Toward Achieving the "Beloved Community" in the Workplace: Lessons for Applied Business Research and Practice From the Teachings of Martin Luther King Jr.

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Toward Achieving the “Beloved Community” in the Workplace

Lessons for Applied Business Research and Practice From the Teachings of Martin Luther King Jr.

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In this study, the authors analyze data from a Gallup Organization public opinion poll commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to illustrate how businesses might incorporate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s social justice themes of belongingness and connectedness in ways beneficial to desirable organizational outcomes (e.g., employee satisfaction, employee loyalty, employee retention). Results from a racially/ethnically diverse sample of more than 1,200 Americans indicate that, among other outcomes, racial and ethnic minority employees who feel a sense of engagement (i.e., belongingness and connectedness) with their workplaces, and who believe in their organization’s commitment to diversity, feel a heightened affective connection at work. Furthermore, negative psychosocial outcomes because of perceived discrimination-based inequity in the workplace were mediated by engagement and trust in organization diversity policies. The authors discuss implications of these findings for future management research and practice.

**Keywords:** Martin Luther King Jr.; employee engagement; ethnic diversity; racial discrimination; workplace diversity; Gallup Organization

O, yes I say it plain,  
America was never America to me,  
And yet I swear this oath—  
America will be!

—Hughes (1994, p. 191)
In a 1967 address on his view of the prospects for peace at home and abroad (King, 1967), Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s citation of this passage from Langston Hughes’s poem “Let America Be America Again” made two things abundantly clear. For one, Dr. King had an abiding “concern for the integrity and life of America” (King, 1967) and was determined to “work for the health of our land” to ensure that “America will be” (King, 1967). At the same time, the quotation indicates, and Dr. King recognized, that for many Americans a pathology of social inequity existed that forestalled the emergence of “the bright day of justice” (King, 1963a), as exemplified by his 1963 statement that “segregation is a cancer in the body politic, which must be removed before our democratic health can be realized” (King, 1963b).

In many ways, racial and ethnic discrimination has long had a “cancerous” effect on American workplaces, and on employees in them. These negative effects have been both physical (e.g., Asakura, Gee, Nakayama, & Niwa, 2008; Gee, Ro, Gavin, & Takeuchi, 2008; Mustillo et al., 2004) and psychological/emotional (e.g., Schulz et al., 2006; Utsey, Ponterotto, Reynolds, & Cancelli, 2000) in nature. These pernicious consequences are even more sobering when one considers that a person who believes there is no avenue or recourse for justice in the workplace will frequently carry the harmful outcomes into his or her nonwork life (Schaubroeck, Jones, & Xie, 2001).

Dr. King believed that until all U.S. citizens felt a connection, or attachment, to their country, a realistic prognosis for America’s health would assert that although “we have come a long, long way . . . we [still] have a long, long way to go” (King, 1957). Dr. King saw the potential for such attachment in his conception of the “Beloved Community.” We believe a similar prescription for the ailments caused by workplace discrimination is possible via application of the tenets of employee engagement. A large body of empirical investigations (e.g., Coffman & Gonzalez-Molina, 2002; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Wagner & Harter, 2006) has provided ample evidence of the beneficial impact of engaged employees at the organizational (e.g., stock market return), unit (e.g., customer satisfaction), and individual levels (e.g., intent to remain). Although there are many conceptualizations of engagement (Finn & Rock, 1997) and related concepts, such as commitment, culture, and climate, one commonality among them is the central importance of the employee’s attachment to his or her organization as being antecedent to positive outcomes. In this article, we make a conceptual and empirical connection between social justice themes championed by Dr. King, and manifested in the “Beloved Community,” and employee engagement as representative of organizational attachment, as
ways to alleviate the painful outgrowths of injustice in both business and society at large.

The Beloved Community: Belongingness and Connectedness

Dr. King’s contributions encompassed myriad social justice arenas. Although he is probably most widely associated with the Civil Rights campaign of the 1950s and 1960s, Dr. King also exerted tremendous effort in the cause of alleviating poverty, ending what he viewed as an unjust war in Vietnam, and in general striving to see the realization of “The Beloved Community.” According to the King Center (n.d.), the Beloved Community is a global vision, in which all people can share in the wealth of the earth . . . [and where] [r]acism and all forms of discrimination, bigotry and prejudice will be replaced by an all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood.

In all of Dr. King’s works, one can see an overarching objective of bringing people together, regardless of their background. Dr. King envisioned a world in which belongingness and connectedness characterized the human condition, whereby those in power would “open the doors of opportunity to all of God’s children . . . [and] lift [people] from the quicksands of . . . injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood” (King, 1963a). Although belongingness and connectedness may seem conceptually indistinct, depending on the context, there can be subtle differences. A sense of “belonging” may arise from mere membership in an organization, as a pipe fitter might belong to the local union. Under the membership scenario, an individual could belong to the organization without necessarily feeling part of an interdependent collective. It is in the latter sense, that is, the notion of an “all-for-one and one-for-all” community that Dr. King’s words resonate, as when he asserted that the death of segregation would be “[not] merely a victory for fifty thousand Negroes of Montgomery, [nor for] sixteen million Negroes of America, [nor for] just . . . one segment of society, but for the whole of the nation” (King, 1956a).

