric perspective. However, there was a relatively high correlation between this variable and the “Job Pursuit Intentions” measure suggesting a lack of discriminant validity. Therefore, these two measures can be considered similar in scope. Future research can help determine if this instrument can produce unique and valuable measurements. Moreover, recommendation intentions were associated with positive perceptions of procedural justice which is consistent with previous findings (i.e. Gilliland, 1994). Also, recommendation intentions were significantly



correlated with organizational attractiveness and job pursuit intentions reaffirming previous research (i.e. Schreurs et al., 2010).

### *Hypotheses*

Statistical analysis demonstrated that no significant differences occurred between groups with respect to any of the dependent measures. One explanation for these results may be that the measures used were not powerful enough to detect significant differences in attitudes toward the organization or fairness perceptions. Furthermore, insufficient sample size may also be attributed to such statistical conclusions. Group sizes for the procedural justice measure may not have been large enough to detect significant group differences.

The overall design of the study may have also contributed to the lack of statistically significant differences. One possibility is that the manipulations used were not drastic enough to warrant varying perceptions from participants since all organizations' recruitment documents had some type of AAP. The use of a control group or an organization recruitment document that did not endorse any type of AAP at all would have helped to determine whether or not this is a reasonable explanation.

Additionally, the conjectures made with regard to the overall theoretical perspective may simply be incorrect. It is possible that job applicants' perceptions of fairness and attitudes are not affected by the publication or endorsement of an organization's AAP regardless of how much information is given and the level of prescriptiveness of the type of program used. However, results did have a general trend toward significance when inspecting the interaction term in the overall model ( $p=.07$ ). In light of this marginally significant finding, results from univariate ANOVAs were examined. Further investigation revealed that there was a significant difference

between groups for the “Job Application Intentions” measure which demonstrated that individuals exposed to vague tiebreak procedure programs had significantly lower ratings when compared to individuals exposed to vague opportunity enhancement programs when controlling for SDO. Yet, due to the non-significant omnibus test statistic, it is possible that this difference may have occurred due to chance. Therefore, further investigation is warranted with regard to these issues although this general trend could begin to provide support for the idea that organizations adopting tiebreak procedure programs while exhibiting relatively low levels of informational justice may discourage job seekers from submitting applications.

#### *SDO as a Covariate*

SDO significantly predicted all outcome variables which leads to the conclusion that the measures utilized in the current investigation were significantly affected by the participant’s level of SDO. To help bolster the argument of using SDO as a covariate rather than an additional independent variable, separate analyses were conducted. SDO was dichotomized into high and low levels based on individuals being above or below the sample mean. Those above the mean were listed as having high levels of SDO and those below the mean were listed as having low levels of SDO. When this was added as an additional independent variable, no significant model parameters were found. Controlling for this variable in future research where the outcome variables of interest are congruent or similar in scope to those used in this study may help investigators remove the influence of extraneous individual differences that would subsequently impact the accuracy of construct measurement such as procedural justice.

### *Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research*

Certain limitations in the research design may contribute to the results and conclusions. The use of a student sample is one limitation which inhibits generalizability of results. However, conducting this type of research using a field sample would prove to be quite difficult due to its experimental nature. Moreover, the use of a field sample would be associated with greater risks if one attempted to replicate the methodologies employed here. A separate issue is that students who are not actual job seekers may have reacted differently to the mock recruitment document. However, statistical analysis revealed that no significant differences were found across any measures regardless of how many hours per week participants worked. Therefore, whether participants were unemployed, employed part-time, or employed full-time, was irrelevant to their perceptions of fairness and attitudes toward the organization. Future research may be able to determine whether or not the use of student samples produces varying results for related policy-capturing studies. Also, this sample was overwhelmingly female and mostly Caucasian. Obtaining a more demographically diverse sample would have allowed for a closer examination of differences with regard to race, ethnicity, and even gender.

A separate limitation is the lack of a control group. Adding a separate condition where participants were exposed to no AAP at all could have allowed researchers to garner more information concerning differences in fairness perceptions and attitudes. This would allow investigators to determine the extent to which adopting any type of AAP may be affecting subsequent perceptions and attitudes. Consequently, future research should employ designs using a control group to assess the possibility of these types of differences. Additionally, most participants were unable to correctly identify which type of AAP description they read which

may help to explain the lack of significant findings. This may suggest that individuals may not give much clout to these types of issues when seeking employment or that the manipulations were not salient enough to produce distinct perceptions and attitudes.

