# AUTHENTICITY AS A NECESSARY CATALYST FOR NUMERICAL DIVERSITY'S EFFECTIVENESS

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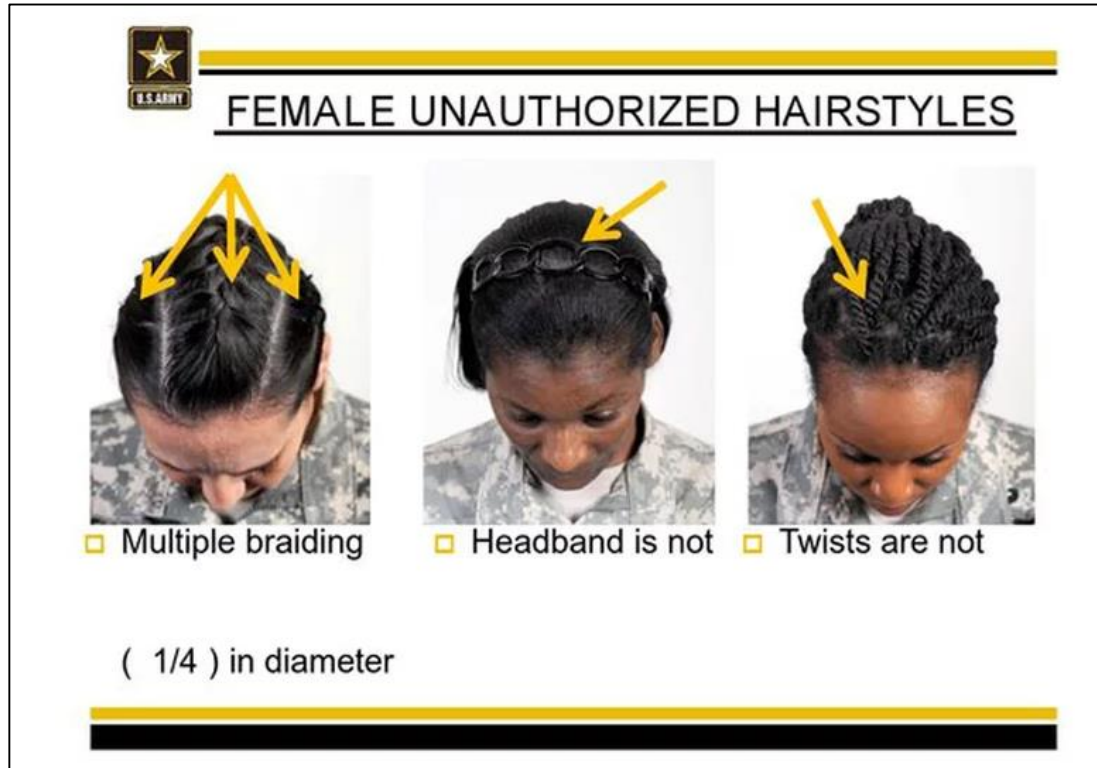
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# Army's Ban on Some Popular Hairstyles Raises Ire of Black Female Soldiers

By HELENE COOPER   APRIL 20, 2014



FEMALE UNAUTHORIZED HAIRSTYLES

☐ Multiple braiding     ☐ Headband is not     ☐ Twists are not

( 1/4 ) in diameter

3–1), curving inward to the natural termination point at the base of the neck. When the hair is combed, it will not fall over the ears or eyebrows, or touch the collar, except for the closely cut hair at the back of the neck. The block-cut fullness in the back is permitted to a moderate degree, as long as the tapered look is maintained. Males are not authorized to wear braids, cornrows, or dreadlocks (unkempt, twisted, matted, individual parts of hair) while in uniform, or in civilian clothes on duty. Haircuts with a single, untapered patch of hair on the top of the head (not consistent with natural hair loss) are considered eccentric and are not authorized. Examples include, but are not limited to, when the head is shaved around a strip of hair down the center of the head (mohawk), around a u-shaped hair area

# DID THE ARMY HAVE A DIVERSITY PROBLEM?

% Black and Total Minority Employees (2014)
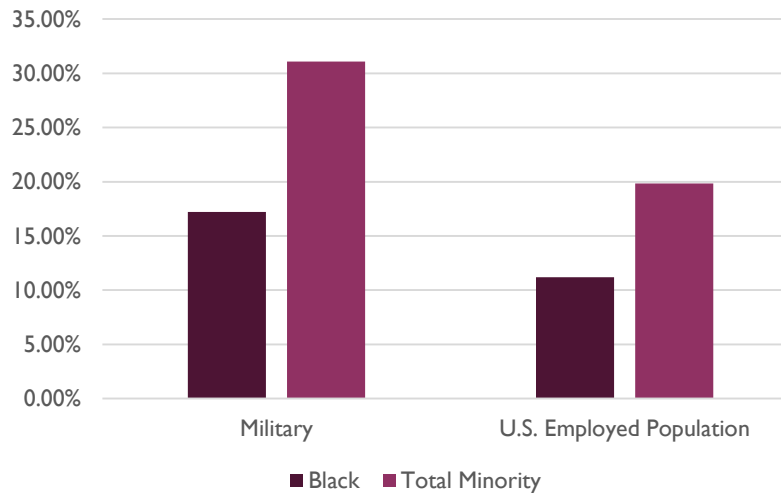


*Black Women Enlisting at Higher Rates in U.S. Military*

By JAMES DAO    DEC. 22, 2011

Black women are enlisting in the military at far higher rates than are white or Hispanic women, and they now represent nearly a third of all the women in the armed forces, a new study by the Pew Research Center has found.