In the management literature, this context also dovetails with Baumeister and Leary’s (1995) theory of belongingness as comprising, in part, “a fundamental human motivation” to “form and maintain . . . a minimum quantity of interpersonal relationships [i.e., social bonds]” (p. 499). Baumeister and Leary saw this need for belonging as flowing from an evolutionary imperative to become part of a group as a way of optimizing goal
achievement (e.g., reproductive success and competition for scarce resources). This utilitarian/beneficial aspect of working together is reflected in Dr. King’s comments to the 1956 convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), in which he pledged that, contrary to the notion that he was leading an interracial battle,

we are not out to defeat or humiliate the white man. We are out to help him as well as ourselves. The festering sore of segregation debilitates the white man as well as the Negro. And so we are not out to win a victory over the white man. And I assure you that the basic struggle . . . after all is not between Negroes and white people. . . . And if there is a victory . . . it will be a victory for justice . . . a victory for democracy . . . and a victory for good will. (King, 1956c)

Laudatory as this type of interreliance is, it does not completely capture the full flavor of Dr. King’s approach and its relevance to management theory and practice. Returning to Baumeister and Leary’s conceptualization, in addition to requiring that people evidence a need for frequent interactions with others, belongingness also implies that these contacts will have a relational context, such that the interactions are “subjectively different from and often more rewarding than an interaction with a stranger or a casual acquaintance” (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 500). Thus, for these researchers, belongingness incorporates both “head and heart.” On the one hand, the motivation for goal attainment triggers “cognitive activity . . . [reflecting] a pervasive concern with forming and maintaining [positive] relationships” (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 500).

At the same time, belongingness also engenders “[e]motion[al] reactions [following] directly from outcomes that pertain to the need to belong, [whereby] positive affect should follow from forming and solidifying social bonds, and negative affect should ensue when relationships are broken, threatened, or refused” (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 500). Accordingly, when comparing “essentially identical interactions” within a group that does possess this emotional/social bond with those of another group that is not so characterized, “a strictly behavioral record might reveal nothing special or rewarding about these interactions” (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 500). Hence, at its essence, belongingness involves “the need . . . for regular social contact with those to whom one feels [emotionally] connected [emphasis added]” (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 501) and requires a belief from the individual that “the other cares about his or her welfare and likes (or loves) him or her” (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 500). Again, Dr. King provides a ready example of the application of this principle to the social justice movement:
From the beginning [of the Montgomery bus boycott] the city commission, where there’s the reactionary element of the white community, attempted to block the protest. And I say reactionary elements of the white community because I never want to give the impression that all of the white people in the South are downright and low in terms of civil rights. I assure you that there are white persons even in Montgomery, Alabama, who are deeply sympathetic with the movement and who have given us great words of encouragement and even contributions. (King, 1956c)

The Role of Employee Engagement

This framework shares much conceptually with the Gallup Organization’s operationalization of employee engagement. Employee engagement refers to an “individual’s involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work,” and, following Kahn (1990), occurs when those individuals are “emotionally connected to others and cognitively vigilant” (Harter et al., 2002, p. 269). Furthermore, “employees are emotionally and cognitively engaged when they know what is expected of them, have opportunities to feel an impact and fulfillment in their work, perceive that they are part of something significant with coworkers whom they trust, and have chances to improve and develop” (p. 269).

This view of engagement on its face appears theoretically similar to other attachment-based constructs, such as organizational commitment and organizational culture, to name two. However, a closer examination of these paradigms reveals important differences that support the appropriateness of linking employee engagement to belongingness and connectedness, and thereby to Dr. King’s guiding principles.

The advantageous aspects of organizational commitment for employee attachment are well established. With regard to attitudes, one team of researchers defined organizational commitment as

the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization, which is characterized by belief in and acceptance of organizational values, willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization, and a desire to maintain membership in the organization. (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982, p. 27)

Organizational commitment is positively related to job satisfaction (Bateman & Strasser, 1984) and work attendance (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), and negatively related to both absenteeism and turnover (Cotton & Tuttle,
However, a key conceptual distinction between engagement and commitment is the fact that the attitudinal experience of commitment occurs apart from, or as a consequence of, the day-to-day, routine work activities employees regularly engage in (Jones & Harter, 2005). Employee engagement, on the other hand, is developed and sustained “through work and other employee-role activities” and is more directly tied to the interactive component of an employee’s interpersonal work experience, particularly with managers and coworkers (Jones & Harter, 2005, p. 78). Furthermore, although engagement, like commitment, has an affective component encompassing “people’s emotional reactions to conscious and unconscious phenomena,” it also is centered in “the objective properties of jobs, roles, and work context . . . —all within the same moments of task performance” (Kahn, 1990, p. 693). So, even though affect-based connection to organizations (e.g., commitment) has been associated with desired workplace behavior (Costigan, Ilter, & Berman, 1998), engagement may be a more valuable measure of the role of attachment (i.e., belongingness and connectedness) to the workplace on important outcomes.