Also, there may be differences in attitudes and perceptions of fairness for individuals depending upon the stage of the employee-employer relationship. For example, job-seekers may hold differential attitudes and perceptions when compared to current employees or those in the interviewing/hiring process. Future research should attempt to address these issues: 1) to reveal which types of AAPs have the most favorable reactions 2) to determine when individuals should be exposed to an organization's affirmative action policies, and 3) to identify the extent to which perceptions of informational justice regarding AAPs play a role in relevant outcomes.

#### *Overall Implications for Theory and Practice*

Although statistical analyses did not demonstrate significant differences between groups, individuals exposed to tiebreak procedure AAPs tended to have the least favorable reactions even though the majority of participants were potential beneficiaries (i.e. women). This evidence suggests that organizations adopting such an AAP could dispel well-qualified job seekers from pursuing employment regardless of demographic characteristics. This could be related to previous findings by Stewart and Shapiro (2000) concluding that AAPs which grant substantial weight to demographic qualities could actually be detrimental to beneficiaries because they would feel that their appointment to a certain position is not based on merit. Results presented in the current examination did not suggest that individuals have significantly different attitudes and perceptions regarding opportunity enhancement and equal opportunity types of programs.

However, this point remains unresolved, and future research should attempt to delve into this issue in more detail.

Another point of interest concerns social dominance theory. Empirical evidence presented suggests that perceptions and attitudes are significantly affected by one's SDO which is consistent with previous literature (i.e. Pratto, et al., 1994) and supports the overall theoretical postulates regarding social dominance theory. Hence, researchers should take note of these relationships especially when conducting similar investigations within related arenas in order to avoid obtaining confounded measurements.

With respect to organizational justice theory, varying levels of informational justice did not have a significant impact on participants' perceptions. However, data revealed a general trend suggesting that tiebreak procedure programs with low levels of procedural justice tended to have low ratings of job application intentions. This result relates to the logic presented in Harrison et al. (2006) stating that individuals generally have more favorable reactions and perceptions when justification for the endorsement of an AAP is provided. Furthermore, a likely explanation for this trend also outlined in Harrison et al. is that individuals tended to equate a vaguely defined AAP with strong preferential treatment types of programs or quota systems. This suggests a general lack of public knowledge regarding these types of programs and systems which can be detrimental to their promotion and advocacy. Organizations and researchers should continue to explore effective ways of conveying and implementing AAPs in order to enhance organizational image, develop a diverse and efficacious workforce, maintain a well-qualified applicant pool, and provide general benefits to society as a whole by mitigating social inequities.

**APPENDIX A: SOCIAL DOMINANCE ORIENTATION SCALE**

Which of the following objects or statements do you have a positive or negative feeling towards? Beside each object or statement place a number from 1 to 7 which represents the degree of your positive or negative feeling.

| 1             | 2        | 3                 | 4                            | 5                 | 6        | 7             |
|---------------|----------|-------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------------|
| Very negative | Negative | Slightly negative | Neither positive or negative | Slightly positive | Positive | Very positive |

1. Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.
2. In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups.
3. It's OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others.
4. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups.
5. If certain groups stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems.
6. It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom.
7. Inferior groups should stay in their place.
8. Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place.
9. It would be good if groups could be equal.
10. Group equality should be our ideal.
11. All groups should be given an equal chance in life.
12. We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups.
13. Increased social equality.
14. We would have fewer problems if we treated people more equally.
15. We should strive to make incomes as equal as possible.
16. No one group should dominate in society.

Notes: 1) Items 9-16 are reverse-coded.

2) Adopted from: Pratto, F., Sidanius, J., Stallworth, L.M., & Malle, B.F. (1994). Social dominance orientation: A personality variable predicting social and political attitudes, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67(4), 741-763.

**APPENDIX B: GENERAL REACTIONS TO ORGANIZATION AND SELECTION  
POLICY**



On this scale of 1-7, mark the number representing how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

|                   |          |                   |                           |                |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4                         | 5              | 6     | 7              |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

1. A job at this company is very appealing to me.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

2. I believe this selection system identifies the best applicants.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

3. The way this organization selects employees is fair.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

Reference: Brooks, M.E., Guidroz, A.M., & Chakrabarti, M. (2009). Distinction bias in applicant reactions to using diversity information in selection decisions. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 17(4), 377-390.