The study found that of the 167,000 enlisted women in the military, 31 percent are black, twice their percentage in the civilian female population. Black men represent about 16 percent of the male enlisted population, roughly equal to their proportion in the civilian population.

White women, by comparison, represent 53 percent of women in the military, while accounting for 78 percent of the civilian female population.

# DOES NUMERICAL DIVERSITY *REQUIRE* AUTHENTICITY IN ORDER TO PREVENT PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION?

- Authenticity is defined as "*the degree to which individuals connect with and enact their true selves in various situations*" (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Rogers, 1961).

- Authenticity positively related to well-being in the workplace (Menard and Brunet, 2011) and may be a precursor to promotion (Phillips, Dumas, & Rothbard, 2018)

- Nonetheless, underrepresented minorities are less likely to act authentically in organizational environments (Phillips, Dumas, & Rothbard, 2018)

# AUTHENTICITY AS A CATALYST FOR NUMERICAL DIVERSITY (STUDIES)

- Study 1 - Minority Business Owners (Survey)

- Study 2 - Minority MBA Alumni (Qualitative)

- Study 3 - Black Employees (Experimental)

- Study 4 - White Employees (Survey)

# STUDY 1- DISENTANGLING THE EFFECTS OF NUMERICAL DIVERSITY VS. AUTHENTICITY



- Surveyed 486 minority business owners
  (71.4% male; 48.2% Black, 23.3% Latino, 17.9% Asian, 4.3% Native American, 1.6% Pacific Islander, and 3.1% Other)

- Focal Measures

  - *Authenticity*
    - 11-item Authenticity Scale (e.g. "*When I am working, I feel out of touch with the real me*; Wood, Linley, Maltby, & Baliousis, 2008; α = .81)
  - *Racial Diversity*
    - Sliding Bar indicating the % of people that are minorities; Subjective Assessment (e.g. "My industry is very racially/ethnically diverse," 1= strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree)
  - *Discrimination*
    - Major Experiences of Discrimination Scale (Williams et al., 2008; e.g. "*I have been unfairly denied opportunities within my industry as an entrepreneur*" α = .92)
    - Chronic Work place Discrimination Scale (McNeilly et al., 1996; Bobo, 2000; e.g. "How often are you watched more closely than other entrepreneurs?", α = .86)

# STUDY 1- RESULTS
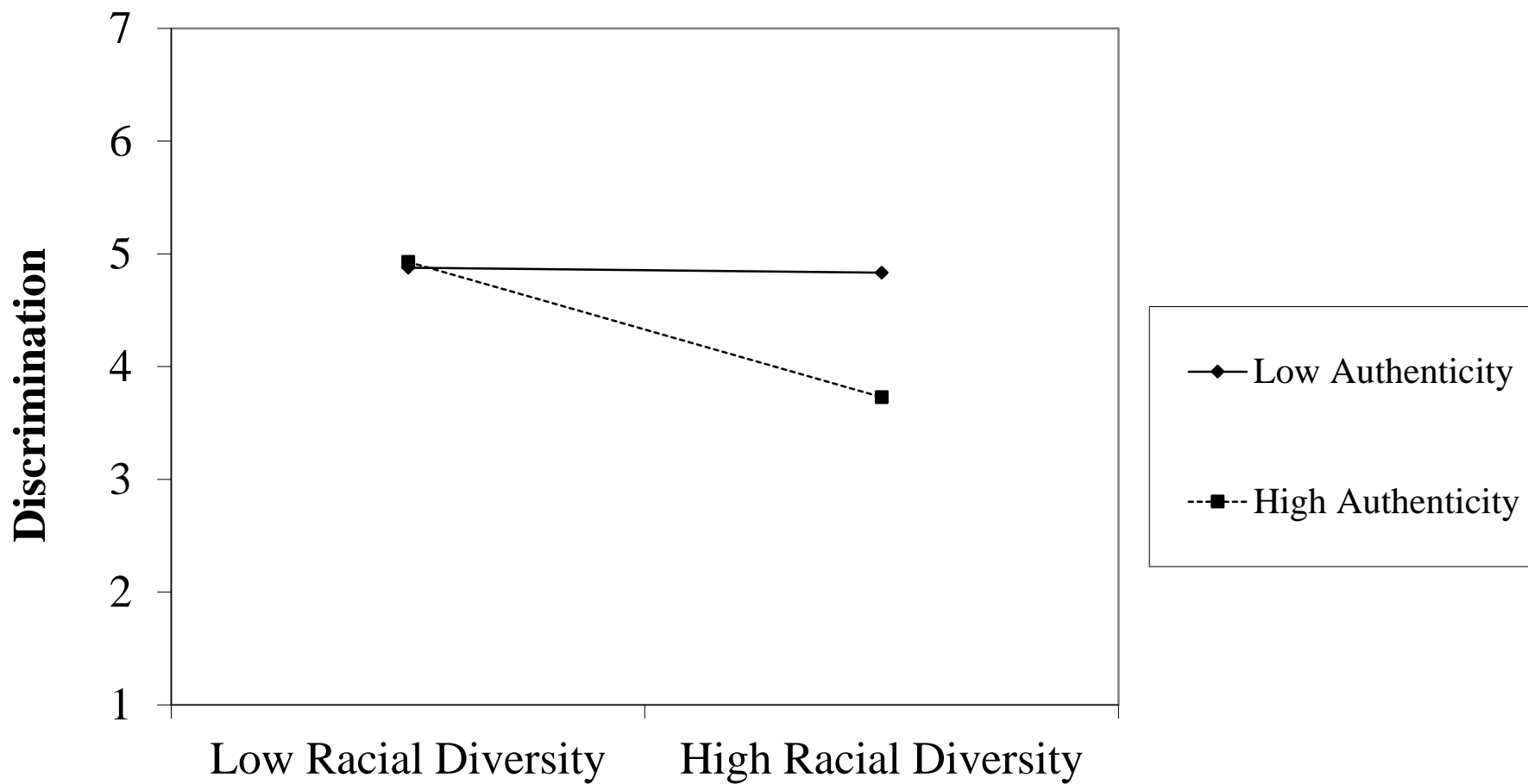
# STUDY 2- HOW DO MINORITIES DEFINE AUTHENTICITY IN THE WORKPLACE?