Organizational culture as a theoretical perspective on attachment also has many connotations of belongingness and connectedness. In this case, the way employees feel a sense of connection to the organization is through values they share with other organizational members. This can be seen in definitions of culture that refer to it as “social or normative glue that holds an organization together” (Smircich, 1983, p. 344), and acknowledge “[that the] pervasiveness and importance of values in organizational culture are fundamentally linked to the psychological process of identity formation in which individuals . . . seek a social identity that provides meaning and connectedness” (O’Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991, p. 492). On its face, then, culture would seem to be a logical conduit by which to bring about belongingness and connectedness. Ironically, however, in some circumstances, strong cultures may actually be antithetical to the kind of attachment inherent in Dr. King’s mission. In strong organizational cultures, the organization’s core values are intensely held and widely shared by employees (Wiener, 1988). When those core values are “positive” (e.g., inclusiveness, acceptance of differences), the potential for an environment of perceived justice is apparent. However, when those values include, for example, the condoning of overt racial prejudice, as in the much publicized 1996 discrimination lawsuit against Texaco and its senior management, strong cultures may actually act as a barrier to the potential benefits of diversity (e.g., greater creativity/innovation, enhanced decision making), even in the presence of formal diversity policies (Labich, 1999).
Scenarios like this are particularly meaningful in light of research on culture formation that indicates that individuals are attracted to, selected by, and leave organizations, in large part, based on the degree of value congruence between the individual and organization (Schaubroeck, Ganster, & Jones, 1998; Schneider, 1987). Hence, a form of homogenization can occur, whereby even those whose values may be more beneficent than those of the dominant organizational culture may have to stifle or eliminate those values in order to fit in, or else find themselves compelled to leave the organization because of the mismatch (Schneider, 1987). For those organizations characterized by institutional injustice, then, relying on cultural transformation alone to redress such iniquities can often be a futile endeavor.

Gallup’s engagement model moves beyond organizational commitment and culture in its emphasis on not just the individual level of employee attitudes and the organizational level of shared values and beliefs (i.e., culture) but also on the specific, direct impact operational managers can have in stimulating belongingness and connectedness. This is especially critical in considering combating perceived and/or actual discrimination, as in the Texaco case.

Workplace Discrimination: Barrier to the Beloved Community

One of the factors in the workplace that can disrupt a felt sense of belongingness is discrimination. Whereas the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission defines discrimination as treating one person unfairly (vs. another) because of factors unrelated to their ability or potential, such as age, race, creed, disability, sex, military duty, or national origin (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d.), we consider one’s perceptions of whether or not he or she has experienced discrimination as equally important to reaching the Beloved Community envisioned by Dr. King. An individual may never file a claim of discrimination yet still perceive that it has occurred, and worse yet, still experience the psychological effects of being singled out on the basis of some socially observable trait. The negative impact on employees of experiencing discrimination in the workplace, whether real or perceived, includes damage to their psychological well-being and can lead to lower job (Chrobot-Mason, 2003; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994) and career satisfaction (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990). Clearly, discrimination is a barrier to achieving the “Beloved Community” for those facing such unfairness, and also, we would argue, for the perpetrators of injustice. Employee engagement, with its focus on building mutually beneficial emotional
attachment between employees and their managers through work activities, has the potential to greatly weaken or remove these barriers.

To be certain, discrimination is not as pervasive as in has been in the past, yet, the EEOC reported that it received 82,792 job-bias charges from private-sector employees in Fiscal Year 2007, the highest number since 2002 and the largest annual increase (9%) since the early 1990s. The most notable increases were for race (12%), retaliation (18%), age (15%), and disability (14%) discrimination (EEOC, 2008).

To realize the Beloved Community, managers and organizational leadership must identify practices that help reduce not only the actual incidences of discrimination but also the extent to which individuals perceive they are being discriminated against on the basis of factors other than merit. We propose that one approach to dealing with discrimination is by building an environment of open communication, trust, and diversity, where all individuals are valued. Such an environment evokes the Beloved Community envisioned by Dr. King, one in which individuals are highly engaged in their workplace. That is, they feel both a sense of unity within the organization (i.e., belongingness) and positive psychological attachment to the organization (i.e., connectedness), supported by organizational policies and practices.

Method

The 40th anniversary of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and subsequent creation of the EEOC provided the opportunity to empirically investigate our assertion. To commemorate the occasion, Gallup (2005), in conjunction with Kaiser-Permanente, UPS, and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), conducted the **40th Anniversary Survey: Civil Rights in the Workplace**. The goal of the survey was to assess the opinions, attitudes, and experiences of workers in America. The respondents were interviewed by telephone and were selected using random digit dialing (RDD) procedures. Gallup was only interested in those who had been working in the recent past; thus, once participants were contacted by phone, individuals who were not currently employed or who had not been employed or looking for work in the past year were deemed ineligible and not interviewed.

Participants

The final sample of participants was racially diverse, totaling 1,252 individuals (492 White, 302 Black, 310 Latino, 104 Asian, 44 “No Response”).

1
The survey included the Q12® items (described below), allowing us to measure and analyze the effect of belongingness and connectedness on perceived discrimination, opinions regarding retaliation for discrimination claims, and beliefs about workplace policies designed to bring about equality and fairness.

Measures

Employee Engagement. Gallup measures employee engagement using a 12-item scale (see Table 1) known as the Q12®, which collectively measures both employee attitudes (e.g., “The mission/purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important”) and actions within the purview of managers (e.g., “In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work”). Harter and his associates’ large-scale meta-analysis of studies incorporating the Q12® (Harter et al., 2002) provides insight on different dimensions of engagement, comprising subgroupings of the Q12® items. The validity of the Gallup measure is well established (Harter et al., 2002). Our contention is that organizations can use engagement concepts like the one operationalized by Gallup to help achieve some of Martin Luther King Jr.’s vision for the “Beloved Community” while also reaping the positive business outcomes accruing from engaged employees.

