I Like You because You Hire People Like Me: Effect of Race Composition of Organisational Representatives on Job Applicant Responses

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Abstract

A diverse workforce helps an organisation to stay competitive (Richard, 2000). Organisations can use recruitment advertising to attract a diverse workforce. Organisations featuring minority representatives in recruitment advertising are perceived as more attractive, particularly in the eyes of minority applicants (Avery, 2003; Avery, Hernandez & Hebl, 2004; Perkins, Thomas & Taylor, 2000; Wells, 2008). To date, only one study has examined and explained why applicants are attracted to organisations featuring minority members (Avery et al., 2004). The present research aimed to extend the previous study by proposing two types of perceived similarity (i.e. surface- and deep-level) as mediators in the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes. Further, this research investigated two potential moderators: participant race and intergroup contact. It aimed to understand why the effect of race composition differs between minority and majority applicants and between respondents with high and low levels of intergroup contact. The mediated moderation models tested in this research respond to calls for examining intervening as well as moderating factors that may influence the effect of diversity (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007).

Three experimental studies were conducted. Study 1 examined the mediating effect of perceived surface- and deep-level similarity in the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes. Two hundred and twenty-four Malaysian Chinese university students participated. Study 2 investigated whether the moderating effect of participant race on the race composition and outcome relationships are mediated by perceived surface- and deep-level similarity. One hundred and eighty-three minority Chinese and 97 majority Malay students participated. Study 3 examined intergroup contact as a moderator, as well as participant race. The research used university location (i.e. Malaysia *versus* Australia) as a proxy for the amount of intergroup contact. In addition to the Study 2 participants (n = 280), 161 minority Chinese and 459 majority Malay university students in Malaysia were recruited (total N = 900).

Overall, these studies showed that minority Chinese respondents were more attracted to, were more interested in pursuing a job opportunity at, and perceived more opportunities for advancement in organisations featuring a homogenous group of Chinese or a group of racially diverse representatives than organisations featuring a

homogenous group of Malay representatives. However, the ratings of majority Malay respondents were not affected by the race composition of organisational representatives. Further, Study 3 found that the effect of race composition was weaker for minority respondents with high levels of intergroup contact compared to minority respondents with low levels of intergroup contact. These direct and moderating relationships were mediated by perceived surface-, but not deep-level, similarity.

This research extends previous findings by suggesting that perceived surface-level (i.e. race) similarity, but not deep-level similarity, is the intervening factor between race composition and recruitment outcomes. Moreover, perceived race similarity explains why the effect of the race composition is stronger for minority members, particularly those who have had fewer intergroup interactions, than for majority members. Organisations should encourage the perception of race similarity between applicants and employees through diversity signals included in recruitment materials. In summary, featuring minority representatives in recruitment advertising is beneficial in achieving a diverse workforce.

Declaration

This thesis presents work carried out by myself and does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; and all substantive contributions by others to the work presented, including jointly authored publications, are clearly acknowledged.

Signature:

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Yin Lu Ng

Date: 19th November 2010

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The shrinking applicant pool and increasingly diverse business markets have motivated employers to acquire a diverse workforce. By capitalising on the different strengths, capabilities, skills and knowledge that employees bring, employers are likely to attain sustainable competitive advantage through a diverse workforce that is valuable and inimitable (Richard, 2000). For example, a diverse workforce may help the employer to better understand the marketplace (Smedley, Butler & Bristow, 2004), to achieve more creative and innovative solutions to everyday work problems (Cox, 2001) and to increase the overall productivity of the organisation (Thomas & Ely, 1996).

The recruitment literature suggests that the first step in achieving a diverse workforce is to appear as an attractive employer (Allen, Mahto & Otondo, 2007; Barber, 1998). Applicants often rely on the information that an organisation includes in its recruitment brochures to understand the nature of the job or the work environment (Rynes & Cable, 2003). For example, applicants may look for diversity signals (e.g., portrayal of racial minority representatives) in recruitment advertising to gauge the organisation's commitment and stance towards diversity (Avery, Hernandez & Hebl, 2004; Rynes, 1991; Spence, 1973). Further, diversity-related information is perceived as important and attractive by applicants from minority groups, such as Black Americans (Thomas & Wise, 1999). Thus, organisations convey their diversity stance during recruitment activities to increase their attractiveness to these applicants (Avery et al., 2004).

Previous research has shown consistently that organisations that convey diversity messages in their recruitment materials or recruiting campaigns are more likely to attract minority applicants (Avery, 2003; Perkins, Thomas & Taylor, 2000). For instance, Black American applicants are more attracted to organisations that feature minority (e.g., Black American or Hispanic American) representatives (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000) or firms that state their diversity stance (i.e. affirmative action [AA] policies) in their recruitment brochures (Highhouse, Stierwalt, Bachiochi, Elder & Fisher, 1999; Rau & Hyland, 2003). Including diversity messages in recruitment advertising may signal that an organisation values diversity in the

workplace (Avery et al., 2004; Carless, 2005b; Rynes, 1991; Spence, 1973) and, as a result, minority applicants may be more attracted to the organisation.

Several theoretical perspectives have been used to explain the effect of race diversity on applicant attraction. For example, social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987) suggests that racially similar individuals tend to categorise and perceive themselves as belonging to the same group (i.e. in-group) and categorise others as belonging to an out-group. They show greater liking for similar others in order to enhance their social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987). Further, consistent with the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971), individuals are attracted to others who are similar to them in terms of demographic attributes, personal values, personality and attitudes.

There have been calls for studies to examine the mediating link between diversity and outcome variables for more than a decade (Avery & McKay, 2006; Goldberg, 2005; Lawrence, 1997; Mannix & Neale, 2005; Riordan, 2000). Previous research has suggested perceived similarity as the mechanism by which similarity operates but few studies have empirically tested it, particularly in the recruitment context (Avery et al., 2004; Garcia, 2004; Goldberg, 2005; Graves & Powell, 1995). Most studies examined the perception of similarity of interviewers or recruiters and its effect on interview outcomes (Garcia, 2004; Goldberg, 2005; Graves & Powell, 1995). Only one study to date has empirically tested the mediating effect of perceived similarity on the relationship between race composition and applicant attraction. Avery et al. (2004) found that perceived similarity mediated the effect of race composition of organisational representatives featured in a recruitment brochure on applicant attraction. Avery et al. (2004) used a general measure of perceived similarity as the mediator. The current thesis aims to extend previous findings by examining two types of perceived similarity: surface-level similarity, which captures the similarity of demographic attributes such as race; and deep-level similarity, which involves the similarity of less observable attributes such as values and attitudes (Harrison, Price & Bell, 1998; Harrison, Price, Gavin & Florey, 2002).

Examining two different types of perceived similarity in this thesis enables the researcher to identify the mediator in the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes. Further, it allows a more in-depth understanding of two theoretical perspectives—social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986;

Turner, 1987) and the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971)—that are often used in tandem to understand the effects of diversity. Although both perspectives similarly predict negative effects of race dissimilarity on attraction, social identity/categorisation theory may be more suitable for understanding the effect of *demographic* similarity on attraction whereas the similarity-attraction paradigm may be more appropriate for explaining the effect of *attitudinal or value* similarity. Specifically, social identity/categorisation theory suggests that actual similarity with respect to a social category like race generates surface-level similarity, which leads to attraction (Tsui, Egan & O'Reilly, 1992), whereas the similarity-attraction paradigm suggests that actual similarity generates inferences of deep-level similarity (Byrne, 1971; Goldberg, 2005), which lead to attraction. To date, no research has explicitly examined the mediating effects of these two types of perceived similarity on the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes.

Further, this research aims to examine personal and contextual characteristics that may moderate the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes. The identity salience and numerical distinctiveness literature (McGuire, McGuire, Child & Fujioka, 1978; Randel, 2002; Stryker, 1968) suggests that members of a group that is in the numerical minority tend to have a more salient identity. Hence, minority members are more sensitive to racial issues and place greater weight on organisational diversity attributes or diversity practice than majority members (Roberson, Kulik & Pepper, 2009; Thomas & Wise, 1999). Previous research has shown consistently that the effect of race composition on attraction is stronger for Black American applicants than for White American applicants (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000; Wells, 2008). The present research examines the moderating effect of participants' numerical status (i.e. majority *versus* minority) on the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes. As in previous studies (Avery et al., 2004; Wells, 2008), the present research uses participant race as an indicator of the participant's numerical status.

Further to examining participant race, the present research investigates the moderating role of intergroup contact in the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes. This research utilises university location as a proxy for the amount of contact an individual has had with out-group (i.e. racially dissimilar) members. Research has shown that university location influences the amount of

diversity exposure students experience (Shrivastava & Gregory, 2009). Based on the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947), increased intergroup interaction reduces the prejudice that individuals usually exhibit towards out-group members. Hence, the effect of race composition on recruitment outcomes may be stronger for individuals who have had less intergroup contact than for individuals who have had more intergroup contact. To date, very few studies have included and examined moderators (other than participant race) in the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes (Avery, 2003; Wells, 2008) and none of these studies has examined the moderating role of intergroup contact. Further, all studies examining the effects of race composition were conducted in the United States (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000; Wells, 2008). The present research examines whether the moderating effect of race can be generalised to a non-Western society, particularly to a society in which minority members enjoy a higher social status than do majority members (i.e. Malaysia; Agadjanian & Liew, 2005).

In summary, the objective of this thesis is threefold. Firstly, it aims to test the mediating effect of perceived surface- and deep-level similarity on the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes. Secondly, it aims to examine whether the interactive effect of race composition and participant race on recruitment outcomes is mediated by perceived surface- and deep-level similarity. Although previous research has demonstrated the moderating role of applicant race in the relationship between race composition of organisational representatives and applicant attraction (Avery, 2003; Perkins et al., 2000), these studies have not provided empirical evidence explaining *why* minority and majority applicants react differently to race composition. Thirdly, this research aims to investigate whether the joint moderating effects of participant race and intergroup contact on the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes will be mediated by perceived surface- and deep-level similarity. To the author's knowledge, the present research will be the first to examine the interactive effect of two moderating variables in the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes through perceived surface- and deep-level similarity. The complexity of the current research model allows the author to further understand the underlying mechanism linking race composition to recruitment outcomes. Figure 1 illustrates the overall research model.

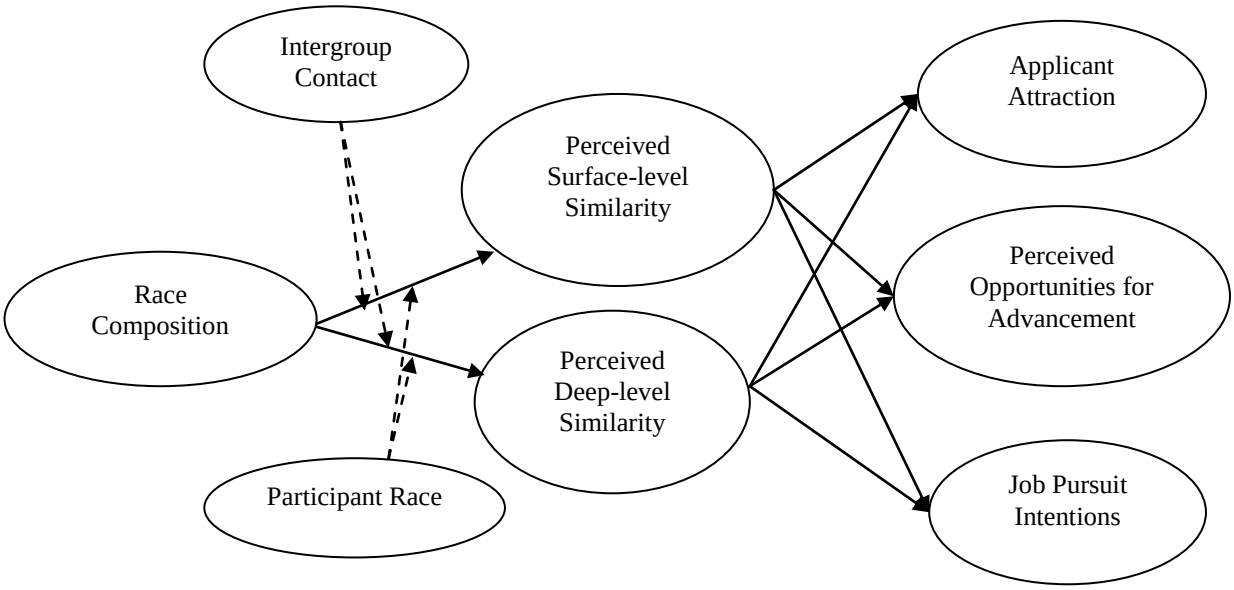


Figure 1: Overall research model.

1.2 Context of the Research

Previous race or ethnic diversity recruiting research has been conducted in Western societies, primarily focused on Black Americans as the minority group (Perkins et al., 2000). The present research involves majority Malay and minority Chinese individuals from Malaysia. Malaysia is selected as the study context as it is a multiracial country in which there is a clear distinction between majority (i.e. Malay) and minority (i.e. Chinese) groups. Of Malaysia's total population (28.31 million people; Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2009), 50.4% are Malays, 23.7% are Chinese, 11% are indigenous, 7.1% are Indians and 7.8% are others (The World Factbook, 2004). Malaysia is unique among multicultural societies because the minority group of Chinese in Malaysia enjoys a higher socioeconomic status than do the majority group of Malays (Agadjanian & Liew, 2005). In contrast, minority groups in other multicultural societies (e.g., the United States or United Kingdom) are usually disadvantaged in terms of economic and social status relative to the majority group (Pratto et al., 2000). Hence, Malaysia will be an appropriate study location as it can be used to test a similar set of research questions as those addressed in Western societies,

but using different racial groups that have their own unique Asian cultures. In general, this thesis sets out to understand the underlying mechanism of the effect of race composition in a non-Western society as well as to explore possible moderators that influence the effect of race composition on recruitment outcomes.

Three studies are designed to meet the overall research objectives. All studies involve a similar instrument that comprises a job advertisement and a series of scaled questions (see Appendix C). The main manipulation of the study is the race composition of organisational representatives featured in the advertisement. Three types of race composition are developed: 1) a homogenous group of minority representatives; 2) a group of racially diverse representatives (i.e. 50% minority and 50% majority representatives); and 3) a homogenous group of majority representatives. All studies use a between-subjects design (i.e. each participant is given only one type of job advertisement to view). Manipulation of diversity messages in terms of the race composition of organisational representatives featured in an organisation's recruitment advertising has been shown to be an effective strategy in attracting minority applicants (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000; Wells, 2008).

Three recruitment outcomes are examined in the present research: applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement. These variables are chosen because of their relevance and importance in the literature. Firstly, applicant attraction is defined as 'an attitude or expressed general positive affect toward an organization' (Aiman-Smith, Bauer & Cable, 2001, p. 221). Applicant attraction is the first and major goal of an organisation's recruitment effort (Barber, 1998; Breaugh & Starke, 2000). Organisations that utilise minority recruiters in their recruitment activities (Goldberg, 2003), state diversity policies or stance in recruitment materials (Cropanzano, Slaughter & Bachiochi, 2005; Highhouse et al., 1999; James, Brief, Dietz & Cohen, 2001) or feature minority representatives in recruitment advertising (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000) are perceived as attractive employers particularly by minority applicants.

Secondly, the term job pursuit intentions refers to intentions 'to take action to find out more information about an organization, to contact the organization, and to try to secure an interview with the organization' (Aiman-Smith et al., 2001, p. 221). Job pursuit intentions are a key recruitment outcome, in addition to applicant attraction (Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin & Jones, 2005; Ma & Allen, 2009; Rynes,

1991; Williamson, King, Lepak & Sarma, 2010). Applicants' intentions to pursue a job opportunity in an organisation were predicted by the type of AA plans (Slaughter, Bulger & Bachiochi, 2005; Slaughter, Sinar & Bachiochi, 2002) or diversity policies or values (Kim & Gelfand, 2003; Rau & Hyland, 2003; Saks, Leck & Saunders, 1995) described in the recruitment materials.

Thirdly, perceived opportunities for advancement is defined as an individual's belief that he or she will be promoted based on good performance and that all employees within the organisation have an equal opportunity for advancement (Riordan & Shore, 1997). Research has shown that race composition of employees within an organisation influences employees' perceived advancement opportunities (Riordan & Shore, 1997). Specifically, White employees working in groups comprising mostly minority members perceived lower levels of advancement opportunities than White employees working in groups comprising mostly White or racially diverse employees did (Riordan & Shore, 1997). Further, an organisation practising a diversity policy specifically designed to benefit Black individuals was perceived by White applicants as less attractive and less likely to offer satisfying advancement or promotion opportunities than an organisation practising a more general diversity policy (James et al., 2001). Applicants may use race composition of organisational representatives featured in recruitment advertising to gauge their own advancement opportunities within an organisation (Avery, 2003). Hence, perceived opportunities for advancement may be an important recruitment-related outcome in addition to applicant attraction and job pursuit intentions. The present research investigates these three variables as recruitment-related outcomes across all three studies.

1.3 Overview of the Three Studies

1.3.1 Study 1

The purpose of Study 1 is to examine the indirect effect of race composition on recruitment outcomes. It is predicted that participants' perceived surface-level (i.e. race) and deep-level (i.e. personal values, personality and attitudes) similarity with the group of representatives featured in the advertisement will mediate the relationships between race composition and recruitment outcomes. According to social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987), individuals tend to define themselves and others according to social categories. For example, individuals may use race to

distinguish between in-group (i.e. same-race) and out-group (i.e. different-race) members. In order to achieve or maintain a positive social identity, individuals tend to maximise the differences between in-group and out-group members and perceive out-group members as less similar and less favourable (Kramer, 1991; Tsui et al., 1992). Hence, it is predicted that participants will be more attracted to organisations that feature a homogenous group of representatives who are racially similar to the participants or a group of racially diverse representatives than organisations that feature a homogenous group of representatives who are racially dissimilar to the participants. For example, minority Malaysian Chinese students will be more attracted to an organisation that features a homogenous group of Chinese or a group of racially diverse representatives than one that features a homogenous group of Malay representatives. The Chinese employees will be perceived as racially similar (i.e. in-group members) and their organisation will be evaluated more positively. In addition, the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) states that individuals are attracted to attitudinally similar others. Similarity in underlying attributes (e.g., attitudes, beliefs and personality) may be inferred from demographic (e.g., race) similarity (Tsui et al., 1992). That is, individuals may be attracted to racially similar others believing that their own attitudes, beliefs and personality are similar to those of the comparison others (Graves & Powell, 1995; Pfeffer, 1983; Wayne & Liden, 1995). Hence, it is predicted that participants will be more attracted, be more interested in pursuing a job opportunity and perceive more opportunities for advancement when the organisation features a homogenous group of representatives who are racially similar to the participants or a group of racially diverse representatives than when it features a homogenous group of representatives who are racially dissimilar to the participants, believing that the group of racially similar employees possesses a set of deep-level attributes similar to their own. Two hundred and twenty-four minority Malaysian Chinese university students in Malaysia were recruited for this study.

1.3.2 Study 2

Research has shown consistently that the effect of race composition on attraction is different for majority and minority group members (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000; Wells, 2008). Study 2 aims to investigate the interactive effect of race composition and participant race on recruitment outcomes and to test whether the interactive effects will be mediated by perceived surface- and deep-level similarity.

Based on the identity salience and numerical distinctiveness literature (McGuire et al., 1978; Randel, 2002; Stryker, 1968), an individual's identity becomes salient when the group with which the individual identifies is in the numerical minority. Thus, the minority group members are more likely to categorise themselves and others using their salient identity (i.e. race) than the majority group members (Forehand, Deshpandé & Reed, 2002). The minority group of Chinese participants may be more likely to attend to, and be affected by, race-relevant information in the advertisement (i.e. race composition) than the majority group of Malay participants. It is predicted that the interactive effect of race composition and participant race on the recruitment outcomes will be mediated by perceived surface- and deep-level similarity. Minority Chinese, being more sensitive to racial identity than majority Malays, may be more likely to use representative race as a basis for evaluating the organisation. Further, minority Chinese individuals may also use the representatives' race as a proxy for determining how similar they are to those representatives in terms of deep-level attributes. Hence, as a result of perceived similarities (in terms of race and deep-level attributes), minority Chinese participants may be more attracted, be more interested in pursuing a job opportunity and perceive more opportunities for advancement when the organisation features a homogenous group of Chinese or a group of racially diverse representatives than when it features a homogenous group of Malay representatives. In contrast, majority Malay participants will be unaffected by the race composition of organisational representatives due to their majority status in the society. Two hundred and eighty Malaysian Malay and Malaysian Chinese students in Australia were recruited to test the study hypotheses.

1.3.3 Study 3

The objective of Study 3 is to investigate whether intergroup contact influences the interactive effect of race composition and participant race on the recruitment outcomes. In addition to the Study 2 sample in Australia, a group of Malay and Chinese students in Malaysia is recruited (total $N = 900$). This research uses university location (i.e. Malaysia *versus* Australia) as a proxy for the amount of intergroup contact. According to the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947), meaningful contacts between two racial groups may reduce the negative attitudes (e.g., stereotypes and prejudice) that one has towards out-group members. When racial minority members have greater contacts with racial majority members, they are less likely to differentiate

themselves from the majority members in terms of race (Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman & Rust, 1993). Further, contact may foster a mutual understanding between the minority and the majority groups, which in turn mitigates the initial negative perceptions and increases the attraction that one group has towards another (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Cook, 1978; Pettigrew, 1971). Malaysian students in Malaysia are more likely to encounter and interact with racially dissimilar individuals as compared to Malaysian students in Australia. Hence, participants in Malaysia may be less likely to use race to distinguish in-group and out-group members and less likely to perceive the group of racially similar representatives featured as similar to them in terms of race and underlying values, which in turn influences their attitudes towards an organisation. Integrating the identity salience literature (Stryker, 1968) and the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947), the sensitivity that minority Chinese participants have about their race may reduce as the intergroup contact increases. Minority Chinese participants who have had more intergroup contact may be less sensitive to the race composition featured in recruitment advertising and more likely to form favourable attitudes towards the out-group individuals than minority Chinese participants who have had less intergroup contact. Hence, it is predicted that the effect of race composition will be weaker for minority participants who have had more intergroup contact—as they are less likely to categorise and perceive same-race representatives featured as possessing the same race and underlying attributes as them—than minority Chinese participants who have had less intergroup contact. In contrast, majority Malay participants will be unaffected by the race composition of organisational representatives due to their majority social status, regardless of the amount of intergroup contact they have had. Overall, it is predicted that there will be a three-way interactive effect of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on recruitment outcomes. Further, the three-way interactive effect will be mediated by perceived surface- and deep-level similarity.

Table 1 summarises the research questions and hypotheses that will be tested in each study.

Table 1

Summary of research questions (RQ) and study hypotheses (H) addressed in each study (S).

Study (S)	Research Questions (RQ)	Study Hypotheses (H)
S1	RQ 1. Do perceived surface- and deep-level similarities mediate the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes?	H1–H3: Participants will be more attracted to (H1), more likely to pursue a job in (H2) and more likely to perceive opportunities for advancement in (H3) organisations that feature a homogenous group of representatives who are racially similar to them or a group of racially diverse representatives than organisations that feature a homogenous group of representatives who are racially dissimilar to them. H4: The effect of race composition of organisational representatives on applicant attraction (H4a), job pursuit intentions (H4b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H4c) will be mediated by perceived surface-level similarity. H5: The effect of race composition of organisational representatives on applicant attraction (H5a), job pursuit intentions (H5b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H5c) will be mediated by perceived deep-level similarity.
S2	RQ 2. Do perceived surface- and deep-level similarities mediate the interactive effect of race composition and participant race on recruitment outcomes?	H6: There will be a two-way interactive effect of race composition and participant race on applicant attraction (H6a), job pursuit intentions (H6b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H6c). The effect of race composition of organisational representatives will be stronger for minority participants than for majority participants. H7: The two-way interactive effect of race composition and participant race on applicant attraction (H7a), job pursuit intentions (H7b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H7c) will be mediated by perceived surface-level similarity. H8: The two-way interactive effect of race composition and participant race on applicant attraction (H8a), job pursuit intentions (H8b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H8c) will be mediated by perceived deep-level similarity.
S3	RQ 3. Do perceived surface- and deep-level similarities mediate the	H9: There will be a two-way interactive effect of race composition and intergroup contact on applicant attraction (H9a), job pursuit intentions (H9b) and perceived

two-way (race composition x intergroup contact) and three-way (race composition x participant race x intergroup contact) interactive effect on recruitment outcomes?	opportunities for advancement (H9c). The effect of race composition of organisational representatives will be stronger for participants who have had less intergroup contact than for participants who have had more intergroup contact. H10: There will be a three-way interactive effect of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on applicant attraction (H10a), job pursuit intentions (H10b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H10c). The effect of race composition will be stronger for minority participants who have had less intergroup contact than for minority participants who have had more intergroup contact. Majority participants will be unaffected by the race composition regardless of the amount of intergroup contact. H11: The two-way interactive effect of race composition and intergroup contact on applicant attraction (H11a), job pursuit intentions (H11b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H11c) will be mediated by perceived surface-level similarity. H12: The two-way interactive effects of race composition and intergroup contact on applicant attraction (H12a), job pursuit intentions (H12b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H12c) will be mediated by perceived deep-level similarity. H13: The three-way interactive effects of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on applicant attraction (H13a), job pursuit intentions (H13b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H13c) will be mediated by perceived surface-level similarity. H14: The three-way interactive effects of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on applicant attraction (H14a), job pursuit intentions (H14b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H14c) will be mediated by perceived deep-level similarity.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. The current chapter illustrates the importance of attaining a diverse workforce. It highlights the theoretical gaps within the existing literature and demonstrates that studies examining the underlying mechanism of the similarity-attraction relationship are very much needed. Chapter 1 justifies why perceived similarity may be a mediator in the similarity-attraction relationship based on theoretical reasoning. In addition, it presents the overall research model, context of the research and an overview of the three studies. Chapter 1 concludes with three main research questions, specific study hypotheses and an outline of the entire thesis.

Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive literature review along with an in-depth theoretical discussion. The chapter begins by presenting two commonly adopted approaches (i.e. factor *versus* proportions) that have been used to define and conceptualise diversity. The factor approach categorises diversity attributes into two extremes such as visible and less visible whereas the proportions approach defines diversity in terms of the ratio or number of members of various social groups (Mannix & Neale, 2005). Then, the chapter discusses effects of diversity on group processes and performance. Two theoretical perspectives that have been used to explain the effects of diversity are described. Specifically, social categorisation theory (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1987) and the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) have been used to explain the negative effects of diversity whereas the information-processing/decision-making perspective (Gruenfeld, Mannix, Williams & Neale, 1996; Wittenbaum & Stasser, 1996) has been adopted to understand the positive effects of diversity. The chapter then discusses literature central to the thesis: diversity recruitment. Three strategies (i.e. diversity statements, recruiter's characteristics and inclusion of minority representatives in job advertisements) that have been used by employers to attract minority applicants are thoroughly discussed. Further to predicting the direct effects of diversity on recruitment outcomes using social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987) and the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971), Chapter 2 also offers a systematic discussion of studies that have examined mediating and moderating effects on the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes. In particular, literature on perceived similarity (e.g., different measures and dimensions of perceived similarity, links between actual and perceived similarity and

mediating effects of perceived similarity on the actual similarity and outcome relationships) is reviewed. Further, studies that have examined the role of potential moderators (i.e. participant race and intergroup contact) are discussed. The identity salience perspective (Stryker, 1968) and the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947) are adopted to explain the moderating effects of participant race and intergroup contact that are examined in the study.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 describe Studies 1, 2 and 3 respectively. There are four main sections—introduction, methods, results and discussion—in each chapter. Specifically, the introduction describes specific aims of the study. It also discusses previous research and theoretical bases that are used to support and develop study hypotheses. The methods section provides information about the study's sample, design and procedures. The results section presents the findings of statistical tests used to examine the study hypotheses. Lastly, the discussion section gives a summary of results in relation to the literature and study predictions. It also provides theoretical and practical implications, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the specific study.

The final chapter encapsulates the achievements of the research overall. Key findings are reviewed in relation to the existing literature and theoretical models. Chapter 6 underscores the contributions of the thesis to the literature (i.e. theoretical implications) and to human resource practitioners (i.e. practical implications). The chapter concludes with limitations of current research and suggestions for future studies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 showed that diversity research, particularly studies examining the underlying processes and contingency factors of diversity effects, has not been given adequate attention. It outlined a research model that aimed to address those research gaps. Specifically, Chapter 1 presented an overview of the three studies along with each study's specific objectives.

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of previous research within the diversity literature. The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section discusses various forms and dimensions of diversity that have been defined by diversity research scholars. These different approaches are presented as complementing rather than competing with one another. The second section covers literature that has examined the effects of diversity on group outcomes. It points out the inconsistency of research findings and discusses theoretical bases for understanding these relationships. The third section presents literature that goes to the heart of this thesis: diversity recruitment. It describes the three strategies that are commonly used by employers to attract minority employees. It also discusses the theoretical bases that are used to explain the effects of diversity. Further, the literature pertaining to the two mediators (i.e. perceived surface- and deep-level similarity) and the two moderators (i.e. participant race and intergroup contact) of this study is reviewed.

2.2 The Nature and Definition of Diversity

Diversity is 'the umbrella term' (Jackson, May & Whitney, 1995, p. 217) for describing differences between two or more individuals in terms of demographic and/or underlying attributes (Jackson, Stone & Alvarez, 1993; Mannix & Neale, 2005; Triandis, Kurowski & Gelfand, 1994; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Diversity refers to a composite or a configuration of individual differences within a group or a unit (Jackson et al., 1995). An individual or a group does not own diversity; it is the combined diversity attributes of each member within a group that defines the group's diversity (Harrison & Klein, 2007; Jackson, Joshi & Erhardt, 2003). Diversity is 'a characteristic of *social grouping* that reflects the degree to which objective or subjective differences

exist between group members' (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007, p. 516, emphasis added) or 'the *distribution* of personal attributes among interdependent members of a work unit' (Jackson et al., 2003, p. 802, emphasis added). While acknowledging the usefulness of these conceptualisations, this thesis adopts a more general definition of diversity: the extent to which two or more individuals are different or dissimilar.

2.2.1 Factor approach

Most studies in the diversity literature are team diversity investigations examining the effect of team members' characteristics on performance outcomes (Bowers, Pharmer & Salas, 2000; Stewart, 2006; Webber & Donahue, 2001). Team diversity studies usually involve individuals who have the opportunity to interact with the team members and recognise the similarities they have with the members (Harrison et al., 2002). In contrast, diversity recruitment research often involves applicants who have little or no personal interaction with organisational representatives or employees (Avery, 2003). Applicants often rely on the visible attributes of the organisation members (e.g., race of organisational representatives) for gauging the deeper-level attributes that they share with the organisation members (Avery et al., 2004).

Research scholars who study the relationships between team diversity and team outcomes tend to categorise diversity attributes based on the extent to which the attributes are job-related. Job-relatedness is defined as the degree to which an attribute 'directly shapes the perspectives and skills related to cognitive tasks' (Pelled, 1996, p. 615). Task-related (i.e. high job-related) diversity attributes are essential for good performance and for achieving team members' common goals. In contrast, relations-oriented (i.e. low job-related) diversity attributes are less likely to improve job performance but these characteristics enhance the formation of social relationships (Jackson et al., 1995; 2003; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Pelled, 1996; Pelled, Eisenhardt & Xin, 1999; Sessa & Jackson, 1995; Webber & Donahue, 2001). Research has shown considerable support for the job-relatedness predictions. For instance, functional background diversity (i.e. task-related attributes) was more likely to predict task conflict whereas demographic diversity (i.e. relations-oriented attributes) was more likely to predict emotional conflict among team members (Pelled et al., 1999). It is important to differentiate task-related attributes from relations-oriented attributes as diversity of the former attributes has greater impact on work performance whereas diversity of the latter attributes is more likely to predict affective or emotional outcomes (Pelled et al., 1999).

Each category of the job-relatedness classification (task-related *versus* relations-oriented) is further divided into visible and less visible categories (Jackson et al., 1995; Milliken & Martins, 1996). Visible attributes are characteristics that people can easily judge in the first encounter (e.g., race or group tenure; Bowers et al., 2000; Jackson et al., 1995; 2003). Visible diversity has also been known as demographic, social category or surface-level diversity. Visible characteristics are highly salient, readily detectable and observable/discernible (Harrison et al., 1998; 2002; Jackson et al., 1995; Mannix & Neale, 2005; Milliken & Martins, 1996). As these attributes are also impermeable and relatively immutable, it is common for individuals to categorise one another based on their race or group tenure (Jackson et al., 1993; 1995; Pelled et al., 1999; Webber & Donahue, 2001).