**APPENDIX C: ORGANIZATIONAL ATTRACTIVENESS AND JOB PURSUIT  
INTENTIONS**

Mark the number on the scale from 1-7 that best describes your answer to the following questions.

|                   |          |                   |                           |                |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4                         | 5              | 6     | 7              |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

*Items for Organizational Attractiveness*

1. This would be a good company to work for.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7
2. I would want a company like this in my community.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7
3. I would like to work for this company.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7
4. This company cares about its employees.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7
5. I find this a very attractive company.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7

*Items for Job Pursuit Intentions*

1. I would accept a job offer from this company.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7
2. I would request more information about this company.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7
3. If this company visited campus I would want to speak with a representative.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7
4. I would attempt to gain an interview with this company.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7
5. I would actively pursue obtaining a position with this company.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7
6. If this company was at a job fair I would seek out their booth.  
1    2    3    4    5    6    7

Reference: Aiman-Smith, L.A., Bauer, T.N., & Cable, D.M. (2001). Are you attracted? Do you intend to pursue? A recruiting policy-capturing study. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 16(2), 219-237.

**APPENDIX D: JOB APPLICATION INTENTIONS AND PRODUCT PURCHASE  
INTENTIONS MEASURES**

### Job Application Intentions Measure

|                   |          |                   |                           |                |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| 1                 | 2        | 3                 | 4                         | 5              | 6     | 7              |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

1. I would send an application to this organization if it did not take long to do so.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

2. I would send an application to this organization even if it took longer than most other applications.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

3. Sending an application to this organization would be worth my time.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

4. I would probably apply for employment with this organization shortly after hearing about it.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

### Product Purchase Intentions Measure

1. I would be willing to purchase products from this business.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

2. I would buy a product from this business even if a competitor had the same product for the same price.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

3. I would buy a product from this business only if it would save me money.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

4. I would buy a product from this business even if it was a little more expensive than a competing brand's product.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

**APPENDIX E: ORGANIZATION RECOMMENDATION INTENTIONS**

On this scale of 1-5, mark the number representing how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

|                   |          |                           |       |                |
|-------------------|----------|---------------------------|-------|----------------|
| 1                 | 2        | 3                         | 4     | 5              |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree or disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

1. I would recommend this organization as an employer to others.

1      2      3      4      5

2. I would encourage others to apply here.

1      2      3      4      5

3. I would recommend this company to a friend looking for a job.

1      2      3      4      5

Questionnaire adapted from: Van Hoyer, G. (2008). Nursing recruitment: Relationship between perceived employer image and nursing employees' recommendations. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 63(4), 366-375.



**APPENDIX F: MOCK RECRUITMENT DOCUMENT**

**Mission Statement:** It is the mission of Acme to provide quality service and products to its customers at competitive rates and to fulfill their wants and needs in an efficient manner. Our friendly, knowledgeable, and professional staff will help inspire, educate, and problem-solve for our customers.

**Company Motto:** Think. Create. Succeed.

**Company Background:** Acme is a national firm within the U.S. that has been in business for over 40 years. Locations from coast-to-coast and the development of a broad and growing customer base have helped to keep this company going strong. With thousands of locations and employees, Acme is an established leader in innovation, community partnership, and employment opportunity. Acme continues to build upon the same principles that have made it such a leader in its field. With a wide variety of experts in the field of technology, business administration, engineering, chemistry, education and training, as well as other fields, we pride ourselves on putting individual talents to work for the good of our customers.

**Why work for us?**

Acme provides competitive salaries, health benefits, a comfortable work environment, and membership in one the friendliest employee communities around. Regardless of your skills and training, Acme values unique experiences and passions. No matter what you're good at, Acme can give you a rewarding career. With our resources and your knowledge, the sky is the limit!

**Commitment to Teamwork**

Acme, Inc. is made up of more than 50 departments and divisions such as research and development, customer service, sales and marketing, information systems and technologies, product development, and much more. We appreciate the importance of teamwork, cooperation, and working together to achieve the best results possible for our customers. We respect values of trust, honesty, and respect amongst co-workers to make an efficient and productive team for the continuous improvement of our organization.

**Internship Programs**

Still in school? No worries! Acme has developed an internship program for young, future professionals. We understand the importance of gaining on the job experience while getting an education. Acme looks to place students into internship programs related to their field of study giving them opportunities to foster their own skills and to make contributions to our company's efforts as well.

