

Room 10 – Queen Maxima Hall 🕒 10:45-12:00

2

***STAYING THE COURSE:
KEEPING LGBTQ+ AND OTHER
IDENTITIES AT THE CENTER IN
A SHIFTING DEI LANDSCAPE***

#BeyondPride2025

Staying the Course: Keeping LGBTQ+ and Other Identities at the Center in a Shifting DEI Landscape



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From 'rainbow washing' to 'rainbow hushing'?

JPMorgan makes changes to its diversity programs, memo says

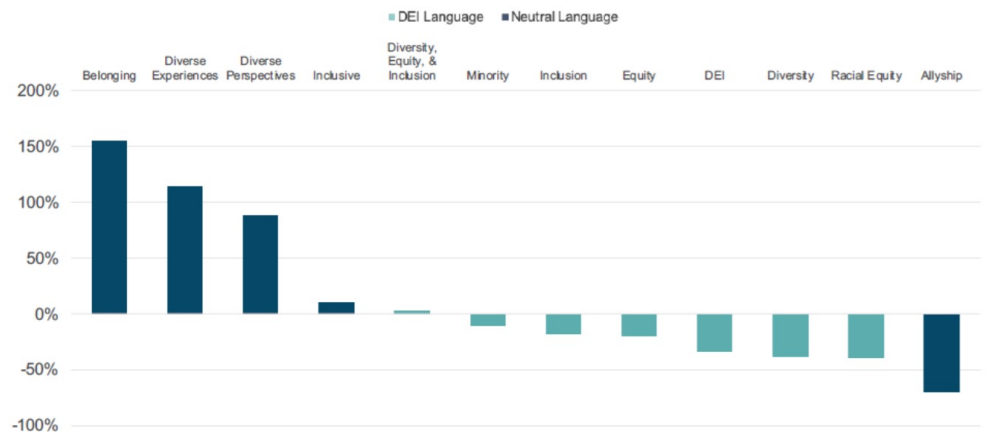
By Nupur Anand

March 21, 2025 3:44 PM GMT+1 · Updated 2 months ago



Slide 4 of 31 English (United Kingdom) accessibility: investigate

Change in selected term frequency, compared to 2023





Diversity statement

Your organization has recently changed its diversity and mission statements. Instead of explicitly mentioning sexual orientation, race, religion, or gender, the focus is now on “diverse perspectives, experiences, and opinions,” emphasizing that everyone is diverse.

What do you think about this change?

1. This is a great move—everyone is unique, and focusing on race or sexuality just reinforces stereotypes.
2. This is smart—it helps include majority group members who often feel left out of D&I efforts.
3. I feel like the organization is watering down what D&I really means.
4. We should drop the statement altogether—organizations should focus on meritocracy, not diversity.

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Diversity approaches

Identity-Blind Approach

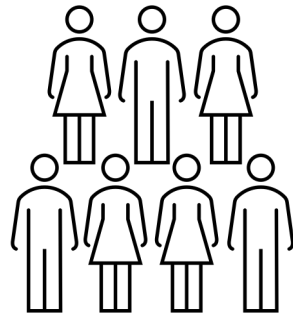
Identity-Conscious Approach



Diversity approaches

Identity-Blind Approach

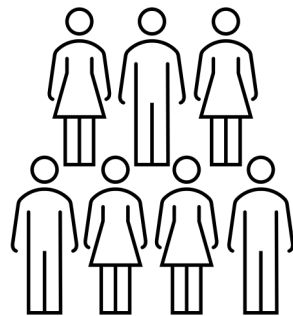
Everyone is an individual first. We should focus on individual differences and/or similarities



Diversity approaches

Identity-Blind Approach

Everyone is an individual first. We should focus on individual differences and/or similarities



Pros

- Diminishes open conflict
- Minimizes discomfort

Cons

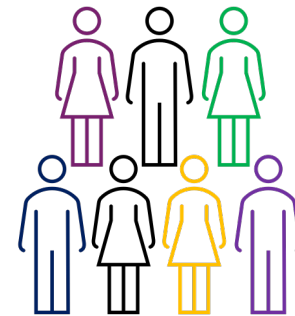
- Assumes equal starting position
- Assumes unequal treatment in the past
- Ignores importance of privilege