### Table 1

**Items Comprising the Gallup Q12® Engagement Index**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Satisfaction</th>
<th>5-point scale, 5 is extremely satisfied, 1 is extremely dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I know what is expected of me at work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my job right.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. There is someone at work who encourages my development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. At work, my opinions seem to count.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The mission/purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. My associates (fellow employees) are committed to doing quality work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I have a best friend at work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each of the Q12® statements is proprietary (Gallup Organization, 1993-1998). They cannot be reprinted or reproduced in any manner without the written consent of Gallup. Copyright © 1993-1998 Gallup, Inc., Washington, D.C. All rights reserved. See Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (2002) for a more detailed discussion of the index.
**Perceived Discrimination.** We used three survey items to ascertain the extent to which respondents felt discrimination had negatively affected their work lives. Two items sought insight on the experience of workplace discrimination related to hiring and promotion practices. Interviewers read the following statement to respondents: “Please tell me if you believe that any of the following things have ever happened to you.” Respondents were then given (on a rotating basis) two scenarios: (a) “You believe you were not offered a job because of your race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability,” and (b) “You believe you were passed over for a promotion because of your race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability.” Respondents were also asked about perceptions of recent discrimination. Each was asked, “Do you feel you have been discriminated against in your workplace for any reason in the past 12 months?” Response alternatives for this item were also “yes” or “no.” Responses to the three items were collapsed to create a single variable. If respondents answered “Yes” to any of the three individual items, the composite item was coded “1”; if the response to all three items was “no,” the composite item was coded “0.”

Finally, information about general beliefs with regard to potential negative repercussions from discrimination complaints was gained by an item asking for level of agreement with the following statement: “Employers retaliate against employees who say they have been discriminated against at work.” Responses were coded on a 1-to-5 scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree (M = 3.32, SD = 1.35, N = 1,210). Approximately 47% of respondents agreed (i.e., responded either 4 or 5) that organizations retaliate against those bringing forth discrimination complaints.

**Company Diversity Policies.** Respondents’ perspective on their companies’ stance toward diversity in the workplace was assessed via a five-item index that we have dubbed the Diversity Policy Score (DPS). DPS is an indicator of commitment on the part of organizations to equality and fairness and is operationalized as the extent to which individuals feel their workplace and workplace leadership are committed to communicating, promoting, and valuing diversity (see, e.g., Avery, Hernandez, & Hebl, 2004; Kim & Gelfand, 2003). Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree) with seven statements. An exploratory factor analysis of these items revealed a single factor (eigenvalue = 3.6, variance explained = 72%) with strong reliability (α = .900). DPS was calculated as the mean of the following five items (M = 3.93, SD = 1.1, N = 974): “I am aware of my company’s efforts to create diversity in the workplace”; “I believe that my company is adequately striving for diversity in the
workplace”; “I value my company’s diversity efforts in making a welcome and tolerant work environment for all employees”; “I believe that my company’s workforce diversity contributes to our competitiveness in the marketplace”; and “The head of my company or organization is committed to diversity at my workplace.”

**Workplace Attachment.** Respondents’ affective affinity with their workplace was measured using responses to three items. An overall satisfaction measure asked survey participants to respond to the question, “On a 5-point scale, where 5 is extremely satisfied and 1 is extremely dissatisfied, how satisfied are you with your place of employment as a place to work?” The other two items assessed respondents’ turnover intentions and company loyalty. Respondents were asked their level of agreement (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree) with the statements, “I plan to be with my company or organization 1 year from now,” and “I would recommend my company as a place to work to friends and family members.” Exploratory factor analysis of these three items revealed a single factor (eigenvalue = 2.1, variance explained = 70%) with strong reliability (α = .775). We labeled this factor the Affective Attachment Scale (AAS). The AAS was calculated as the mean of the three items (M = 3.95, SD = 1.06, N = 1,011), with higher values indicating more favorable scores.

**Belongingness and Connectedness.** Using Gallup’s operationalization of employee engagement as a foundation, we factor analyzed two subsets of the Q12® items. The two subsets were conceptually consistent with our separate, but related, constructs of belongingness and connectedness. Because the concepts were highly correlated conceptually and empirically (r = .71, p ≤ .01), we used oblique rotated factor analytic techniques, which are designed for correlated constructs. The belongingness factor (eigenvalue = 2.1, variance explained = 69%) incorporated respondents’ level of agreement (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree) with the following statements: “At work, my opinions seem to count”; “The mission/purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important”; and “My associates (fellow employees) are committed to doing quality work.” The connectedness factor (eigenvalue = 2.2, variance explained = 74%) was similarly constructed from responses to these items: “In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work”; “My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person”; and “There is someone at work who encourages my development.” Both the Belongingness Scale (M = 3.84, SD = 1.04, N = 1,019) and Connectedness Scale (M = 3.63, SD = 1.22, N = 1,000) evidenced strong reliability (α = .779 and .816, respectively).
As expected, belongingness and connectedness were highly correlated ($r = .71, p \leq .01$); thus, we conducted another exploratory factor analysis of the six items comprising the two scales. Results of that analysis produced a single factor (eigenvalue = 3.8, variance explained = 63%) exhibiting strong reliability ($\alpha = .877$). Therefore, in any analyses where the constructs are analyzed together (e.g., multiple regression analysis), we use a single scale that measures “employee engagement” (Harter et al., 2002). The Engagement Scale is calculated as the sum of the scores for belongingness and connectedness (range = 2 [lowest engagement] to 10 [highest engagement]; $M = 7.54, SD = 2.03, N = 985$).