- **Sample:** 65 Black and Latinx female and male alumni of a Top-20 Southeastern MBA program

- Employed 4 current MBAs to conduct 30 – 45 minute semi-structured interviews

- Research Assistants were matched on race and gender to their interviewee

- Asked questions regarding interviewee's:
    - ability to be authentic in workplace,
    - the degree to which authenticity is embraced in their environment
    - discrimination they've faced.

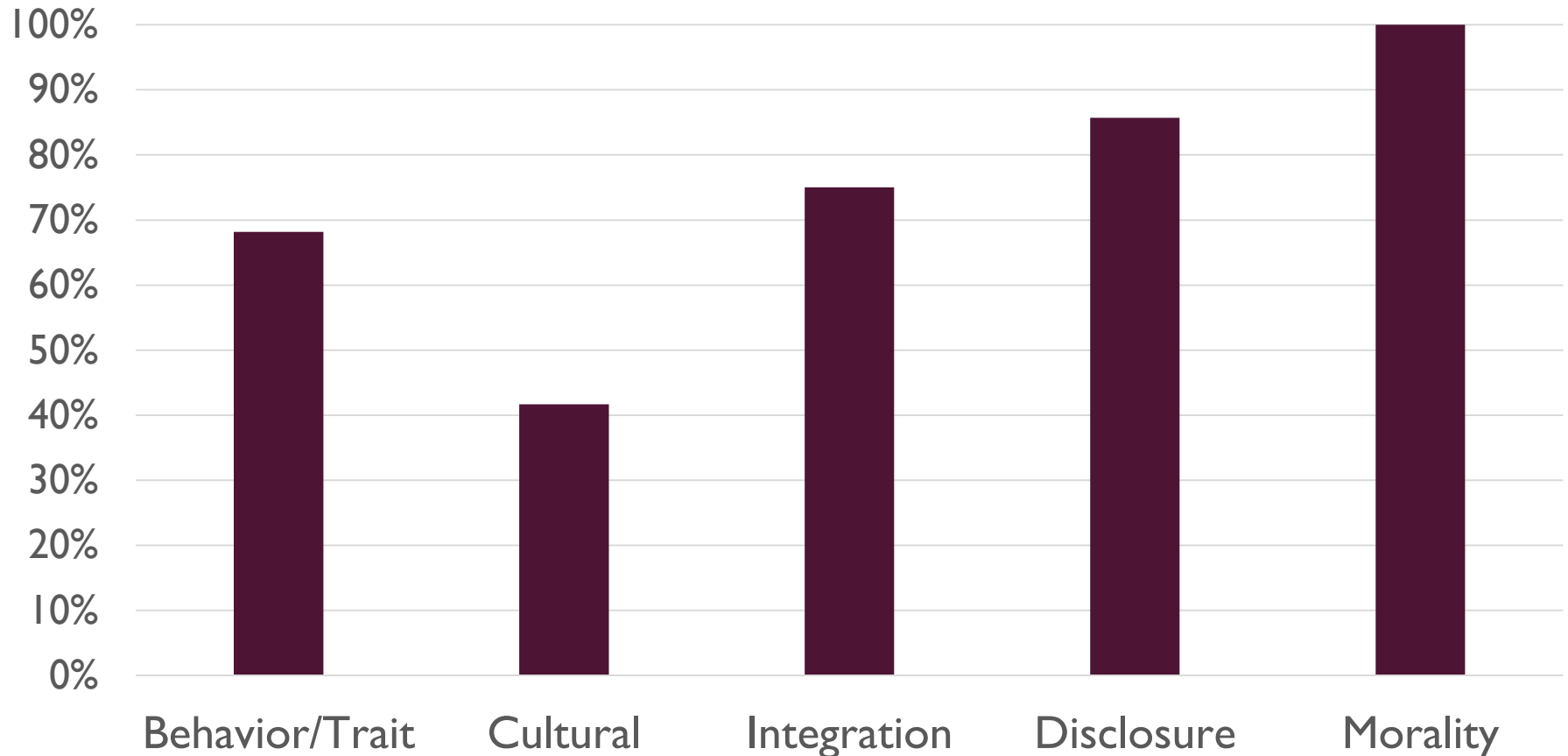|  | Frequency | Entry | Mid-Level | Senior-Level | Executive |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Black women** | 15 | 1 | 3 | 10 | 1 |
| **Black men** | 23 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 2 |
| **Latinas** | 16 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 0 |
| **Latinos** | 11 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 2 |