In contrast to differences on visible attributes, less visible differences are unlikely to be identified during initial interactions (Jackson et al., 1995; 2003). These attributes are known as non-observable, less salient, underlying and deep-level (Harrison et al., 1998; 2002; Jackson et al., 1995; Mannix & Neale, 2005; Milliken & Martins, 1996). Skills, personal values and personality are a few examples of non-observable or underlying attributes. Visible and less visible attributes 'are not mutually exclusive' of one another (Milliken & Martins, 1996, p. 404). Differences in less salient attributes are often inferred from the surface-level or demographic diversity (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Klimoski & Donahue, 2001). For example, two individuals who are dissimilar in race might believe that they hold different personal values due to their different cultural backgrounds. This perceived association between visible and underlying attributes underscores the importance of examining both types of attributes.

This thesis examines the effect of diversity on recruitment outcomes by focusing on relations-oriented diversity attributes. It directly addresses the effect of race similarity (i.e. a visible relations-oriented attribute) on individuals' perception of similarity in terms of race (i.e. a visible relations-oriented attribute), as well as perceptions of similarity in terms of values, personality and attitudes (i.e. less visible relations-oriented attributes). These perceptions of similarity are predicted to lead to recruitment outcomes (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement). Table 2 provides a summary and examples of diversity attributes in each category, incorporating Jackson et al.'s (1995) and others' (Harrison et al., 1998; Pelled, 1996) diversity typologies.

Table 2

Categorisation of diversity attributes according to the attributes' job-relatedness and visibility.

	Job-relatedness	
	Task-related	Relations-oriented
Visibility		
Visible (surface-level)	Group tenure	Age, gender, race
Less visible (deep-level)	Knowledge, skills, abilities	Personal values, personality, attitudes

2.2.2 Proportions approach

Expanding on the factor approach in categorising diversity attributes (i.e. visible *versus* less visible or task-related *versus* relations-oriented), some diversity researchers have categorised diversity using a proportions approach (Blau, 1977; Kanter, 1977; Mannix & Neale, 2005). The proportions approach suggests that the ratio of one group to another (e.g., the number of White Americans in relation to Black Americans) in a social setting may influence group members' perceptions and attitudes.

According to Blau (1977), individuals in a heterogeneous group (e.g., a racially diverse group) have greater opportunities to interact with dissimilar others. As a result of increased contact, individuals are less likely to reject or discriminate against the out-group (i.e. dissimilar) members. This is consistent with the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947) that predicts that the amount of contact between two or more individuals increases the liking between these individuals. Hence, in a context that offers more opportunities for intergroup relations, individuals are more likely to show greater liking and less prejudice towards dissimilar others (Pettigrew, 1982).

Similar to Blau's (1977) argument, Kanter (1977) suggested that the proportion of minority group members in a group affects group outcomes. In particular, Kanter (1977) identified four types of groups based on the proportion of minority relative to majority group members. A 'uniform' group is a group that has all majority members (e.g., men or White Americans). In a 'skewed' group, minority members comprise 1% to 15% of the total group members. A group is referred to as 'tilted' if minority members constitute 15% to 35% of the total group members. It is a 'balanced' group

when the number of minority members nearly equals the number of majority members (i.e. comprises 35% to 65%).

Minority members in a 'skewed' group (i.e. 'tokens') are more likely to display token behaviours such as maintaining a low profile, not taking a leadership role and being quiet/powerless than minority members who are not in a token position (Kanter, 1977; Li, 1994). Studies adopting the proportions approach in categorising diversity attributes showed support for Kanter's (1977) predictions (Li, 1994; Li, Karakowsky & Siegel, 1999). For instance, Asian individuals who were 'tokens' in a Caucasian-dominated group were more passive and introverted than Asian individuals who were not in token positions (Li, 1994). Individuals are not comfortable when placed in a token position. Individuals in a token position anticipate that they are more likely to be noticed and to be judged based on a salient social category (Kulik, Roberson & Perry, 2007) by individuals who are in the numerical majority (Roberson & Kulik, 2007). Specifically, tokens are afraid to be evaluated based on negative stereotypes that people have about members of a social group to which they belong (i.e. stereotype threat; Roberson & Kulik, 2007). For example, 'solo' minority members—individuals who are the only minority member in their work group—are more likely than 'non-solo' minority members to believe that others will view them as having a lower level of ability due to their race (Roberson, Deitch, Brief & Block, 2003, p. 177). Hence, in the recruitment context, applicants may be less attracted to organisations that feature a large proportion of representatives who are dissimilar to them because these applicants may anticipate being in a token position if they join the organisation. Studies examining the effect of pictorial diversity showed that applicants were more attracted to an organisation that depicted representatives who are similar than to an organisation that depicted representatives who are dissimilar to the applicants (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000; Wells, 2008).

Previous research on conceptualising diversity is enormous and comprehensive; however, it is not without limitations. Recently, Harrison and Klein (2007) presented a refined measurement and conceptualisation of diversity. Without discounting the usefulness of previous definitions of diversity, they argued that diversity should go beyond explaining differences (Harrison & Klein, 2007). In particular, diversity should be defined in terms of: 1) *separation*—different positions among group members along a continuum of dissimilarity on attributes such as values or attitudes; 2) *variety*—

different categories among group members in terms of knowledge and experience; and 3) *disparity*—vertical differences among group members in terms of pay and status (Harrison & Klein, 2007). It is important to differentiate these three types of diversity, as they are not only distinct in their nature/meaning but also in the theoretical bases used to predict and support research findings (Harrison & Klein, 2007). Although it is beyond the scope of the current thesis to test these refined diversity concepts and research models (Harrison & Klein, 2007), they are included in this section to raise the awareness of diversity scholars to achieve a more complex and comprehensive understanding of diversity.

2.3 Effects of Diversity on Group Processes and Performance

The previous section discussed different ways to conceptualise diversity. This section will present a summary of diversity effects on group processes and performance. Specifically, the discussion will focus on research that has examined the effects of diversity in terms of race/ethnicity (i.e. a visible attribute) and in terms of values, personality and attitudes (i.e. less visible attributes).

Meta-analytical reviews have shown consistently that the effect of race/ethnic diversity on group processes and performance is mixed or non-existent (Jackson et al., 2003; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Stewart, 2006; Webber & Donahue, 2001; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). For example, a meta-analysis of 24 diversity studies from 1980 to 1999 revealed that relations-oriented attributes (i.e. age, gender and race) were not significantly related either to performance ($\rho = -.03$) or to cohesion ($\rho = -.07$; Webber & Donahue, 2001). The non-significant meta-analytical finding reflects the mixed results of individual studies. Specifically, racially diverse groups are sometimes more cooperative (Cox, Lobel & McLeod, 1991), more creative (O'Reilly, Williams & Barsade, 1998), more likely to produce high quality ideas (McLeod & Lobel, 1992) and more likely to achieve better task performance (Watson, Kumar & Michaelsen, 1993). However, other studies show that members in racially heterogeneous groups are less likely to exhibit pro-social behaviours (Kizilos, Pelled & Cummings, 1996), are less attracted to one another (Linville & Jones, 1980) and experience more emotional conflict (Pelled, 1993; Pelled et al., 1999). Further, members in a racially heterogeneous group report lower career satisfaction (Greenhaus, Parasuraman & Wormley, 1990) and

lower commitment to the organisation and are less likely to stay with the same employer (Tsui et al., 1992).

Research examining the diversity effect of less visible attributes (e.g., values, personality and attitudes) is sparse. Early studies showed that group members who differ in their values, personality and attitudes were more likely to produce positive performance outcomes (Torrance, 1957). Specifically, individuals of different personality types tended to generate better quality ideas and solutions (Hoffman, 1959; Hoffman & Maier, 1961) and attain better performance (Neuman, Wagner & Christiansen, 1999). Further, research showed that groups comprising members with different attitudes were more creative (Triandis, Hall & Ewen, 1965). However, a meta-analysis of 13 studies showed that personality diversity was non-significantly related to performance, with heterogeneous groups only slightly outperforming homogenous groups (Bowers et al., 2000). Similarity in personality among group members may enhance the members' compatibility; however, it may not lead to better performance (Bowers et al., 2000; Mullen & Copper, 1994).

Overall, the inconsistent diversity research findings indicate that examining the direct effects of diversity on performance may be inadequate in providing an explanation for the effects of diversity (Bowers et al., 2000; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; Webber & Donahue, 2001; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). They highlight the need for more research that explores the underlying processes (i.e. mediators) in the relationship between diversity and performance as well as moderating factors that may influence the effects of diversity on performance or group outcomes (Shore et al., 2009). As noted, 'the predicted outcome is not necessarily evidence of the predicted process, however, and relying on outcomes to determine process runs the risk of resulting misleading conclusions' (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007, p. 519). Therefore, researchers should explicitly test variables that may potentially explain the effects of diversity rather than assuming demographic diversity is a proxy for these underlying factors (Priem, Lyon & Dess, 1999; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007).

2.3.1 Understanding the effects of diversity

Several theoretical perspectives have been used to explain the effects of diversity on group processes and performance. These theories are divided into two main streams: social categorisation theory (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1987) or the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971); and the information-processing or decision-making

perspective (Gruenfeld et al., 1996). Social categorisation theory and the similarity-attraction paradigm proposed a 'pessimistic' view of diversity whereas the information-processing or decision-making perspective advocated an 'optimistic' view of diversity (Mannix & Neale, 2005, pp. 33–34).

Based on social categorisation theory, individuals tend to categorise themselves and others into meaningful social groups, such as gender or race (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1987). In order for individuals to maintain a positive self-identity, they maximise the differences between in-group members (similar others) and out-group members (dissimilar others). Out-group members are viewed as less attractive (Kramer, 1991) and less trustworthy or dishonest (Brewer, 1979; Tajfel, 1982). As a result of the self-categorisation process, individuals tend to engage in behaviours that may hamper between-group functioning, behaviours such as stereotyping, anxiety and sub-group formation (Loden & Rosener, 1991; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Hence, members of a diverse group are more likely to experience dissatisfaction and conflict, experience less cohesion, engage in less cooperation and communication and are more likely to leave the group (Crocker & Major, 1989; Martin & Shanahan, 1983; Moreland, 1985; Stephan & Stephan, 1985; Triandis et al., 1994).

The similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) suggests that individuals are attracted to people with common attitudes. Further, similar individuals are more likely to possess similar life experiences and thus, they are less likely to have communication problems and more likely to engage in pleasurable interactions (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Hence, diverse group members are more likely to hold negative attitudes towards one another and, as a result, they are less likely to communicate and more likely to leave the group (Jehn, Northcraft & Neale, 1999; O'Reilly, Snyder & Boothe, 1993; Riordan & Shore, 1997). In conclusion, social categorisation theory (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1987) and the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) provide parallel theoretical explanations for the negative effects of diversity on group processes (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998).

In contrast, the 'optimistic' view of diversity or the 'value-in-diversity hypothesis' perspective (Cox et al., 1991, p. 827; Mannix & Neale, 2005, p. 33) suggests that dissimilarities between group members are beneficial for group functioning and performance, regardless of whether it causes difficulties to group processes such as communication among members (Mannix & Neale, 2005). The

information-processing/decision-making perspective suggests that group heterogeneity enhances group performance through the wide range of job-relevant skills, abilities, knowledge and information that members have to offer (Gruenfeld et al., 1996). Members of a diverse group are more likely to have contacts with similar people outside the group as they may prefer to interact with similar others (Byrne, 1971). Thus, members of a diverse group are more likely to have access to a wide variety of perspectives that leads the group members to obtain better solutions (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Bantel & Jackson, 1989; Gruenfeld et al., 1996; Pelled et al., 1999; Stasser, Stewart & Wittenbaum, 1995; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). However, group heterogeneity will be beneficial for group performance only if the information that members bring is value-adding (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998) and only if these members are willing to share their information with the group: individuals prefer to interact with similar others and focus on their shared knowledge (Gigone & Hastie, 1993). Overall, in contrast to social categorisation theory (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1987) and the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971), the information-processing/decision-making perspective (Gruenfeld et al., 1996) predicts a positive effect of diversity on group performance through the variety of skills and knowledge that members are willing to contribute to the group.

Although these perspectives are independently useful in understanding the effects of diversity, van Knippenberg and Schippers (2007) have proposed an interaction between the two perspectives. The biases and prejudice resulting from social categorisation may prevent individuals from communicating openly (van Knippenberg, 1999). As a result, they inhibit constructive information-sharing and processing, which in turn leads to poorer group outcomes (van Knippenberg, De Dreu & Homan, 2004). Several studies found preliminary support for the integrated model (Jehn et al., 1999; Phillips, Mannix, Neale & Gruenfeld, 2004). However, to date, social categorisation processes have not been measured directly (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Hence, future research should test the actual mechanisms of social categorisation and information-processing explicitly and include potential moderating factors such as task interdependence, temporal issues, organisational culture and type of team that have been discussed in the literature (Mannix & Neale, 2005; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; Webber & Donahue, 2001). The testing of more complex diversity models (i.e. mediating and moderating effects) would provide greater confidence to diversity

researchers in explaining the diversity effects and thus, motivate human resource practitioners to recruit and utilise a diverse group of employees.

2.4 Diversity Recruitment: State of the Art

Although the effect of diversity on performance has been inconsistent (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998), there are reasons for organisations to aim to achieve diversity. Firstly, in the face of skill shortages (Cascio, 2003; Fullerton & Toossi, 2001), it is important to fully utilise the talent or resources available in the labour market. The strategy includes utilising talents from disadvantaged or under-represented (i.e. minority) social groups (Doverspike, Taylor, Shultz & McKay, 2000). Secondly, a diverse workforce helps to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse client base (Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 1998). Specifically, minority employees who have a similar background as the clients may better understand the clients' cultural practices and know the best marketing strategy to attract those culturally similar clients (Smedley et al., 2004; Thomas & Ely, 1996). Thirdly, organisations committed to diversity values may convey a favourable image to the public (McKay & Avery, 2005), for example, an image that the organisation is fair and socially responsible. Applicants are more attracted to and more likely to pursue job opportunities in organisations with a favourable reputation (Cable & Turban, 2003; Carless & Imber, 2007). Fourthly, some organisations support diversity in order to meet legal requirements and avoid lawsuits (McKay & Avery, 2005; Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 1998). These organisations may actively recruit minority applicants in response to external pressure from the organisation's stakeholders (McKay & Avery, 2005).

Given the importance of obtaining a diverse group of employees for the organisation, it is beneficial to explore methods to recruit these employees. This thesis focuses on the use of racial minority representatives in recruitment advertising as a strategy for achieving race diversity. Race was chosen as the focus of this thesis because it is one of the most salient social categories. Race is often used by individuals to categorise themselves and others as well as to develop social identity (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Research has shown that racial diversity influences potential applicants' and employees' attitudes and behaviours (Avery, 2003; Riordan & Shore, 1997). Further, in comparison to age and gender similarity, racial similarity demonstrates a greater impact on recruitment outcomes (Goldberg, 2003). Research on

race is one of the most needed yet neglected topics in the organisational literature (Chugh & Brief, 2008). Indeed, the amount of race research was ranked the second least among diversity research of demographic variables (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Hence, this thesis aims to contribute a timely piece of information to the extant literature by examining the effect of race diversity on recruitment outcomes.

2.4.1 Strategies for attracting minority applicants

Three major strategies are employed by organisations in attracting minority applicants: a statement of diversity policy in recruitment advertising; the use of minority recruiters; and the inclusion of minority representatives in recruitment advertising. These strategies are assumed to be effective because they signal to minority applicants that the organisation values people like them (Carless, 2005b; Spence, 1973). Applicants often have little knowledge about an organisation (Rynes, 1991). Thus, they utilise cognitive heuristics (i.e. short cuts) to interpret the limited information that is presented and available to them (Highhouse & Hoffman, 2001). Specifically, applicants obtain information regarding the job and the employer such as the organisation's diversity values through signals provided by the employing organisation (Barber, 1998; Carless, 2005b; Rynes, 1991; Spence, 1973). For instance, applicants may infer that the race of recruiters in job interviews or organisational representatives featured in recruitment advertising reflects the race of actual or typical employees (Rafaeli & Oliver, 1998; Turban, Forret & Hendrickson, 1998). Hence, minority applicants are attracted to organisations that indicate they value workplace diversity and do not discriminate against minority members (Avery & McKay, 2006; Cable & Graham, 2000; McKay & Avery, 2006; Thaler-Carter, 2001). In short, the underlying message communicated by a recruitment activity is important in influencing an applicant's perceptions of the organisation (McKay & Avery, 2006).

2.4.1.1 Statement of diversity policy

One of the strategies commonly used to attract minority applicants involves explicitly stating the organisation's diversity policy in the recruitment material. Employers often describe themselves as an organisation practising either Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) or AA policies (Highhouse et al., 1999; James et al., 2001). An EEO (i.e. identity-blind) policy encourages recruiters to hire applicants from a diverse applicant pool. That is, applicants are selected based on their skills and

qualifications. In contrast, an AA (i.e. identity-conscious) policy actively promotes the recruitment of minority applicants. Organisations practising an AA policy prioritise the hiring of minority applicants during the recruitment and selection procedures (Kulik & Roberson, 2008).

To compare the effects of different types of diversity policies on majority individuals' attitudes, James et al. (2001) conducted two studies, one experimental and one field. The experimental study examined the effect of diversity policy type (AA *versus* EEO) on potential applicants' attitudes. The AA policy benefited Black American individuals whereas the EEO policy was a more general diversity policy that provided a fair chance for all employees to perform well (James et al., 2001). White American job applicants were less attracted to an organisation portrayed as practising an AA policy than an organisation portrayed as practising an EEO policy. Further, these applicants were more likely to perceive the AA organisation as providing less satisfying promotion opportunities than the EEO organisation (James et al., 2001). A similar pattern of results was found in the field study. White American employees were less satisfied with promotion opportunities when they perceived that their organisation practised policies benefiting Black Americans, and this relationship between diversity policy and dissatisfaction was stronger for White American employees with a high level of prejudice than for White American employees with a low level of prejudice (James et al., 2001). This supported previous research suggesting that White American applicants might react negatively to organisations advocating identity-conscious diversity policies (Little, Murry & Wimbush, 1998; Summers, 1995).

In contrast, minority applicants are more attracted to organisations that actively recruit minority applicants than organisations that support a more general diversity policy (Cropanzano et al., 2005; Highhouse et al., 1999; Slaughter et al., 2002). For example, Highhouse et al. (1999) showed that Black American participants are more attracted to an organisation that is featured as an identity-conscious employer than an organisation that is featured as an identity-blind employer. Further, Black American engineering students were more attracted to organisations supporting an 'eliminate discrimination' policy than a 'tiebreak/preferential treatment' policy (Cropanzano et al., 2005, p. 1174); the former policy was perceived as fairer and less stigmatising than the latter (Slaughter et al., 2005). These findings show that majority and minority applicants

have clear but different preferences in the type of diversity policy supported by an employing organisation.

There is a multitude of studies comparing the effects of diversity policy on majority and minority applicants. A recent meta-analysis revealed a consistent pattern of results over 35 years of research: minority members (i.e. Black Americans and Hispanic Americans) tend to have more favourable attitudes towards AA policies than majority members do (i.e. White Americans). Further, Black Americans have more positive attitudes than Hispanic Americans do (Harrison, Kravitz, Mayer, Leslie & Lev-Arey, 2006). Recent studies showed support for the differential effect of diversity policy type on participants' attitudes (Levi & Fried, 2008; Williamson, Slay, Shapiro & Shivers-Blackwell, 2008). For example, White American, Black American and Asian/Pacific Islander participants had different responses to four types of brochures. Participants read a recruitment brochure with a diversity statement (i.e. identity-conscious policy) and no justification, a diversity statement and a business case justification, a diversity statement and an ideological justification, or no diversity statement (Williamson et al., 2008). The results showed that White American applicants favoured organisations that did not include a diversity statement in the recruitment brochure over those that included one, regardless of the justification type. In contrast, Black American applicants were more attracted to organisations that included a diversity statement than organisations that did not, regardless of the type of justification. Further, Asian/Pacific Islander participants who read an advertisement including a diversity statement with an ideological or a business-case justification reported greater attraction than Asian/Pacific Islander participants who read an advertisement with no diversity statement. However, Asians/Pacific Islanders who read an advertisement including a diversity statement with no justification reported a similar level of attraction as Asians/Pacific Islanders who read an advertisement with no diversity statement (Williamson et al., 2008).

However, some studies did not find support for the differential effect of diversity policy on majority and minority individuals. For instance, an earlier study showed that participants, regardless of their race, were more attracted to organisations that took a more proactive stance to diversity practices than to organisations that merely described themselves as AA/EEO employers (Williams & Bauer, 1994). Similarly, both majority and minority participants were more likely to accept a job offer and give positive ratings to organisations that indicated their diversity commitment in the recruitment brochure

than those that did not (Kim & Gelfand, 2003). In general, applicants who perceive the employing organisation as supportive to diversity policy are more committed to and more likely to stay with their career and profession (Carless, 2005b). In summary, organisations that include a diversity statement in recruitment advertising are viewed as more attractive, particularly by minority applicants, than those that exclude such statements.

2.4.1.2 The use of racial minority recruiters

The second strategy adopted by organisations to recruit minority applicants is the use of racial minority recruiters. Research examining the effect of recruiter demographic attributes on applicant attraction is not extensive and findings are inconclusive. For instance, an early study showed that minority applicants formed more positive attitudes towards organisations that use minority recruiters whereas majority applicants were unaffected by the race of the recruiters (Wyse, 1972). To the contrary, a later study found that White American applicants indicated greater attraction to the job when a White American representative was featured whereas Black American applicants were more attracted to the job when a Black American representative was presented (Young, Place, Rinehart, Jury & Baits, 1997). That is, the positive effect of applicant-representative similarity on attraction was supported for both majority and minority applicants (Young et al., 1997). However, applicant-recruiter similarity had a positive effect on applicants' attitudes with respect to racial similarity but not gender or age similarity (Goldberg, 2003). Further, a recent recruitment meta-analysis showed that recruiters' actual demographic attributes do not significantly predict applicants' perceived job and/or organisational attractiveness (Chapman et al., 2005). In summary, more studies examining the effect of recruiter characteristics on attraction are needed to reach firmer conclusions.

2.4.1.3 The use of racial minority representatives in recruitment materials

The third strategy, and the one most central to this thesis, is the use of racial minority representatives (i.e. pictorial diversity) in recruitment advertising. To date, three studies and one unpublished thesis have examined the effects of pictorial race diversity on recruitment outcomes. These studies revealed a consistent pattern of results. Minority applicants were more attracted to organisations featuring minority representatives in their recruitment advertising whereas majority applicants were neither

more nor less attracted to these organisations (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000; Wells, 2008).

One of the earliest studies that examined the effect of pictorial diversity on applicant attraction was conducted by Perkins et al. (2000). Specifically, they investigated the effect of race composition of organisational representatives on students' ratings of organisational attractiveness, perceived compatibility between the student and the organisation and favourability of the organisation's image. Race composition was manipulated by changing the ratio of Black American to White American employees represented in the advertisement. Black American employees constituted 0%, 10%, 30% or 50% of the total ten employees. Black American students reported a higher level of attractiveness when there was at least one Black American employee (i.e. 10% of the total employees) depicted in the advertisement. Further, Black American students' ratings on all three outcome variables increased as the proportion of the Black American employees increased (Perkins et al., 2000). In contrast, White American students showed no difference across the proportions of Black American employees depicted in the job advertisement (Perkins et al., 2000).

Along similar lines, Avery (2003) examined the effect of race composition on organisations' attractiveness using a website advertisement. This study differed from Perkins et al.'s (2000) research as the workforce composition in the advertisement was manipulated not only in terms of the proportion of each racial group (i.e. Black American or White American), but also in terms of the featured employee's organisational status (i.e. worker or manager). Black American students reported greater attraction to organisations that featured a greater proportion of Black American employees than organisations that featured a smaller proportion of Black American employees. However, the effect of race composition on attraction was evident only when the Black employees were depicted as managers and not when the Black employees were depicted as co-workers. In contrast, White American students' ratings of organisations' attractiveness were unaffected by either the proportion or status of minority employees depicted in the advertisement (Avery, 2003). Hence, the status of minority employees in an organisation is perceived by minority applicants as just as important as, if not more important than, the overall proportion of minority employees in an organisation.

Perkins et al. (2000) and Avery's (2003) studies did not include Hispanic Americans in the study sample. A later study showed that Black American and Hispanic American participants were more attracted to organisations that showed a minority representative (either Black American *or* Hispanic American) in the advertisement than to those that used an advertisement that showed a White American representative, even if the race of the representative featured in the advertisement was different from their own (Avery et al., 2004). Hispanic American and Black American participants classified themselves as the same group (i.e. minority) and White American students as a different group (i.e. majority; Avery et al., 2004). Similar to the findings of the previous studies, White American participants showed no differences in their ratings of attractiveness across advertisements (Avery et al., 2004).

A recent unpublished thesis (Wells, 2008) revealed a similar pattern of results. However, this study was distinct from the previous three as it tested whether organisational attractiveness continues to increase when the number of Black American (i.e. minority) representatives depicted in the recruitment advertising exceeds the number of White American (i.e. majority) representatives. Minority applicants were more attracted to an organisation that depicted a homogenous group of minority (i.e. 100% minority) or a group of racially diverse (i.e. 50% majority and 50% minority) representatives in recruitment advertising, than to an organisation that depicted a homogenous group of majority (i.e. 100% majority) representatives. In contrast, majority applicants were indifferent to the race composition: differences in majority applicants' ratings of attractiveness were non-significant across the three race composition conditions (Wells, 2008). The findings of this research suggested that minority applicants were attracted to organisations that *included* minority representatives, regardless of the proportion of the minority. Surprisingly, minority participants did not find organisations that featured a homogenous group of minority representatives as more attractive than organisations that featured a group of racially diverse representatives. In contrast, organisations featuring a group of racially diverse representatives were perceived as slightly (although non-significantly) more attractive by minority applicants than organisations featuring a homogenous group of minority representatives (Wells, 2008).

In summary, organisations that featured minority representatives in their recruitment advertising were perceived as more attractive than organisations that did

not. The effect of race composition on attraction was particularly strong for minority applicants, whereas majority applicants tended to be indifferent to the race composition of organisational representatives featured in the job advertisement.

2.4.2 Theoretical perspectives: Predicting the effect of race composition on recruitment outcomes

Several theoretical bases are used to explain the effects of diversity on recruitment outcomes such as attraction. Firstly, social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987) suggests that people constantly categorise themselves and others into social groups. Categorisation allows an individual to organise his or her social environment and define him or herself and others (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). An individual's social identity refers to 'those aspects of an individual's self-image that derive from the social categories to which he perceives himself as belonging' (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 16). For example, people tend to differentiate the self from others according to social categories that are meaningful to them (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Pettigrew, 1980) such as race (e.g., White American *versus* Black American).

Based on social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987), individuals are driven to attain and/or maintain a positive social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In order to enhance self-identity, people tend to identify with social groups that they perceive as self-enhancing (Hogg & Turner, 1985; Riordan, 2000; Tajfel, 1978). Further, they tend to evaluate members of their own group especially favourably by maximising the differences between in-groups and out-groups (Kramer, 1991). Moreover, people are motivated to maintain a common social identity across different social settings (Steele, 1988) by identifying with groups that are consistent with their present identity (McKay & Avery, 2006; Riordan, 2000). Groups that are inconsistent with one's social identity are more likely to be viewed as unattractive (Kramer, 1991) and members of the out-group are more likely to be perceived as dishonest, less trustworthy and less cooperative (Brewer, 1979). Individuals tend to derive positive feelings from a group's successes and thus, they are driven to maintain a positive image of their own group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hogg & Terry, 2000).

In the recruitment context, minority applicants tend to favour organisations featuring a group of minority (i.e. in-group) rather than majority (i.e. out-group) representatives (Avery, 2003) although they have not interacted with those

representatives. Demographic attributes such as race can be easily noticed even when there is little or no interaction among team members (Zellmer-Bruhn, Maloney, Bhappu & Salvador, 2008). Further, individuals are able to obtain and maintain a positive social identity without or prior to acquiring knowledge about the group (Tsui et al., 1992). According to cognitive psychological research, people tend to store information about in-group members in a more in-depth way (Park & Rothbart, 1982). They tend to remember more information regarding their similarity with in-group members and dissimilarity with out-group members (Wilder, 1981) and retain information that is less favourable about out-group members (Howard & Rothbart, 1980). Consistent with the minimal differentiation paradigm (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy & Flament, 1971), group members who were assigned to random and non-significant groups (prior to any contact among the members) displayed strong favouritism and positive biases towards their own group members.

Secondly, a related theoretical perspective—the similarity-attraction paradigm—predicts that individuals are attracted to people with similar attitudes (Byrne, 1971). Early studies found support for the paradigm (Byrne, 1971; Byrne & Clore, 1970) and later research extended the paradigm to examine the effect of demographic similarity (Ferris, Judge, Rowland & Fitzgibbons, 1994; Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989). People are attracted to demographically (e.g., race, gender) similar others believing that these individuals have attitudes similar to their own (Baskett, 1973). Demographic attributes such as race are often used as proxies for inferring interpersonal similarity (Elsass & Graves, 1997). In the recruitment context, applicants are more attracted to, and more likely to choose to work for, an organisation whose workforce has characteristics similar to their own (Riordan, 2000; Schneider, 1987). For instance, individuals may be more attracted to a firm that hires a group of employees who are racially similar to them, anticipating that these employees share their personal values and attitudes (Avery et al., 2004).

Thirdly, Person-Organisation (P-O) fit theory (Kristof, 1996) suggests that people are more attracted to an organisation that has values and goals that are compatible with their own (Carless, 2005a; Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005). P-O fit refers to 'the compatibility between people and organizations' (Kristof, 1996, p. 4) and it occurs when the two entities satisfy the needs of each other and/or when they possess a similar set of characteristics (Kristof, 1996). Research has shown that applicants are more likely

to work for organisations practising values that are congruent with theirs (Cable & Judge, 1996) and to believe that these organisations will fulfil their needs and wants (Chatman, 1989; Kristof, 1996). Hence, organisations that feature a group of representatives who are racially similar to the applicants may be perceived as more compatible and are more likely to fulfil the applicants' needs. As a result, applicants are more attracted to these organisations than organisations that feature a group of racially dissimilar representatives.

> *Hypothesis 1. Participants will be more attracted to organisations that feature a homogenous group of representatives who are racially similar to them or a group of racially diverse representatives than organisations that feature a homogenous group of representatives who are racially dissimilar to them.*

Applicants' intentions to pursue job opportunities in an organisation are affected by the type of diversity plans featured in job advertisements (Slaughter et al., 2002; 2005). Applicants are more likely to pursue a job in organisations that indicated their commitment to diversity in their recruitment brochure than organisations that did not include diversity commitment statement (Saks et al., 1995). Organisations featuring their diversity stance in job advertisements were perceived as fair leading to applicants' intentions to pursue job opportunities in the organisation (Slaughter et al., 2002; 2005). In a similar vein, organisations featuring a group of racially diverse or minority employees in recruitment advertising were perceived as more favourable, more compatible and more attractive (Perkins et al., 2000). Further, applicants who perceive a high level of fit with the organisation and the job position are more committed to their career and more likely to stay in the same profession (Carless, 2005b). Consistent with P-O fit theory (Kristof, 1996) and the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971), applicants are more likely to pursue job opportunities in organisations depicting a group of representatives who are racially similar to them than organisations depicting a group of representatives who are racially dissimilar to them. It is hypothesised that:

> *Hypothesis 2. Participants will be more likely to pursue a job in organisations that feature a homogenous group of representatives who are racially similar to them or a group of racially diverse representatives than organisations that feature a homogenous group of representatives who are racially dissimilar to them.*

Based on signalling theory (Spence, 1973), organisations that feature a group of racially diverse representatives in their job advertisement may be perceived as fair and as more likely to provide equal advancement opportunities to employees than organisations that only feature a group of majority representatives. Minority employees tend to evaluate an employer as fair and as more likely to provide career advancement opportunities when the employees believe the organisation is supportive of diversity policies (Parker, Baltes & Christiansen, 1997). Further, research has shown that employees who work with racially similar co-workers are more likely to perceive advancement opportunities than those who work with racially dissimilar co-workers (Riordan & Shore, 1997). In the recruitment context, applicants who view a group of racially similar employees featured in the recruitment material are more likely to perceive that they possess the same stereotypical characteristics that are essential for performance as those employees (Fernandez, 1981). Hence, these applicants may expect greater opportunities for career advancement when they become part of the organisation's workforce. It is predicted that:

> *Hypothesis 3. Participants will be more likely to perceive opportunities for advancement in organisations that feature a homogenous group of representatives who are racially similar to them or a group of racially diverse representatives than organisations that feature a homogenous group of representatives who are racially dissimilar to them.*

2.4.3 Opening the 'black box': Perceived similarity as the mediator between race composition and recruitment outcomes

Perceived similarity refers to the extent to which individuals *think* and *believe* that they are similar to others (Turban & Jones, 1988). The majority of past studies has emphasised *actual* similarity, paying little attention to the *perception* of similarity. It is important to study perceived similarity because the effect of actual similarity on attraction may be facilitated by the extent to which the individual believes him or herself to be similar to the other person (Goldberg, 2005; Riordan, 2000). As noted by Harrison et al. (2002), 'if differences are to be meaningful, they must be perceived' (p. 1032). Individuals who are demographically different from one another will only perceive the other person as dissimilar if they are aware of and conscious of the

differences and if they feel that the differences are significant (Shrivastava & Gregory, 2009).