Diversity approaches

Identity-Conscious Approach

Everyone has a different social identity, which is valuable and affects their lived experience



Diversity approaches

Pros

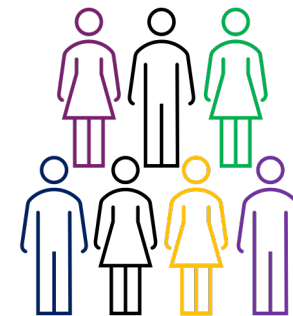
- Acknowledges social privilege/disadvantage
- Decreases prejudice

Cons

- Increase in stereotyping
- Backlash from majority group – perceived threat
- Reduce validity of prejudice claims

Identity-Conscious Approach

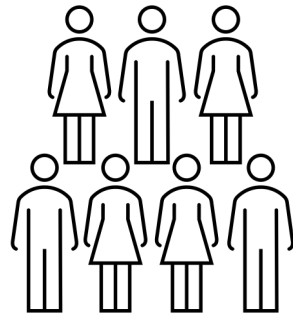
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Diversity approaches

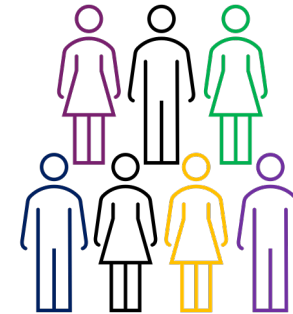
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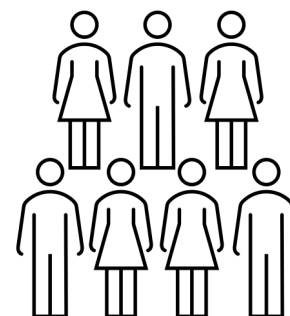
Identity-Conscious Approach

Everyone has a different social identity, which is valuable and affects their lived experience