In addition to race and ethnicity, we also include a number of sociodemographic and human resources–related control variables. On the basis of evidence supporting “generational effects” on the experience of discrimination (Schuman, Steeh, Bobo, & Krysan, 1997), we included age (measured in years) as a control. Because numerous examples in the relational demography literature highlight gender differences in the workplace (e.g., Albaum & Peterson, 2006; Bhal, Ansari, & Aafaqi, 2007; VandenHeuvel & Wooden, 1995), we also included a control for sex/gender (male = 1, female = 0). To be able to better interpret any potential effect of discrimination experienced throughout a respondent’s employment, an ordinal measure of job tenure (years of service) was also included. Respondents were asked how long they worked for their “current employer.” The response categories were “less than 1 year,” “1 year to less than 3 years,” “3 years to less than 7 years,” “7 years to less than 10 years,” “10 years to less than 15 years,” “15 years to less than 20 years,” “20 years to less than 25 years,” “25 years to less than 30 years,” and “30 years or more.”

Our analytic objectives are as follows. First, we describe the nature of the relationships among the variables in the analyses. Second, we provide evidence of the negative impact that discrimination can have on perceptions about the workplace. Third, we provide further evidence that psychological engagement—belongingness and connectedness—can significantly reduce the impact of discrimination on workplace attachment. Last, we produce a path analysis model showing the simultaneous effects of all the variables in our model.

**Analyses**

The univariate descriptive statistics and bivariate association measures are presented in Table 2. The bivariate statistics allow us to assess the interrelationships among the key variables. Table 2 can be read from either the column or the row dimensions, and whereas the row dimensions show the
Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for Selected Study Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Age (years)</td>
<td>40.80</td>
<td>12.84</td>
<td>1,233</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Job tenure (length of service)</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>1,025</td>
<td>.49**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Perceived discrimination (1 = yes; 0 = no)</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,005</td>
<td>.10**</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Belongingness</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1,019</td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Connectedness</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
<td>.74**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Engagement</td>
<td>7.54</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
<td>.92**</td>
<td>.94**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Diversity Policy Score (DPS)</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>974</td>
<td>.08*</td>
<td>.08**</td>
<td>-.27**</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Affective Attachment</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>1011</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td>.11**</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
<td>.70**</td>
<td>.58**</td>
<td>.68**</td>
<td>.47**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Perceived Retaliation</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1011</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.12**</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>-.16**</td>
<td>-.08*</td>
<td>-.12**</td>
<td>-.14**</td>
<td>-.18**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Engagement is calculated as the combined scale values for Belongingness and Connectedness.

*p ≤ .05. **p ≤ .01.
variable and their representative number (e.g., age = 1), for parsimony, the columns are labeled only by number.

There are several important relationships to note. First and most important, as theorized, perceived discrimination and retaliation are barriers to achieving the Beloved Community as envisioned by Dr. King. Those who report having experienced discrimination are less satisfied with their workplace \((r = -0.24)\) and are more likely to believe employers retaliate against those who make claims of discrimination \((r = 0.20)\). Second, engagement as a management strategy and supportive policies (DPS) both offer potential to reduce the negative effects of discrimination. The concepts of belongingness and connectedness are highly correlated \((r = 0.74)\), and thus, together they form the index of engagement. Engagement has significant positive associations with affective attachment \((r = 0.68)\) and DPS \((r = 0.46)\), but negative associations with perceived discrimination \((r = -0.25)\) and retaliation \((r = -0.12)\). Similarly, DPS has a positive association with affective attachment \((r = 0.47)\), but negative relationships with perceived discrimination \((r = -0.27)\) and retaliation \((r = -0.14)\). Thus, both engagement and DPS are associated with desired outcomes, including lower discrimination.

To calculate the additive effects of race, perceived discrimination, employee engagement, and DPS on retaliation perceptions (Table 3) and affective attachment (Table 4), we performed stepwise ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analyses. These analyses allowed us to both control for additional sociodemographic variables as well as model the changes in effects because of added variables. Both regressions were run in three “steps.” First, a baseline model (Step 1) was analyzed with only demographic information included. Second, perceived discrimination was added to the model (Step 2) to observe the effects of discrimination above and beyond basic demographics. Finally, a third model (Step 3) was run, including the engagement and DPS variables, to observe the extent to which they diminished the negative effects of discrimination. We expected that for retaliation perceptions, engagement and DPS would have less of an impact because views of retaliation may be tied more to societal beliefs than to mere workplace environment. Conversely, for affective attachment to the workplace, we expected engagement and DPS to significantly reduce the effects of discrimination.

The regression results in Table 3 show that perceived discrimination has a significant impact on beliefs about retaliation. Individuals who perceived they had experienced work-related discrimination had greater concerns that employers retaliate against those who bring discrimination claims. In fact, in the baseline model (Step 1), Blacks and women were significantly more likely to believe
employers retaliate, but when perceived discrimination is considered, these effects were no longer statistically significant. That is, perceived experience with discrimination explains why there are racial differences in perceptions of retaliation from employers. As shown in the Step 3 column, engagement did not have a significant effect on retaliation; however, individuals who perceived their organizations had stronger diversity policy scores had more optimistic beliefs about the perceived retaliatory behavior of employers. Yet, as evidenced by the third step of the model, DPS did not completely remove the effects of discrimination. These results, shown in Table 3, highlight the negative impact discrimination can have on reaching the “Beloved Community.”