Diversity researchers have suggested that perceived diversity transforms actual differences into the individuals' thoughts and behaviours (Zellmer-Bruhn et al., 2008). Only diversity characteristics that are noticed by group members will have an impact on team outcomes (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Lawrence, 1997; Zellmer-Bruhn et al., 2008). Hence, an individual's perception of a situation is more influential than the actual situation in his or her decision-making (McKay & Avery, 2006; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). The inclusion of both actual and perceived demographic similarity increases the predictability of similarity in outcome variables (Cleveland & Shore, 1992; Lawrence, 1988; 1996). Therefore, examining perceived similarity may deepen the understanding of diversity effects and provide an explanation for the inconsistent diversity effects in the literature (Lawrence, 1997; Zellmer-Bruhn et al., 2008). Diversity scholars have acknowledged the importance of perceived similarity (Shrivastava & Gregory, 2009; Tsui et al., 1992; van Knippenberg et al., 2004; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998) but few studies have explicitly tested perceived similarity in the diversity recruitment context (with the exception of Avery et al., 2004; Garcia, 2004; Goldberg, 2005; Graves & Powell, 1995). There have been calls for perceived similarity research for more than a decade (Lawrence, 1997; Nkomo, 1992).

The measurement and conceptualisation of perceived similarity has been inconsistent (Dose, 1999; Graves & Powell, 1995; Harrison et al., 2002; Liden, Wayne & Stilwell, 1993; Wayne & Liden, 1995). For instance, some studies utilised a general or global measure of perceived similarity (Avery et al., 2004; Dose, 1999; Graves & Powell, 1995) whereas others used a one-item measure of perceived similarity (Polzer, Milton & Swann, 2002; Pulakos & Wexley, 1983; Turban & Jones, 1988). This thesis adopts the conceptualisation of perceived similarity presented by Harrison et al. (2002). According to Harrison et al. (2002), there are two types of perceived similarity: perceived surface-level similarity, which captures the similarity of visible or demographic attributes such as race, and perceived deep-level similarity, which involves the similarity of less visible attributes such as values and attitudes. The surface-level and deep-level distinction is consistent with previous diversity typologies (Jackson et al., 1995; Milliken & Martins, 1996). A similar distinction has been used in the recent diversity recruitment research (Cunningham, 2007).

Research has shown that actual surface-level diversity is positively related to perceived surface-level diversity. For instance, actual race and age dissimilarity are positively related to perceived race and age dissimilarity respectively (Cunningham, 2007). Harrison et al. (2002) found that actual similarity on several specific surface-level attributes (i.e. age, race and marital status) predicted an aggregate measure of perceived surface-level similarity. However, only actual similarity in attitudes (but not personality and values) predicted the overall measure of perceived deep-level similarity (Harrison et al., 2002).

Although studies have established the link between actual similarity and perceived similarity (Cunningham, 2007; Dose, 1999; Harrison et al., 2002), only a handful of them have explicitly tested the mediating role of perceived similarity in the relationship between actual similarity and outcomes. Further, perceived similarity has been examined in different study contexts that involved different types of samples. For example, some studies have examined the effect of similarities within applicant-recruiter dyads (Garcia, 2004; Goldberg, 2005; Graves & Powell, 1995) whereas others investigated the effect of similarities within subordinate-supervisor dyads (Huang & Iun, 2006; Turban & Jones, 1988; Wayne & Liden, 1995). Race similarity between applicant and recruiter was positively related to interview outcomes and this relationship was mediated by the recruiter's perceptions of similarity (Goldberg, 2005). Further, demographically similar subordinate-supervisor dyads yielded greater supervisor's perceived similarity and liking to the subordinate than dissimilar dyads, which in turn led to higher supervisory ratings of the subordinate's performance (Wayne & Liden, 1995).

To date, only one study has examined the mediating role of perceived similarity in the relationship between race composition of organisational representatives featured in recruitment material and attraction (Avery et al., 2004). Applicants tended to perceive that representatives who belonged to their own race (i.e. in-group members) were more similar to themselves than representatives who belonged to other races (i.e. out-group members). Further, Black Americans showed a stronger effect of race composition on organisational attractiveness as compared to White Americans, and this moderating effect was mediated by perceived similarity (Avery et al., 2004). Interestingly, Hispanic American and Black American respondents were similarly attracted to organisations depicting either a Hispanic American *or* Black American representative; hence, it

underlined the role of *perceived* similarity in determining minority applicants' attraction to the organisation. Avery et al. (2004) concluded that race of the representatives featured was not used as a proxy for the diversity stance of the organisation. Rather, minority applicants viewed themselves as similar to the minority representative featured in the recruitment advertisement (in terms of minority status and not race) and this similarity attracted them to the organisation (Avery et al., 2004).

Consistent with social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987), individuals may use race to distinguish between in-group (i.e. same-race) and out-group (i.e. different-race) members. Same-race individuals are perceived as more racially similar (Cunningham, 2007; Harrison et al., 2002). However, they are also perceived as more favourable (Kramer, 1991; Tsui et al., 1992) leading to greater applicant attraction, pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement. Hence, perceived surface-level (i.e. race) similarity may mediate the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes.

> *Hypothesis 4. The effect of race composition of organisational representatives on applicant attraction (H4a), job pursuit intentions (H4b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H4c) will be mediated by perceived surface-level similarity.*

In line with the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971), people are attracted to racially similar others because they believe that these individuals share their own underlying values or attitudes (Chattopadhyay, 1999; Goldberg, 2005; Graves & Powell, 1995; Pfeffer, 1983; Wayne & Liden, 1995). As stated by Tsui et al. (1992, p. 551), 'the similarity-attraction hypothesis maintains that similarity in attitudes is a major source of attraction between individuals. A variety of physical, social, and status traits can be used as the basis for inferring similarity in attitudes, beliefs, or personality.' Applicants may be attracted to organisations featuring racially similar representatives because they perceive that they and the representatives have deep-level attributes in common. A recent study showed that actual social category (i.e. race) similarity predicted perceived deep-level similarity (i.e. similarity in work style) leading to positive group outcomes (Zellmer-Bruhn et al., 2008). People make inferences about deep-level or underlying characteristics based on salient surface-level attributes (Zellmer-Bruhn et al., 2008). For example, Mannix and Neale (2005, p. 44) suggested the 'congruence assumption', in which 'visible traits are reasonable substitutes for, and

predictors of, underlying differences'. The present research predicts that perceived deep-level similarity will mediate the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes.

Hypothesis 5. The effect of race composition of organisational representatives on applicant attraction (H5a), job pursuit intentions (H5b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H5c) will be mediated by perceived deep-level similarity.

2.4.4 Participant race as a moderator

Majority and minority applicants have different emphases in their evaluation of an organisation as a potential employer (Backhaus, Stone & Heiner, 2002; Thomas & Wise, 1999). Hence, it is meaningful to investigate whether the effect of race composition is asymmetrical across these two groups. For example, minority individuals tend to view recruiter demographics and organisational diversity attributes as more important (Thomas & Wise, 1999) and are more likely to show greater value for diversity (i.e. appreciation of an employer's effort to increase demographic diversity) than majority individuals (Kossek & Zonia, 1993; Mor Barak, Cherin & Berkman, 1998; Roberson et al., 2009). Empirical research has shown consistently that the effect of race composition on attraction is stronger for minority than for majority group members (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000; Wells, 2008).

Based on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), individuals identify with more than one social category and these social identities vary in terms of their salience. Identity salience is the propensity that an identity will become apparent in a social context (Stryker, 1968). The identity salience and numerical distinctiveness literature (McGuire et al., 1978; Randel, 2002; Stryker, 1968) suggests that an individual's identity becomes salient when the group with which the individual identifies is in the numerical minority. Black American applicants are more often in a numerical minority position in social settings as compared to White American individuals (Avery, 2003). Thus, race is more salient to minority group members and they are more likely to categorise themselves and others using their salient identity (i.e. race) than majority group members (Forehand et al., 2002). Hence, race or race composition of the organisation's workforce is a particularly important factor for

minority applicants in deciding whether to work for an organisation or not (Leonard, 2001; Thomas & Wise, 1999).

In contrast to minority individuals, majority members are rarely the numerical minority in an organisation (Perkins et al., 2000). As a result of their numerical majority status, they enjoy psychological privileges and hence, they are less likely to be concerned about the race composition of organisational representatives featured in recruitment advertising (Perkins et al., 2000). Majority individuals may not be concerned about an organisation's diversity as long as they remain in the numerical majority (Chattopadhyay, 1999; Riordan & Shore, 1997; Tsui et al., 1992). Interestingly, Wells (2008) showed that White American applicants remained indifferent to the race composition of organisational representatives even when they were depicted as the numerical minority. Overall, minority applicants are more likely to be affected by the race composition of organisational representatives than majority applicants are. Hence, it is predicted that:

> *Hypothesis 6. There will be a two-way interactive effect of race composition and participant race on applicant attraction (H6a), job pursuit intentions (H6b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H6c). The effect of race composition of organisational representatives will be stronger for minority participants than for majority participants.*

Based on the identity salience and numerical distinctiveness literature (McGuire et al., 1978; Randel, 2002; Stryker, 1968), minority members are more sensitive to their race as compared to majority members. Minority members tend to use race as a basis for categorising themselves and others (Forehand et al., 2002). In contrast, majority applicants tend to be less concerned about racial issues due to their majority status in the society. Given that minority members have a more salient race identity, they are more likely to view same-race individuals as similar to them in terms of race, as well as values, personality and attitudes (Tsui et al., 1992; Zellmer-Bruhn et al., 2008). Consistent with the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971), minority applicants are more attracted to organisations featuring a group of representatives who are racially similar to them because they perceive that these representatives share underlying attributes with them. To the contrary, majority applicants tend to be indifferent to the race composition of organisational representatives featured in recruitment advertising. Integrating the identity salience and numerical distinctiveness literature (McGuire et al.,

1978; Randel, 2002; Stryker, 1968) and the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971), it is predicted that:

Hypothesis 7. The two-way interactive effect of race composition and participant race on applicant attraction (H7a), job pursuit intentions (H7b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H7c) will be mediated by perceived surface-level similarity.

Hypothesis 8. The two-way interactive effect of race composition and participant race on applicant attraction (H8a), job pursuit intentions (H8b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H8c) will be mediated by perceived deep-level similarity.

2.4.5 Intergroup contact as a moderator

2.4.5.1 The contact hypothesis

The contact hypothesis proposed that interaction between individuals of different social groups might reduce the bias and prejudice that individuals usually exhibit towards out-group members (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947). Contact tends to be more effective in reducing bias when: 1) members have equal power and status; 2) members have common goals; 3) members are engaged in interdependent or cooperative tasks; 4) the contact occurs in a context that supports egalitarian norms; and 5) members are given opportunities to develop personal acquaintances and intergroup friendships (Dovidio, Gaertner & Kawakami, 2003; Pettigrew, 1998). These conditions may enhance the positive effect of contact, but they are not essential (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Some studies found negative effects of intergroup contact when the optimum conditions were violated. However, other studies found positive effects (see Pettigrew, 1998 for a review), suggesting that the positive relationship between intergroup contact and reduced prejudice may operate even when intergroup contact conditions are not optimal (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

A related perspective predicting the positive effect of contact is the mere exposure hypothesis (Homans, 1950; Zajonc, 1968). This hypothesis predicts that increased interaction (i.e. increased quantity of contact) fosters an individual's attraction to other people and facilitates favourable impressions (Binder et al., 2009; Brown Eller, Leeds & Stace, 2007). Supporting the proposition that the optimal conditions of contact are facilitative but not essential for attitude change (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), research

has found that quantity (i.e. amount) but not quality (i.e. conditions) of contact predicted attitude favourability (Brown et al., 2007). Integrating the contact literature and the mere exposure perspective, individuals who have had more contact with racially dissimilar (i.e. out-group) members may extend their liking to other members of the out-group (Biernat, 1990; Brown et al., 2007). The present research hypothesises that participants who have had more intergroup contact with out-group members will be less sensitive to, and less affected by, the race composition of organisational representatives featured in recruitment advertising than participants who have had less intergroup contact.

Research has shown consistently that the effect of contact on reduced prejudice is weaker for minority members than for majority members (Binder et al., 2009; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). Majority members are more likely to benefit from intergroup contact (in terms of attitude change) than minority members even if both groups experience the same conditions for optimal contact (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). Indeed, the positive effect of contact on reducing prejudice is non-existent for minority members unless the interaction target or out-group member is perceived as representative of the out-group (Binder et al., 2009). The asymmetrical effect of intergroup contact on majority and minority group members may be explained by the different expectations that the group members hold towards intergroup interactions (Binder et al., 2009; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). Minority members are more aware of the status or power differences between majority and minority groups and are more concerned about discriminative treatment by majority members (Binder et al., 2009; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). Thus, minority members are less likely to experience or perceive the conditions for contact as 'optimum' (e.g., members have equal power and status, the contact occurs in a context that supports egalitarian norms). In contrast, majority members often enjoy a higher status and so they tend to be more concerned about whether they are being perceived as discriminative towards minority members (Binder et al., 2009; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). Hence, majority members are more likely to show favourable attitudes during intergroup contact in order to avoid being judged as discriminative towards minority members. In summary, the positive effect of intergroup contact is greater for majority than for minority members (Binder et al., 2009; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005).

Researchers have proposed several mechanisms to explain the effect of contact. Firstly, contact may foster learning about one another and hence, people who engage in more contact are better informed and have good knowledge about out-group members (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). As a result of meaningful contact, people may recognise the similarity they have with others (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008), which in turn leads to more favourable impressions (Byrne, 1971). This is consistent with a recent research finding that information-sharing among team members over time increased the accuracy of perception about out-group members, particularly with respect to similarities or differences in deep-level attributes (Zellmer-Bruhn et al., 2008). Secondly, intergroup contact may reduce feelings of threat and anxiety towards out-group members (Blascovich, Mendes, Hunter, Lickel & Kowai-Bell, 2001; Paolini, Hewstone, Cairns & Voci, 2004; Pettigrew, 1998; Stephan et al., 2002; Stephan, Stephan & Gudykunst, 1999; Voci & Hewstone, 2003) and thus, reduce prejudice towards others (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Specifically, increased contact may minimise the avoidance and discomfort an individual experiences while interacting with dissimilar others or out-group members because he or she now knows what to expect and how to act (Crosby, Bromley & Saxe, 1980; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). Thirdly, intergroup contact may enhance one's empathy and ability to take the other's perspective. Willingness to take the perspective of out-group members leads to more positive racial attitudes (Vescio, Sechrist & Paolucci, 2003). Moreover, contact may enhance the understanding of the historical and cultural background of others, making people more sensitive to prejudice, which in turn leads to reduced bias (Dovidio et al., 2003). The meta-analytic findings showed support for all three mediators with anxiety reduction and empathy emerging as stronger mediators than knowledge (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Similarly, a recent longitudinal field study that was carried out in three European countries (Belgium, England and Germany) supported the role of intergroup anxiety as a mediator in the relationship between contact and unfavourable intergroup emotions (Binder et al., 2009).

Further, meaningful interaction among individuals might reduce prejudice or increase attraction towards one another by changing stereotypes. Specifically, individuals are more likely to recognise that the stereotypes they hold about the out-group may not apply to all members of the group (Wolsko et al., 2003). The elevated amount of contact fosters mutual understanding, which in turn mitigates initial negative

perceptions and increases interpersonal attraction (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Cook, 1978; Pettigrew, 1971). Individuals who interact with out-group members may also be less repelled by the heterogeneity or differences among group members (Wolsko et al., 2003). However, stereotype change occurs only when the out-group members are seen as representative of the group and their behaviours disconfirm the group stereotype (Wolsko et al., 2003). Contact in itself may also reduce prejudice without necessarily changing stereotypes (Wolsko et al., 2003). Contact researchers have argued that interaction should increase liking and decrease intergroup anxiety as long as the interaction is non-threatening and knowledge-adding (Stephan & Stephan, 1984; 1985; 1989; Triandis, 1994; Wolsko et al., 2003).

2.4.5.2 Integrating the contact hypothesis and the similarity-attraction paradigm

The proposed relationship between contact and attraction is supported by diversity research that examined the moderating role of time in the similarity-attraction relationship. The effects of demographic similarity tend to diminish (Harrison et al., 1998; Pelled et al., 1999) and become less relevant (Jehn et al., 1999) over time, whereas the effects of deep-level similarity become more significant as group tenure increases (Harrison et al., 1998; 2002; Jehn et al., 1999). Further, as team tenure increases, members experience greater improvement in the knowledge and information that they have about one another's deep-level attributes than in their knowledge of surface-level attributes (Harrison et al., 2002). Thus, the benefits of group heterogeneity are maximised following prolonged interaction among the group members (Watson et al., 1993; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Consistent with the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947), individuals who spend more time together have greater opportunities to interact or collaborate (Harrison et al., 1998; 2002) and thus, they gain more information about each other (Elsass & Graves, 1997; Gruenfeld et al., 1996; Harrison et al., 1998). As a result, they tend to have less stereotypical views and more accurate judgments of individuals from a different group (Jackson et al., 1993; Newcomb, 1961) and are less likely to misjudge the dissimilarity that they have with out-group members (Shrivastava & Gregory, 2009). Over time, people learn more about the underlying values of others who belong to a different group (out-group members) and the initial perception of differences based on surface-level characteristics such as race is degraded (Harrison et al., 1998; 2002).

A recent study showed that team members share more information as the number of meetings increases (Zellmer-Bruhn et al., 2008). Information-sharing enhances the exchange of information between group members and thus allows the members, particularly those who belong to different social categories, to develop accurate impressions and disconfirm stereotypes about one another (Aronson & Patnoe, 1997; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000). People are more likely to learn more about each other and produce shared knowledge (Stasser & Titus, 1985) through information-sharing. As a result, they are more likely to emphasise their similarities rather than their differences (Gaertner, Rust, Dovidio, Bachman & Anastasio, 1994; Shrivastava & Gregory, 2009). Hence, information or knowledge sharing among team members encourages the perception of similarity (Zellmer-Bruhn et al., 2008). Therefore, fostering collaboration among team members over time may reduce initial prejudices and weaken the negative effects of demographic dissimilarity among the group members, which in turn leads to greater attraction (Elsass & Graves, 1997; Harrison et al., 2002).

Further, minority members tend to generalise from their positive experience of interacting with majority members (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Dovidio et al., 2003). That is, minority members who have a favourable experience with majority members may anticipate similarly favourable interactions with other majority members in future settings. Research has shown consistently that the pleasantness of previous experiences with out-group members predicted favourable intergroup attitudes (Hamberger & Hewstone, 1997; Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Pettigrew, 1997; Stangor, Jonas, Stroebe & Hewstone, 1996; Towles-Schwen & Fazio, 2001; Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe & Ropp, 1997). Minority members who have greater opportunities to meet and interact with majority members are more likely to form positive attitudes towards the majority members and anticipate favourable interactions with the out-group members. Further, individuals generalise the changed stereotype to other out-group members when the original out-group member is seen as typical of the group (Brown, Vivian & Hewstone, 1999; Desforges et al., 1991; Desforges, Lord, Pugh, Sia, Scarberry & Ratcliff, 1997; Wilder, Simon & Faith, 1996).

2.4.5.3 Integrating the contact hypothesis and social identity/categorisation theory

Social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987) suggests that individuals tend to show in-group favouritism and out-group rejection in

order to enhance their self-identity. Based on the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947), the increased contact between majority and minority members allows both groups' members to reconstruct their social identities through de-categorisation (Brewer & Miller, 1984) and re-categorisation (Anastasio, Bachman, Gaertner & Dovidio, 1997; Gaertner et al., 1993; 1994). As a result of the de-categorisation process, people are less likely to distinguish themselves from others based on social groups (in-group and out-group differentiation) but to treat others, particularly dissimilar others, as individual entities rather than as members of the out-group (Gaertner, Rust, Dovidio, Bachman & Anastasio, 1996; Wilder, 1986). Individuals focus on personal attributes and information rather than on social category information during an interaction (Elsass & Graves, 1997). Consequently, people are less likely to form a positive bias towards their own group and thus, the biases between the two groups are decreased (Brewer, 1979; Turner, 1985). Re-categorisation occurs when people from two different social groups see themselves as belonging to the same group and having a common in-group identity (Anastasio et al., 1997; Gaertner et al., 1993; 1994). The common in-group identity model (Gaertner et al., 1993; 1996) suggests that social categorisation promotes intergroup bias; and contact reduces prejudice by changing members' cognitive representation. Members categorise in-group and former out-group members as belonging to the *new* in-group. They see themselves as 'we' rather than 'us' and 'them' (Brown & Turner, 1981; Gaertner et al., 1996; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). Hence, contact reduces intergroup biases through the positive attitudes that one has towards the previous out-group members (Gaertner et al., 1996).

In the recruitment context, applicants who have had less contact with out-group members may be more sensitive about their own race as well as the race of organisational representatives featured in the advertisement. They are more likely to use race to differentiate themselves from others than applicants who have had more contact with out-group members (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Gaertner et al., 1996). As a result, applicants who have had less contact with out-group members may show stronger in-group favouritism and out-group rejection. That is, applicants who have had less contact with out-group members tend to show attitudes that are more negative towards organisations featuring organisational representatives who are racially dissimilar to them as compared to applicants who have had more contact with out-group members. Therefore, it is predicted that the effect of race composition will be stronger for

participants who have had less intergroup contact than for participants who have had more intergroup contact.

> *Hypothesis 9. There will be a two-way interactive effect of race composition and intergroup contact on applicant attraction (H9a), job pursuit intentions (H9b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H9c). The effect of race composition of organisational representatives will be stronger for participants who have had less intergroup contact than for participants who have had more intergroup contact.*

Hypothesis 6 predicted that the effect of race composition on recruitment outcomes would be stronger for minority than for majority members due to the minority members' salient identity (Stryker, 1968). Based on the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947), Hypothesis 9 proposed that participants who engaged in greater intergroup interactions would be less affected by the race composition of organisational representatives than participants who engaged in fewer intergroup interactions. Integrating the identity salience literature (McGuire et al., 1978; Randel, 2002; Stryker, 1968) and the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947), minority members who have had fewer intergroup interactions are more likely to be affected by the race composition of organisational representatives featured in recruitment advertising than minority members who have had greater intergroup interactions. In contrast, majority participants will be unaffected by the race composition of organisational representatives regardless of the amount of contact that they have had with racially dissimilar others. To date, there are no studies that have examined the combined moderating effect of participant race and amount of intergroup contact. This research predicts that:

> *Hypothesis 10. There will be a three-way interactive effect of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on applicant attraction (H10a), job pursuit intentions (H10b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H10c). The effect of race composition will be stronger for minority participants who have had less intergroup contact than for minority participants who have had more intergroup contact. Majority participants will be unaffected by the race composition regardless of the amount of intergroup contact.*

Consistent with the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947), intergroup bias between members of two social groups reduces as intergroup contact

increases. Interaction between individuals increases the knowledge that one has about another (Shrivastava & Gregory, 2009). People who have had more exposure and experience interacting with individuals from diverse cultures (i.e. greater 'diversity experience') are less likely to form stereotypical views about dissimilar others (Shrivastava & Gregory, 2009, p. 530). Rather, people with more diversity experience develop similarity or dissimilarity perceptions about the target person based on the person's idiosyncratic or specific characteristics that are more accurate (Shrivastava & Gregory, 2009). Hence, individuals who have had regular interactions with out-group members may be less sensitive to their own race and less likely to show in-group bias and out-group rejection.

Consistent with the common in-group identity model (Gaertner et al., 1993; 1996), individuals who have had regular interactions with out-group members may be more likely to view former out-group (i.e. different-race) members as belonging to the same group and sharing the personal values, personality and attitudes with members of the in-group (i.e. same-race). Research showed that individuals who have had greater experience with dissimilar others are less likely to perceive dissimilarity, which in turn leads to the individuals' desire to group or identify with the dissimilar members (Shrivastava & Gregory, 2009). Hence, the effect of race composition of organisational representatives may weaken as the contact between two groups' members increases because these members are more likely to recognise their similarities.

> *Hypothesis 11. The two-way interactive effect of race composition and intergroup contact on applicant attraction (H11a), job pursuit intentions (H11b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H11c) will be mediated by perceived surface-level similarity.*
>
> *Hypothesis 12. The two-way interactive effects of race composition and intergroup contact on applicant attraction (H12a), job pursuit intentions (H12b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H12c) will be mediated by perceived deep-level similarity.*

The identity salience literature (Stryker, 1968) suggests that minority members are more sensitive to their race than majority members. Based on the contact hypothesis literature (Brewer & Miller, 1984), the sensitivity that minority members have about their race may reduce as intergroup interaction increases. Minority members who have

had more intergroup contact may be less likely to categorise themselves and others based on race and less likely to perceive racially similar others as in-group members and racially dissimilar individuals as out-group members than minority members who are deprived of intergroup contact (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Gaertner et al., 1996). As a result, minority members who have had more intergroup contact are less likely to view same-race representatives featured in recruitment advertising as similar to them in terms of race, personal values, personality and attitudes, which would lead to greater attraction (Tsui et al., 1992; Zellmer-Bruhn et al., 2008). In contrast, majority applicants tend to be less concerned about racial issues due to their majority status in the society. Hence, majority applicants may be indifferent to the race composition of organisational representatives featured in recruitment advertising and are less likely to view same-race representatives as similar to them (as compared to minority applicants) regardless of the amount of intergroup contact they have had. This research predicts that perceived surface-level (i.e. race) and deep-level similarity may mediate the three-way interactive effect of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on recruitment outcomes.

> *Hypothesis 13. The three-way interactive effects of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on applicant attraction (H13a), job pursuit intentions (H13b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H13c) will be mediated by perceived surface-level similarity.*
>
> *Hypothesis 14. The three-way interactive effects of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on applicant attraction (H14a), job pursuit intentions (H14b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H14c) will be mediated by perceived deep-level similarity.*

Chapter 3: Study 1

3.1 Introduction

Several research opportunities and gaps in the diversity literature were identified in Chapter 2. This chapter describes a study that aims to fill one of the voids by opening the 'black box' (Lawrence, 1997, p. 2). Study 1 examines the underlying mechanism linking the race composition of organisational representatives to recruitment outcomes.

Both social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) note that individuals are more attracted to similar others. These theoretical perspectives are often used to explain the effect of diversity on attraction; however, they have not been clearly distinguished by researchers in the past (Avery et al., 2004). The present study proposes that each theory has a different focus in its explanation of the effects of similarity. Social identity theory suggests that actual similarity with respect to a social category such as race generates surface-level similarity that leads to attraction (Tsui et al., 1992). The similarity-attraction paradigm suggests that actual demographic similarity generates inferences of deep-level similarity on attitudes and values that lead to attraction (Byrne, 1971; Goldberg, 2005). Hence, Study 1 proposes that perceived surface- and deep-level similarity are the underlying factors linking race composition of organisational representatives to recruitment outcomes. By examining two types of perceived similarity, this study points out the critical distinctions between the two theoretical perspectives and further identifies their points of divergence. This is the first study that examines two potential mediators simultaneously in a recruitment context.

The overall research model and the proposed relationships among study variables are presented in Figure 2.

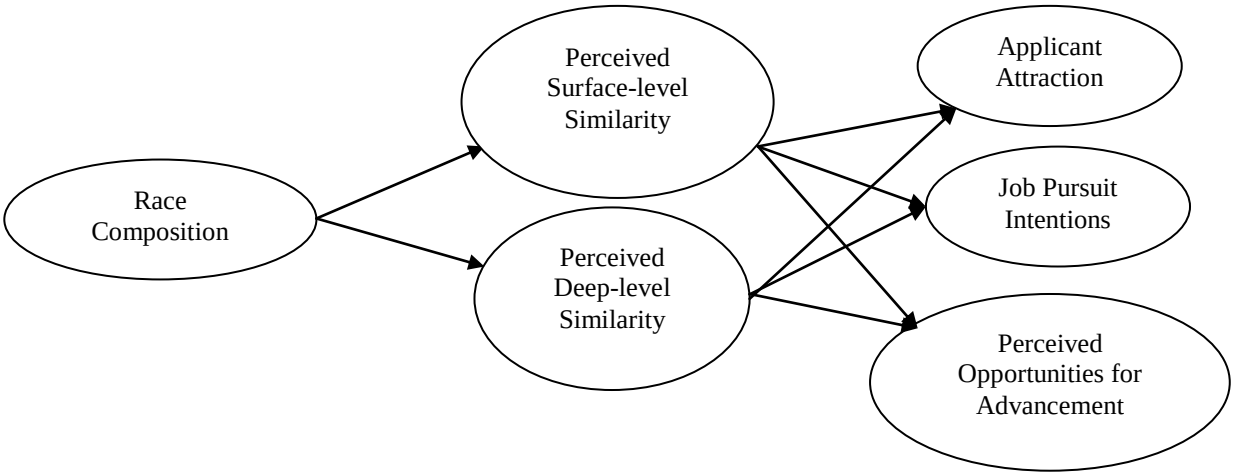


Figure 2: Study 1 model.

3.2 Hypotheses Development

3.2.1 Effects of race composition on recruitment outcomes

Based on social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987) and the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971), applicants are more attracted to organisations featuring racially similar (i.e. in-group) than racially dissimilar (i.e. out-group) representatives. Studies have shown consistently that organisations depicting a group of organisational representatives who are racially similar to the applicant are perceived as more attractive than organisations depicting a group of organisational representatives who are racially dissimilar to the applicant (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000; Wells, 2008). Further, applicants tend to interpret the race of organisational representatives featured in recruitment advertising as reflecting the race of typical employees or the actual race composition of an organisation's workforce (Rafaeli & Oliver, 1998; Turban et al., 1998). Organisations that feature a group of racially diverse or minority representatives signal that they value diversity and are less likely to discriminate against minority members (Avery & McKay, 2006; Cable & Graham, 2000; McKay & Avery, 2006; Thaler-Carter, 2001). Based on P-O fit theory (Kristof, 1996), applicants are more attracted to organisations practising values that are congruent with theirs (Cable & Judge, 1996; Carless, 2005a) or organisations that are more likely to fulfil their needs. Integrating social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987), the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) and P-O fit theory (Kristof, 1996), it is predicted that applicants are more attracted to organisations featuring a group of representatives who

are similar to them than organisations featuring a group of representatives who are dissimilar to them.

> *Hypothesis 1. Participants will be more attracted to organisations that feature a homogenous group of representatives who are racially similar to them or a group of racially diverse representatives than organisations that feature a homogenous group of representatives who are racially dissimilar to them.*

Research has shown that applicants are more likely to pursue a job in organisations that indicate their commitment to diversity in a recruitment brochure (Saks et al., 1995). When organisations indicated a commitment to diversity in their recruitment brochure, applicants who were high in racial tolerance were more motivated to pursue a job (Brown, Cober, Keeping & Levy, 2006). Organisations that included their diversity stance in recruitment materials were perceived as fair leading to applicants' intentions to pursue job opportunities in those organisations (Slaughter et al., 2002; 2005). Further, organisations featuring a group of racially diverse or minority employees in recruitment advertising were perceived as more favourable, more compatible and more attractive (Perkins et al., 2000). Applicants are more likely to commit to and to stay in the same profession when they perceive a high level of P-O fit (Carless, 2005b). Consistent with P-O fit theory (Kristof, 1996) and the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971), applicants are more likely to pursue job opportunities in organisations depicting a group of representatives who are racially similar to them than organisations depicting a group of representatives who are racially dissimilar to them. It is hypothesised that:

> *Hypothesis 2. Participants will be more likely to pursue a job in organisations that feature a homogenous group of representatives who are racially similar to them or a group of racially diverse representatives than organisations that feature a homogenous group of representatives who are racially dissimilar to them.*

Based on signalling theory (Spence, 1973), an organisation that features a group of racially diverse representatives may be perceived as a fair employer and as more likely to provide equal advancement opportunities to its employees than an organisation that features a group of majority representatives. Research has shown that employees who work with racially similar co-workers are more likely to perceive opportunities for

advancement than those who work with racially dissimilar co-workers (Riordan & Shore, 1997). Employees who were racially similar to the organisational workforce were more likely to believe that they possessed stereotypical characteristics that were essential for performance (Fernandez, 1981). Hence, job applicants who view a group of racially similar employees featured in the recruitment material are more likely to perceive that they are also equipped with the skills required for good performance. These applicants may expect greater opportunities for career advancement upon their entry into the organisation. Overall, it is predicted that the race composition of organisational representatives in recruitment advertising will affect applicants' perception of opportunities for advancement.