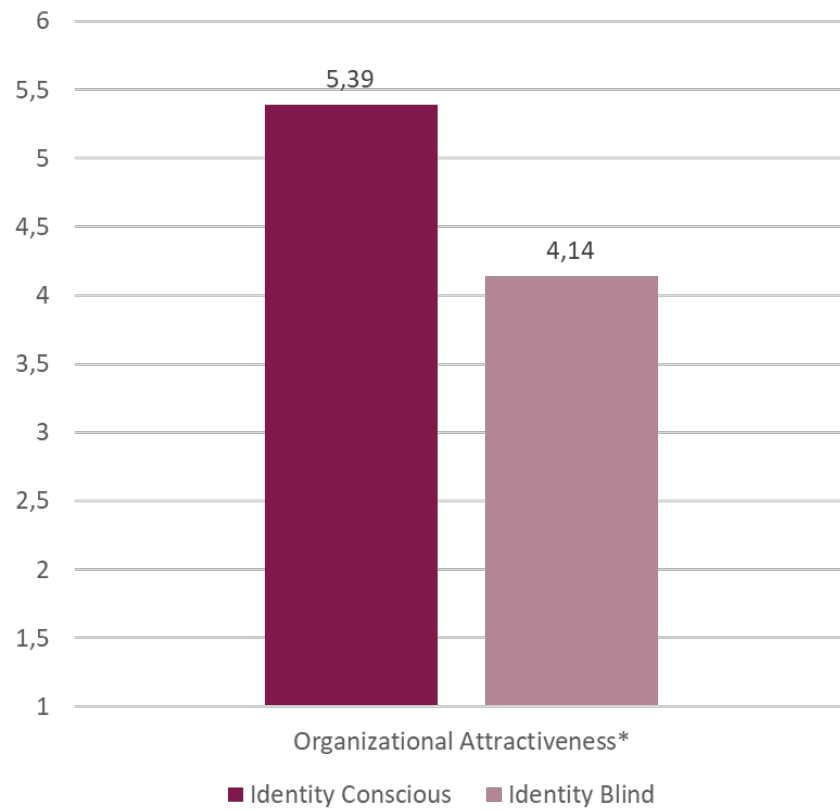




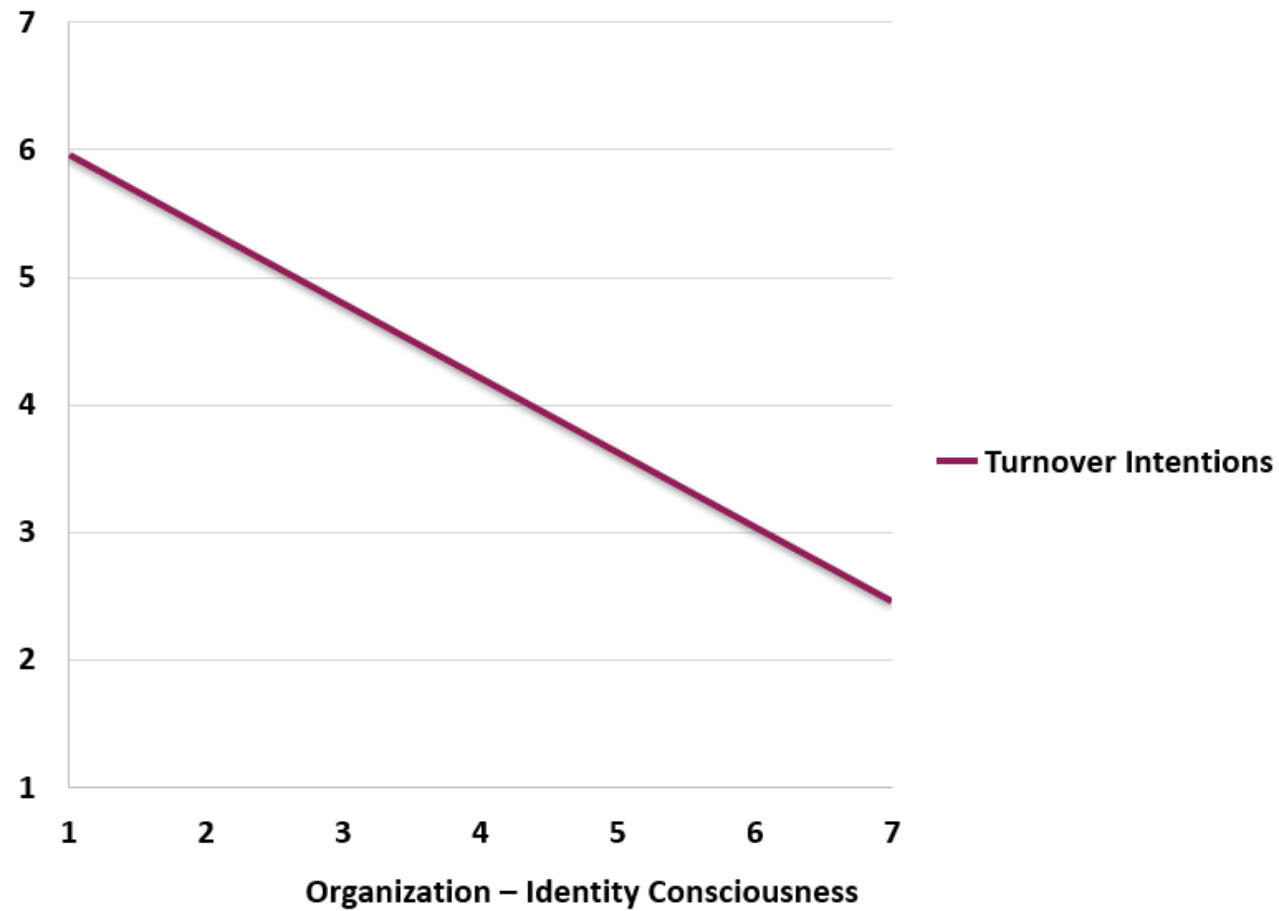