### Table 3
Regression Analysis of Effect of Perceived Discrimination, Engagement, and Diversity Perceptions on Perceived Retaliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>β (SE)</th>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Step 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>3.53 (.18)**</td>
<td>3.30 (.18)**</td>
<td>3.70 (.26)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black*</td>
<td>.26 (.12)*</td>
<td>.18 (.12)</td>
<td>.18 (.12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino*</td>
<td>–.05 (.12)</td>
<td>–.04 (.11)</td>
<td>–.04 (.11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian*</td>
<td>–.09 (.19)</td>
<td>–.08 (.18)</td>
<td>–.09 (.18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (male = 1)</td>
<td>–.25 (.09)**</td>
<td>–.11 (.09)</td>
<td>–.09 (.09)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job tenure (length of service)</td>
<td>–.07 (.02)**</td>
<td>–.07 (.02)**</td>
<td>–.07 (.02)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived discrimination</td>
<td>.61 (.09)**</td>
<td>.55 (.10)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee engagementb</td>
<td></td>
<td>–.01 (.02)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity Policy Score (DPS)</td>
<td></td>
<td>–.10 (.05)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Analysis N = 861. Standard errors are in parentheses.

a. Black, Latino, and Asian are coded to compare each racial-ethnic group against Whites.
b. Composite scale of Belongingness and Connectedness scales.

*p ≤ .05. **p ≤ .01.
The regression results shown in Table 4 indicate that employee engagement and DPS have the ability to reduce the impact of discrimination on affective attachment. Focusing on the main variables of interest, Step 2 shows discrimination had a significant negative relationship with attachment. This is consistent with the bivariate results from Table 2. However, when engagement and DPS are considered in the model, the effects of discrimination on attachment are significantly reduced. What is most promising is the $R^2$ statistic, which indicates how much individual differences in attachment scores are explained by variables in the model. In the baseline model (Step 1), 6% of the variance in attachment is accounted for, but when discrimination is considered, the

![Table 4](http://bas.sagepub.com)

**Table 4**

Regression Analysis of Effect of Perceived Discrimination, Engagement, and Diversity Perceptions on Affective Attachment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>β (SE)</th>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Step 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>.74</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(.14)**</td>
<td>(.13)**</td>
<td>(.15)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacka</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.09)</td>
<td>(.09)</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinoa</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.09)</td>
<td>(.09)</td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.14)</td>
<td>(.14)</td>
<td>(.10)*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sex (male = 1)</td>
<td>.37</td>
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<td>.15</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(.07)**</td>
<td>(.07)**</td>
<td>(.05)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.00)</td>
<td>(.00)**</td>
<td>(.00)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job tenure (length of service)</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.02)</td>
<td>(.02)</td>
<td>(.01)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived discrimination</td>
<td>-.55</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.07)**</td>
<td>(.06)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee engagementb</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.01)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity Policy Score (DPS)</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.03)**</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Δ$R^2$</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.06**</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Analysis $N = 871$. Standard errors are in parentheses.

a. Black, Latino, and Asian are coded to compare each racial-ethnic group against Whites.
b. Composite scale of Belongingness and Connectedness scales.

*p ≤ .05. **p ≤ .01.
variance explained doubles, to 12%. When engagement and DPS are added to
the third model, the $R^2$ jumps to .50, an increase of 38 percentage points. We
increased the ability to explain levels of attachment by 38% over and above
what is explained by sociodemographic variables and perceived experience
with discrimination. This is strong empirical evidence that engagement and
supporting policies can reduce the negative effects of discrimination and
increase employees’ attachment to their organizations.

To consolidate our analyses, we ran a path model designed to show the
simultaneous relationships among the variables. The results of this analysis
are shown in Figure 1. Each of the rectangles represents a scaled (indexed)
variable, and the arrowed lines represent (causal) paths signifying the direc-
tions of causality. The numeric values associated with the paths are stan-
dardized regression coefficients, each of which are calculated controlling for
age, sex, and job tenure (control variables are not shown in the figure).
Values with no sign before them indicate a positive relationship among the
variables connected by the lines, and values with a minus sign (−) indicate a
negative relationship. Our main dependent variable is affective attachment.

Of primary theoretical importance to our research are the significant effects
of engagement ($\beta = .56$) and DPS ($\beta = .20$), and the nonsignificant effects
of perceived discrimination ($\beta = −.02$) and retaliation ($\beta = −.03$), on attachment.
Individuals who are more engaged and work in settings with stronger DPS
were more attached to their workplaces, and these effects were strong
enough to nullify the effects of perceived discrimination and retaliation. This
latter point is supported by the significant negative relationships of the path
arrows pointing to “perceived discrimination” in Figure 1.

Almost half ($R^2 = .48$) of the differences in attachment was accounted for
by the relationships in our model. Even though our hypothesized model
does an exceptional job of predicting affective attachment, the model fit sta-
tistics, $\chi^2(df = 13) = 308.02, p \leq .01$, Normed Fit Index (NFI) = .78,
Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .78, root mean square error of approxima-
tion (RMSEA) = .13, indicate that we would need to respecify some rela-
tionships to optimize the relationship between our theory and the data. Nonetheless, the path analysis results show that engagement and DPS are
opportunities to reduce the negative impacts of discrimination.