Hypothesis 3. Participants will be more likely to perceive opportunities for advancement in organisations that feature a homogenous group of representatives who are racially similar to them or a group of racially diverse representatives than organisations that feature a homogenous group of representatives who are racially dissimilar to them.

3.2.2 Mediating effects of perceived surface- and deep-level similarity

Social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987) suggests that people tend to categorise themselves and others into meaningful social categories such as race (e.g., White American *versus* Black American). In order to enhance self-identity, individuals psychologically maximise the differences between two groups (Kramer, 1991), evaluating members of their own group especially favourably. One of the earliest studies establishing the link between actual and perceived similarity was that of Harrison et al. (2002). They found that actual surface-level and actual deep-level similarity predicted perceived surface-level and perceived deep-level similarity respectively. Along similar lines, a recent study found that actual race and age dissimilarity was positively related to perceived race and age dissimilarity (Cunningham, 2007). Thus, applicants are more likely to perceive a group of organisational representatives who belong to the same racial group (i.e. in-group) as more racially similar than a group of representatives who belong to a different racial group (i.e. out-group).

A handful of studies have explicitly tested the mediating role of perceived similarity in the relationship between actual similarity and individual/organisational

outcomes (Cunningham, 2007; Goldberg, 2005; Graves & Powell, 1995; Harrison et al., 2002; Huang & Iun, 2006; Wayne & Liden, 1995). For example, recruiters' perceived similarity was found to mediate the relationship between actual applicant-recruiter similarity and interview outcomes (Goldberg, 2005). Further, team members' perceived surface-level similarity mediated the relationship between actual race similarity and team social integration (Harrison et al., 2002).

However, studies examining the mediating role of perceived similarity specifically in the recruitment context are scarce. To date, only one study has shown the mediating effect of perceived similarity on the relationship between race composition of organisational representatives and applicant attraction (Avery et al., 2004). Consistent with social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987), individuals tend to favour members of the in-group over members of the out-group. Hence, job applicants may be more attracted to an organisation featuring a group of racially similar representatives, perceiving that the people in the organisation are more similar to them in terms of race. Overall, it is predicted that the race composition of organisational representatives featured in a recruitment material will influence applicants' attitudes towards the organisation through their perception of race similarity with the group of representatives.

> *Hypothesis 4. The effect of race composition of organisational representatives on applicant attraction (H4a), job pursuit intentions (H4b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H4c) will be mediated by perceived surface-level similarity.*

In contrast to social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987), which focuses on the effect of social category (i.e. surface-level) similarity, the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) proposes that individuals with similar *attitudes* or *underlying attributes* are attracted to one another. Perceived deep-level similarity (e.g., similarity in values, personality and attitudes) may be inferred from demographic similarity (e.g., race similarity) between two or more individuals (Tsui et al., 1992). A recent study showed support for the argument: actual social category (i.e. race) similarity significantly predicted perceived deep-level similarity (i.e. similarity in work style; Zellmer-Bruhn et al., 2008). Hence, similarity of surface-level attributes (e.g., race) is often used to estimate or infer similarity of underlying attributes (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Klimoski & Donahue, 2001; Zellmer-

Bruhn et al., 2008). Further, people are attracted to racially similar others, believing that these individuals share their own underlying values, attitudes, beliefs and personal experiences (Chattopadhyay, 1999; Riordan, 2000). Based on the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) and empirical findings, the race composition of organisational representatives is predicted to influence participants' perceived values, personality and attitudes (i.e. deep-level attributes) similarity leading to their attraction, pursuit intentions and perception of opportunities for advancement.

> *Hypothesis 5. The effect of race composition of organisational representatives on applicant attraction (H5a), job pursuit intentions (H5b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H5c) will be mediated by perceived deep-level similarity.*

3.3 Methods

3.3.1 Stimulus materials

Three job advertisements were created based on information obtained from the web pages of multinational organisations in Malaysia (e.g., General Electric, Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation and Shell). All three advertisements similarly depicted the recruiting effort by an organisation named Soroton Inc. The advertisements briefly described Soroton Inc. as an organisation that produces a wide range of goods and services and an employer that provides a good package of career opportunities. Specific information such as the job title or description and organisation type was not included because such specific information may influence participants' attraction to the organisation (Perkins et al., 2000). Below is the organisation's description that was included in all three advertisements:

> *Whether you're still studying hard or you've already graduated, Soroton Inc. offers you a wealth of challenging career opportunities. At Soroton Inc., we give you the ability to manage your own development, providing you with the tools to chart your own career path. With a diverse range of products and services, a career in this organization comes with opportunities to enrich one's self with knowledge on the many aspects of businesses and operations. We are committed to being a global employer of choice, and we offer competitive compensation, rewards and benefits.*

Following the organisation description, four employee testimonials were presented. Testimonials were included as they are commonly used by many organisations today in their recruitment materials (van Hoye & Lievens, 2007). The content of the organisation information and the employee testimonials was held constant across all three advertisements. A sample testimonial was:

> *The company values my individual progress and supports me in developing a wide range of useful skills (Izrul bin Shamsudin).*

The only variation across the advertisements was the race composition of the employees making the testimonials. Beside each testimonial, the advertisement presented the picture and name of the employee making the comments. Both the picture and the name cued the employee's race. Two male and two female employees were used in each advertisement. There were three race composition conditions: 100% minority Chinese (i.e. two Chinese males and two Chinese females), 50% minority Chinese and 50% majority Malay (i.e. one Chinese male and one Chinese female; one Malay male and one Malay female) and 100% majority Malay (i.e. two Malay males and two Malay females). Gender was held constant across advertisements in order to minimise its confounding effect (Avery, 2003). Only Malay and Chinese employees were presented because these are the two largest racial groups in Malaysia (Soong, 2008).

Finally, the human resource representative's phone number, office address and email address were included at the bottom of the advertisement. These contact details were important in signalling to the participants that the job will only be offered in Malaysia (see Appendix C).

A survey was attached to the advertisement (see Appendix C). There were two sections in the survey: 1) demographic and background information (i.e. age, gender, race); and 2) a series of scaled items measuring the variables of interest (i.e. perceived surface-level similarity, perceived deep-level similarity, attraction to the organisation, intentions to pursue a job in the organisation and perceived opportunities for advancement). The order of the survey sections was counter-balanced so that the stimulus material along with the scaled items was presented before or after the demographic items.

3.3.2 Participants and procedures

3.3.2.1 Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted prior to the main survey distribution. The purpose of the pilot study was threefold. Firstly, it ensured that the employees featured in the pictures were moderately attractive (to minimise the effects of physical attractiveness) and confirmed that the overall attractiveness of the employees was consistent across the three conditions. Secondly, it ascertained that the name used to identify the employee clearly signified the employee as Chinese or Malay. Thirdly, it examined the suitability and comprehensibility of survey items.

Ten Malaysian students in Adelaide were recruited. Participants were briefly informed about the aims of the pilot study. Upon their agreement to participate, participants were asked to rate the physical attractiveness of the employee depicted in each picture using a scale from 1 (highly unattractive) to 5 (highly attractive). There were 16 pictures in total: eight Malaysian Malay and eight Malaysian Chinese working adults, with four males and four females of each race. Then, participants were given a list of 20 names and were asked to indicate whether those names were Chinese, Malay or other races/uncertain. Finally, they were asked to read the survey items and suggest ways to improve the items' comprehensibility.

Responses from the pilot study were aggregated and analysed. An average attractiveness score was calculated for each picture. Four employees (i.e. two males and two females of each race) that were rated as moderately attractive (i.e. nearest to the midpoint of 3.0) were selected and included in the final study material. Only names that clearly indicated the employee's race were used in the final study material. A few items were reworded based on participants' comments.

3.3.2.2 Survey distribution

Research participants were 225 Malaysian Chinese students enrolled in private higher learning institutions in Malaysia. As a result of public policy in Malaysia, private higher learning institutions in Malaysia commonly include a large group of non-majority or minority Malaysian Chinese students (Manshor, Jusoh & Simun, 2003; Tan, 2002). Hence, the race composition of the study sample was representative of the actual population. One Chinese participant did not complete the items associated with the outcome variables and thus, this participant was excluded from the final analyses (final

N = 224). The majority of the Chinese participants were female (*n* = 143; 63.84%) and all participants were between 18 and 25 years old (*M* = 20.42, *SD* = 1.25).

A letter of introduction was sent to the head of school of the institution (see Appendix A). Upon the head of school's agreement, participants were approached by the researcher during their lectures and an announcement was made in the class. Additionally, the study was advertised on a student web page. Students who were interested in participating were asked to register on an online sign-up sheet. Students were free to choose to attend any of the 30-minute time slots from Monday to Friday, from 9am to 6pm. The survey was conducted in a tutorial room that had been allocated to the principal researcher for the period of the study.

All participants were given a set of standard instructions prior to the commencement of the study. Firstly, a brief introduction about the researcher and the research topic was provided. Participants were informed that the purpose of the study was to examine the effect of different advertisements on organisational attractiveness and university students like them were invited to participate in this study because they would be the potential job applicants. They were told that their honest feedback would be meaningful to the recruiting organisations as well as to the researchers. Secondly, regardless of where they wanted their future job to be, participants were required to imagine that they were currently looking for a job in Malaysia. This was to ensure that participants perceived the advertisement as personally relevant. Thirdly, they were told that the advertised company was a general organisation producing a variety of goods and services, and thus, it hires graduates from all fields. Participants were asked to respond to all items to their best possible extent based on the information given in the advertisement. Fourthly, participants were asked to respond to the items and materials in the order that they were presented. This was to maintain the counter-balancing of the survey sections. They were asked not to re-visit sections once they had proceeded. Finally, participants were asked not to share the information about the study with other students who might be participating in the research. They were also discouraged from conversing with other participants while completing the survey. This was to prevent participants from becoming aware of the study manipulation. Further, discussion among participants might trigger social desirability responses.

After the verbal instructions, participants were given a survey pack containing an information sheet describing the study, a consent form (see Appendix B), the survey

and a small envelope containing the manipulation check (see Appendix C). The present study uses a between-subjects design: participants were randomly assigned to one of the three race composition conditions and they were not aware of the other conditions. Participants were asked not to open the small envelope until they had completed the survey. They were also asked to read and sign the consent form if they agreed to participate. The voluntariness of participation and confidentiality and anonymity of responses were emphasised to participants. They were reminded not to write their names on any of the study materials. The survey took about 20 minutes to complete. Participants were thanked and given a chocolate at the end of the session. Some participants were given extra credit as part of their course requirements.

3.3.3 Measures

The survey was written in English because English is the main language used in most private higher learning institutions in Malaysia (Education Guide Malaysia, n.d.). The survey included five continuous variables (i.e. perceived surface-level similarity, perceived deep-level similarity, applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement) and all items were measured using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). An average score was calculated for each variable. Individual item scores for the variable were summed and the total score was divided by the number of scaled items. For example, a participant who rated 3, 5 and 7 for the three perceived deep-level similarity items would have an average score of 5 (i.e. [3+5+7]/3=5) for perceived deep-level similarity. Average scores of all variables for each participant were computed (with the exception of the single item measure of perceived surface-level similarity). None of the items was reverse-coded; hence, a higher mean score indicated a greater degree of the focal construct. Further, participants' demographic information (e.g., age, gender and race) was obtained through open-ended and categorical responses. The organisation's name (i.e. Soroton Inc.) was used as the referent in all survey items (see Appendix C).

3.3.3.1 Perceived surface-level similarity

A one-item perceived surface-level similarity measure was based on Cunningham's (2007) perceived racial dissimilarity measure. The item was: 'with respect to race, I think I am very similar to the employees who work at Soroton Inc.'.

3.3.3.2 Perceived deep-level similarity

Three items were developed based on Cunningham's (2007) and Harrison et al.'s (2002) conceptualisation of perceived deep-level similarity. The items measured the degree to which participants perceived themselves as similar to the people working in the organisation in terms of personal values, personality and attitudes. A sample item was: 'with respect to personal values, I think I am very similar to the employees who work at Soroton Inc.'. The internal consistency of this measure was .86.

3.3.3.3 Applicant attraction

Participants' attraction to the organisation was measured using the three-item scale developed by Highhouse, Lievens & Sinar (2003). A sample item was: 'Soroton Inc. is attractive to me as a place for employment'. The internal consistency of this measure was .87.

3.3.3.4 Job pursuit intentions

Participants' intentions to pursue a job in the organisation were measured using the six-item scale adapted from Aiman-Smith et al. (2001). A sample item was: 'if Soroton Inc. was at a job fair I would seek out their booth'. The internal consistency of this measure was .85.

3.3.3.5 Perceived opportunities for advancement

Participants' perceived opportunities for advancement were assessed using the four-item scale adapted from Riordan and Shore (1997). A sample item was: 'I perceive that there are opportunities for advancement and promotion in Soroton Inc.'. The internal consistency of this measure was .71.

3.3.3.6 Demographic control variables

Demographic variables were included as control variables in order to obtain results that were more accurate (Avery, 2003). In this study, participants reported their age in response to an open-ended question and reported their gender by choosing either a male or female category.

3.3.3.7 Manipulation check

One manipulation check item was developed for the purpose of this survey: 'based on the advertisement, I believe that Soroton Inc. comprises employees of various

races'. Similar to other outcome variables, participants were asked to respond to the manipulation check item based on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

3.4 Results

3.4.1 Assumptions checking and preliminary diagnostics

Prior to examining the hypothesised relationships, data were screened for data entry accuracy, missing values and univariate normality. A 10% random data check revealed no data entry errors. SPSS frequencies revealed no out-of-range data. Further, the descriptive statistics showed that four of the five study variables were normally distributed: standardised skewness and kurtosis scores were less than 3.29 (Field, 2005).

3.4.2 Manipulation check

To check the effectiveness of the manipulation, a one-way ANOVA with race composition (i.e. condition) as the fixed factor and the manipulation check response as the dependent variable was conducted. There were significant differences across the three conditions (F [2, 198] = 39.93, $p < .001$). Post-hoc tests showed that the 50% Chinese-50% Malay condition differed significantly from the 100% Chinese (M_{diff} = 1.38, SE = .24, $p < .001$) and 100% Malay (M_{diff} = 2.13, SE = .24, $p < .001$) conditions. Further, the difference between the 100% Chinese and 100% Malay conditions was significant (M_{diff} = .75, SE = .27, $p <.05$). As expected, respondents perceived the organisation in the 50%-50% condition as comprising different races to a greater extent than the organisation in the two 100% conditions. In conclusion, the manipulation was effective: participants' perception of the organisation's workforce diversity reflected the race composition of organisational representatives featured in the advertisement.

3.4.3 Zero-order correlations

Means, standard deviations and correlations among study variables are shown in Table 3. The zero-order correlations matrix indicates that the two perceived similarity measures were positively related to applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement. Age was negatively and significantly correlated with applicant attraction and perceived opportunities for advancement whereas gender was positively and significantly related to applicant attraction. Younger and female applicants gave higher ratings on attraction than older and male applicants

did. Age and gender were controlled in all subsequent analyses. None of the correlation coefficients between outcome variables exceed .90. Hence, neither the problem of multicollinearity nor singularity was substantial (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Table 3

Means (M), standard deviations (SD) and correlations among study variables.

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Age	20.42	1.25						
2. Gender	.64	.48	-.25***					
3. Perceived race similarity	4.31	1.53	.01	-.06				
4. Perceived deep-level similarity	4.31	1.06	-.05	.02	.39***			
5. Applicant attraction	4.46	1.03	-.13*	.15*	.44***	.48***		
6. Job pursuit intentions	4.81	.95	-.01	.01	.46***	.43***	.62***	
7. Perceived opportunities for advancement	5.03	.89	-.18**	-.03	.50***	.37***	.45***	.49***

N = 224;
Gender: 0 = male, 1 = female
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

3.4.4 Confirmatory factor analysis

A confirmatory factor analysis (i.e. CFA) was performed to verify the factor structure of the four main study variables (i.e. perceived deep-level similarity, applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement). The one-item measure of perceived surface-level similarity was excluded from the analysis. The overall fit of the model was less than optimal (χ^2 [98] = 299.52, p = .000; CFI = .88; RMSEA = .10; SRMR = .07), but a large sample size is more likely to produce a significant χ^2 (Kline, 1998). Moreover, a CFI value that is closer to 1.00 indicates a better degree of fit (Byrne, 2001) and a SRMR value less than .10 reflects a good model (Williams, Vandenberg & Edwards, 2009). The researcher examined whether the four-factor structure solution was a better fitting model than two other alternatives: a one-factor structure (i.e. a single latent variable representing all study items) and a two-factor structure (with one latent variable representing the three mediator items [i.e. perceived deep-level similarity] and another latent variable representing the 13 recruitment outcome items [i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement]). The four-factor structure solution displayed a better fit than either the one-factor structure solution (χ^2 [104] = 686.23, p = .000; CFI = .67; RMSEA = .16; SRMR = .10) or the two-factor structure solution (χ^2 [103] = 489.01, p =

.000; CFI = .78; RMSEA = .13; SRMR = .08). Table 4 shows the factor loadings from the four-factor CFA. All items loaded significantly on their respective factors and all factor loadings were more than the minimum recommended value of .40 (Holtom, Lee & Tidd, 2002). In conclusion, the four-factor solution is the preferred model for this study because: 1) all four variable constructs are adapted from pre-existing scales; 2) the four-factor model displays a better fit than one- or two-factor alternative models; and 3) all items significantly loaded on their respective scales.

Table 4

Study 1 factor structure.

Latent Variable	Item	Un-standardised Factor Loadings	Standardised Factor Loadings	Significance
Perceived Deep-level Similarity	1	1.00	.82	n/a
	2	.98	.85	Yes
	3	.88	.80	Yes
Applicant Attraction	1	1.00	.76	n/a
	2	1.43	.91	Yes
	3	1.26	.85	Yes
Job Pursuit Intentions	1	1.00	.67	n/a
	2	1.02	.58	Yes
	3	.99	.63	Yes
	4	1.16	.81	Yes
	5	1.10	.78	Yes
	6	1.08	.71	Yes
Perceived Opportunities for Advancement	1	1.00	.64	n/a
	2	.96	.61	Yes
	3	1.17	.61	Yes
	4	1.30	.62	Yes

3.4.5 Tests of hypotheses

3.4.5.1 Effects of race composition on recruitment outcomes

This study predicted that participants would be more attracted to (Hypothesis 1), more likely to pursue a job in (Hypothesis 2) and more likely to perceive opportunities for advancement in (Hypothesis 3) organisations that feature a homogenous group of

representatives who are racially similar to them or a group of racially diverse representatives than organisations that feature a homogenous group of representatives who are racially dissimilar to them. Three parallel Analyses of Covariance (ANCOVA) were conducted to test Hypotheses 1 to 3. In each analysis, age and gender were entered as covariates (i.e. controls), race composition was entered as a fixed factor and the outcome (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions or perceived opportunities for advancement) was entered as the dependent variable.

The results showed that after controlling for age and gender, the main effect of race composition was significant for applicant attraction (F [2, 219] = 16.19, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .13$), job pursuit intentions (F [2, 219] = 13.27, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .11$) and perceived opportunities for advancement (F [2, 219] = 12.60, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .10$).

As hypothesised, participants were more attracted to (mean difference = .83, $SE = .16$, $p < .001$), were more likely to pursue job opportunities in (mean difference = .70, $SE = .15$, $p < .001$) and perceived greater opportunities for advancement in (mean difference = .64, $SE = .14$, $p < .001$) an organisation featuring a homogenous group (i.e. 100%) of Chinese than in an organisation featuring a homogenous group (i.e. 100%) of Malay representatives. Further, participants who viewed an advertisement featuring a group of racially diverse (i.e. 50% Chinese–50% Malay) representatives gave a significantly higher rating on applicant attraction (mean difference = .69, $SE = .15$, $p < .001$), job pursuit intentions (mean difference = .62, $SE = .14$, $p < .001$) and perceived opportunities for advancement (mean difference = .54, $SE = .13$, $p < .001$) than participants who viewed an advertisement featuring 100% Malay representatives. However, the rating differences between participants who viewed an advertisement featuring 50% Chinese–50% Malay representatives and participants who viewed an advertisement featuring 100% Chinese representatives were non-significant for the three recruitment outcomes. Figure 3 illustrates the effect of race composition on the three recruitment outcomes. Table 5 shows the condition means and standard deviations of all study variables. In conclusion, Hypotheses 1 to 3 were supported.

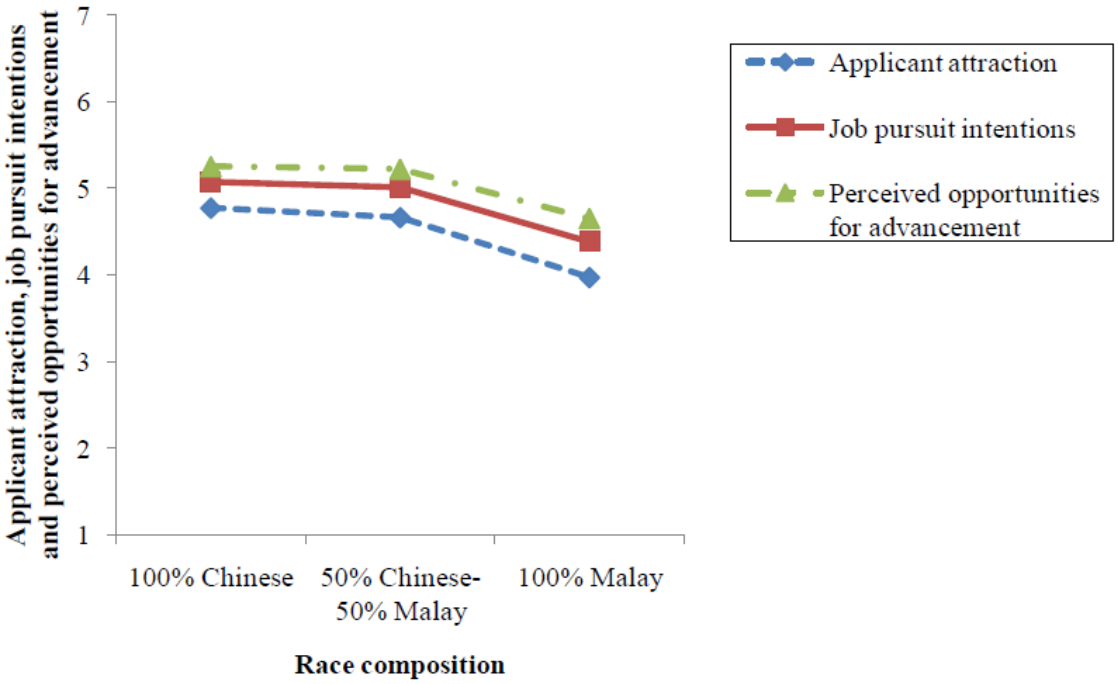


Figure 3: Participants' attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement across three race composition conditions.

Table 5

Condition means (M) and standard deviations (SD) for major study variables.

Race composition	100% Chinese			50% Chinese–50% Malay			100% Malay		
	M	***SD***	***n***	***M***	***SD***	***n***	***M***	***SD***	***n***
Perceived surface-level similarity	5.36	1.06	66	4.60	1.12	80	3.12	1.43	78
Perceived deep-level similarity	4.68	.96	66	4.33	.95	80	3.97	1.14	78
Applicant attraction	4.77	.84	66	4.66	.98	80	3.97	1.06	78
Job pursuit intentions	5.07	.77	66	5.01	.96	80	4.38	.95	78
Perceived opportunities for advancement	5.25	.72	66	5.22	.90	80	4.65	.91	78

3.4.5.2 Mediating effects of perceived surface- and deep-level similarity

Hypotheses 4 and 5 proposed that perceived surface-level similarity and perceived deep-level similarity would mediate the effect of race composition on recruitment outcomes (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement). Baron and Kenny's (1986) guidelines indicate that a mediation effect is demonstrated by three conditions. Firstly, the relationship between race composition and the mediator (i.e. perceived surface- or deep-level similarity) must be significant. Secondly, the relationship between race composition and the outcome variable (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions or perceived opportunities for advancement) must also be significant. Thirdly, the initially significant relationship between race composition and the outcome variable (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions or perceived opportunities for advancement) is reduced or becomes non-significant when the mediator (i.e. perceived surface-level similarity or perceived deep-level similarity) is included in the analysis. In this final analysis—when race composition and the mediator are simultaneously included as predictors of the outcome variable—the mediator's effect on the outcome variable (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions or perceived opportunities for advancement) must remain significant.

To test the first condition for mediation, two ANCOVAs were conducted. Similar to previous analyses, age and gender were entered as covariates, race composition was entered as a fixed factor and the mediator (i.e. perceived surface- or deep-level similarity) was entered as the dependent variable. The results showed that after controlling for age and gender, the main effect of race composition was significant for perceived surface-level similarity (F [2, 219] = 63.96, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .37$) and for perceived deep-level similarity (F [2, 219] = 8.89, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$). Hence, the first condition for mediation was met for both mediators.

The previous ANCOVA results showed that the main effect of race composition was significant for all three outcome variables (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement). Hence, the second condition for mediation was met for all three outcome variables. To examine the mediation hypotheses further, several ANCOVAs were conducted. In these analyses, age, gender and the proposed mediator (i.e. perceived surface- or deep-level similarity) were entered as covariates, race composition was entered as a fixed factor and the outcome (i.e.

applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions or perceived opportunities for advancement) was entered as the dependent variable.

The results showed that upon the entry of perceived surface-level similarity as a covariate, the initially significant main effect of race composition for applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement became non-significant for all three outcome variables (F [2, 218] = 1.91, *ns*; F [2, 218] = 1.31, *ns*; F [2, 218] = .71, *ns*). Further, the effect of perceived surface-level similarity was significant for applicant attraction (F [1, 218] = 25.66, p <.001, partial η^2 = .11), job pursuit intentions (F [1, 218] = 31.92, p <.001, partial η^2 = .13) and perceived opportunities for advancement (F [1, 218] = 47.97, p <.001, partial η^2 = .18). In summary, these findings supported Hypotheses 4a, 4b and 4c: the effects of race composition on applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement were mediated by perceived surface-level similarity.

In contrast, upon the entry of perceived deep-level similarity, the main effect of race composition remained significant for all three outcome variables: applicant attraction (F [2, 218] = 9.48, p < .001, partial η^2 = .08), job pursuit intentions (F [2, 218] = 7.87, p <.05, partial η^2 = .07) and perceived opportunities for advancement (F [2, 218] = 7.69, p < .05, partial η^2 = .07). Although the significance levels of the effect of race composition were reduced, they remained significant. Hence, the third condition was partially met for the mediation of perceived deep-level similarity. Overall, Hypotheses 5a, 5b and 5c were partially supported: the effects of race composition on applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement were partially mediated by perceived deep-level similarity.

3.5 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the indirect effect of race composition of organisational representatives on applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement. It aimed to extend previous findings and contribute to the literature by examining the mediating role of perceived surface- and deep-level similarity in the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes. Based on the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971), it was predicted that minority Chinese participants would be more attracted to organisations that featured a homogenous group of Chinese representatives or a group of racially diverse representatives than organisations that featured a homogenous group of Malay

representatives. Further, these relationships would be mediated by the extent to which Chinese participants perceived themselves as similar to the group of representatives featured in the recruitment advertising in terms of race, and in terms of values, personality and attitudes.

As hypothesised, minority Chinese participants tended to perceive employees who work at an organisation featuring a homogenous group of minority Chinese or a group of racially diverse employees to be more similar to them in terms of race, and in terms of values, personality and attitudes. This finding was in line with previous research demonstrating that actual demographic similarity was related to perceived demographic similarity (Cunningham, 2007; Harrison et al., 2002) as well as perceived deep-level similarity (Zellmer-Bruhn et al., 2008). Moreover, consistent with the study hypotheses, participants were more attracted, were more likely to pursue a job opportunity and perceived greater opportunities for advancement when an organisation features a homogenous group of Chinese or a group of racially diverse employees than when an organisation features a homogenous group of Malay employees. This finding supports previous studies that examined the effect of race composition on applicant attraction (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000; Wells, 2008).

The significant mediating effect of perceived surface-level (i.e. race) similarity on the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes supports social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987). Potential applicants used race to categorise themselves and others and distinguished same-race individuals from dissimilar others. As a result of perceiving in-group members as more racially similar (Cunningham, 2007; Harrison et al., 2002) and more favourable (Kramer, 1991; Tsui et al., 1992), minority Chinese participants showed greater attraction towards organisations that featured a group of minority Chinese or racially diverse representatives.

In contrast to the study hypothesis, the extent to which minority Chinese applicants perceived that the group of representatives featured in the advertisement shared their own values, attitudes and experiences did not affect their attraction to the organisation. In other words, perceived deep-level similarity did not mediate the effect of race composition on applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement. This may reflect the fact that participants in this study (i.e. university students) were in the early stages of their career search. Applicants who

are in an early stage of recruitment may be more affected by direct and visible attributes (e.g., employees' race) in their job choice decisions, than by indirect and less visible attributes (e.g., employees' personal values). Research suggests that surface-level similarity has greater effect than deep-level similarity during a relationship's early stages (Harrison et al., 2002) whereas the effects of deep-level similarity become more significant as the individual's tenure in a group increases (Harrison et al., 1998; 2002). Based on the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947), interaction among individuals may foster learning and information-sharing. As a result, people are more likely to obtain accurate information about similarities and differences of out-group members, particularly in terms of deep-level attributes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Zellmer-Bruhn et al., 2008). Here, the absence of actual interaction between participants and the organisational representatives restricted participants from learning about the deep-level attributes that they might share with the representatives. Had they learnt about the deep-level similarities that they have with the representatives, the applicants might be more likely to form favourable impressions about the representatives or the organisation as a whole.

Further, no information about deep-level attributes of the organisation was presented and the respondents' personal values were not measured. Therefore, the researcher was unable to assess the actual deep-level similarity between the organisation and the participant. Studies have shown that actual deep-level similarity, but not actual surface-level similarity, predicts perceived deep-level similarity, which in turn leads to social integration among employees (Harrison et al., 2002). This suggests that perceived similarity may mediate the actual similarity and attraction relationship only when the actual and perceived similarities reflect the same underlying dimension. Had the study presented information about the representatives' or organisation's actual values and obtained information about the participants' personal values, the researcher might have seen a mediating effect of perceived deep-level similarity on the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes.

Clearly, race composition in a job advertisement influences applicants' attitudes. Hence, organisations should include minority members in the recruitment material in order to attract minority applicants. Further, the inclusion of minority group members in the advertisement may also attract members of other minority groups not featured therein. Avery et al. (2004) found that both Black American and Hispanic American

participants were attracted to organisations using advertisements featuring a minority representative (Black American *or* Hispanic American). This highlights how important it is that organisations foster the perceived similarity of minority applicants in addition to promoting the actual similarity. For example, organisations should ensure that target applicants are well informed and encouraged to see themselves as similar to the organisation's workforce and as good fits to the organisational culture. However, this study only examined minority Chinese applicants. Future research should include other racial groups, such as the majority Malay in Malaysia. Studies have shown consistently that minority Black applicants were more attracted to organisations that featured minority representatives in recruitment advertising whereas majority White applicants were unaffected by the race composition (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000; Wells, 2008). It will be fruitful to examine if a similar pattern of results would be obtained from a non-Western society.

Chapter 4: Study 2

4.1 Introduction

Study 1 showed that minority Chinese participants were more attracted to, were more likely to pursue a job in, and perceived greater opportunities for advancement in, organisations that featured a homogenous group of Chinese or a group of racially diverse representatives than organisations that featured a homogenous group of Malay representatives. Further, these relationships between race composition and recruitment outcomes (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement) were mediated by perceived surface-level (i.e. race) similarity. The finding supports social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987) and highlights perceived race similarity as the underlying mechanism linking race composition to recruitment outcomes.

However, Study 1 only examined minority Chinese participants. It did not investigate whether the effect of race composition on recruitment outcomes is symmetric across minority and majority individuals. Previous research has demonstrated that the effect of race composition of organisational representatives on applicant attraction is stronger for minority than for majority members (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000). However, these studies have not provided empirical evidence explaining *why* minority and majority applicants react differently to the race composition.