# STUDY 2 - HOW DO MINORITIES DEFINE AUTHENTICITY IN THE WORKPLACE?

| Codes | Definition |
|---|---|
| Behavior/Trait (n =21) | ….being genuine, trustworthy, and honest |
| Cultural (n=15) | ….expressing their cultural norms, practices, and customs (e.g. speaking one's native language, speaking with an accent, and wearing one's hair in a natural state (e.g., dreadlocks, afros) |
| Integration of selves (n=14) | …integrating their personal and professional selves across contexts |
| Disclosure (n=8) | ….disclosing personal information |
| Morality (n=7) | …. Existentialism, morality and ethics |

| | Behavior/Trait | Cultural | Integration of selves | Disclosure | Morality |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Black women | 3 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 1 |
| Black men | 9 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Latinas | 6 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Latinos | 3 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

# STUDY 2 - DO MINORITIES THINK THEIR AUTHENTIC SELF WILL BE SUCCESSFUL AT WORK?

"You wear a suit, you'll have straight hair.... All those things being authentic—and hair, like I said hair, that's a big deal. My first job as a twenty-something year old, I had damage to my hair, and I went in braids rather than cutting it all off and **after—I think it was two years of wearing braids, I came into work with my hair pressed, or relaxed, and the comments I received from several people were "Wow, you look so professional now."**

"A friend was asking me yesterday if I felt like I could wear a different hairstyle. I said, "I don't know." I said, **"We have a woman who had blue hair, but I haven't seen too many textured hair styles in terms of African American women**."

"Whether I'm listening to a **gospel station or whether I'm listening to hip hop music**, I've never felt like I could be the one to put that out there. I'm always pleasantly surprised when I get into a dialogue with a co-worker and I realize that they know, maybe, more than I do about—especially like hip hop music, but **I never feel like I can put it out there, that "Oh, yeah, I went to this concert," or "My record collection, or music collection, consists of this, that, and the other." I don't feel like I can put that out there. I don't feel like that is acceptable."**

# STUDY 3- NUMERICAL DIVERSITY VS. AUTHENTICITY (CONTROLLED TEST)

- **Sample:** 230 Black participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk
- **Procedure:** Participants were tasked with reading quotes from current minority employees of an organization regarding their D&I climate.
- **Manipulation:** 2(Numerical Diversity: High vs. Low) x 2(Cultural Authenticity: High vs. Low)
- **Dependent Variables:** *Expected* Discrimination, Major Experiences of Discrimination,
- Chronic Workplace Discrimination

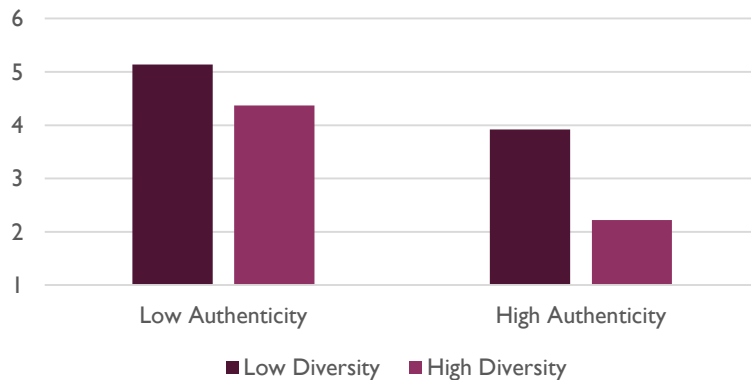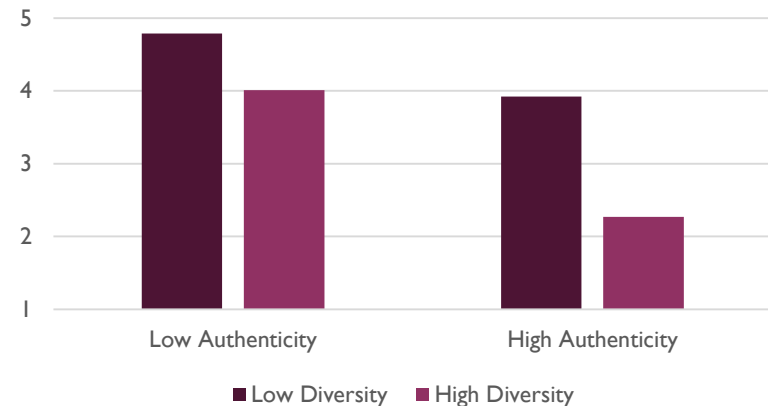| Numerical Diversity Example (High) | Authenticity Example (High) |
|---|---|
| "…They want to represent the U.S. inside the firm. If we have 25 percent Latinos in the U.S., they want to have at least 25 percent Latinos at HKM.." | "At HKM – I just feel like I can be authentic—and hair, like I said hair, that's a big deal…A friend was asking me yesterday if I felt like I could wear a different hairstyle. I said, "Of course." I said, "We even have a woman who has blue hair, so I know a natural hair style on a Black woman would be acceptable." |