### Discussion

Results of our analyses provide several points of interest for our quest of
applying Dr. King’s life’s lessons and works to enriching contemporary
workplaces.
We still see the world through different lenses based on majority/minority status.” While still a high school student, Dr. King (1944) once lamented that “Black America still wears chains. The finest Negro is at the mercy of the meanest white man. Even winners of our highest honors face the class color bar. Look at . . . the paradoxes that mark daily life in America” (King, 1944). Although circumstances with regard to actual legal impediments to equality have most certainly changed in the decades since that 1944 quote, perceptions of trait-based inequity persist, as documented on numerous occasions (e.g., McKay et al., 2007; Pettigrew, 1980; Tsui, Egan, & O’Reilly, 1992). The present investigation adds to that body of evidence.

Our results mirror several previous investigations (e.g., Dixon, Storen, & Van Horn, 2002; McKay et al., 2007) and are potentially ominous when one takes into account the negative effect (e.g., decreased productivity and increased turnover intent) perceptions of being discriminated against can have for both the employee targets of the discrimination and their employers (Chrobot-Mason, 2003; Greenhaus et al., 1990; Polzer, Milton, & Swann, 2002; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). In addition, as discrimination

Note: The effects are standardized regression coefficients controlling for age, sex, and job tenure (control variables not shown).

*p ≤ .05. **p ≤ .01.
claims to the EEOC continue to increase (Hastings, 2007), and retaliating against employees for submitting such claims is in direct violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, these companies place themselves in the position of being vulnerable to financial and legal sanctions.

“Like many good things, engagement is not exclusive to any group of people.” Our results revealed no significant difference across race in overall employee engagement, $F(3, 948) = .21$, $ns$, or its subcomponents, belongingness, $F(3, 954) = .97$, $ns$, and connectedness, $F(3, 954) = .63$, $ns$. In terms of attitudinal attachment processes, this result differs from several studies revealing a consistent pattern of members of racial minorities reporting lower levels of, for instance, job satisfaction (e.g., Moch, 1980; O’Reilly & Roberts, 1973; Vecchio, 1980) and coworker social support (CSS) (e.g., Dignam, Barrera, & West, 1986; Dixon et al., 2002; Linville, Salovey, & Fischer, 1986; Reynolds, Turner, & Haslam, 2000). One explanation for the discrepant trends is that employee engagement, as operationalized by the Q12®, is an “antecedent . . . of . . . job satisfaction and other affective constructs” (Harter et al., 2002). As explained by Jones and Harter (2005), the experience of job satisfaction and other affective constructs “[operate] distally from the routine activities organizational members undertake, while engagement more immediately determines whether or not those activities occur” (p. 79). Thus, from the organization’s perspective, when considering various attitudinal frameworks, engagement may provide the maximum return.

Our analyses affirm this notion, as indicated by both the correlation coefficients for belongingness, connectedness, and affective attachment in Table 2 and the results of Step 2 of the regression analysis in Table 4, showing the composite Engagement Scale as a significant predictor of affective attachment. And because engagement appears to be less variable across racial categories than other affective states, organizations and their managers theoretically should be able to obtain optimal results by focusing on enhancing those things, like belongingness and connectedness (i.e., engagement), that illustrate how “we have discovered that [all races] can stick together for a common cause” (King, 1956b).

“While engagement ‘belongs’ to individuals, organizations play a role as well.” As suggested in the previous section, employee engagement is a potential boon to businesses. And although companies cannot “make” their employees more engaged, they can certainly take direct actions to try to increase the proportion of engaged employees in their workforce. As Harter and his
colleagues (Harter et al., 2002) explained, one of the major benefits of the Q12® items is that they represent factors that can be directly affected by the dynamics of the supervisor-employee dyad relationship. Hence, by helping their employees see how the materials and equipment they use in their job (Q12® Item 2) relate to organizational outcomes, managers are better equipped to engender cohesion in the work group, while at the same time increasing the prospects that employees will perceive equity in the administration of resources. Similarly, by designing the selection process to specifically seek conscientious employees, making performance goals as interdependent as possible, and designing work to maximize the opportunities employees have to interact and discuss their joint accomplishments, managers can directly affect their employees’ level of respect for one another (Q12® Item 9).

Apart from the impact individual managers, as agents of the organization, can have on their employees’ engagement, organizations as entities themselves may also play a part in the equation via their formal policies. This is clearly indicated in the results of the regression analyses presented in Tables 3 and 4. As outlined in Step 3 of each table, the DPS—respondents’ perceptions of their companies’ values regarding demographic diversity in their workplaces—significantly predicted increases in affective attachment and decreased perception of employer retaliation for discrimination complaints, beyond the impact of engagement. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that with regard to affective attachment (Table 3 and Figure 1), after the inclusion of DPS, the effect of perceived discrimination is significantly reduced. Thus, the simple action of establishing, and effectively promoting and supporting, diversity policies can pay huge dividends toward creating an organizational culture where all members truly believe that “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Justice is indivisible” (King, 1963c, p. 79).