Study 2 aims to examine the moderating effect of participant race (i.e. minority Malaysian Chinese *versus* majority Malaysian Malay) on the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes. It is hypothesised that the effect of race composition of organisational representatives will be stronger for minority Chinese than for majority Malay participants. Further, these relationships will be mediated by perceived surface- and deep-level similarity. Figure 4 presents the proposed mediated moderation study model. Following the study model, hypotheses are developed and numbered as they appear in the literature review chapter (see Chapter 2).

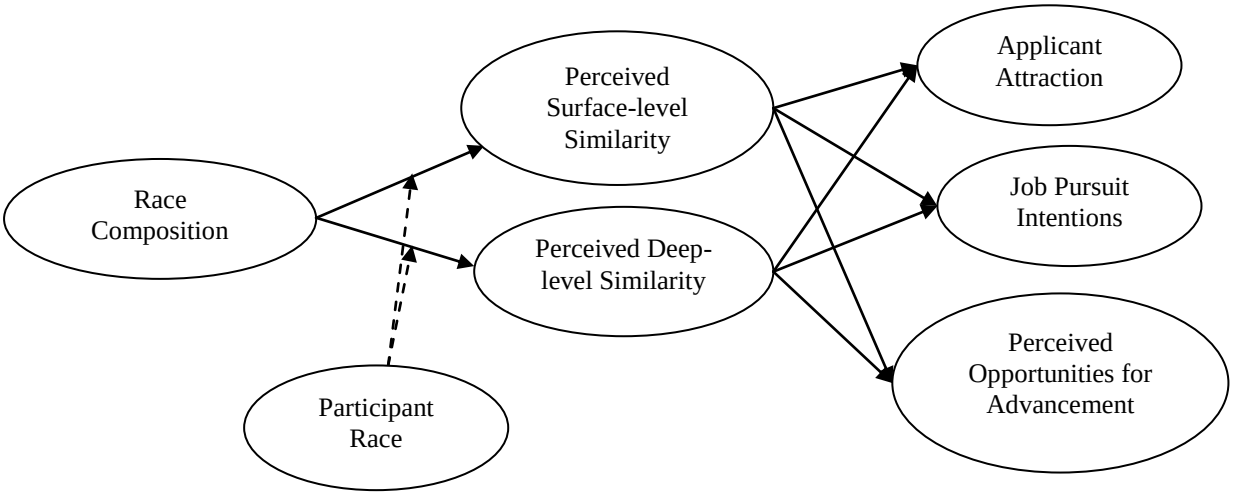


Figure 4: Study 2 model.

4.2 Hypotheses Development

4.2.1 Interactive effects of race composition and participant race

The identity salience and numerical distinctiveness literature (McGuire et al., 1978; Randel, 2002; Stryker, 1968) suggests that an individual's identity becomes salient when the group with which the individual identifies is in the numerical minority. Thus, minority group members are more likely to categorise themselves and others using their salient identity (i.e. race) than majority group members (Forehand et al., 2002). As a result, minority members may be more likely to attend to, and be affected by, race-relevant information in the recruitment materials (i.e. race composition of organisational representatives) than majority members (Perkins et al., 2000). Further, minority applicants tend to place greater emphasis on recruiter demographics and organisational diversity attributes (Thomas & Wise, 1999) and are more likely to appreciate an employer's effort to increase demographic diversity than majority applicants are (Kossek & Zonia, 1993; Mor Barak et al., 1998; Roberson et al., 2009). Research has shown consistently that the effect of race composition of organisational representatives featured in a recruitment brochure on attraction is stronger for minority than for majority applicants (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000; Wells, 2008). Based on the identity salience and numerical distinctiveness literature

(McGuire et al., 1978; Randel, 2002; Stryker, 1968) and empirical findings, it is predicted that:

> *Hypothesis 6. There will be a two-way interactive effect of race composition and participant race on applicant attraction (H6a), job pursuit intentions (H6b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H6c). The effect of race composition of organisational representatives will be stronger for minority participants than for majority participants.*

4.2.2 Mediating effects of perceived surface- and deep-level similarity

Social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987) proposes that people use race to distinguish between in-group (i.e. same-race) and out-group (i.e. different-race) members. Same-race individuals are perceived as more racially similar (Cunningham, 2007; Harrison et al., 2002). However, they are also perceived as more favourable (Kramer, 1991; Tsui et al., 1992), leading to greater applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement. Individuals tend to seek and maintain membership with groups that they categorise as possessing the same social identity (Tsui et al., 1992; Turner, 1984).

Consistent with the identity salience and numerical distinctiveness literature (McGuire et al., 1978; Randel, 2002; Stryker, 1968), Malaysian Chinese individuals are more aware of their race than majority Malaysian Malay individuals. As a result, minority Chinese individuals may be more likely to classify racially similar (i.e. Malaysian Chinese) individuals as in-group members and racially dissimilar (i.e. Malaysian Malay) individuals as out-group members. To maintain a positive identity, minority Chinese individuals tend to perceive same-race individuals as more racially similar and rate those individuals more favourably than dissimilar individuals (Steele, 1988). Research has shown that the effect of race composition on attraction is stronger for Black American applicants than for White American applicants, and the moderating effect is mediated by perceived similarity (Avery et al., 2004). Hence, this study predicts that:

> *Hypothesis 7. The two-way interactive effect of race composition and participant race on applicant attraction (H7a), job pursuit intentions (H7b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H7c) will be mediated by perceived surface-level similarity.*

Integrating the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) and the identity salience and numerical distinctiveness literature (McGuire et al., 1978; Randel, 2002; Stryker, 1968), individuals (particularly minority individuals) are attracted to racially similar others because same-race individuals are perceived as having similar values, attitudes and personality (Harrison et al., 2002; Tsui et al., 1992). Surface-level attributes (e.g., race) may influence the perception of deep-level similarity (Tsui et al., 1992), which in turn leads to attraction. As race is a more salient identity for minority Chinese than for majority Malay applicants, minority Chinese applicants will tend to perceive the same-race organisational representatives as sharing underlying values with them than majority Malay applicants. Thus, minority applicants will be more attracted to organisations that feature a group of racially similar representatives than organisations that feature a group of racially dissimilar representatives. In contrast, majority Malay applicants who have a less salient race identity will be less sensitive to race-relevant information included in recruitment advertising. They are less likely to perceive same-race representatives as similar to them in terms of underlying values, personality and attitudes and thus, they will be less affected by the race composition of organisational representatives featured in the advertisement than minority Chinese applicants will. This study predicts that:

> *Hypothesis 8. The two-way interactive effect of race composition and participant race on applicant attraction (H8a), job pursuit intentions (H8b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H8c) will be mediated by perceived deep-level similarity.*

4.3 Methods

4.3.1 Participants and procedures

This study uses a 2 (participant race) x 3 (race composition) between-subjects design. Research participants were 294 Malaysian students enrolled in an educational institution in Adelaide, Australia. Of the 294 participants, 183 were Chinese, 97 were Malays, seven were Indians and seven belonged to other categories. In line with the study aims, only participants who identified themselves as Chinese or Malay were included in the analyses (final $N = 280$). More than half of these participants were female ($n = 180$; 64.29%). On average, participants were 21.43 years of age ($SD = 1.90$) and most participants were between 20 and 23 years old ($n = 215$, 76.79%).

Participants were recruited through four student associations whose members are mainly Malaysian students. An invitation email was sent to all members of each association. Members were asked to reply to the email or to contact the principal researcher directly if they were interested in participating. In order to increase the study sample size, students on the university campus and other public places (e.g., shopping malls, cafes) within the city centre of Adelaide were also approached.

All participants were given the standard instructions prior to the commencement of the study. A survey pack similar to the one described in Study 1 was distributed to all participants. The study took about 20 minutes to complete. Participants were thanked and given a Christmas lolly at the end of the session. All surveys were personally administered by the principal researcher to increase the consistency and control of the study.

4.3.2 Measures

Items measuring five continuous variables described in Study 1 were included in the present study. All items were measured using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). As with Study 1, the participant's score on each variable was obtained by dividing the sum of the item scores by the number of items.

4.3.2.1 Perceived surface-level similarity

The single-item perceived surface-level similarity measure was again based on Cunningham's (2007) perceived racial dissimilarity measure.

4.3.2.2 Perceived deep-level similarity

The three-item perceived deep-level similarity measure based on Cunningham (2007) and Harrison et al. (2002) was included. The internal consistency of this measure was .88.

4.3.2.3 Applicant attraction

The three-item attraction scale developed by Highhouse et al. (2003) was used. The internal consistency of this measure was .88.

4.3.2.4 Job pursuit intentions

The six-item scale of job pursuit intentions by Aiman-Smith et al. (2001) was utilised. The internal consistency of this measure was .90.

4.3.2.5 Perceived opportunities for advancement

The four-item perceived opportunities for advancement scale from Riordan and Shore (1997) was again used in the present study. The internal consistency of this measure was .81.

4.3.2.6 Demographic control variables

Participant's age and gender were obtained and included as control variables.

4.3.2.7 Manipulation check

The one-item manipulation check measure was included in this study: 'based on the advertisement, I believe that Soroton Inc. comprises employees of various races'.

4.4 Results

4.4.1 Assumptions checking and preliminary diagnostics

Prior to examining the hypothesised relationships, data were screened for data entry accuracy, missing values and univariate normality. A 10% random data check revealed no data entry errors. SPSS frequencies revealed no out-of-range data. There was no missing data in the outcome variables and thus, analyses were conducted using the complete data set. The descriptive statistics showed that the distribution of some study variables (i.e. job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement) was non-normal: standardised scores for skewness and kurtosis were more than 3.29 (Field, 2005). However, this study has a large sample (N = 280) and thus, the skewness and kurtosis are unlikely to have substantial impact on the analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

4.4.2 Manipulation check

Similar to Study 1, a one-way ANOVA with race composition (i.e. condition) as the fixed factor and the manipulation check response as the dependent variable was conducted to check the effectiveness of the manipulation. There were significant differences across the three conditions (F [2, 265] = 47.58, p < .001). Post-hoc tests showed that the 50% Chinese-50% Malay condition differed significantly from the 100% Chinese (M_{diff} = 1.61, SE = .22, p < .001) and 100% Malay (M_{diff} = 2.08, SE = .21, p < .001) conditions. The difference between the 100% Chinese and 100% Malay conditions was non-significant (M_{diff} = .47, SE = .24, *ns*). Consistent with Study 1,

respondents perceived the organisation in the 50%-50% condition as comprising different races to a greater extent than the organisation in the two 100% conditions. In conclusion, the manipulation was effective: participants' perception of the organisation's workforce diversity reflected the race composition of organisational representatives featured in the advertisement.

4.4.3 Zero-order correlations

Means, standard deviations and correlations among study variables are shown in Table 6. None of the outcome variables was significantly correlated with gender or age. The proposed moderator (i.e. participant race) was significantly related to the three outcome variables (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement). The negative relationships between participant race and the outcome variables indicate that Malay participants were more likely to give a higher rating on those variables than Chinese participants were. None of the bivariate correlations exceeded .90. Thus, the problem of multicollinearity and singularity among the variables was not substantial (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Table 6

Means (M), standard deviations (SD) and correlations among study variables.

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age[a]	21.43	1.90							
2. Gender	.64	.48	.02						
3. Participant race	.65	.48	-.09	-.01					
4. Perceived surface-level similarity	4.35	1.54	.05	-.02	-.10				
5. Perceived deep-level similarity	4.28	1.09	.07	-.00	-.08	.47***			
6. Applicant attraction	4.23	1.07	.06	.08	-.15*	.38***	.56***		
7. Job pursuit intentions	4.74	1.07	.04	.04	-.24***	.40***	.55***	.57***	
8. Perceived opportunities for advancement	4.79	.95	.01	-.01	-.20**	.53***	.52***	.50***	.59***

N = 280, N^a = 276
Gender: 0 = male, 1 = female; Participant race: 0 = Malay, 1 = Chinese
*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, two-tailed

4.4.4 Confirmatory factor analysis

Similar to Study 1, a CFA was performed to verify the factor structure of the four main study variables (i.e. perceived deep-level similarity, applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement). The one-item measure of perceived surface-level similarity was excluded from the analysis. The overall fit of the model was less than ideal (χ^2 [98] = 329.20, p = .000; CFI = .92; RMSEA = .09; SRMR = .06). However, a CFI value that is closer to 1.00 indicates a better degree of fit (Byrne, 2001) and a SRMR value less than .10 reflects a good model (Williams et al., 2009). The researcher examined whether the four-factor structure solution was a better fitting model than two other alternatives: a one-factor structure (i.e. a single latent variable representing all study items) and a two-factor structure (with one latent variable representing the three mediator items [i.e. perceived deep-level similarity] and another latent variable representing the 13 recruitment outcome items [i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement]). The four-factor structure solution displayed a better fit than either the one-factor structure solution (χ^2 [104] = 998.70, p = .000; CFI = .69; RMSEA = .18; SRMR = .10) or the two-factor structure solution (χ^2 [103] = 768.62, p = .000; CFI = .77; RMSEA = .15; SRMR = .09). Table 7 shows the factor loadings from the four-factor CFA. All items loaded significantly on their respective factors and all factor loadings were more than the minimum recommended value of .40 (Holtom et al., 2002). In conclusion, the four-factor solution is the preferred model for this study because: 1) all four variable constructs are adapted from pre-existing scales; 2) the four-factor model displays a better fit than one- or two-factor alternative models; and 3) all items significantly loaded on their respective scales.

Table 7

Study 2 factor structure.

Latent Variable	Item	Un-standardised Factor Loadings	Standardised Factor Loadings	Significance
Perceived Deep-level Similarity	1	1.00	.83	n/a
	2	1.09	.89	Yes
	3	.87	.82	Yes
Applicant Attraction	1	1.00	.78	n/a
	2	1.34	.94	Yes
	3	1.08	.83	Yes
Job Pursuit Intentions	1	1.00	.72	n/a
	2	.95	.59	Yes
	3	1.19	.76	Yes
	4	1.36	.90	Yes
	5	1.24	.86	Yes
	6	1.18	.79	Yes
Perceived Opportunities for Advancement	1	1.00	.69	n/a
	2	1.13	.77	Yes
	3	1.29	.82	Yes
	4	1.10	.64	Yes

4.4.5 Tests of hypotheses

4.4.5.1 Interactive effects of race composition and participant race

Hypotheses 6a, 6b and 6c proposed that participant race would moderate the effect of race composition on applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement. Three parallel two-way ANCOVAs were conducted to test Hypothesis 6. Age and gender were entered as covariates (i.e. controls), race composition and participant race were entered as fixed factors and the outcome (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions or perceived opportunities for advancement) was entered as the dependent variable.

4.4.5.2 Interactive effects of race composition and participant race on applicant attraction

Hypothesis 6a predicted that there would be a two-way interactive effect of race composition and participant race on applicant attraction. As hypothesised, the interactive effect of race composition and participant race on applicant attraction was significant (F [2, 268] = 3.62, p <.05, partial η^2 = .03).

A simple effect analysis was performed as a follow-up procedure for interpreting the significant interactive effect for applicant attraction. The analysis showed that the difference between Chinese and Malay participants in the rating of applicant attraction was significant in the 100% Malay condition (F [1, 276] = 18.18, p < .001), but not in the 50% Chinese–50% Malay (F [1, 276] = .00, *ns*) or 100% Chinese (F [1, 276] = .02, *ns*) condition.

Figure 5 illustrates that the effect of race composition was stronger for minority Chinese participants than for majority Malay participants. The differences across race composition conditions were only significant for Chinese (F [2, 275] = 8.81, p < .001) and not for Malay (F [2, 275] = .18, *ns*) participants. Minority Chinese participants were less attracted to the organisation that featured a homogenous group of Malay representatives as compared to the organisation that featured a homogenous group of Chinese (mean difference = .75, SE = .21, p = .001) or a group of racially diverse (mean difference = .69, SE = .21, p < .01) representatives. In contrast, Malay participants were similarly attracted to all three types of organisations. Overall, Hypothesis 6a was supported.

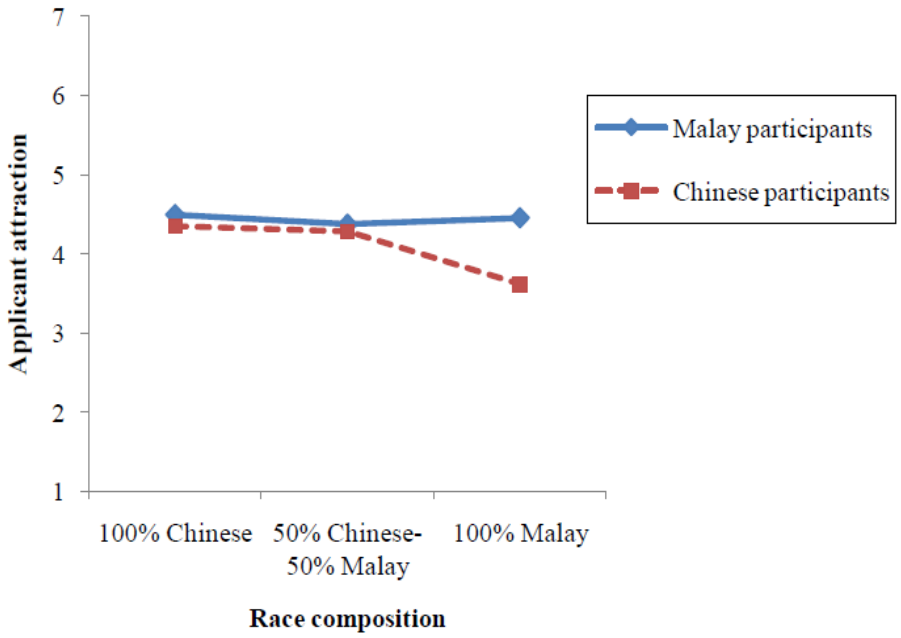


Figure 5: Interactive effect of race composition and participant race on applicant attraction.

4.4.5.3 Interactive effects of race composition and participant race on job pursuit intentions

Hypothesis 6b proposed that there would be a two-way interactive effect of race composition and participant race on job pursuit intentions. In contrast to Hypothesis 6b, the interaction term between race composition and participant race was non-significant (F [2, 268] = 1.56, *ns*). Participant race did not moderate the effect of race composition on job pursuit intentions and thus, Hypothesis 6b was not supported. Figure 6 shows that the effect of race composition on job pursuit intentions was symmetrical across Chinese and Malay participants.

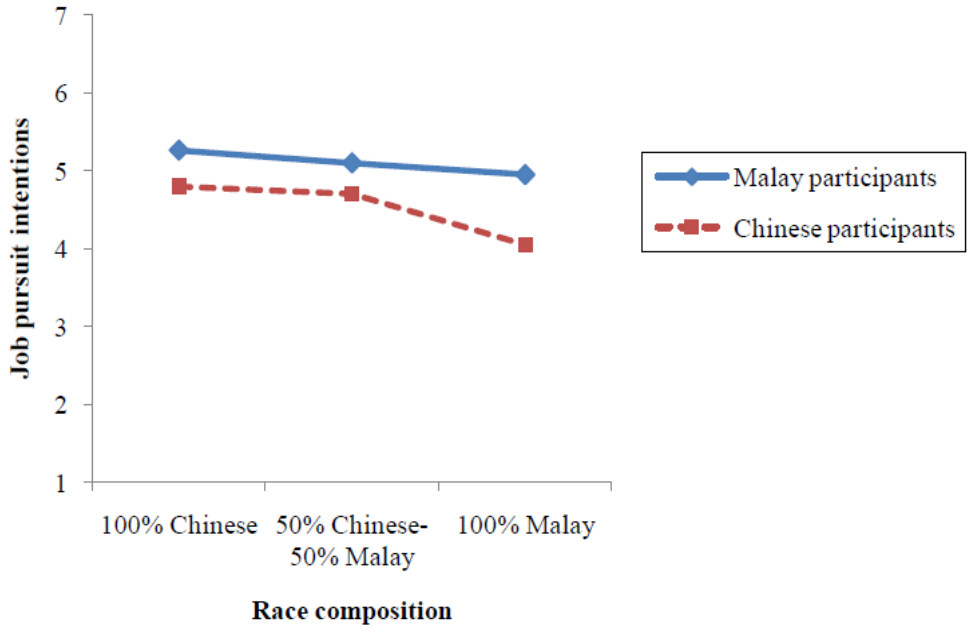


Figure 6: Interactive effect of race composition and participant race on job pursuit intentions.

4.4.5.4 Interactive effects of race composition and participant race on perceived opportunities for advancement

Hypothesis 6c predicted that there would be a two-way interactive effect of race composition and participant race on perceived opportunities for advancement. As hypothesised, the interaction term between race composition and participant race was significant (F [2, 268] = 8.55, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$).

A simple effect analysis showed that the difference between Chinese and Malay participants in the rating of perceived opportunities for advancement was significant in the 100% Malay condition (F [1, 276] = 40.79 $p < .001$) and not in the 50% Chinese–50% Malay (F [1, 276] = .18, *ns*) or 100% Chinese (F [1, 276] = .30, *ns*) condition.

Figure 7 illustrates that the effect of race composition on perceived opportunities for advancement was stronger for Chinese participants than for Malay participants. The differences across race composition conditions were only significant for Chinese (F [2, 275] = 23.58, $p < .001$) and not for Malay (F [2, 275] = .01, *ns*) participants. Minority Chinese participants were less likely to perceive opportunities for advancement in organisations that featured a homogenous group of Malay representatives than in organisations that featured a homogenous group of Chinese (mean difference = 1.06, *SE*

= .17, $p < .001$) or a group of racially diverse (mean difference = .89, *SE* = .17, $p < .001$) representatives. In contrast, Malay participants' perception of advancement opportunities was unaffected by the race composition conditions. In conclusion, Hypothesis 6c was supported.

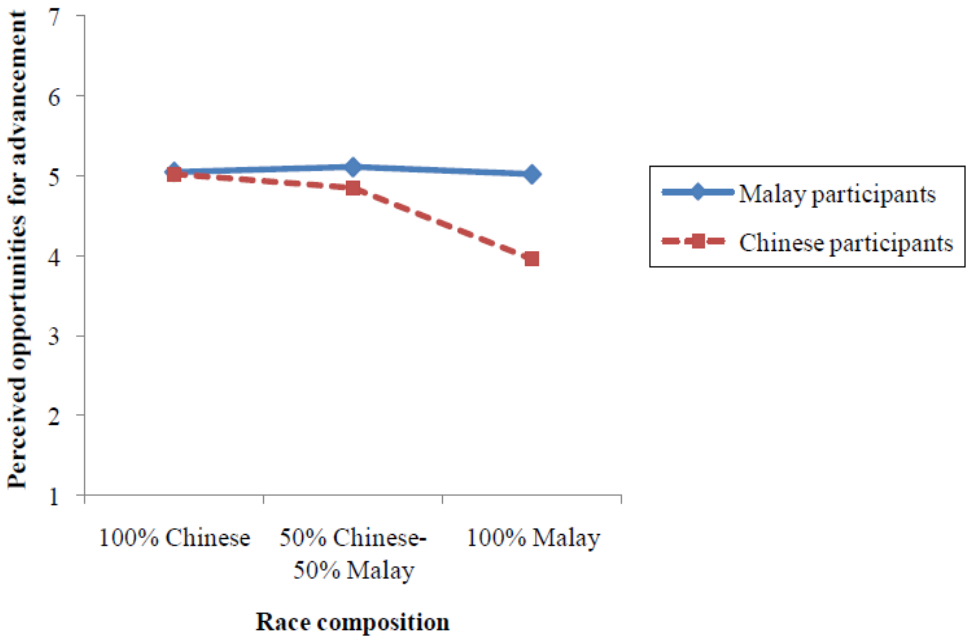


Figure 7: Interactive effect of race composition and participant race on perceived opportunities for advancement.

Table 8 shows the condition means and standard deviations across participant race. Main effects of race composition and participant race and the interactive effect of the two predictors are illustrated in Table 9.

Table 8

Means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions, perceived opportunities for advancement, perceived surface-level similarity and perceived deep-level similarity by race composition and participant race.

Race Composition	100% Chinese			50% Chinese–50% Malay			100% Malay		
	M	***SD***	***n***	***M***	***SD***	***n***	***M***	***SD***	***n***
Applicant attraction									
Malay	4.49	.73	31	4.37	1.01	29	4.45	.90	37
Chinese	4.35	1.17	62	4.28	.88	62	3.61	1.26	55
Total	4.40	1.04	93	4.31	.92	91	3.95	1.20	92
Job pursuit intentions									
Malay	5.26	.79	31	5.10	.85	29	4.95	.95	37
Chinese	4.80	1.08	62	4.70	.85	62	4.05	1.29	55
Total	4.95	1.01	93	4.83	.86	91	4.41	1.24	92
Perceived opportunities for advancement									
Malay	5.05	.78	31	5.11	.60	29	5.02	.84	37
Chinese	5.02	.93	62	4.85	.73	62	3.96	1.06	55
Total	5.03	.88	93	4.94	.70	91	4.39	1.10	92
Perceived surface-level similarity									
Malay	3.52	1.39	31	4.79	1.08	29	5.27	1.24	37
Chinese	4.97	1.37	62	4.63	1.03	62	2.89	1.52	55
Total	4.48	1.53	93	4.68	1.04	91	3.85	1.83	92
Perceived deep-level similarity									
Malay	4.41	.95	31	4.36	.97	29	4.41	.81	37
Chinese	4.42	1.15	62	4.34	.94	62	3.82	1.37	55
Total	4.42	1.08	93	4.35	.95	91	4.06	1.21	92

Table 9

Main and interactive effects of race composition and participant race on applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions, perceived opportunities for advancement, perceived surface-level similarity and perceived deep-level similarity.

	Race composition	**Participant race**	**Race composition x Participant race**
Applicant attraction	F (2, 268) = 3.59, p < .05, partial η^2 = .03	F (1, 268) = 6.87, p < .01, partial η^2 = .03	F (2, 268) = 3.62, p < .05, partial η^2 = .03
Job pursuit intentions	F (2, 268) = 6.55, p < .01, partial η^2 = .05	F (1, 268) = 20.08, p < .001, partial η^2 = .07	F (2, 268) = 1.56, *ns*, partial η^2 = .01
Perceived opportunities for advancement	F (2, 268) = 10.37, p < .001, partial η^2 = .07	F (1, 268) = 16.57, p <.001, partial η^2 = .06	F (2, 268) = 8.55, p < .001, partial η^2 = .06
Perceived surface-level similarity	F (2, 268) = 5.42, p < .01, partial η^2 = .04	F (1, 268) = 4.56, p < .05, partial η^2 = .02	F (2, 268) = 47.63, p < .001, partial η^2 = .26
Perceived deep-level similarity	F (2, 268) = 1.81, *ns*, partial η^2 = .01	F (1, 268) = 1.84, *ns*, partial η^2 = .01	F (2, 268) = 2.21, *ns*, partial η^2 = .02

4.4.5.5 Mediating effects of perceived surface- and deep-level similarity

Hypotheses 7 and 8 proposed that the two-way interactive effects of race composition and participant race on recruitment outcomes would be mediated by perceived surface- and deep-level similarity. Baron and Kenny's (1986) guidelines indicate that a mediation effect is demonstrated by three conditions. Firstly, the relationship between the interaction term (i.e. race composition x participant race) and the mediator (i.e. perceived surface- or deep-level similarity) must be significant. Secondly, the relationship between the interaction term (i.e. race composition x participant race) and the outcome variable (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions or perceived opportunities for advancement) must also be significant. Thirdly, the initially significant relationship between the interaction term and the outcome variable (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions or perceived opportunities for advancement) is reduced or becomes non-significant when the mediator (i.e. perceived surface- or deep-level similarity) is included in the analysis. In this final analysis—when the interaction term and the mediator are simultaneously included as predictors of the outcome variable—the mediator's effect on the outcome variable (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions or perceived opportunities for advancement) must remain significant.

Two parallel ANCOVAs were conducted to test the first condition for mediation. In these analyses, age and gender were entered as covariates, race composition and participant race were entered as fixed factors and the mediator (i.e. perceived surface- or deep-level similarity) was entered as the dependent variable. The results showed that after controlling for age and gender, the interactive effect of race composition and participant race was significant for perceived surface-level similarity (F [2, 268] = 47.63, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .26$) but non-significant for perceived deep-level similarity (F [2, 268] = 2.21, *ns*). Hence, the first condition for mediation was met for perceived surface-level similarity but not for perceived deep-level similarity. Further analysis to test the mediating role of perceived deep-level similarity was not conducted.

The second condition for mediation is to establish an interactive effect of race composition and participant race on the outcome variables (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement). As indicated in the previous section, the two-way interactive effect of race composition and participant race was significant for applicant attraction (F [2, 268] = 3.62, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$) and

perceived opportunities for advancement (F [2, 268] = 8.55, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$) but non-significant for job pursuit intentions (F [2, 268] = 1.56, *ns*). Thus, the second condition for mediation was met for applicant attraction and perceived opportunities for advancement. Further analyses were conducted for testing the mediating effect on these two outcome variables.

Two parallel ANCOVAs were conducted to examine the third condition for a mediating effect. In these analyses, age, gender and perceived surface-level similarity were entered as covariates, race composition and participant race were entered as fixed factors and the outcome (i.e. applicant attraction or perceived opportunities for advancement) was entered as the dependent variable. Upon the entry of perceived surface-level similarity as a covariate, the interactive effect of race composition and participant race on applicant attraction became non-significant (F [2, 267] = 1.16, *ns*, partial $\eta^2 = .01$) whereas the effect of perceived surface-level similarity on applicant attraction was significant (F [1, 267] = 29.06, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .10$). Hence, Hypothesis 7a was supported: perceived surface-level similarity mediated the interactive effect of race composition and participant race on applicant attraction.

Upon the entry of perceived surface-level similarity as a covariate, the interactive effect of race composition and participant race on perceived opportunities for advancement became non-significant (F [2, 267] = .49, *ns*, partial $\eta^2 = .00$) whereas the effect of perceived surface-level similarity on perceived opportunities for advancement was significant (F [1, 267] = 60.47, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .19$). Hence, Hypothesis 7c was also supported: perceived surface-level similarity mediated the interactive effect of race composition and participant race on perceived opportunities for advancement.

In conclusion, Hypotheses 7a and 7c were supported but Hypotheses 7b and 8 (a, b and c) were rejected.

4.5 Discussion

The purpose of this study was twofold. Firstly, it aimed to test the interactive effect of race composition and participant race on applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement. Secondly, this study aimed to examine whether the interactive effect of race composition and participant race on the recruitment outcomes would be mediated by perceived surface- and deep-level similarity. It was predicted that the effect of race composition would be stronger for minority Chinese participants than for majority Malay participants. Further, the

moderating effect of participant race would be mediated by perceived surface- and deep-level similarity.

As predicted, Study 2 has shown that the effects of race composition on recruitment outcomes are stronger for minority Chinese than for majority Malay participants. This is consistent with the diversity recruitment literature suggesting that minority applicants are more sensitive to diversity attributes or race-relevant information in the recruitment material than majority applicants are (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Goldberg & Allen, 2008; Perkins et al., 2000; Thomas & Wise, 1999). Organisations that feature a group of minority or a group of racially diverse representatives signal that they value diversity and are less likely to discriminate against minority members (Avery & McKay, 2006; Cable & Graham, 2000; McKay & Avery, 2006; Thaler-Carter, 2001). Hence, minority Chinese applicants are more attracted to organisations featuring a group of Chinese or a group of racially diverse representatives. In contrast, race composition may be of less concern to majority Malay applicants. Malaysian Malay individuals receive more education and career opportunities due to their numerical majority status (Manshor et al., 2003). Hence, the effect of race composition on recruitment outcomes is weaker for majority than for minority applicants.

The asymmetrical effect of race composition on attraction in this study is similar to the one found in Western societies (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000). Past researchers (Kanter, 1977; Li et al., 1999) have suggested that people's behaviour in organisational settings is affected by the numerical representation. In Western societies (e.g., the United States or United Kingdom) numerical representation is usually confounded with low socioeconomic status (i.e. racial minorities have a lower socioeconomic status than the majority group). As a result, it is unclear whether Western diversity effects result from numerical minority status or low socioeconomic status. However, in Malaysia, Malaysian Chinese individuals are in the numerical minority but enjoy a relatively high socioeconomic status (Agadjanian & Liew, 2005). Hence, results of the current study suggest that it is their numerical representation and not their socioeconomic status that makes minorities sensitive to diversity signals. This is consistent with the identity salience and numerical distinctiveness literature (McGuire et al., 1978; Randel, 2002; Stryker, 1968). Minority members are more likely to be

affected by the race composition of organisational representatives presented in the recruitment material than majority members are due to their salient identity.