# STUDY 3 - NUMERICAL DIVERSITY VS. CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY (CONTROLLED TEST)
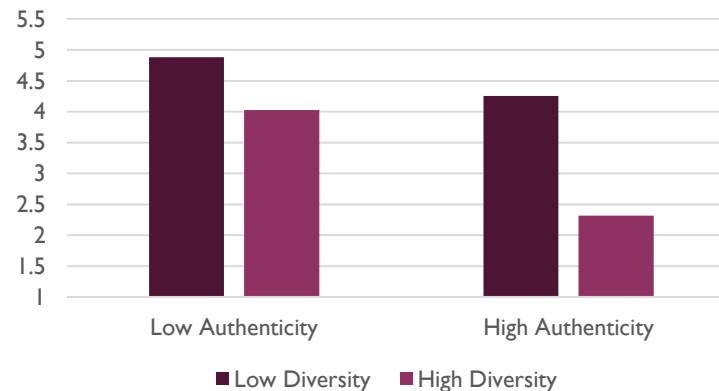


Discrimination

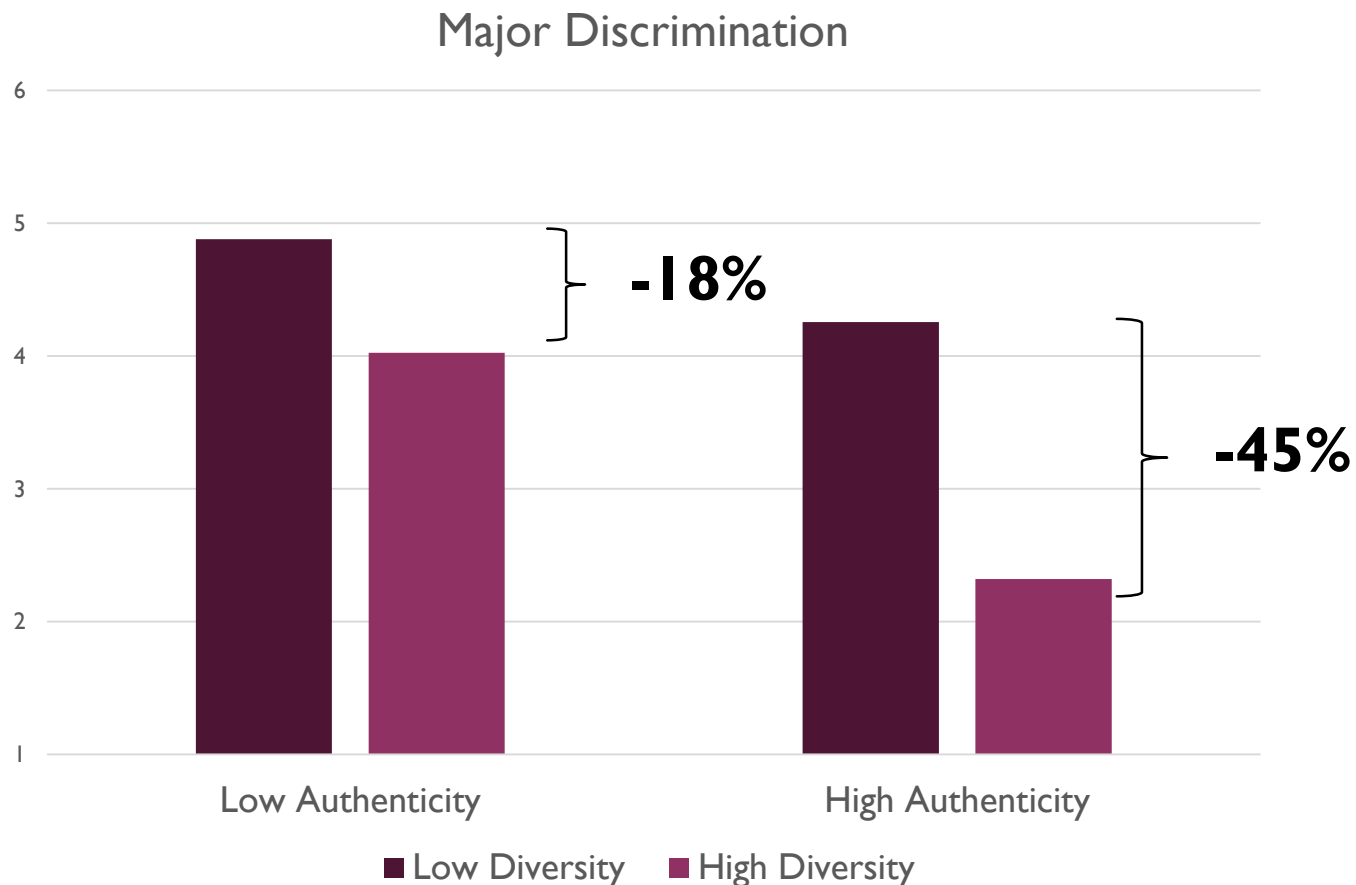Diversity x Authenticity = F(1, 225) = 4.782, p = .03