**Commitment to Diversity**

Acme is an equal opportunity employer. We value and promote differences in our workplace. Our assessment process is sensitive to differences in culture, language, and experiences. We assess in a variety of languages, we use a variety of tests that respect cultural and racial identity, and we credit nontraditional and unorthodox experiences when making hiring decisions. We hire more women, minorities, and physically challenged employees than any other company in our area.

## Application Process

We are always looking for eager professionals to help us reach our goals and continuously improve the way we do business. Whether it's an internship, entry-level, or management position, you're seeking, we want to hear from you! All applications are welcome!

Note: EO Explicit manipulation presented here. All manipulations were presented in the "Commitment to Diversity" section.

## **APPENDIX G: EXPERIMENTAL MANIPULATIONS**

## EO Vague

Acme is an equal opportunity employer. We recognize that everyone brings something different to the organization and we value that difference. Different cultures, different languages, and different experiences are all valued at Acme, and our assessment process takes all of these differences into consideration.

## Opportunity Enhancement Explicit

Acme takes pride in developing a diverse body of employees. Within the last year, we have invested over several thousand dollars to encourage diverse individuals to apply for entry-level and management positions. Every year we attend over 150 events nationwide in order to focus part of our efforts on offering employment opportunities to diverse members of the workforce. Over 45% more of our applicants are now from diverse backgrounds. Applicants are assessed using numerous selection tools, and are examined based on the results of these assessments. Those deemed the best applicants are considered for employment.

## Opportunity Enhancement Vague

Acme takes pride in developing a diverse body of employees. We make an effort to ensure our applicants are from diverse backgrounds. Applicants are assessed using numerous selection tools, and are examined based on the results of these assessments. Those deemed the best applicants are considered for employment.

## Tiebreak Procedure Explicit

Acme values employing a diverse workforce. Diversity is considered as a desirable quality, but only the most qualified candidates are considered and chosen for employment. All applicants are assessed using numerous selection tools, and are examined based on these results. However, in a situation where two equally qualified candidates are competing for one position, a member of a diverse, underrepresented group would be chosen over another candidate because of the company's interest in promoting diversity and opportunity.

## Tiebreak Procedure Vague

Acme values employing a diverse workforce. Diversity is considered as a desirable quality, but only the most qualified candidates are considered for employment. Ethnicity and gender will be considered in the case of equally ranked applicants. All applicants are assessed using numerous selection tools, and are examined based on the results.

## **APPENDIX H: MANIPULATION CHECK**

1. The name of the company you read about was \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) Great Ideas, Inc.
- b) Acme Corp.
- c) Sigma Automotive
- d) I don't know

2. The company's advertisement addressed policies related to diversity issues.

- a) True
- b) False
- c) I don't know

3. Which of the following best describes the company's "Commitment to Diversity" section in the advertisement you read?

- a) They use resources to increase the diversity of applicants only.
- b) Different cultures, different languages, and different experiences are all valued and the assessment process takes all of these differences into account.
- c) Ethnicity and gender are considered in the case of equally ranked applicants when hiring.
- d) I don't know

4. The company described in the advertisement you read does NOT offer an internship program.

- a) True
- b) False
- c) I don't know

5. The company described in the advertisement you read about has several locations throughout the nation.

- a) True
- b) False
- c) I don't know

6. Which of the following was NOT a sub-heading of the company advertisement you read?

- a) Why work for us?
- b) Commitment to teamwork
- c) Environmentally friendly policies
- d) Commitment to diversity
- e) I don't know



**APPENDIX I: IRB APPROVAL LETTER**



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research & Commercialization  
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

### Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1  
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

To: **Joseph G Zaragoza**

Date: **July 22, 2011**

Dear Researcher:

On 07/22/2011, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: UCF Initial Review Submission Form  
Project Title: The Impact of Individual Perceptions of the Fairness of Public  
Affirmative Action Policy Statements on Attitudes toward the  
Organization  
Investigator: Joseph G Zaragoza  
IRB Number: SBE-11-07748  
Funding Agency: None

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the [Investigator Manual](#).

On behalf of Kendra Dimond Campbell, MA, JD, UCF IRB Interim Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Janice Turchin on 07/22/2011 09:17:45 AM EDT

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Janice Turchin'.

IRB Coordinator

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