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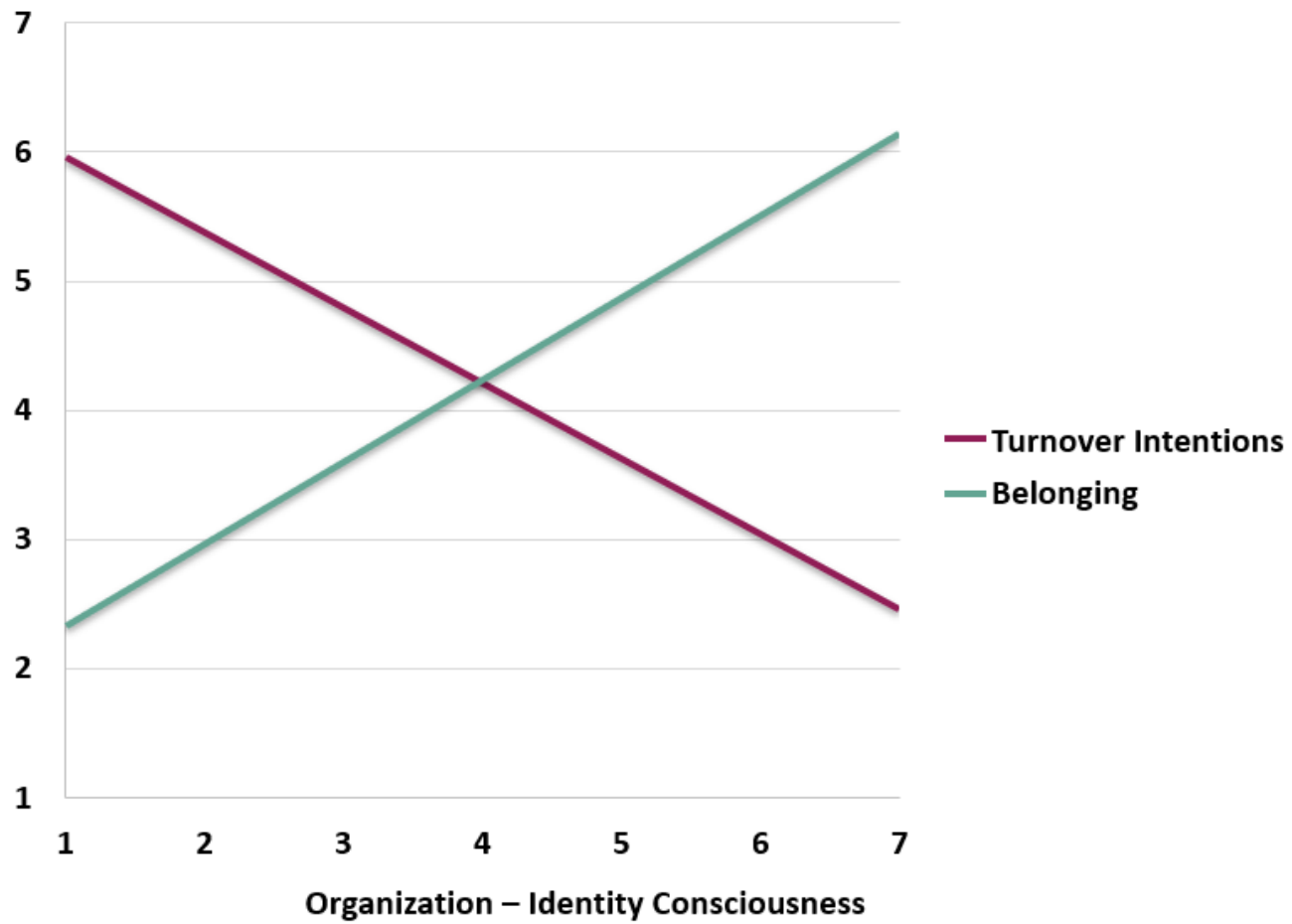
Organizational attractiveness