In contrast to the study's prediction, the interactive effect of race composition and participant race on job pursuit intentions was non-significant. Minority Chinese and majority Malay participants similarly showed a greater intention to pursue job opportunities in organisations that featured a homogenous group of Chinese or a group of racially diverse representatives than organisations that featured a homogenous group of Malay representatives. Due to the relatively high socioeconomic status that minority Malaysian Chinese individuals enjoy (Agadjanian & Liew, 2005), organisations that are dominated or owned by Chinese individuals may be perceived as more prestigious. Consistent with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), majority Malay applicants can enhance their self-identity by identifying with organisations they perceive as high-status. Previous research has shown that low-status group members (e.g., females) identified with a high-status group (e.g., males) in order to benefit from a positive social identity and gain desirable economic resources (Ely, 1994; 1995; Graves & Powell, 1995; Gutek, 1985; Umphress, Smith-Crowe, Brief, Dietz & Watkins, 2007). However, this study did not measure the prestige or status of the organisation. Future research is warranted to test the proposed explanation.

As hypothesised, the moderating effect of participant race on the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes was mediated by perceived surface-level (i.e. race) similarity. This confirms the importance of perceived race similarity as the underlying mechanism linking race composition to recruitment outcomes. The mediated moderation finding has also pointed out the critical role of perceived race similarity in explaining the non-symmetrical effect of race composition across majority and minority applicants. This is consistent with previous research showing that the moderating effect of participant race on the relationship between race composition and applicant attraction is mediated by perceived similarity (Avery et al., 2004). As with Study 1, perceived deep-level similarity did not mediate the moderating effect of participant race on the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes. This supports the proposition that perceived race similarity plays a more important role in explaining the effect of race similarity during a relationship's early stages (Harrison et al., 2002).

In summary, this study demonstrated the role perceived race similarity plays as a mediator in the moderating effect of participant race on the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes. It provided provisional answers to 'why' and 'how' an organisation can use race composition in attracting applicants. For instance, organisations may use minority representatives or recruiters in their recruiting campaign to signal that minority employees are valued in the organisation. The findings suggest that featuring minority representatives in the recruitment materials attracts minority as well as majority applicants. Minority applicants are attracted to organisations featuring a group of minority representatives believing that these representatives possess the same racial identity as them. However, majority applicants are indifferent to the race composition of organisational representatives. That is, majority applicants' attraction to the organisation is less likely to be influenced by the race composition of the organisation.

Chapter 5: Study 3

5.1 Introduction

Study 2 investigated the interactive effects of race composition and participant race on recruitment outcomes (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement). As predicted, the effects of race composition on recruitment outcomes were stronger for minority Chinese than for majority Malay participants and the moderating effect of participant race was mediated by perceived surface-level similarity. The mediated moderation relationship supported findings of previous research (Avery et al., 2004).

This study aims to extend Study 2 findings by examining a three-way interactive effect of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on the recruitment outcomes. Further, this study investigates whether the three-way interactive effects on recruitment outcomes will be mediated by perceived surface- and deep-level similarity. Based on the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947), increased contact between members of two groups reduces intergroup prejudice. Research has shown that university location influences the amount of diversity students experience (Shrivastava & Gregory, 2009). This study utilises university location as a proxy for the amount of intergroup contact. Figure 8 presents the study model. It is predicted that intergroup contact will interact with race composition and participant race and influence recruitment outcomes through participants' perceived surface- and deep-level similarity. As with previous chapters, hypotheses of this study are developed and numbered as they appear in the literature review chapter (see Chapter 2).

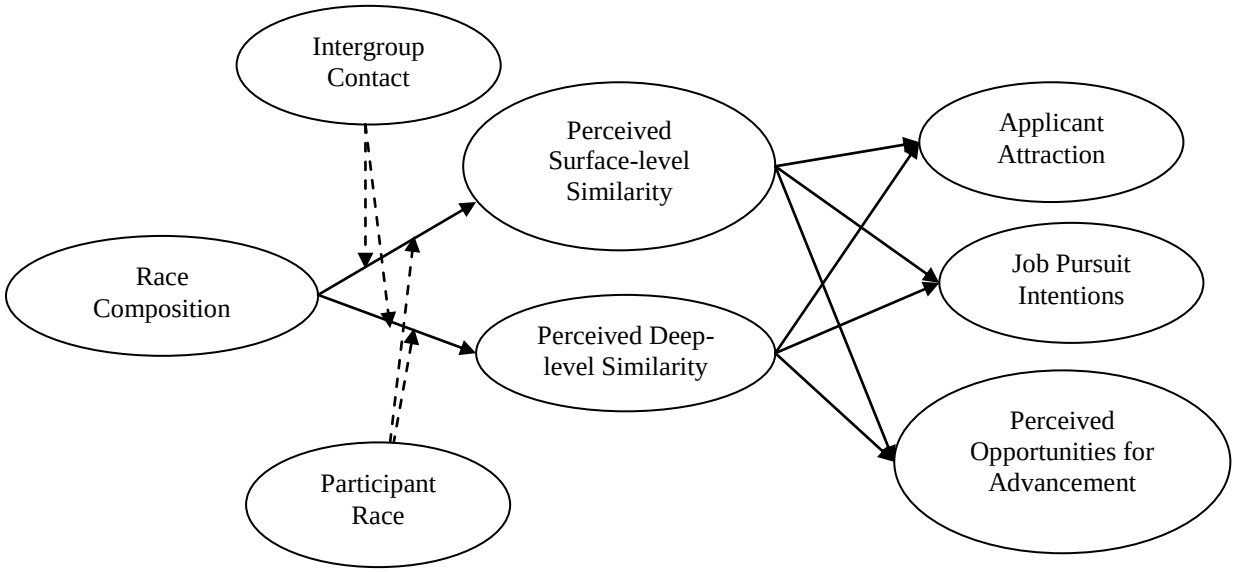


Figure 8: Study 3 model.

5.2 Hypotheses Development

5.2.1 Two-way interactive effects of race composition and intergroup contact

Based on the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947), intergroup interaction reduces the prejudice that members of one group usually exhibit towards members of another group. Increased intergroup interaction enhances the understanding of and knowledge about one another (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Cook, 1978; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Pettigrew, 1971). As a result of contact, individuals develop more favourable attitudes towards the out-group as a whole (Biernat, 1990; Brown et al., 2007). Further, increased intergroup contact may help individuals to hold perceptions that are more accurate about out-group members by disconfirming the negative stereotypes that the individuals have about out-group members (Wolsko et al., 2003). Although the positive effect of contact on reduced prejudice was evident in both majority and minority groups, it was stronger for the former group than for the latter (Binder et al., 2009; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005).

Integrating the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947) and social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987), individuals who

have had more intergroup contact may de-emphasise their social identity and perceive out-group members as individual entities rather than as members of a particular social group (e.g., racial minority or majority; Brewer & Miller, 1984). Consistent with the common in-group identity model (Gaertner et al., 1993; 1996), intergroup interactions may facilitate identity re-categorisation. Individuals tend to categorise in-group and out-group members as belonging to a new common in-group. Thus, intergroup biases are reduced by decreasing the positive bias that individuals usually have towards their own group (Brewer & Miller, 1984) and increasing favourable attitudes towards the former out-group (Gaertner et al., 1996).

This study involves Malaysian students in Australia and Malaysian students in public universities in Malaysia. The effect of race composition may differ across students in these two locations due to the differential amount of contact that they have had with racially dissimilar individuals. Most public universities in Malaysia are populated by majority Malay students. As a result of New Economic Policy (1969–1971), Malay and indigenous students are given priority in entering educational institutions (Manshor et al., 2003). Fifty-five per cent of the student positions in the public university are reserved for Malays (Ancheh, 2005; Ayob & Yaakub, 1999). Hence, Chinese or non-Malay families tend to send their children to private institutions or overseas universities (Ancheh, 2005; Tan, 2002). Due to the large number of majority Malay students in public universities in Malaysia, Chinese or non-Malay students in public universities have greater chances to interact with Malay individuals as compared to Chinese or non-Malay students in Australia. Further, public universities in Malaysia embrace and emphasise the Malay culture. *Bahasa Melayu* (i.e. Malay language), rather than English, is often used as the official medium of instruction in public universities (Education Guide Malaysia, n.d.). Thus, students in the public universities in Malaysia may also be well exposed to, and have greater opportunities to learn about, one another's culture. In summary, university location may be an appropriate proxy reflecting the amount of intergroup interactions that an individual has.

Further, university students are often involved in team work or group assignments as part of their course requirements. Team work facilitates the perception of having common goals and common goals foster interdependence among team members. In most universities, students enjoy equal power and education status. Hence,

regardless of the location where the contact occurs (i.e. Australia or Malaysia), the interactions that university students have meet the optimum conditions for attitude change so that the *amount of contact* influences the magnitude of attitude change. Due to the student composition in public universities in Malaysia, this study predicts that students in Malaysia who have had more intergroup contact may be less likely to show favouritism towards organisations featuring a group of representatives who are racially similar and less likely to reject organisations featuring a group of representatives who are racially dissimilar to them, than students in Australia who have had less intergroup contact. Specifically, the effect of race composition on recruitment outcomes will be weaker for participants who have had more intergroup contact than for participants who have had less intergroup contact.

> *Hypothesis 9. There will be a two-way interactive effect of race composition and intergroup contact on applicant attraction (H9a), job pursuit intentions (H9b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H9c). The effect of race composition of organisational representatives will be stronger for participants who have had less intergroup contact than for participants who have had more intergroup contact.*

5.2.2 Three-way interactive effects of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact

Diversity literature (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000; Wells, 2008) and findings from Study 2 have shown that the effect of race composition on recruitment outcomes is generally stronger for minority than for majority members. Race is a more salient identity for minority than for majority members (Stryker, 1968) and thus, minority members are more sensitive to race or race composition of the organisational representatives. Integrating the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947) and the identity salience and numerical distinctiveness literature (McGuire et al., 1978; Randel, 2002; Stryker, 1968), minority members who have had fewer intergroup interactions are more likely to be affected by the race composition of organisational representatives featured in recruitment advertising than minority members who have had greater intergroup interactions. Minority members who experience more intergroup contact are more likely to form favourable attitudes towards out-group members and display less positive bias towards in-group members (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Gaertner et al., 1996). In contrast, majority participants who enjoy social

privileges due to their majority status are less likely to be affected by the race composition of organisational representatives regardless of the amount of contact that they have had with racially dissimilar others. To date, no studies have examined the combined moderating effect of participant race and intergroup contact. Based on the theoretical reasoning, this study predicts that:

> *Hypothesis 10. There will be a three-way interactive effect of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on applicant attraction (H10a), job pursuit intentions (H10b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H10c). The effect of race composition will be stronger for minority participants who have had less intergroup contact than for minority participants who have had more intergroup contact. Majority participants will be unaffected by the race composition regardless of the amount of intergroup contact.*

5.2.3 Mediating effects of perceived surface- and deep-level similarity

Based on the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947), intergroup interaction reduces the prejudice that members of one group have towards members of another group. As a result of increased interaction, people have greater knowledge about one another (Shrivastava & Gregory, 2009). People who have interacted with individuals from diverse cultures (i.e. who have greater 'diversity experience') are less likely to hold stereotypical views about dissimilar others and more likely to form accurate perceptions about their similarities or dissimilarities with others (Shrivastava & Gregory, 2009, p. 530).

Individuals who have regular interactions with out-group members may be less sensitive to their own race and less likely to show in-group bias and out-group rejection through de-categorisation (Brewer & Miller, 1984) and re-categorisation (Anastasio et al., 1997; Gaertner et al, 1993; 1994). Consistent with the common in-group identity model (Gaertner et al., 1993; 1996), individuals who have had greater interactions with out-group members are more likely to view former out-group (i.e. racially dissimilar) individuals as belonging to the same group and sharing the values, personality and attitudes of the in-group (i.e. racially similar). Research has shown that individuals who have had more experience with dissimilar others are less likely to perceive dissimilarity, which in turn leads to the individuals' desire to group or identify with those dissimilar members (Shrivastava & Gregory, 2009). Hence, the effect of race composition of

organisational representatives reduces as the contact between members of the two groups increases because these members recognise their similarities. It is predicted that:

> *Hypothesis 11. The two-way interactive effect of race composition and intergroup contact on applicant attraction (H11a), job pursuit intentions (H11b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H11c) will be mediated by perceived surface-level similarity.*
>
> *Hypothesis 12. The two-way interactive effects of race composition and intergroup contact on applicant attraction (H12a), job pursuit intentions (H12b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H12c) will be mediated by perceived deep-level similarity.*

The identity salience and numerical distinctiveness literature (McGuire et al., 1978; Randel, 2002; Stryker, 1968) suggests that minority members are more sensitive to their race than majority members are. Based on the contact hypothesis literature (Brewer & Miller, 1984), the sensitivity that minority members have about their race may reduce as intergroup interaction increases. Minority members who have had more intergroup contact may be less likely to categorise themselves and others based on race, and to perceive racially similar others as in-group members and racially dissimilar individuals as out-group members, than minority members who have had less intergroup contact (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Gaertner et al., 1996). As a result, minority members who have had more intergroup contact are less likely to view same-race representatives featured in recruitment advertising as similar to them in terms of race, personal values, personality and attitudes, which in turn leads to greater attraction (Tsui et al., 1992; Zellmer-Bruhn et al., 2008). In contrast, majority applicants tend to be less concerned about racial issues due to their majority status in the society (Perkins et al., 2000). Hence, majority applicants may be indifferent to the race composition of organisational representatives featured in recruitment advertising regardless of the amount of intergroup contact they have had. Overall, this study predicts that perceived surface-level (i.e. race) and deep-level similarity may mediate the three-way interactive effect of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on recruitment outcomes.

> *Hypothesis 13. The three-way interactive effects of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on applicant attraction (H13a), job pursuit*

intentions (H13b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H13c) will be mediated by perceived surface-level similarity.

Hypothesis 14. The three-way interactive effects of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on applicant attraction (H14a), job pursuit intentions (H14b) and perceived opportunities for advancement (H14c) will be mediated by perceived deep-level similarity.

5.3 Methods

5.3.1 Participants and procedures

Study 3 uses a 2 (participant race) x 2 (intergroup contact) x 3 (race composition) between-subjects design. Five hundred and fifty-six Malay and 344 Chinese university students (N = 900) took part in this study. Of these 900 participants, 620 were Malaysian students in Malaysia (459 Malay and 161 Chinese individuals) and 280 were Malaysian students in Australia (97 Malay and 183 Chinese individuals). The group of Malaysian students in Australia (n = 280) were participants from Study 2. More than half of the total participants were female (n = 608, 67.56%) and most participants were between 20 to 25 years (n = 827, 91.89%, M = 22.40, SD = 2.00).

The 620 Malaysian students in Malaysia were recruited from three public universities in Malaysia. As with Study 1, a letter of introduction was sent to the head of school prior to the survey distribution (see Appendix A). The survey was conducted in lecture halls. All participants were given the standard instructions described in Study 1 and a survey pack similar to the one used in Study 1 was distributed to all participants. The study took about 20 minutes to complete. Participants were thanked and given a chocolate at the end of the session. As with Study 1 and 2, all surveys were personally administered by the principal researcher to increase the consistency and control of the study.

5.3.2 Measures

Items measuring five continuous variables described in Study 1 were included in the present study. All items were measured using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). As with Study 1 and 2, the participant's score on each variable was obtained by dividing the sum of the item scores by the number of items.

5.3.2.1 Perceived surface-level similarity

The single-item perceived surface-level similarity measure was again based on Cunningham's (2007) perceived racial dissimilarity measure.

5.3.2.2 Perceived deep-level similarity

The three-item perceived deep-level similarity measure based on Cunningham (2007) and Harrison et al. (2002) was included. The internal consistency of this measure was .87.

5.3.2.3 Applicant attraction

The three-item attraction scale developed by Highhouse et al. (2003) was used. The internal consistency of this measure was .87.

5.3.2.4 Job pursuit intentions

The six-item scale of job pursuit intentions by Aiman-Smith et al. (2001) was utilised. The internal consistency of this measure was .90.

5.3.2.5 Perceived opportunities for advancement

The four-item perceived opportunities for advancement scale from Riordan and Shore (1997) was again used in the present study. The internal consistency of this measure was .79.

5.3.2.6 Demographic control variables

As with Study 1 and 2, participant's age and gender were included as control variables.

5.3.2.7 Manipulation check

The one-item manipulation check measure was included in this study: 'based on the advertisement, I believe that Soroton Inc. comprises employees of various races'.

5.4 Results

5.4.1 Assumptions checking and preliminary diagnostics

Prior to examining the hypothesised relationships, data were screened for data entry accuracy, missing values and univariate normality. A 10% random data check revealed no data entry errors. SPSS frequencies revealed no out-of-range data. The descriptive statistics showed that the distribution of the study variables were non-

normal: standardised scores for skewness and kurtosis were more than 3.29 (Field, 2005). However, this study has a large sample (N = 900) and thus, the skewness and kurtosis are unlikely to have substantial impact on the analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

5.4.2 Manipulation check

Identical to Study 1 and 2, a one-way ANOVA with race composition (i.e. condition) as the fixed factor and the manipulation check response as the dependent variable was conducted to check the effectiveness of the manipulation. There were significant differences across the three conditions (F [2, 840] = 77.65, p < .001). Post-hoc tests showed that the 50% Chinese-50% Malay condition differed significantly from the 100% Chinese (M_{diff} = 1.46, SE = .13, p < .001) and 100% Malay (M_{diff} = 1.48, SE = .13, p < .001) conditions. The difference between the 100% Chinese and 100% Malay conditions was non-significant (M_{diff} = .02, SE = .15, *ns*). As predicted, respondents perceived the organisation in the 50%-50% condition as comprising different races to a greater extent than the organisation in the two 100% conditions. In conclusion, the manipulation was effective: participants' perception of the organisation's workforce diversity reflected the race composition of organisational representatives featured in the advertisement.

5.4.3 Zero-order correlations

Means, standard deviations and correlations among study variables are shown in Table 10. The proposed moderators (i.e. participant race and intergroup contact) were negatively and significantly related to the three outcome variables (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement). Malay participants gave a higher rating than Chinese participants on all outcome variables and participants who have had more intergroup contact (i.e. students in Malaysia) gave a higher rating than participants who have had less intergroup contact (i.e. students in Australia) on all outcome variables. Further, age and gender are positively correlated with the outcome variables. Specifically, older participants gave higher ratings on applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement than younger participants did and female participants gave higher ratings on applicant attraction than male participants did. None of the bivariate correlations exceeded .90;

thus, the problem of multicollinearity and singularity among the variables was not substantial (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Table 10

Means (M), standard deviations (SD) and correlations among study variables.

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age[a]	22.40	2.00								
2. Gender[b]	.68	.47	-.02							
3. Participant race[c]	.38	.49	-.19***	.00						
4. Intergroup contact[c]	.31	.46	-.33***	-.05	.38***					
5. Perceived surface-level similarity[d]	4.51	1.39	.06	.01	-.10**	-.08*				
6. Perceived deep-level similarity[e]	4.52	1.06	.08*	.03	-.18***	-.15***	.52***			
7. Applicant attraction[e]	4.69	1.02	.11**	.12**	-.26***	-.30***	.37***	.55***		
8. Job pursuit intentions[e]	5.14	.99	.07*	.01	-.26***	-.27***	.39***	.51***	.58***	
9. Perceived opportunities for advancement[e]	5.12	.87	.11**	.02	-.21***	-.25***	.47***	.51***	.55***	.61***

n^a = 886, n^b = 899, n^c = 900, n^d = 894, n^e = 897

Gender: 0 = male, 1 = female; Participant race: 0 = Malay, 1 = Chinese; Intergroup contact: 0 = high (i.e. students in Malaysia), 1 = low (i.e. students in Australia)

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, two-tailed

5.4.4 Confirmatory factor analysis

A CFA was performed to verify the factor structure of the four main study variables (i.e. perceived deep-level similarity, applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement). The one-item measure of perceived surface-level similarity was excluded from the analysis. The overall fit of the model was approaching fit (χ^2 [98] = 684.27, p = .000; CFI = .93; RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .05). A CFI value that is closer to 1.00 indicates a better degree of fit (Byrne, 2001) and a SRMR value less than .10 reflects a good model (Williams et al., 2009). Moreover, for RMSEA, values that are equal to .80 or less indicate a good fit (DiLalla, 2000; Holtom et al., 2002; McDonald & Ho, 2002). The researcher examined whether the four-factor structure solution was a better fitting model than two other alternatives: a one-factor structure (i.e. a single latent variable representing all study items) and a two-factor structure (with one latent variable representing the three mediator items [i.e. perceived deep-level similarity] and another latent variable representing the 13 recruitment outcome items [i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement]). The four-factor structure solution displayed a better fit than either the one-factor structure solution (χ^2 [104] = 2602.67, p = .000; CFI = .71; RMSEA = .16; SRMR = .09) or the two-factor structure solution (χ^2 [103] = 1808.48, p = .000; CFI = .81; RMSEA = .14; SRMR = .08). Table 11 shows the factor loadings from the four-factor CFA. All items loaded significantly on their respective factors and all factor loadings were more than the minimum recommended value of .40 (Holtom et al., 2002). In conclusion, the four-factor solution is the preferred model for this study because: 1) all four variable constructs are adapted from pre-existing scales; 2) the four-factor model displays a better fit than one- or two-factor alternative models; and 3) all items significantly loaded on their respective scales.

Table 11

Study 3 factor structure.

Latent Variable	Item	Un-standardised Factor Loadings	Standardised Factor Loadings	Significance
Perceived Deep-level Similarity	1	1.00	.79	n/a
	2	1.15	.91	Yes
	3	.97	.82	Yes
Applicant Attraction	1	1.00	.81	n/a
	2	1.20	.91	Yes
	3	.97	.80	Yes
Job Pursuit Intentions	1	1.00	.74	n/a
	2	.80	.60	Yes
	3	.96	.73	Yes
	4	1.14	.87	Yes
	5	1.11	.85	Yes
	6	1.11	.83	Yes
Perceived Opportunities for Advancement	1	1.00	.68	n/a
	2	1.07	.69	Yes
	3	1.25	.75	Yes
	4	1.13	.66	Yes

5.4.5 Tests of hypotheses

5.4.5.1 Two-way interactive effects of race composition and intergroup contact

Hypotheses 9a, 9b and 9c proposed that there would be two-way interactive effects of race composition and intergroup contact on applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions or perceived opportunities for advancement respectively. Three parallel two-way ANCOVAs were conducted to test Hypothesis 9. Age and gender were entered as covariates (i.e. controls), race composition and intergroup contact were entered as fixed factors and the outcome (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions or perceived opportunities for advancement) was entered as the dependent variable.

5.4.5.2 Two-way interactive effects of race composition and intergroup contact on applicant attraction

Hypothesis 9a predicted that there would be a two-way interactive effect of race composition and intergroup contact on applicant attraction. As hypothesised, the interactive effect of race composition and intergroup contact on applicant attraction was significant (F [2, 874] = 3.24, p <.05, partial η^2 = .01).

A simple effect analysis was performed as a follow-up procedure for interpreting the significant interactive effect. The analysis showed that the difference in applicant attraction rating between participants who have a high, and participants who have a low, level of intergroup contact was significant in the 100% Malay (F [1, 893] = 49.86, p < .001), 50% Chinese–50% Malay (F [1, 893] = 23.25, p < .001) and 100% Chinese (F [1, 893] = 29.95, p < .001) conditions.

Figure 9 illustrates that the effect of race composition was stronger for participants who have a low level of intergroup contact than for participants who have a high level of intergroup contact. The differences across race composition conditions were significant for participants who have a low level of intergroup contact (F [2, 892] = 5.08, p < .01) and not for participants who have a high level of intergroup contact (F [2, 892] = .40, *ns*). Participants who have a low level of intergroup contact were less attracted to the organisation that featured a homogenous group of Malay representatives than the organisation that featured a homogenous group of Chinese (mean difference = .47, SE = .16, p < .01) or a group of racially diverse (mean difference = .38, SE = .16, p = .05) representatives. However, participants who have a high level of intergroup contact were similarly attracted to all three types of organisations. Overall, Hypothesis 9a was supported.

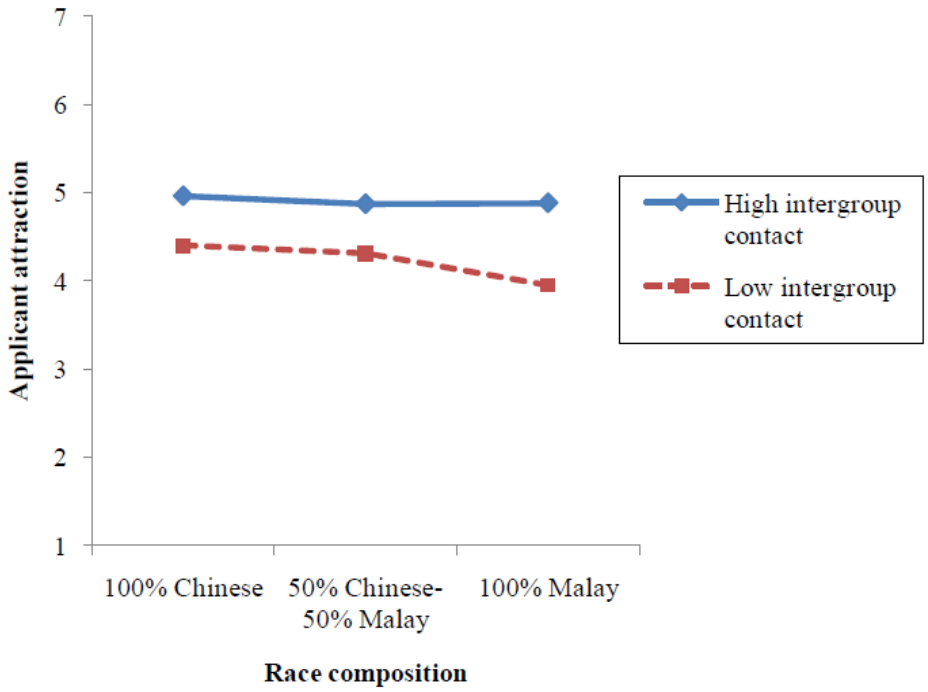


Figure 9: Interactive effect of race composition and intergroup contact on applicant attraction.

5.4.5.3 Two-way interactive effects of race composition and intergroup contact on job pursuit intentions

Hypothesis 9b predicted that there would be a two-way interactive effect of race composition and intergroup contact on job pursuit intentions. The interaction term between race composition and intergroup contact was significant (F [2, 874] = 3.41, p < .05, partial η^2 = .01).

A simple effect analysis showed that the difference in job pursuit intentions between participants who have a high, and participants who have a low, level of intergroup contact was significant in the 100% Malay (F [1, 893] = 37.21, p < .001), 50% Chinese–50% Malay (F [1, 893] = 17.21, p < .001) and 100% Chinese (F [1, 893] = 26.80, p < .001) conditions.

Figure 10 illustrates that the effect of race composition on job pursuit intentions was stronger for participants who have a low level of intergroup contact than for participants who have a high level of intergroup contact. The differences across race composition conditions were significant for the low contact group (F [2, 892] = 7.30, p < .01) and not for the high contact group (F [2, 892] = 1.41, *ns*). Participants in the low

contact group were less likely to pursue job opportunities in an organisation that featured a homogenous group of Malay representatives than in an organisation that featured a homogenous group of Chinese (mean difference = .55, *SE* = .16, *p* = .001) or a group of racially diverse (mean difference = .43, *SE* = .16, *p* < .05) representatives. However, participants in the high contact group gave similar ratings across the race composition conditions. Thus, the effect of race composition on job pursuit intentions was stronger for participants who have had less intergroup contact than for participants who have had more intergroup contact. In conclusion, Hypothesis 9b was supported.

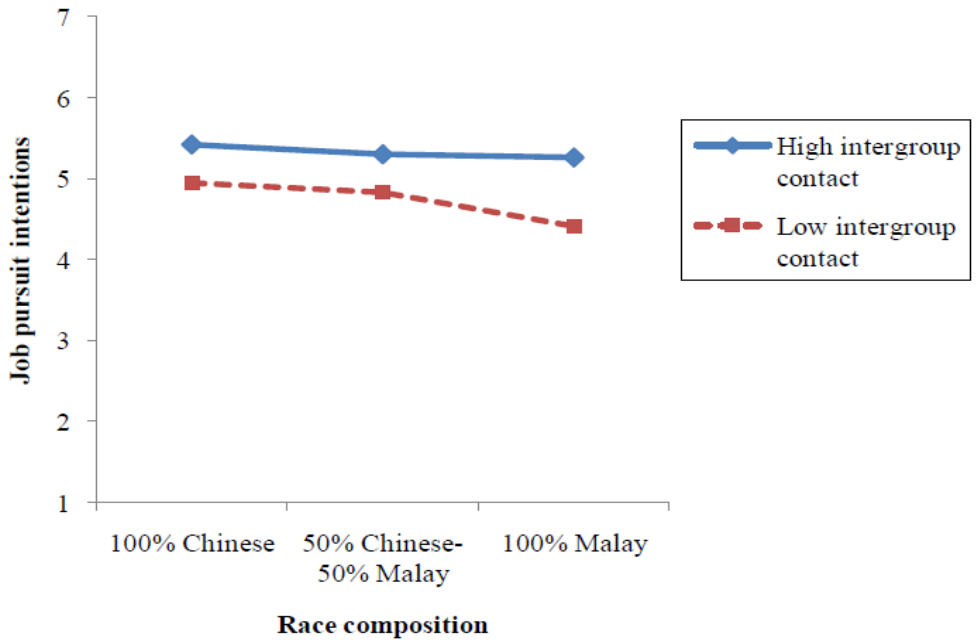


Figure 10: Interactive effect of race composition and intergroup contact on job pursuit intentions.

5.4.5.4 Two-way interactive effects of race composition and intergroup contact on perceived opportunities for advancement

Hypothesis 9c predicted that there would be a two-way interactive effect of race composition and intergroup contact on perceived opportunities for advancement. As hypothesised, the interaction term between race composition and intergroup contact was significant (F [2, 874] = 7.96, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$).

A simple effect analysis showed that the difference between participants who have a high, and participants who have a low, level of intergroup contact was significant in the 100% Malay (F [1, 893] = 41.55, $p < .001$), 50% Chinese–50% Malay (F [1, 893] = 13.24, $p < .001$) and 100% Chinese (F [1, 893] = 17.43, $p < .001$) conditions.

Figure 11 illustrates that the effect of race composition on perceived opportunities for advancement was stronger for participants who have a low level of contact than for participants who have a high level of contact. The differences across race composition conditions were only significant for participants who have a low level of contact (F [2, 892] = 15.11, $p < .001$) and not for participants who have a high level of contact (F [2, 892] = 1.00, *ns*). Participants in the low contact group were less likely to perceive opportunities for advancement in an organisation that featured a homogenous group of Malay representatives than in an organisation that featured a homogenous group of Chinese (mean difference = .64, SE = .13, $p < .001$) or a group of racially diverse (mean difference = .55, SE = .14, $p < .001$) representatives. In contrast, participants' ratings in the high contact group were unaffected by the race composition conditions. In conclusion, the effect of race composition on perceived opportunities for advancement was stronger for participants who have had less intergroup contact than for participants who have had more intergroup contact. Thus, Hypothesis 9c was supported.

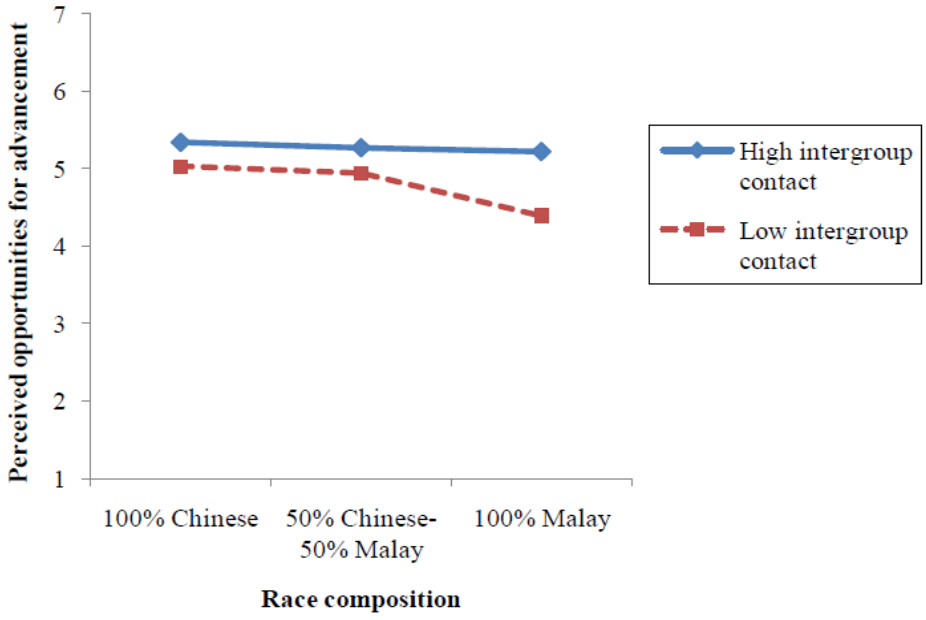


Figure 11: Interactive effect of race composition and intergroup contact on perceived opportunities for advancement.