Chronic Work Discrimination

Diversity x Authenticity = F(1, 225) = 5.511, p = .02



Major Discrimination

Diversity x Authenticity = F(1, 225) = 6.31, p = .013

# STUDY 3 - NUMERICAL DIVERSITY VS. CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY (CONTROLLED TEST)

Major Discrimination

-18%

-45%

Low Authenticity　　　　High Authenticity

■ Low Diversity　　■ High Diversity

Diversity x Authenticity = $F(1, 225) = 6.31$, $p = .013$

# STUDY 4 – DO NON-MINORITIES PRIORITIZE NUMERICAL DIVERSITY OVER AUTHENTICITY?

- **Sample:** 87 White Americans on Amazon Mechanical Turk
- **Procedure:**
  - Participants instructed to imagine they were a CEO and prioritize 10 initiatives based on whether they were "pertinent – do immediately" or "non-essential – do in the future (if at all).
  - Participants then rank ordered the initiatives within each grouping by importance.

**Items**

Institute a "dress down Friday" that allows employees to wear jeans.

Create nursing stations for working mothers

Launch a ski weekend retreat for all new employees to work on leadership and team-building.

Issue stock options for interested middle-managers.

Develop an employee resource group for women

Make sure that work spaces are disability friendly

Designate a unisex bathroom

Create an intramural flag-football team

**Pertinent - Do immediately**

Increase the numerical representation of underrepresented minorities on decision-making committees. 1

**Non-essential - Do in the future (if at all)**

Authorize cultural expression (e.g. afro-centric hairstyles, cultural garb) in the company dress-code. 1
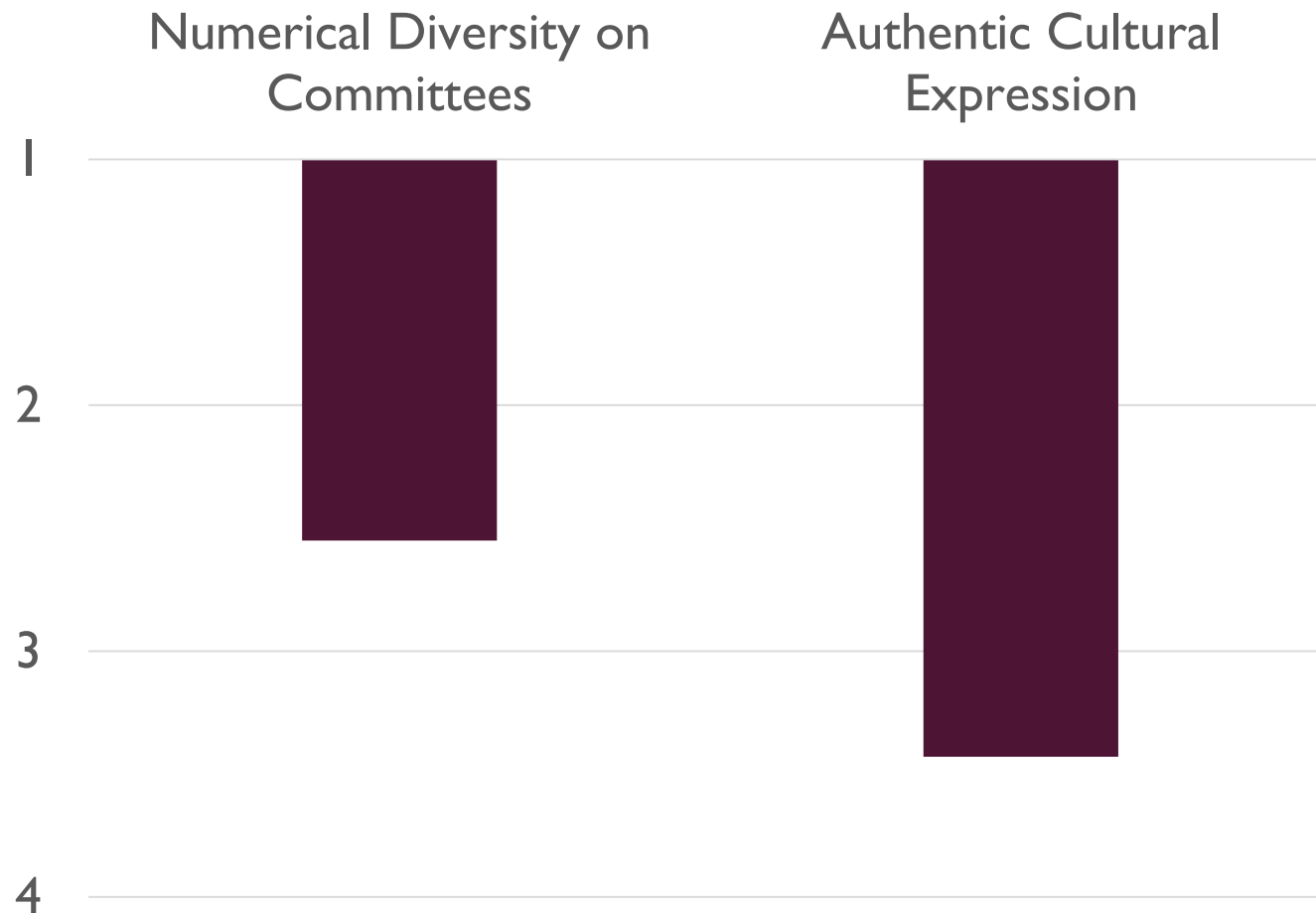
# STUDY 4 – DO NON-MINORITIES PRIORITIZE NUMERICAL DIVERSITY OVER AUTHENTICITY?