Conclusion

Organizations cannot change the practical reality that human beings frequently engage in “oppositional identity” (Fine, 1994), the process by which people “define [themselves], [their] identities, in opposition to, or as distinct from, others” (Gentile, 1996, p. 14), a practice that can be problematic when, as Gentile (1996) pointed out, “my sense of myself is built upon my ability to distinguish myself from you; therefore I value the ways in which I am different from you; therefore I begin to devalue the traits that make you distinct from me” (p. 14). Accordingly, as we have argued, perceptions of being targets of discrimination at work are likely to remain for the foreseeable future.
Similarly, the institution of policies to make the workplace more racially diverse will not, in and of themselves, lead to positive outcomes. Empirical studies have shown, at least in the short term, a negative impact of racial/cultural heterogeneity on group task performance (e.g., Liao, Joshi, & Chuang, 2004; Watson, Kumar, & Michaelsen, 1993). In addition, Zanoni and Janssens (2007) made the case that organizations, by “defining minority employees in terms of fixed, essential group characteristics with negative connotations, and by deploying such differences to reach institutional goals” (p. 2) (e.g., by matching salespersons and clients based on shared racial group membership), use diversity policies as a control mechanism. Whereas we find no fault with companies attempting to maximize their business outcomes, diversity-building practices of this type, Zanoni and Janssens (2007) pointed out, have the potential to cause harm to minority employees’ self-identity, by their being expected to be “model” representatives of their race, yet also “to behave like their majority colleagues” (p. 24). The identity conflict induced by such practices has been shown to cause negative psychological outcomes (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964; Schaubroeck, Ganster, Sime, & Ditman, 1993), similar to the metaphysical impact implied in Dr. King’s belief that by allowing societal discrimination “America . . . stripped [him] of [his] garments . . . [and] robbed [him] of [his] precious endowment” (King, 1944).

The results of our analyses demonstrate that while organizations cannot eliminate either the perception or reality of racial discrimination, they can, through their policies and practices, help create conditions for a more engaged workforce, with accompanying decreases in perceived and actual discrimination. The key is establishing a company environment where members truly live out the shared values that define strong cultures (Wiener, 1988), as opposed to just exhibiting compliance to organizational dictates.

In addition to building a strong culture, organizations would also be well served in promoting a climate of belongingness and connectedness. In contrast to culture, which one researcher refers to as the normative, or “should” aspect of organizational behavior (Michaela & Burke, 2000), climate has been defined as “people’s perceptions and experiences of the workplace in terms of warmth, trust, dynamism, ambiguity, and other affect-laden dimensions” (Michaela & Burke, 2000, p. 234). This definition of climate alludes to the descriptive, or “is” aspect of organizational behavior (Michaela & Burke, 2000). Thus, whereas a culture of belongingness and connectedness influences how employees interpret and value the meaning of those concepts, climate affects how those same employees experience belongingness and connectedness “through actions and interactions” with
their fellow organizational members (Michaela & Burke, 2000, p. 234). Because a major focus of the Q12® engagement measure is precisely on such “actions and interactions,” it provides an apt vehicle for establishing a climate in which the “Beloved Community” can flourish.

Our results can help provide direction for future inferential analyses. For instance, although our measure of engagement did not produce significantly variable results across racial groups, other investigations in different contexts have established interactive effects of engagement level and race. Jones and Harter (2005), as one example, determined that, contrary to expectations, in supervisor-employee dyads comprising members of different races, where the employee reported high levels of engagement, turnover intent was lower than that of same-race dyads. That study demonstrated the complexities attending research focusing on “race” as a primary variable. Future studies focusing on similar relational dynamics (e.g., whether and/or how the proportion of majority vs. minority employees in the workforce may affect the impact of engagement on employee outcomes) would be valuable in extending our findings.

In addition, the methodological design of our study did not allow us to establish a causal direction between employee engagement and perceived discrimination. Hence, although it may be the case that higher engagement leads to lower perceived discrimination, we cannot rule out the possibility that lower perceived discrimination leads to higher engagement. Sequential analyses of that relationship could provide insight to both researchers and managers as to the most efficient allocation of diversity-oriented resources. We also encourage longitudinal studies assessing the extent to which acts of actual discrimination are predicted by engagement level and diversity policy beliefs.

In a 1966 interview for Christian Century Magazine, Dr. King, speaking about what he saw as the fundamental objective of his quest, stated,

I do not think of political power as an end. Neither do I think of economic power as an end. They are ingredients in the objective that we seek in life. And I think that end or that objective is a truly brotherly society, the creation of the beloved community. (King Center, n.d.)

Most businesses have an economic imperative, and, most assuredly, many have some element of political motivation as well. As Dr. King’s mission sought, and as our results demonstrate, those organizational goals need not be mutually exclusive with embracing the notion that “unity is the great need of the hour, . . . and if we are united we can get many of the things that we not only desire but which we justly deserve” (King, 1955).
Notes

1. Although we understand that these labels assess not purely race but also ethnicity and/or nationality, and hence might be more accurately categorized as “racioethnicity” (i.e., “the combination of physical and cultural differences that distinguish Euro-Caucasian members of organizations from minority groups such as African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and American Indians” [Cox & Nkomo, 1993, p. 205]), we use the term race in this article for consistency across studies and consistency with the data collection instrument cited herein. Similarly, we use the term Black as synonymous with African American, and Latino as synonymous with Hispanic.

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3. Adequate fit of confirmatory factor analysis models is indicated by a nonsignificant chi-square (χ²); confirmatory (CFI) and normed (NFI) fit indices of ≥ .95 and ≥ .90, respectively; and a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of .08 or less (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2006). The chi-square fit statistic is sensitive to sample size and thus more likely produces statistically significant results; thus, test results should be interpreted in conjunction with other fit indices.

References


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Peggy Jones, MFA, is an assistant professor and past interim chairperson in the Department of Black Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She is also a Senior Research Fellow and the College of Arts and Science representative for the university’s Institute for Collaboration Science. Her current research is centered on exploring the intersections between language and identity, via a multidisciplinary-based illustrated creative nonfiction approach.