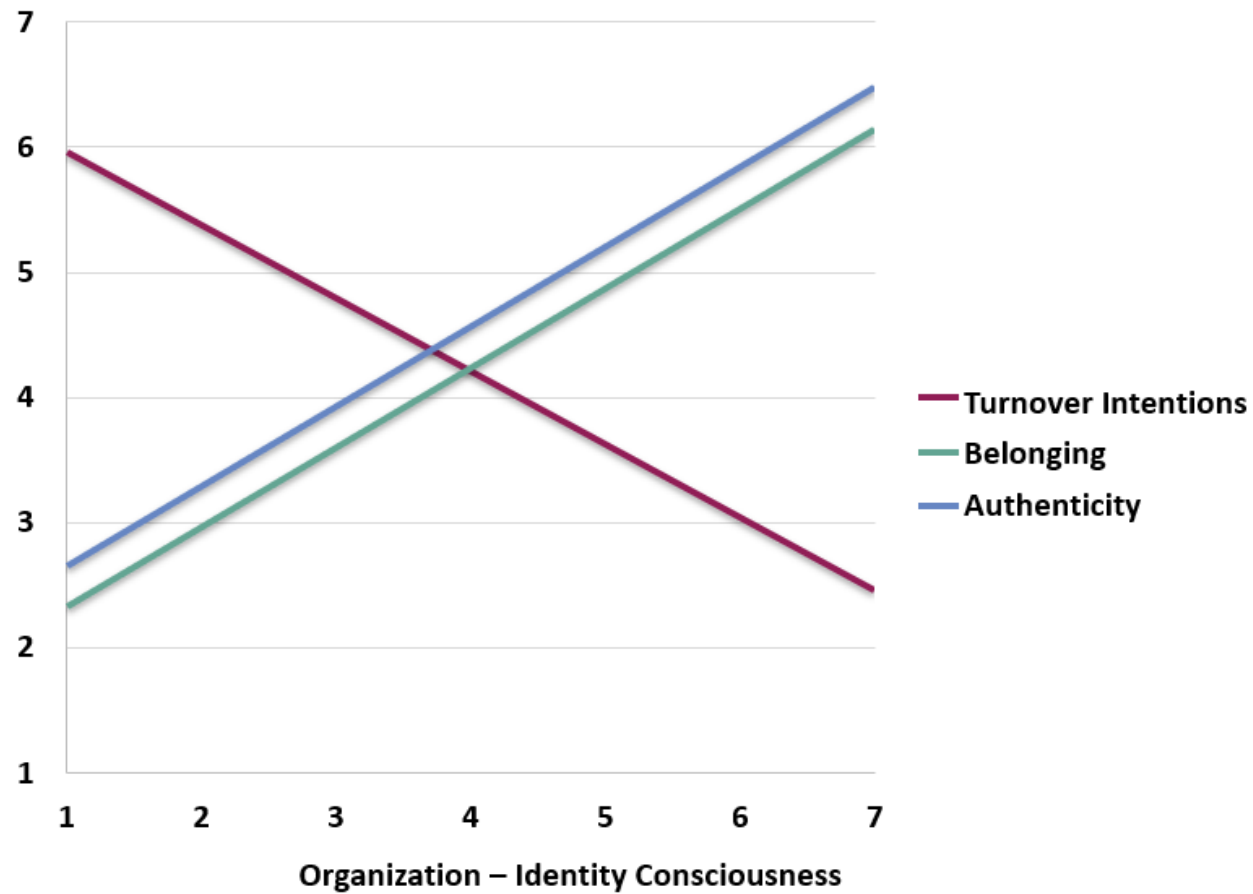
Turnover intentions



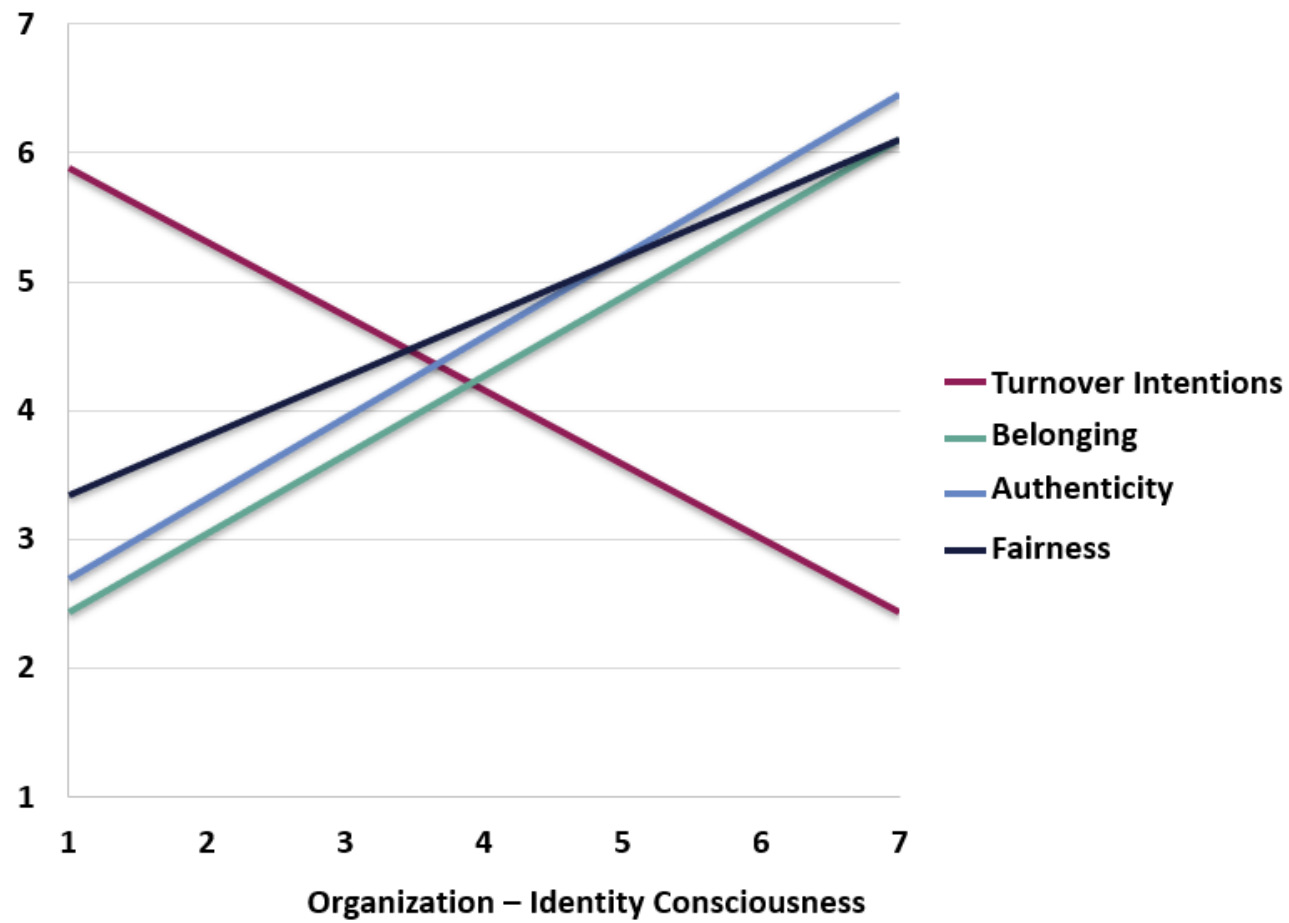
Belonging



Authenticity



Fairness



D&I policies and activities

The vision/intended policy

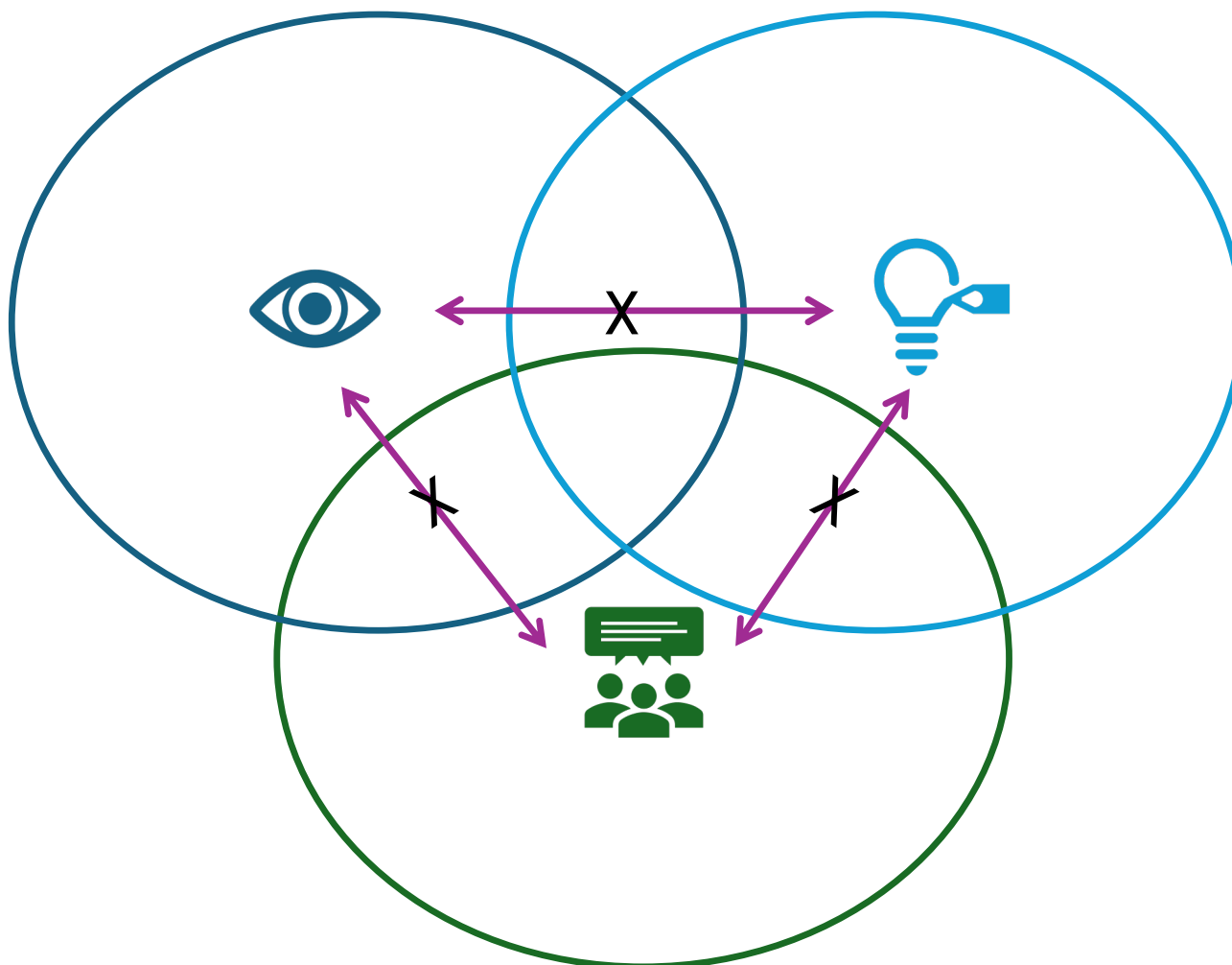


The implemented policy



The perceived and experienced policy







Conclusions

- LGBTQ+ employees feel safer, more fairly treated, and more connected in organizations that name and visibly embrace diversity.
- They are also less likely to leave the organization.
- Job seekers find identity-conscious organizations that actively acknowledge and value different backgrounds and identities more attractive.

Feedback

- Which findings are most striking to you?
- What information is new to you?





Discuss in groups

- What is your organization's current diversity approach?
- What could they do better?
- What does this require, from whom?

Gathering insights

- Main highlights per group





Takeaways