5.4.5.5 Three-way interactive effects of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact

Hypotheses 10a, 10b and 10c proposed that there would be three-way interactive effects of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement. Three parallel ANCOVAs were conducted to test Hypothesis 10. Age and gender were entered as covariates (i.e. controls), race composition, participant race and intergroup contact were entered as fixed factors and the outcome (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions or perceived opportunities for advancement) was entered as the dependent variable.

5.4.5.6 Three-way interactive effects of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on applicant attraction

Hypothesis 10a predicted that there would be a three-way interactive effect of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on applicant attraction. The ANCOVA showed that the three-way interaction term was non-significant for applicant attraction (F [2, 868] = 2.32, *ns*). Hence, Hypothesis 10a was not supported and further analysis for the interactive effect was not performed.

5.4.5.7 Three-way interactive effects of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on job pursuit intentions

Hypothesis 10b proposed that there would be a three-way interactive effect of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on job pursuit intentions. However, the ANCOVA showed that the three-way interactive effect on job pursuit intentions was non-significant (F [2, 868] = .23, *ns*). Hence, Hypothesis 10b was also rejected and no further analysis was performed for job pursuit intentions.

5.4.5.8 Three-way interactive effects of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on perceived opportunities for advancement

Hypothesis 10c predicted that there would be a three-way interactive effect of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on perceived opportunities for advancement. As hypothesised, the three-way interaction term for perceived opportunities for advancement was significant (F [2, 868] = 3.66, $p < .05$, partial η^2 = .01).

Figure 12 illustrates that the effect of race composition on perceived opportunities for advancement was stronger for minority Chinese students who have had a low level of intergroup contact than for minority Chinese students who have had a high level of intergroup contact. However, as shown in Figure 13, the effect of race composition on perceived opportunities for advancement was similar for majority Malay students who have had a low level of intergroup contact and majority Malay students who have had a high level of intergroup contact.

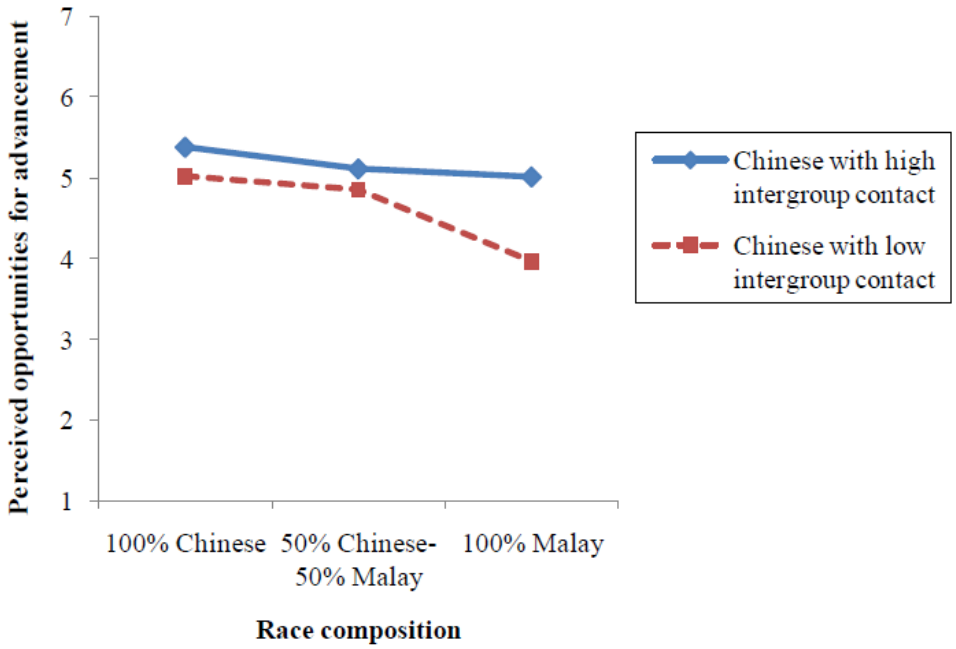


Figure 12: Effect of race composition on perceived opportunities for advancement for minority Chinese participants with high and low intergroup contact.

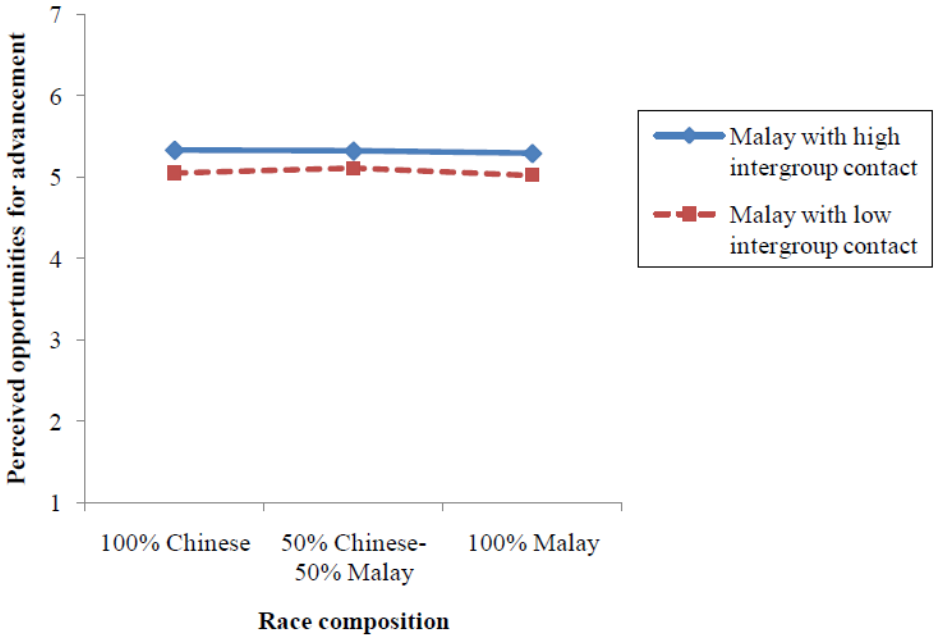


Figure 13: Effect of race composition on perceived opportunities for advancement for majority Malay participants with high and low intergroup contact.

The following two figures show that the differential effect of race composition between minority Chinese and majority Malay participants was weaker for participants who have a high level of intergroup contact (see Figure 14) than for participants who have a low level of intergroup contact (see Figure 15). This suggests that the interaction between race composition and participant race was evident for participants who have had fewer intergroup contacts, but not for participants who have had greater intergroup contacts. Overall, Hypothesis 10c was supported.

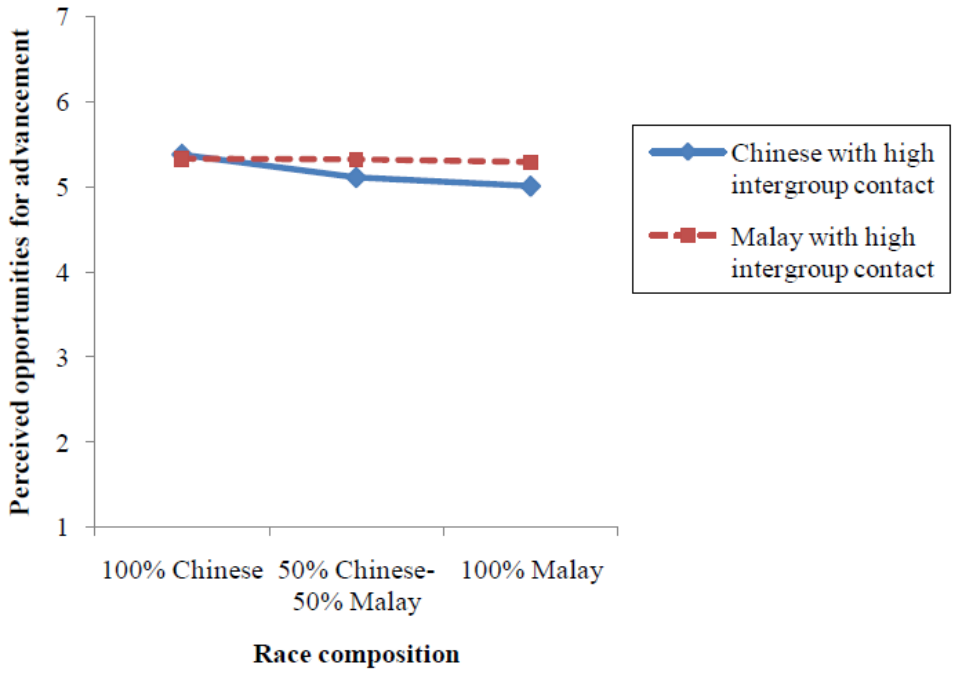


Figure 14: Interactive effect of race composition and participant race on perceived opportunities for advancement at high levels of intergroup contact.

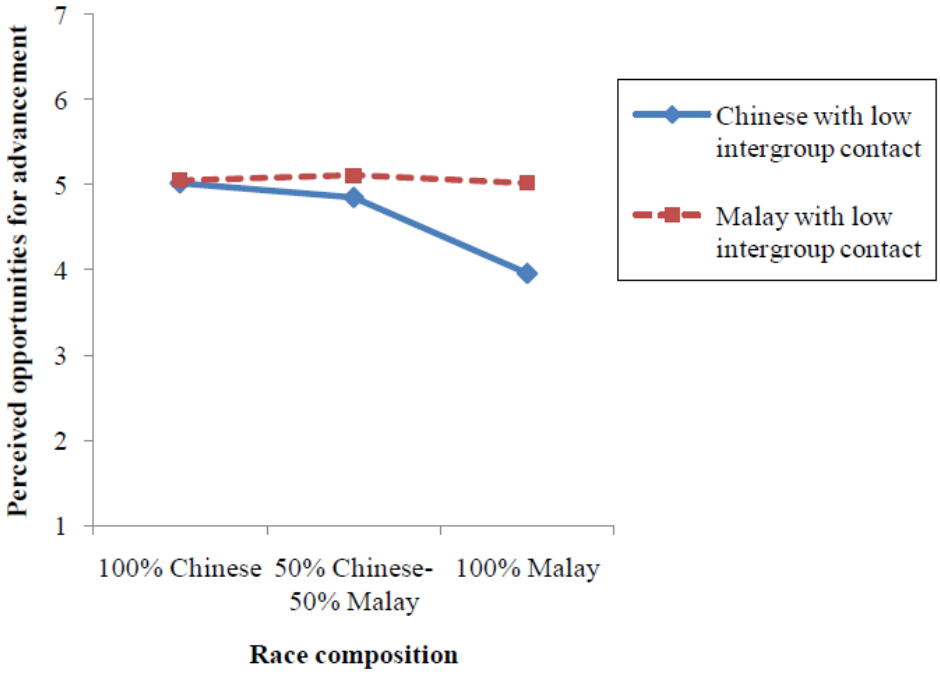


Figure 15: Interactive effect of race composition and participant race on perceived opportunities for advancement at low levels of intergroup contact.

Table 12 shows the condition means and standard deviations across participant race and intergroup contact. Table 13 shows the main effects of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact and the two-way and three-way interactive effects. All possible two-way interaction terms (race composition x participant race, race composition x intergroup contact and participant race x intergroup contact) were included in the analyses.

Table 12

Means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions, perceived opportunities for advancement, perceived surface-level similarity and perceived deep-level similarity by race composition, participant race and intergroup contact.

Race Composition	100% Chinese			50% Chinese–50% Malay			100% Malay		
	M	***SD***	***n***	***M***	***SD***	***n***	***M***	***SD***	***n***
Applicant attraction									
Malay									
High contact	5.00	.90	149	4.99	.92	150	4.99	.94	150
Low contact	4.49	.73	31	4.37	1.01	29	4.45	.90	37
Chinese									
High contact	4.83	.92	52	4.52	.96	51	4.54	.76	54
Low contact	4.35	1.18	62	4.28	.88	62	3.61	1.26	55
Job pursuit intentions									
Malay									
High contact	5.45	.84	149	5.36	.97	150	5.39	.95	150
Low contact	5.26	.79	31	5.10	.85	29	4.95	.95	37
Chinese									
High contact	5.33	.79	52	5.12	.83	51	4.90	.77	54
Low contact	4.80	1.08	62	4.70	.85	62	4.05	1.29	55
Perceived opportunities for advancement									
Malay									
High contact	5.33	.82	149	5.32	.80	150	5.29	.82	150
Low contact	5.05	.78	31	5.11	.60	29	5.02	.84	37
Chinese									
High contact	5.38	.73	52	5.11	.77	51	5.01	.72	54
Low contact	5.02	.93	62	4.85	.73	62	3.96	1.06	55
Perceived surface-level similarity									
Malay									

High contact	4.18	1.36	148	4.74	1.06	149	4.99	1.39	149
Low contact	3.52	1.39	31	4.79	1.08	29	5.27	1.24	37
Chinese									
High contact	5.06	1.27	52	4.35	1.15	51	4.02	1.41	54
Low contact	4.97	1.37	62	4.63	1.03	62	2.89	1.52	55
Perceived deep-level similarity									
Malay									
High contact	4.71	1.02	149	4.74	.96	150	4.75	1.14	150
Low contact	4.41	.95	31	4.36	.97	29	4.41	.81	37
Chinese									
High contact	4.50	.85	52	4.11	1.03	51	4.46	1.03	54
Low contact	4.42	1.15	62	4.34	.94	62	3.82	1.37	55

Table 13

Main effects of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact and two-way and three-way interactive effects on applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions, perceived opportunities for advancement, perceived surface-level similarity and perceived deep-level similarity.

	Race composition	**Participant race**	**Intergroup contact**	**Race composition x Participant race**	**Race composition x Intergroup contact**	**Participant race x Intergroup contact**	**Race composition x Participant race x Intergroup contact**
Applicant attraction	F (2, 868) = 5.08, p < .01, partial η^2 = .01	F (1, 868) = 24.05, p < .001, partial η^2 = .03	F (1, 868) = 48.68, p < .001, partial η^2 = .05	F (2, 868) = 4.26, p < .05, partial η^2 = .01	F (2, 868) = 1.66, *ns*, partial η^2 = .00	F (1, 868) = .02, *ns*, partial η^2 = .00	F (2, 868) = 2.32, *ns*, partial η^2 = .01
Job pursuit intentions	F (2, 868) = 10.03, p < .001, partial η^2 = .02	F (1, 868) = 35.91, p < .001, partial η^2 = .04	F (1, 868) = 38.08, p < .001, partial η^2 = .04	F (2, 868) = 3.37, p < .05, partial η^2 = .01	F (2, 868) = 1.84, *ns*, partial η^2 = .00	F (1, 868) = 4.24, p < .05, partial η^2 = .01	F (2, 868) = .23, *ns*, partial η^2 = .00
Perceived opportunities for advancement	F (2, 868) = 12.67, p < .001, partial η^2 = .03	F (1, 868) = 21.13, p < .001, partial η^2 = .02	F (1, 868) = 34.76, p < .001, partial η^2 = .04	F (2, 868) = 9.90, p < .001, partial η^2 = .02	F (2, 868) = 4.27, p < .05, partial η^2 = .01	F (1, 868) = 5.34, p < .05, partial η^2 = .01	F (2, 868) = 3.66, p < .05, partial η^2 = .01
Perceived surface-level similarity	F (2, 865) = 3.78, p < .05, partial η^2 = .01	F (1, 865) = 6.35, p < .05, partial η^2 = .01	F (1, 865) = 2.91, *ns*, partial η^2 = .00	F (2, 865) = 67.61, p < .001, partial η^2 = .14	F (2, 865) = 3.53, p < .05, partial η^2 = .01	F (1, 865) = 1.00, *ns*, partial η^2 = .00	F (2, 865) = 9.40, p < .001, partial η^2 = .02
Perceived deep-level similarity	F (2, 868) = 1.32, *ns*, partial η^2 = .00	F (1, 868) = 11.86, p < .01, partial η^2 = .01	F (1, 868) = 7.31, p < .01, partial η^2 = .01	F (2, 868) = 1.50, *ns*, partial η^2 = .00	F (2, 868) = 2.33, *ns*, partial η^2 = .01	F (1, 868) = 1.18, *ns*, partial η^2 = .00	F (2, 868) = 2.73, *ns*, partial η^2 = .01

5.4.5.9 Mediating effects of perceived surface- and deep-level similarity

Hypotheses 11–14 predicted that the two-way interactive effect (i.e. race composition x intergroup contact) and three-way interactive effect (i.e. race composition x participant race x intergroup contact) would be mediated by perceived surface- and deep-level similarity. As with Study 1 and 2, the mediating hypotheses were tested using Baron and Kenny's (1986) guidelines. Baron and Kenny's (1986) guidelines indicate that a mediation effect is demonstrated by three conditions. Firstly, the relationship between the interaction term (e.g., race composition x intergroup contact) and the mediator (i.e. perceived surface- or deep-level similarity) must be significant. Secondly, the relationship between the interaction term (e.g., race composition x intergroup contact) and the outcome variable (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions or perceived opportunities for advancement) must also be significant. Thirdly, the initially significant relationship between the interaction term and the outcome variable (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions or perceived opportunities for advancement) is reduced or becomes non-significant when the mediator (i.e. perceived surface- or deep-level similarity) is included in the analysis. In this final analysis—when the interaction term and the mediator are simultaneously included as predictors of the outcome variable—the mediator's effect on the outcome variable (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions or perceived opportunities for advancement) must remain significant.

Two two-way ANCOVAs and two three-way ANCOVAs were conducted to test the first condition for mediation. In the two-way ANCOVAs, age and gender were entered as covariates (i.e. controls), race composition and intergroup contact were entered as fixed factors and the mediator (i.e. perceived surface- or deep-level similarity) was entered as the dependent variable. The results showed that after controlling for age and gender, the two-way interactive effect of race composition and intergroup contact was significant for perceived surface-level similarity (F [2, 871] = 9.96, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$) but non-significant for perceived deep-level similarity (F [2, 874] = 2.77, *ns*).

Similarly, in the three-way ANCOVAs, age and gender were entered as covariates (i.e. controls), race composition, participant race and intergroup contact were entered as fixed factors and the mediator (i.e. perceived surface- or deep-level similarity) was entered as the dependent variable. The results showed that after

controlling for age and gender, the three-way interactive effect of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact was significant for perceived surface-level similarity (F [2, 865] = 9.40, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$) but non-significant for perceived deep-level similarity (F [2, 868] = 2.73, *ns*).

In conclusion, the first condition for mediation was met for perceived surface-level similarity but not for perceived deep-level similarity. Further analysis to test the mediating role of perceived deep-level similarity was not conducted.

The second condition for mediation is to establish significant interactive effects (i.e. race composition x intergroup contact and race composition x participant race x intergroup contact) on the outcome variables (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement). As indicated in the previous section, the two-way interactive effect of race composition and intergroup contact was significant for applicant attraction (F [2, 874] = 3.24, $p <.05$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$), job pursuit intentions (F [2, 874] = 3.41, $p <.05$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$) and perceived opportunities for advancement (F [2, 874] = 7.96, $p <.001$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$). However, the three-way interactive effect was significant only for perceived opportunities for advancement (F [2, 868] = 3.66, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$). Overall, the second condition for mediation was met. Subsequent analyses were performed for outcome variables that were significantly predicted by the interactive effects.

Three parallel ANCOVAs were conducted to examine the third condition for the two-way (i.e. race composition x intergroup contact) mediated moderation effect. In these analyses, age, gender and perceived surface-level similarity were entered as covariates, race composition and intergroup contact were entered as fixed factors and the outcome (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions or perceived opportunities for advancement) was entered as the dependent variable. Upon the entry of perceived surface-level similarity as a covariate, the interactive effect of race composition and intergroup contact became non-significant for applicant attraction (F [2, 870] = .52, *ns*, partial $\eta^2 = .00$), job pursuit intentions (F [2, 870] = .50, *ns*, partial $\eta^2 = .00$) and perceived opportunities for advancement (F [2, 870] = 2.33, *ns*, partial $\eta^2 = .01$). The effect of perceived surface-level similarity was significant for applicant attraction (F [1, 870] = 127.68, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .13$), job pursuit intentions (F [1, 870] = 142.53, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .14$) and perceived opportunities for advancement (F [1, 870] = 228.26, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .21$). Hence, Hypothesis 11 was supported: perceived

surface-level similarity mediated the interactive effect of race composition and intergroup contact on applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement.

A parallel ANCOVA was performed to examine the third condition for the three-way (i.e. race composition x participant race x intergroup contact) mediated moderation effect on perceived opportunities for advancement. Similar to previous analyses, age, gender and perceived surface-level similarity were entered as covariates, race composition, participant race and intergroup contact were entered as fixed factors and the outcome (i.e. perceived opportunities for advancement) was entered as the dependent variable. Upon the entry of perceived surface-level similarity as a covariate, the three-way interactive effect of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on perceived opportunities for advancement became non-significant (F [2, 864] = .55, *ns*, partial η^2 = .00) whereas the effect of perceived surface-level similarity on perceived opportunities for advancement was significant (F [2, 864] = 193.87, $p < .001$, partial η^2 = .18). Therefore, Hypothesis 13 (c) was supported.

In conclusion, Hypotheses 11 and 13(c) were supported but Hypotheses 12, 13 (a and b) and 14 were rejected.

5.5 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the three-way interactive effect of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact on recruitment outcomes (i.e. applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement). Further, it aimed to investigate whether the interactive effect of race composition, participant race and intergroup contact would be mediated by perceived surface- and deep-level similarity.

As hypothesised, minority Chinese participants who have had less intergroup contact were more affected by the race composition of organisational representatives featured in recruitment advertising than minority Chinese participants who have had more intergroup contact. However, majority Malay participants remained indifferent to the race composition regardless of the amount of intergroup contact that they have had. This suggests that the moderating effect of participant race is conditional upon the amount of contact that the individuals have had with racially dissimilar others. The significant moderating role of intergroup contact sheds light on the previous research and Study 2 that have examined the moderating effect of participant race on the

relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000; Wells, 2008). Further, although the two-way interactive effects of race composition and participant race on recruitment outcomes were not explicitly hypothesised in this study, the results showed that the effect of race composition was stronger for minority Chinese than for majority Malay participants. Hence, this study replicates, as well as extends, Study 2 findings.

The significant three-way interactive effect on perceived opportunities for advancement is consistent with the identity salience and numerical distinctiveness literature (McGuire et al., 1978; Randel, 2002; Stryker, 1968) and the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947). Racial salience of minority Chinese participants is reduced upon their increased contact with racially dissimilar individuals. Based on the de-categorisation hypothesis (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Dovidio et al., 2003), minority members who have had greater contacts with out-group members are less sensitive to their race, and less likely to categorise themselves and others based on race, as compared to minority members who have had fewer contacts with out-group members. Further, minority individuals tend to form more favourable attitudes towards racially dissimilar members as the intergroup contact increases (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Gaertner et al., 1996) and hence, they are less likely to reject organisations that feature a homogenous group of representatives who are racially dissimilar to them. In contrast, majority Malay participants are unaffected by the race composition of organisational representatives due to their numerically advantaged status in the society (Perkins et al., 2000). Hence, they remained indifferent to the race composition conditions regardless of the amount of intergroup contact they have experienced.

Further, the three-way interactive effect was mediated by perceived surface-level similarity. However, the three-way mediated moderation effect was significant only for participants' perceived opportunities for advancement. Consistent with past studies (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000; Wells, 2008), the present research showed that minority Chinese participants were more affected by race composition of organisational representatives featured in recruitment advertising than majority Malay participants. Supporting the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947), minority Chinese participants in Australia who have had less interaction with majority Malay members were more affected by the race composition than minority Chinese participants in Malaysia. Minority Chinese participants in Australia might have more

prejudiced views towards majority Malay members and are more sensitive about their race. Their sensitivity and prejudice towards majority Malay members might be intensified when they have had less opportunity to interact with majority Malay members. Further, research suggests that minority members tend to expect greater discrimination than majority members do (Levin, Sinclair, Veniegas & Taylor, 2002). Minority Malaysian Chinese individuals may exhibit greater concern about their advancement opportunities in future workplaces due to their expectations of unfair treatment by majority members. For example, based on national legislation, Malay members are prioritised for positions in Malay-owned and Chinese-owned companies but no parallel favourable treatment is given to non-Malay or minority members, particularly in Malay-owned companies. Thus, minority Chinese individuals tend to perceive Malay-dominated organisations as providing less opportunity for promotion and advancement.

The three-way interactive effect was significant for perceived opportunities for advancement but not for other outcome variables, indicating that the race composition of organisational representatives has different impacts on different recruitment outcomes. Applicants' perceptions of advancement opportunities tend to be affected to a greater extent by the race composition of organisational representatives than their attraction and pursuit intentions. Future research should also examine applicants' behavioural responses such as actual job acceptance and pursuit behaviours.

As with Study 1 and 2, perceived deep-level similarity was a non-significant mediator across all two-way and three-way mediated moderation relationships between race composition and recruitment outcomes. These findings support the argument that perceived surface-level similarity, such as race similarity, may have greater impact and be more important than perceived deep-level similarity in the early stages of a relationship (Harrison et al., 2002). Overall, the mediated moderation effect underlines the importance of perceived race similarity in understanding the effect of race composition on recruitment outcomes.

The present study highlights the benefits of intergroup interactions for reducing prejudice and for developing favourable attitudes between members of different social groups. Employers should encourage meaningful collaboration and frequent communication among team members so that the members are more likely to have positive attitudes about one another. To achieve the optimum effect of contact,

organisations should support egalitarian values and create a work environment that is conducive for employees to develop personal acquaintances and intergroup friendships (Dovidio et al., 2003; Pettigrew, 1998). For example, organisations may integrate interpersonal skills training, such as relationship building with co-workers, into the organisation's orientation program. New employees who were encouraged to interact with racially dissimilar or unfamiliar employees during an orientation program might learn how to behave and what to expect during interracial interactions. As a result, these new employees might experience less anxiety in future intergroup interactions leading to more intergroup friendships within the organisation (Avery, Richeson, Hebl & Ambady, 2009).The support and rapport among different-race employees may be beneficial for reducing stress as well as for improving performance of the new employees (Wanous & Reichers, 2000).

One limitation of this study was that it did not directly measure the amount of contact that participants have had with racially dissimilar members. It used university location as a proxy for the amount of intergroup interactions. Future studies should ask participants to estimate the frequency of interactions (e.g., number of meetings) that they have had with out-group members. Individuals share more information (Zellmer-Bruhn et al., 2008) and thus develop attitudes that are more positive towards out-group members when the number of meetings between these individuals increases. An explicit measure of contact allows researchers to be more precise in predicting the positive effect of contact. However, university location has been a useful proxy for intergroup contact in this study. Universities in these two locations carry distinctive characteristics in terms of the students' race composition and the opportunities that they provide for students to interact with racially dissimilar individuals. The significant moderating effect of intergroup contact on the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes further supports the appropriateness of the operationalisation of the contact construct.

In conclusion, participant race and intergroup contact are critical moderators in the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes. As with Study 1 and 2, perceived race similarity emerges as the explanatory mechanism underlying these moderating relationships. Hence, employers should emphasise the racial identity shared by applicants and employees to facilitate the perception of similarity leading to minority applicant attraction. Further, the use of pictorial diversity is particularly effective for

attracting applicants who have had fewer contacts with racially dissimilar individuals. Findings of this study highlight the need for more research that explores the underlying processes (i.e. mediators) as well as the possible moderating factors that may influence the effects of race composition on recruitment outcomes.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The overall objective of this research was to seek provisional answers for *how* and *why* potential applicants react to various race compositions of organisational representatives featured in recruitment advertising. Specifically, it examined whether (and why) the effect of race composition differs across minority and majority members and across participants with different amount of contact with racially dissimilar others. This chapter provides an overall picture of the research findings, followed by a discussion of the theoretical contributions and practical implications. Finally, the chapter concludes with limitations of the current research and suggestions for future research.

6.2 Key Findings

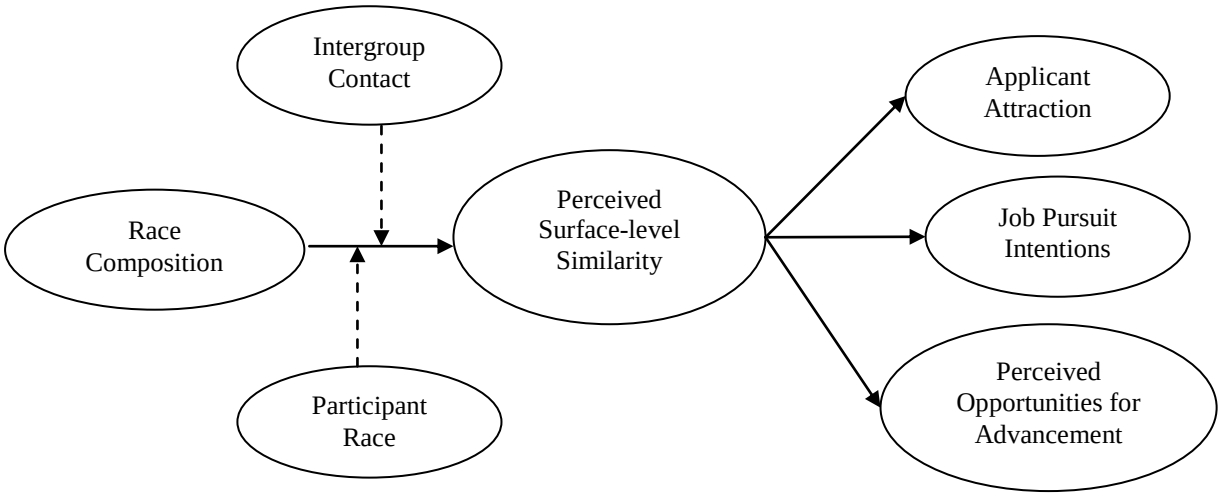


Figure 16: Overall research model.

Figure 16 depicts a graphical representation of the overall research findings. In the face of an increasingly diverse talent pool, it is beneficial for organisations to learn how to attract and utilise under-represented or minority applicants. Findings of the present research suggest that the inclusion of minority representatives in recruitment

advertising is effective for achieving workforce diversity. Organisations featuring a group of minority or racially diverse representatives in their recruitment advertising are perceived as more favourable than organisations featuring a group of majority representatives. However, not all applicants are equally affected by the race composition of organisational representatives featured: the effect of race composition is greater for minority applicants, particularly for minority applicants who have had less contact with racially dissimilar (i.e. majority) members.

The significant mediating effect of perceived race similarity explains *why* the effect of race composition is particularly strong for minority applicants who have had less intergroup contact. Social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987) suggests that participants might perceive same-race representatives featured in recruitment advertising as more racially similar (Cunningham, 2007; Harrison et al., 2002) and more favourable (Kramer, 1991; Tsui et al., 1992) than different-race representatives. Integrating the identity salience and numerical distinctiveness literature (McGuire et al., 1978; Randel, 2002; Stryker, 1968) and the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947), minority individuals who have had more contact with racially dissimilar (i.e. majority) members are less aware of their race and thus, they are less likely to perceive same-race representatives as similar to them. In the present research, minority Malaysian participants in Malaysia who have had regular interactions with racially dissimilar members were less likely to show positive bias towards racially similar individuals and were less likely to display prejudice towards racially dissimilar individuals than minority Malaysian participants in Australia who have had fewer intergroup interactions. Individuals who have had more intergroup contact tend to view racially similar and dissimilar members as individual entities, rather than as in-group and out-group members (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Dovidio et al., 2003). Hence, minority participants who have had greater intergroup interactions were less likely to categorise and perceive same-race representatives as sharing their race identity than minority participants who have had fewer intergroup interactions. As a result, minority Malaysian Chinese students in Malaysia who have had more intergroup contact were less affected by the race composition of organisational representatives (i.e. to show less in-group favouritism and out-group rejection) than minority Malaysian Chinese students in Australia who have had less intergroup contact. In contrast, majority Malay participants were unaffected by the race composition due to their

numerically advantageous position in society. Hence, regardless of the amount of intergroup contact, majority Malay participants remained indifferent to the race composition of organisational representatives.