% Participants who prioritized the initiative as "non-essential"
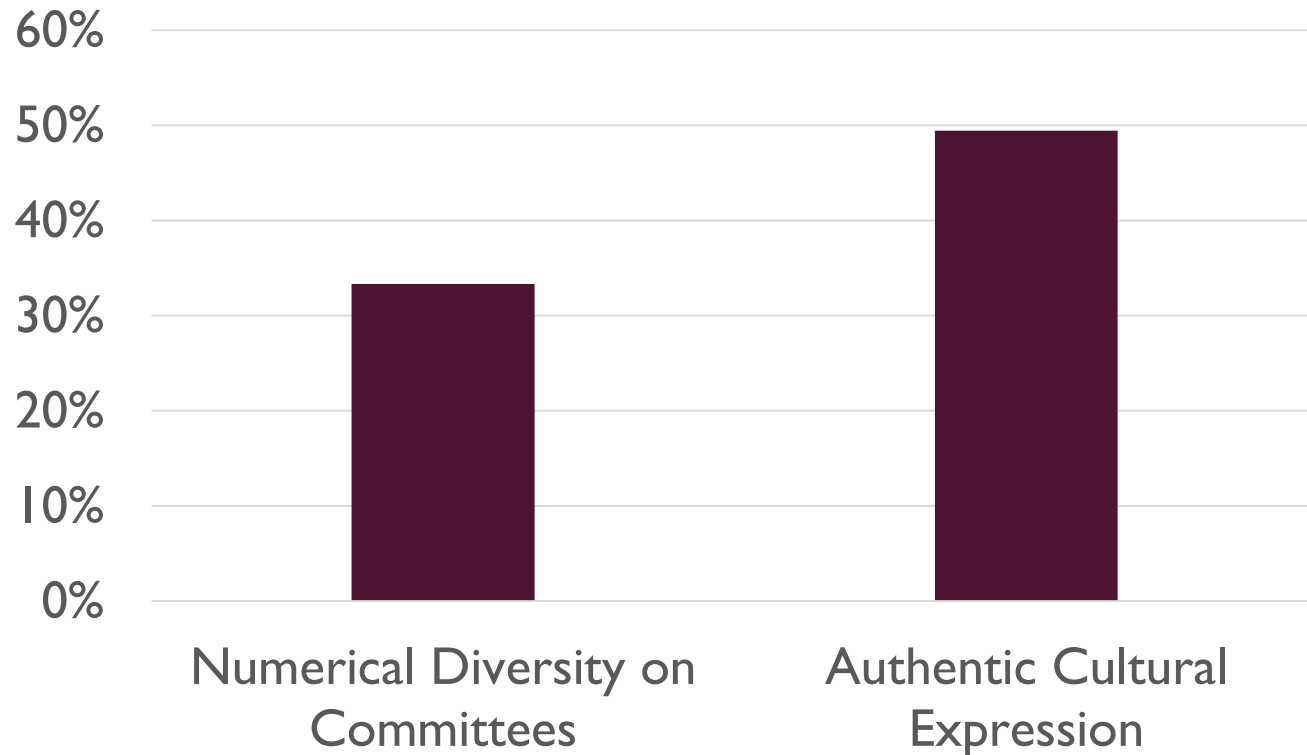
# STUDY 4 – DO NON-MINORITIES PRIORITIZE NUMERICAL DIVERSITY OVER AUTHENTICITY?