Although the present research found a significant mediating effect of perceived race similarity on the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes, perceived deep-level similarity failed to emerge as a significant mediator. The non-significant effect of perceived deep-level similarity supports the conclusions of previous research that deep-level similarity is of greater importance at later stages of a relationship (e.g., when applicants enter the organisation and interact with other employees; Harrison et al., 1998; 2002). As noted, 'information about these factors [deep-level attributes] is communicated through verbal and nonverbal behaviour patterns and is only learned through extended, individualized interaction and information gathering' (Harrison et al., 1998, p. 98). Further, participants in the present research (i.e. university students) were in the early stages of their career search. The job choice decisions of applicants in an early stage of recruitment may be more affected by direct and observable attributes such as employee race than by indirect and less observable attributes such as employees' personal values. Harrison et al. (1998; 2002) suggested that the effect of perceived deep-level similarity is strengthened, whereas perceived surface-level similarity is weakened, over time. Moreover, the present research did not measure actual deep-level similarity. Had the research assessed participants' values, personality and attitudes, and presented the values, personality and attitudes of the organisational representatives, the researcher might have found a significant mediating effect of perceived deep-level similarity. Past studies showed that actual deep-level similarity, but not actual surface-level similarity, predicts perceived deep-level similarity, which in turn leads to social integration among employees (Harrison et al., 2002).

Overall, the present research findings support and extend previous research. Previous studies have shown consistently that the race composition of organisational representatives featured in recruitment advertising influences applicant attraction (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000; Wells, 2008). The present research suggested that the effect of race composition could be extended to other recruitment outcomes such as applicants' job pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement. Further, the moderating effect of participant race on the

relationship between race composition and applicant attraction found in the Western societies is generalisable to a non-Western context. Moreover, the evidence that the effect of race composition on recruitment outcomes operates through perceived race similarity is consistent with the literature examining perceived similarity as an intervening variable in the relationship between actual similarity and interview or work outcomes (Cunningham, 2007; Garcia, 2004; Goldberg, 2005; Graves & Powell, 1995; Harrison et al., 1998; 2002; Huang & Iun, 2006; Turban & Jones, 1988; Wayne & Liden, 1995; Zellmer-Bruhn et al., 2008).

6.3 Theoretical Contributions

The overall objective of the present research was to understand the mechanism linking the direct and moderated effect of race composition to recruitment outcomes, with participant race and intergroup contact as the moderators. The present research responded to the call to open the 'black box' (Lawrence, 1997, p. 2) by proposing participants' perceived surface- and deep-level similarity as the mediators in the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes. This research utilised social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987) and the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) for understanding the mediating effects.

Social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987) and the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) are useful in explaining the effect of similarity on work or recruitment outcomes. Both theories predict that people are attracted to similar others. However, each theory places different emphasis on explaining the effect of diversity attributes on attraction. Social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987) suggests that people group themselves and others based on social categories or demographic attributes. Similarity with respect to a social category such as race fosters the perception of surface-level similarity leading to attraction (Tsui et al., 1992). Thus, social identity/categorisation theory may be appropriate for explaining the effect of surface-level similarity on recruitment outcomes. The similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) proposes that people are attracted to attitudinally similar others. Actual demographic (i.e. surface-level) similarity can generate individuals' inferences of deep-level similarity (Zellmer-Bruhn et al., 2008), which in turn leads to attraction. Hence, the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) may be effective for explaining the effect of similarity in terms of underlying or deep-level attributes such as attitudes and personal values on attraction.

Overall, examining perceived surface- and deep-level similarity allows the researcher to identify the points of divergence between theoretical perspectives—social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987) and the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971)—while recognising the usefulness of both theories in explaining the effect of diversity on recruitment outcomes.

The mediating effects of perceived surface-level similarity were consistent across the three studies. The role perceived race similarity plays as a mediator was significant in explaining: 1) the direct effect of race composition (Study 1); 2) the moderating effect of participant race (Study 2 and 3); and 3) the moderating effects of participant race and intergroup contact (Study 3) on recruitment outcomes. In contrast, perceived deep-level similarity mediated neither the direct effect of race composition nor the moderating effects of participant race and intergroup contact on recruitment outcomes.

The differential mediating effects displayed by surface- and deep-level similarity suggest that it is important to differentiate between the two types of perceived similarity. Consistent with the visible and less visible diversity attributes classification and distinction (Harrison et al., 2002; Jackson et al., 1995; Milliken & Martins, 1996), surface-level and deep-level diversity attributes are anchored at the two opposite ends along the visibility continuum. Specifically, visible attributes, such as race, may be more important in influencing applicants' attitudes towards an employing organisation (e.g., attraction) than less visible or deep-level attributes, such as values, personality and attitudes. Individuals usually categorise themselves and others based on surface-level attributes such as race that are easily identified after a brief interaction (Jackson et al., 1995; 2003; Pelled et al., 1999; Webber & Donahue, 2001). In contrast, deep-level attributes are less visible and non-observable and are unlikely to be identified during initial interactions (Jackson et al., 1995; 2003). Hence, perceived surface-level similarity may be more influential than perceived deep-level similarity in the recruitment context, particularly for applicants who have had limited contact with the organisational representatives. Studies using a general measure of perceived similarity (Avery et al., 2004) were unable to identify the specific similarity dimension that explains the effect of race composition on recruitment outcomes. Hence, the present research clarifies previous research suggesting that it is the perceived race similarity

(and not perceived deep-level similarity) that explains the linkage between race composition and recruitment outcomes.

The moderating role participant race plays in the relationship between race composition and recruitment outcomes replicates previous research conducted in Western societies (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000; Wells, 2008). Although the relative socioeconomic status of minority and majority group members are different between the two societies—minority Chinese individuals in Malaysia possess a higher socioeconomic status than majority Malay individuals (Agadjanian & Liew, 2005), whereas minority Black American individuals in the United States occupy a more disadvantaged position than majority White American individuals (Pratto et al., 2000)—minority members in *both* locations (Malaysia and the United States) are more sensitive to their race and more affected by race composition of organisational representatives featured in recruitment advertising than majority members are. The parallel findings observed between participants in Malaysia and participants in Western societies support the identity salience and numerical distinctiveness literature (McGuire et al., 1978; Randel, 2002; Stryker, 1968). It is numerical minority status, not low socioeconomic status, that increases the salience of minority members' race identity leading to their sensitivity towards race-relevant information (i.e. race composition of organisational representatives) in recruitment advertising. This research rules out the possible confounding effect of numerical minority and socioeconomic status for minority participants in Western societies. The present finding answered the research question of whether minority participants from a more affluent background would exhibit a similar pattern of responses as minority members who were in a disadvantaged position (Avery et al., 2004).

Complex diversity models integrating moderators and mediators such as the one tested in Study 3 are beneficial for understanding the effects of diversity (van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Study 3 integrated social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987) and the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947) to understand the mediated moderation effect of race composition and intergroup interaction on recruitment outcomes. Based on social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987), categorisation of individuals into different social groups generates intergroup biases. The contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947) suggests that interactions between members of two groups

reduces the biases or prejudices by engaging in cognitive processes such as de-categorisation (Brewer & Miller, 1984) and re-categorisation (Gaertner et al., 1993; 1996). As a result of increased contact between two groups' members, individuals perceive out-group or racially dissimilar individuals as individual entities (i.e. de-categorisation) and view the former out-group members as belonging to the new super-ordinate group (i.e. re-categorisation). The integration of social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987) and the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947) highlights the importance of social categorical diversity attributes such as race in influencing the effect of race composition of organisational representatives on applicants' attitudes towards an employing organisation.

Previous research suggested that participants' attitudes towards an organisation might be influenced by the race composition of the participant's community or educational institution: for example, students in a racially diverse institution may be less affected by race composition of organisational representatives than students in a less racially diverse institution are (Avery, 2003; Wells, 2008). Students in a racially diverse institution may be sensitised to interracial interaction, leading to their attraction to an organisation with a group of racially diverse employees (Wells, 2008). This proposition was not explicitly tested in previous studies. The present research fills the void by utilising the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947) to understand the differential effect of race composition on Malaysian students in public universities in Malaysia (i.e. greater intergroup contact opportunities) *versus* Malaysian students in Australia (i.e. fewer intergroup contact opportunities). To the author's knowledge, the present research is the first to examine the contact hypothesis in a recruitment context.

6.4 Practical Implications

Several practical implications can be drawn from the findings of the present research. Firstly, featuring minority representatives in recruitment advertising is beneficial for attracting racial minority as well as majority applicants. This implication is consistent across Western and non-Western cultures. Further, the inclusion of minority representatives is more important than the proportion of minority representatives (Wells, 2008). Consistent with past studies, the present research found that minority applicants were equally attracted to organisations featuring a homogenous group of minority representatives as to organisations featuring a group of racially diverse representatives (Wells, 2008).

Secondly, it is important for an employing organisation to foster the perception of similarity between minority applicants and the featured representatives. Minority applicants are attracted to an organisation that features minority representatives because they believe that the organisation's employees are racially similar to them. Based on social identity/categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1987), organisations should emphasise the race similarity between minority applicants and representatives rather than merely including minority representatives in recruitment advertising.

Thirdly, employers should utilise recruitment materials to convey their diversity stance (Highhouse et al., 1999) and to enhance their reputation or image as an attractive employer (Cable & Graham, 2000; Carless & Imber, 2007). For example, organisational websites have been shown to be a useful recruitment tool to promote an organisation's culture and the benefits of working at the organisation, which in turn influences applicant attraction (Williamson et al., 2010; Williamson, Lepak & King, 2003). Applicants use information in the recruitment materials as signals of the organisation's commitment to, or values for, diversity (Carless, 2005b; Rynes, 1991). Sending diversity messages through recruitment materials is an effective yet economical strategy for attracting both minority and majority applicants (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004). Employers may consider including information about the organisation's culture or values in traditional newspaper advertisements (Blackman, 2006), on organisational websites (Allen et al., 2007; Williamson et al., 2010) and in brochures used in recruitment activities on college campuses (Turban, 2001). The positive effect of information about the organisation (e.g., information about the company culture) on applicant attraction was particularly strong for organisations with a good reputation (Williamson et al., 2010).

Fourthly, employers should consider the amount of interactions that individuals have had with out-group members when designing recruitment activities or materials. For example, organisations that aim to recruit minority applicants from a community comprising racially similar individuals (i.e. very few opportunities for intergroup interactions) should place more emphasis on fostering the perception of race similarity between minority applicants and organisational representatives. Alternatively, the organisation should explicitly convey its stance on diversity in its recruitment materials.

Lastly, multinational organisations should respond appropriately in their diversity management programs. Although minority Chinese individuals in Malaysia enjoy a relatively high status in Malaysia (Agadjanian & Liew, 2005), findings of the present research suggest that they are as sensitive to diversity signals as minority group members are in Western societies. The present research suggests that the effect of race composition on attraction found in Western societies is generalisable to a non-Western society and the present research supports previous findings that an organisation's value for diversity predicted applicant attraction in both Western and non-Western cultures (Wiersema & Bird, 1993). Thus, organisations should not neglect diversity commitment when recruiting employees from various cultures.

6.5 Limitations

Limitations of the current research revolve around methodological issues relating to the cross-sectional design of its studies. In all three studies, data were collected from a single-source: a student sample. The use of single-source data might cause the findings to suffer from common method bias. The student sample restricts the researcher's ability to generalise the study findings to the actual labour market. However, university students bear the closest resemblance to potential applicants among other participant cohorts and a similar sample was used in most recruitment research (Aiman-Smith et al., 2001; Brown et al., 2006).

The present research examined Chinese participants as the only minority group members. However, members of different minority groups may have different reactions to diversity issues (Wiersema & Bird, 1993; Williamson et al., 2008). Further, race was the only diversity dimension examined in the present research. The present research assumed that the applicants were using race as an important demographic attribute in their self-definitions. However, individuals have multiple social identities and tend to identify with groups that will enhance their self-identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). For instance, people define themselves according to their racial groups as well as other social groups that are meaningful to them (e.g., a favourite football team). These social categories and self-categorisations may interact to affect an individual's evaluation of another person (van Bavel & Cunningham, 2009). Individuals may use multiple social categories, or emphasise a particular social category (e.g., race) but downplay another (e.g., gender), during an impression formation of a new encounter (Kulik et al., 2007). Hence, it is important to consider the simultaneous effect of multiple diversity

dimensions on an individual's overall attraction to an organisation. Further, future research should measure participants' identity salience and the degree of their racial identification. Applicants with high identification might be more strongly attracted to organisations featuring members of their own race than their counterparts who are low in identification (Linnehan, Chrobot-Mason & Konrad, 2006).

In real life, potential applicants usually view more than one advertisement before evaluating an organisation. However, participants in this research were given only one advertisement to view prior to giving their attitudinal responses (i.e. attraction, pursuit intentions and perceived opportunities for advancement). Participants may be more or less attracted to an organisation not because of the race composition of organisational representatives but due to other factors, such as type of work offered by the employing organisation (Avery, 2003; Wells, 2008). However, this study's design was similar to that used by the majority of past studies in the diversity recruitment literature (Avery, 2003; Avery et al., 2004; Perkins et al., 2000). Further, the organisation described in the present research was general and applicable to most graduates. The advertisement created for the present research retained 'mundane realism' yet excluded specific information that might influence participants' attitudes towards the organisation (Perkins et al., 2000, p. 243). The applicability and relevance of the job or organisation to the participants was emphasised in the survey.

Although most Malaysian students are proficient in the English language, English is not the first or native language for most Malaysians. Hence, participants might have encountered some difficulties understanding the survey items, particularly students in public universities where Malay is the main language of instruction (Education Guide Malaysia, n.d.). However, the overall comprehensibility of the survey was pilot-tested using Malaysian students.

Finally, information about participants' work experience and job search experience was not collected in this research. Previous research suggests that the effect of job advertisement content on job seekers' attitudes towards an organisation might be greater for individuals who have more job search experience than for individuals who have less job search experience (Walker, Feild, Giles & Bernerth, 2008).

6.6 Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should recruit actual applicants and study their reactions to actual organisations and organisational employees (Breaugh, 2008). Further, researchers

could develop a measure of actual race similarity between an applicant and the organisation's workforce. Previous research has suggested that actual similarity among employees increases group commitment and productivity (Riordan & Shore, 1997). Similar effects may be observed when the comparison group is expanded to include applicants. Moreover, applicants' actual application behaviour could be examined beyond participants' intentions to pursue.

Further, Malaysian Indians should be included as a second minority group in future studies. Malaysian Indians may be more sensitive to diversity issues than Malaysian Chinese. Compared with Malaysian Chinese, Malaysian Indians have a much smaller numerical representation (i.e. 7.10%; The World Factbook, 2004) and occupy a lower socioeconomic status in Malaysian society (Agadjanian & Liew, 2005).

Future studies should include other relations-oriented diversity attributes such as gender in the study materials. Gender composition of recruiters featured in recruitment advertising influences applicant attraction (Umphress et al., 2007). For example, prospective job applicants, particularly those who were high in social dominance orientation, were more attracted to an organisation depicting a group of male recruiters than an organisation depicting a group of female recruiters (Umphress et al., 2007). It will be interesting to examine the interaction between gender and race composition and its effect on recruitment-related outcomes in future research.

In addition to examining participant race as the moderator, future research may investigate participants' social dominance orientation. Social dominance orientation refers to 'the degree to which individuals desire and support group-based hierarchy and the domination of "inferior" groups by "superior" groups' (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, p. 48). Examining social dominance theory may illuminate the non-symmetrical effect of race composition between minority and majority participants, explaining why majority Malay participants were not more attracted to organisations featuring a group of representatives who are racially similar than to organisations featuring a group of representatives who are racially dissimilar to them. Research has shown that majority White participants with high social dominance orientation were more attracted to an organisation depicting majority White recruiters than to an organisation depicting minority Black recruiters. However, majority White participants with low social dominance orientation were unaffected by the race composition of the recruiters (Umphress et al., 2007).

The present research used P-O fit theory (Kristof, 1996) as one of the theoretical bases for predicting the effect of race composition on attraction (Carless, 2005a). However, perceptions of fit were not explicitly sought from the participants. Including a perception of fit measure in future studies allows the researcher to examine perception of fit as a potential intervening variable in the relationship between race composition and applicant attraction, and develops a mediational measure that focuses at the organisation-level, making it more congruent with the organisational attractiveness outcome measure. The present research examined the perception of similarity with organisational representatives (i.e. interpersonal-level) but not similarity or fit with the organisation as a whole (i.e. organisational-level).

Further, in order to improve the validity and reliability of the present research findings, several additional survey items should be included in future studies. Specifically, participants' socioeconomic status should be measured rather than assuming *all* minority Chinese participants possess a higher level of socioeconomic status than majority Malay participants do. In addition, a few items asking about participants' work experience and job seeking experience should be included. Moreover, participants' diversity experience or the amount of interactions they have had with racially dissimilar others should be sought. Although the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947) was a useful theoretical basis for understanding the moderating effect of intergroup contact, participants' amount of contact with racially dissimilar others was assumed in the present research. Further, more information about the fictitious organisation should be provided. Future research may include information about the organisation's values and culture. Stating the organisation's value and culture explicitly allows the researcher to develop a measure of actual deep-level similarity between the applicant and the organisation when the applicant's personal values are also obtained. Previous research showed that actual deep-level similarity predicted perceived deep-level similarity leading to social integration (Harrison et al., 2002). Access to information about actual deep-level similarity may clarify the non-significant effect of perceived deep-level similarity as a mediator. Finally, future studies in non-Western societies should use a survey written in the local society's native language, in order to avoid difficulties in understanding the survey items.

6.7 Conclusions

This research achieved its overall objectives by exploring the mediating role of perceived surface- and deep-level similarity in a set of direct as well as moderated relationships between race composition of organisational representatives and recruitment outcomes. Findings across the three studies showed a consistent result: perceived race similarity, but not perceived deep-level similarity, mediated the direct effect of race composition and the moderated effect of participant race and intergroup contact on recruitment outcomes. The effect of race composition of organisational representatives was stronger for minority Chinese than for majority Malay participants. Further, participants who had fewer intergroup interactions were more influenced by the race composition than participants who had greater intergroup interactions. In conclusion, organisations that strive to achieve a diverse workforce should depict minority members in recruitment advertising and foster the perception of race similarity between minority applicants and the organisation's employees. Potential applicants' race and their amount of interaction with racially dissimilar others should be considered in the organisation's recruitment planning.

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Appendix A: Letter of Introduction

University of
South Australia

School of Management
University of South Australia
Adelaide, SA 5000, Australia

Dean
(faculty)
(university name)
Professor XXX

Subject: Letter of Introduction.

Dear Professor,

My name is Yin Lu Ng and I am currently a PhD candidate in the School of Management, Division of Business, University of South Australia, Australia. I am under the supervision of Professor Carol Kulik and Professor Prashant Bordia of School of Management, University of South Australia. The title of my PhD research is *'The effect of diversity-related messages in job advertisements on organisational attractiveness'*. This letter is to request a formal approval in conducting the research in (university name).

The broad aim of this research is to examine the influence of demographic similarity between the potential applicants and organisational representative depicted in the job advertisement on applicants' attraction towards the organisation as a place to work. Research has shown that individuals are more likely to get attracted to people who are similar to them and employees reported greater satisfaction and lower level of turnover intentions when their work team composed of racially similar individuals. Given the importance of this area of research, I am requesting for your permission to conduct a questionnaire-based study with your students.

The study will be conducted after class or at a time and place that is convenient to the participants. It will take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete the study. Prior to the study, an information sheet and a consent form will be provided to the participants. The information sheet will detail the purpose of the study, the duration required in the study, ways to analyse and store the data, and the ethical procedures outlined by the University of South

Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee. Upon the participant's agreement to participate, they will be given a fictitious job advertisement to view. There are three different advertisements involved in this study. All three advertisements will be identical in terms of the organisation's background description and benefits provided by the employer. The main difference across these job advertisements will be the racial composition of the organisational representatives in the advertisement. Each participant will receive only one type of advertisement. After viewing the advertisement, participants will be asked to respond to a series of scaled questions that ask about their beliefs and perceptions based on the job advertisement. Participants' demographic data will also be sought for analysis and record purposes.

For your convenience, I have included copies of the study materials and questionnaire that will be used in the study. To ensure the confidentiality of participants' responses, only my supervisors, Professor Carol Kulik and Professor Prashant Bordia, and I will have the access to the data collected from the study. Please be assured that research participant's comments or identity will not be revealed to the university in any form. Further, participation in the study will be voluntary in nature and participants may withdraw from the research at any time without any reservation.

There are no potential risks to the participants beyond those encountered during everyday life as a result of their involvement in the research. All information collected as part of the study will be retained for five years in the office of School of Management, University of South Australia, as outlined in the UniSA guidelines. All participants' responses (i.e. completed questionnaires) will be stored and locked in cabinets. All records containing personal information will remain confidential, and no information that may lead to identification of any individual will be released. If you have any questions about the research, please contact me at 012–3528530 or email: ngyinlu@yahoo.com, or my supervisor, Professor Prashant Bordia at +618 8302 7003, email: Prashant.Bordia@unisa.edu.au.

Thank you for giving this request your fullest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Yin Lu Ng
PhD Candidate
School of Management

Division of Business
University of South Australia (UniSA)
City West Campus, North Terrace
Adelaide, SA 5000, Australia
Tel: 012–3528530 (Malaysia), +614 11 108 247 (Australia)
Email: ngyyl008@students.unisa.edu.au or ngyinlu@yahoo.com

Attachments: Study materials and questionnaire
Information sheet
Consent form

Appendix B: Information Sheet and Consent Form

University of
South Australia

School of Management
University of South Australia
Adelaide, SA 5000, Australia

INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Participant,

My name is Yin Lu Ng and I am currently a PhD candidate at the School of Management, University of South Australia, Australia. I am under the supervision of Professor Carol Kulik and Professor Prashant Bordia of School of Management, University of South Australia. You are invited to participate in a research project that aims to investigate the effect of job advertisement type on organisational attractiveness. That is, certain types of job advertisement may appear more attractive than the other. The broad aim of this research is to assist organisations to recruit and select appropriate employees by designing a better job brochure.

Please note that you must be 18 years old or above to take part in this study. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be given a job advertisement to view. After viewing the advertisement, you will be required to respond to a series of scaled questions that ask about your beliefs and perceptions based on the job advertisement. You will be required also to provide some background information. The study will last about 20 minutes.

Your participation in this research is purely voluntary. You may withdraw from the research at any time without any penalty. Your decision of whether or not to participate will not affect your current and future grades or status within the university. Please be assured that all information you provide in this study will be strictly confidential and anonymous. You are requested NOT TO write your name in any of the study materials.

All study materials will be locked in a filing cabinet in the researcher's office, at the University of South Australia (UniSA), City West campus. Any soft copy of the study responses will be stored on the researcher's office computer, which can only be accessed with secured passwords. The study materials and responses will be stored securely at the School of Management, University of South Australia, City West campus, for five years, then destroyed. Only the principal researcher, Yin Lu Ng, and her supervisors, Professor Carol Kulik and Professor Prashant Bordia, will have access to the data. Please be assured that your identity will not be

revealed to the university in any form. All records containing personal information will remain confidential and no information that could identify you will be released. There are no risks to participations beyond those encountered during everyday life.

Data from this research will be utilised in the preparation of manuscripts for future publication. A summary of findings will be posted to you by mail upon request. This will be accomplished within one year after the study is conducted. Please be assured that your individual responses will be protected and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. No individuals will be identified in those publications. Only overall group responses will be presented. If you have any questions regarding the project or your involvement, please feel free to contact me, Yin Lu Ng at +6012 352 8530 (Malaysia), +614 11 108 247 (Australia) or ngyyl008@students.unisa.edu.au or my supervisor, Professor Prashant Bordia at +61 8 8302 7003 or Prashant.Bordia@unisa.edu.au.

This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any ethical concerns about the project or questions about your rights as a participant please contact the Executive Officer of this Committee, Tel: +618 8302 3118; Email: Vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au

Thank you very much for your participation in the research.

Yours sincerely,

Yin Lu Ng
PhD Candidate
School of Management
University of South Australia (UniSA)
City West Campus, North Terrace
Adelaide, SA 5000, Australia
Tel: +6012 352 8530 (Malaysia), +614 11 108 247 (Australia)
Email: ngyinlu@yahoo.com, ngyyl008@students.unisa.edu.au

University of
South Australia

School of Management
University of South Australia
Adelaide, SA 5000, Australia

CONSENT FORM

Project Title: The effect of job advertisement type on organisational attractiveness.

Researcher's name: Yin Lu Ng, PhD Candidate
School of Management, University of South Australia (UniSA)
Contact details: Tel: +6012 352 8530 (Msia), +614 11 108 247 (Aus)
Email: ngyyl008@students.unisa.edu.au

Supervisor's name: Dr. Prashant Bordia, Professor
School of Management, University of South Australia (UniSA)
Contact details: Tel: +61 8 8302 7003 (office)
Email: Prashant.Bordia@unisa.edu.au

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I confirm that I am over 18 years of age.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that all information collected as part of this study will be stored safely by the researcher in her office. Any soft copy of the data stored in the researcher's work computer can only be accessed with her personal username and password. Only the researcher and her supervisors will have access to the data. The data collected will not be used for any purposes other than this particular PhD research. All information collected as part of the study will be retained for five years in the office of School of Management, University of South Australia (UniSA), City West Campus, North Terrace, Adelaide, SA 5000, Australia, according to UniSA guidelines.

Signed .....

Dated .....

I have provided information about the research to the research participant and believe that he/she understands what is involved.

Researcher's signature and date

…….

Appendix C: Stimulus Materials, Survey Questionnaire and Manipulation Check

STIMULUS MATERIAL 1: 100% Chinese Condition

The advertisement below depicts a job opening at *Soroton Inc.* in Malaysia. *Soroton Inc.* is a company that provides a wide range of goods and services. It actively recruits graduates from all fields every year. Please study the advertisement carefully and answer the questions in the following page.

Soroton Inc.

YOUR CHOICE OUR PRIDE

YOUR CHOICE OUR PRIDE

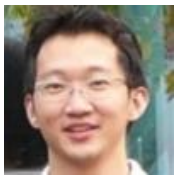
Whether you're still studying hard or you've already graduated, Soroton Inc. offers you a wealth of challenging career opportunities. At Soroton Inc., we give you the ability to manage your own development, providing you with the tools to chart your own career path. With a diverse range of products and services, a career in this organization comes with opportunities to enrich one's self with knowledge on the many aspects of businesses and operations. We are committed to being a global employer of choice, and we offer competitive compensation, rewards and benefits.



'Each day at Soroton Inc. has been unique and demanding in a different way, each requiring a different approach and a different skill-set.'
(Lee Jen Sen)



'I like the variety and freedom in my job. The work helps me to develop continuously, both personally and professionally.'
(Seow Yen Nee)



'The company values my individual progress and supports me in developing a wide range of useful skills.'
(Joshua Hui Hock Eng)



'I love the dynamic environment and being part of a team that is supportive and motivating.'
(Amanda Yap Li-Mei)

INTERESTED? For more information, please contact:

Human Resource Executive
105, Jalan Sultan Ismail,
50250 Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia.

Tel: 603–21486600 | **Fax:** 603–21442288 |**Email:** hr@soroton.com

STIMULUS MATERIAL 2: 50% Chinese–50% Malay Condition

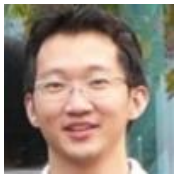
The advertisement below depicts a job opening at *Soroton Inc.* in Malaysia. *Soroton Inc.* is a company that provides a wide range of goods and services. It actively recruits graduates from all fields every year. Please study the advertisement carefully and answer the questions in the following page.

Soroton Inc.

YOUR CHOICE OUR PRIDE

YOUR CHOICE OUR PRIDE

Whether you're still studying hard or you've already graduated, Soroton Inc. offers you a wealth of challenging career opportunities. At Soroton Inc., we give you the ability to manage your own development, providing you with the tools to chart your own career path. With a diverse range of products and services, a career in this organization comes with opportunities to enrich one's self with knowledge on the many aspects of businesses and operations. We are committed to being a global employer of choice, and we offer competitive compensation, rewards and benefits.



'Each day at Soroton Inc. has been unique and demanding in a different way, each requiring a different approach and a different skill-set.'
(Joshua Hui Hock Eng)



'I like the variety and freedom in my job. The work helps me to develop continuously, both personally and professionally.'
(Seow Yen Nee)



'The company values my individual progress and supports me in developing a wide range of useful skills.'
(Izrul bin Shamsudin)



'I love the dynamic environment and being part of a team that is supportive and motivating.'
(Nur Sarima binti Farouk)

INTERESTED? For more information, please contact:

Human Resource Executive
105, Jalan Sultan Ismail,
50250 Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia.

Tel: 603–21486600 | **Fax:** 603–21442288 |**Email:** hr@soroton.com

STIMULUS MATERIAL 3: 100% Malay Condition

The advertisement below depicts a job opening at *Soroton Inc.* in Malaysia. *Soroton Inc.* is a company that provides a wide range of goods and services. It actively recruits graduates from all fields every year. Please study the advertisement carefully and answer the questions in the following page.

Soroton Inc.

YOUR CHOICE OUR PRIDE

YOUR CHOICE OUR PRIDE

Whether you're still studying hard or you've already graduated, Soroton Inc. offers you a wealth of challenging career opportunities. At Soroton Inc., we give you the ability to manage your own development, providing you with the tools to chart your own career path. With a diverse range of products and services, a career in this organization comes with opportunities to enrich one's self with knowledge on the many aspects of businesses and operations. We are committed to being a global employer of choice, and we offer competitive compensation, rewards and benefits.



'Each day at Soroton Inc. has been unique and demanding in a different way, each requiring a different approach and a different skill-set.'
(Nik Amil bin Putera Sulung)



'I like the variety and freedom in my job. The work helps me to develop continuously, both personally and professionally.'
(Nurul Hazlinda binti Muhamad Ali)



'The company values my individual progress and supports me in developing a wide range of useful skills.'
(Izrul bin Shamsudin)



'I love the dynamic environment and being part of a team that is supportive and motivating.'
(Nur Sarima binti Farouk)

INTERESTED? For more information, please contact:

Human Resource Executive
105, Jalan Sultan Ismail,
50250 Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia.

Tel: 603–21486600 | **Fax:** 603–21442288 |**Email:** hr@soroton.com

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

DEMOGRAPHICS

Please provide us with some information about you. We will use this information ONLY to describe, in general terms, the GROUP of people who completed the study.

1. Gender

□ **Male**	□ **Female**

2. Age _____ years old

3. What is your current level of your study and what is the major of your degree?

□ **1st year of undergraduate**	**Majoring in**
□ **2nd year of undergraduate**	**Majoring in**
□ **3rd year of undergraduate**	**Majoring in**
□ **4th year or Honours**	**Majoring in**
□ **Postgraduate**	**Majoring in**
□ **Other (please specify):**	

4. My race is _____

□ **Malay**	□ **Chinese**
□ **Indian**	□ **Other (please specify):**

ABOUT *SOROTON INC.*

Based on the job advertisement above, please let us know what you think of *Soroton Inc.* Please circle the response that best describes how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement using the scale below.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

For me, *Soroton Inc.* would be a good place to work	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
***Soroton Inc.* is attractive to me as a place for employment**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
A job at *Soroton Inc.* is very appealing to me	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
With respect to personal values, I think I am very similar to the employees who work at *Soroton Inc.*	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
With respect to personalities, I think I am very similar to the employees who work at *Soroton Inc.*	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
With respect to attitudes, I think I am very similar to the employees who work at *Soroton Inc.*	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
With respect to race, I think I am very similar to the employees who work at *Soroton Inc.*	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I perceive that there are opportunities for advancement and promotion in *Soroton Inc.*	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I believe that if I perform my job well, I am more likely to be promoted	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I believe people promoted in *Soroton Inc.* are generally the most qualified among potential candidates	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I believe that the policies and practices of *Soroton Inc.* ensure all employees- regardless of their gender, racial origin, or physical abilities- have an equal chance for advancement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
If I was being offered a job from *Soroton Inc.*, I would accept the job offer	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I would request more information about *Soroton Inc.*	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
If *Soroton Inc.* visited campus I would want to speak with a representative	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I would attempt to gain an interview with *Soroton Inc.*	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
I would actively pursue obtaining a position with *Soroton Inc.*	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
If *Soroton Inc.* was at a job fair I would seek out their booth	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

Thank you for your participation!

MANIPULATION CHECK

Based on the advertisement presented in the survey, please tell us how strongly agree or disagree you are to the following statement. You may re-visit the advertisement if necessary. Please circle your response based on the scale from '1 = Strongly Disagree' to '7 = Strongly Agree'.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

'Based on the advertisement, I believe that…

Soroton Inc. **comprises employees of various races'**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

Thank you for your participation!