Ranking of Pertinent Tasks

# FORTUNE 500 DIVERSITY STATEMENTS



% Mention of Diversity vs. Inclusion in Fortune 500 D&I statements
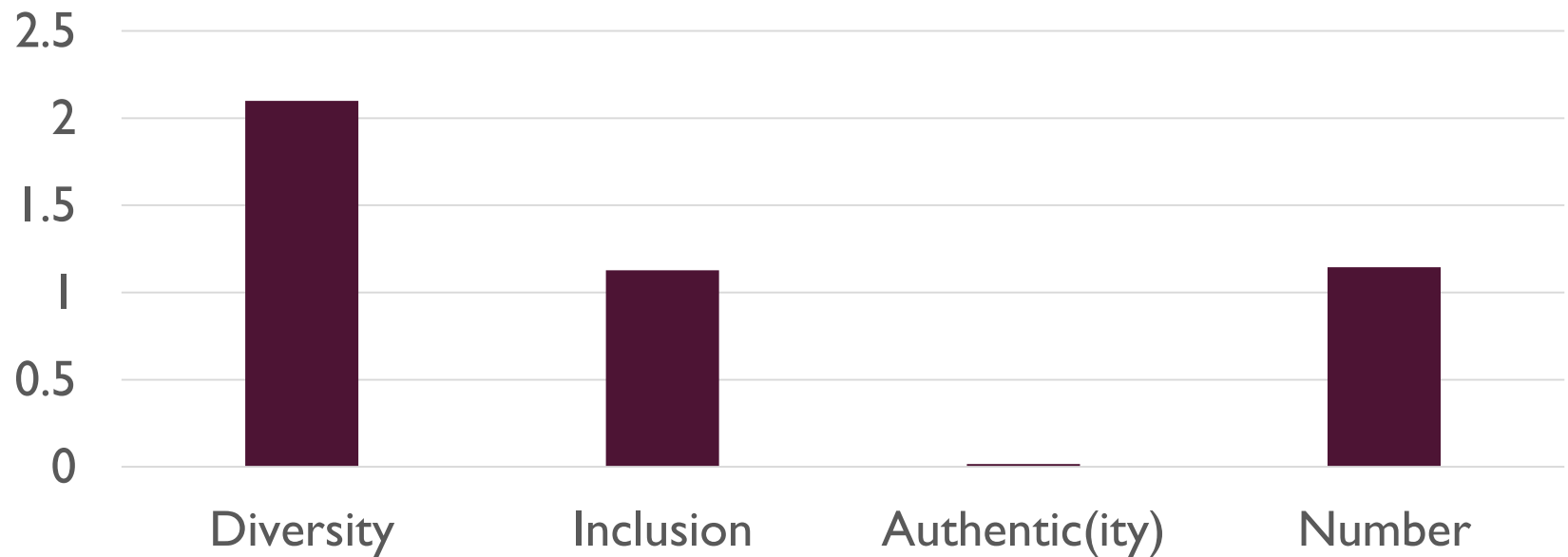
# SUMMARY

- Authenticity acted as a enabler for numerical diversity to have it's intended effect on workplace discrimination.

- Without authenticity, an increase in numerical diversity had no effect on decreasing discrimination.

- Nonetheless, authenticity was still considered a non-essential element within the workplace.

# ADDITIONAL DATA (STUDY 1)

| | Major Experiences of Discrimination (1) | Major Experiences of Discrimination (2) | Major Experiences of Discrimination (2) | Chronic Work Discrimination (1) | Chronic Work Discrimination (2) | Chronic Work Discrimination (2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Authenticity | -.34** | -.36** | -.08 | -.18** | -.20*** | -.18+ |
| | (.12) | (.12) | (.23) | (.06) | (.06) | (.11) |
| Same gender Colleagues | | -.01* | .01 | | -.01+ | -.02 |
| | | (.01) | (.04) | | (.01) | (.02) |
| Racial Diversity | | -.01 | .01 | | -.01 | .01 |
| | | (.01) | (.05) | | (.01) | (.02) |
| Same Race Colleagues | | -.01 | .01 | | -.01 | .01 |
| | | (.01) | (06) | | (.01) | (.02) |
| Authenticity x Percent Woman | | | -.01 | | | .01 |
| | | | (.01) | | | (.01) |
| Authenticity x Racial Diversity | | | -.01 | | | -.01 |
| | | | (.01) | | | (.01) |
| Authenticity x Same Race Colleagues | | | -.01 | | | -.01 |
| | | | (.01) | | | (.01) |
| N | 411 | 411 | 411 | 412 | 412 | 412 |
| R² | .02 | .06 | .06 | .03 | .06 | .07 |

| | Major Experiences of Discrimination (1) | Major Experiences of Discrimination (2) | Major Experiences of Discrimination (2) | Chronic Work Discrimination (1) | Chronic Work Discrimination (2) | Chronic Work Discrimination (2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Authenticity | -.32** | -.29* | 3.22* | -.17** | -.15** | .84 |
| | (.12) | (.11) | (1.37) | (.03) | (.05) | (.64) |
| Same gender Colleagues | | -.11** | -.08 | | -.06** | -.17 |
| | | (.04) | (.32) | | (.02) | (.15) |
| Racial Diversity | | -.10* | .90* | | -.02 | .26 |
| | | (.04) | (.41) | | (.02) | (.19) |
| Same Race Colleagues | | -.13** | -.22 | | -.10*** | .04 |
| | | (.05) | (.44) | | (.02) | (.21) |
| Authenticity x Percent Woman | | | -.01 | | | .02 |
| | | | (.05) | | | (.03) |
| Authenticity x Racial Diversity | | | -.17* | | | -.05 |
| | | | (.07) | | | (.03) |
| Authenticity x Same Race Colleagues | | | -.01 | | | -.02 |
| | | | (.05) | | | (.03) |
| N | 436 | 436 | 436 | 437 | 437 | 437 |
| R² | .02 | .10 | .12 | .02 | .15 | .16 |