- Our research: Naming demographic diversity matters. It signals that people's identities and experiences are valued. Avoiding terms like "diversity" can drive away the talent you want to attract.
- Other research: You can broaden your focus without diluting your message.

Staying the course

- What are your takeaways from today?
- What is one step you can take to help your organization move forward?



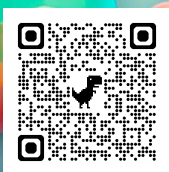
Thank you!

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Download the paper:





Staying the Course: Keeping LGBTQ+ and Other Identities at the Center in a Shifting DEI Landscape

Jojanneke van der Toorn (j.m.vandertoorn@uu.nl) and Kshitij Mor (k.mor@uu.nl)

1. Visibility Matters—Don't "Rainbow Hush"

- Avoid making your language too neutral or generic in an attempt to sidestep political resistance.
- Explicitly naming underrepresented and marginalized groups (e.g. LGBTQ+, racial/ethnic minorities, gender diversity) is critical—visibility fosters recognition and belonging.
- Less visible forms of diversity (like sexual orientation or gender identity) especially require clear acknowledgment to prevent them from being erased.

2. Explicit Diversity Messaging Builds Safer, More Inclusive Workplaces

- Clearly naming diversity (including demographic diversity) signals to employees and candidates that their experiences are seen and valued ([Mor et al., 2024](#)).
- Omitting terms like “diversity” risks alienating the very talent you aim to attract.
- Research shows this kind of visibility creates workplaces that feel safer and more attractive to diverse candidates.

3. Expand the Space – Focus on Demographic Groups and Build Support Across Groups

- You don't need to choose between focusing on “diversity of thought/experience” and naming demographic identities—do both ([Kirby et al., 2023](#)).
- Combine broad diversity language with explicit mention of demographics, for example: “We value diversity of thought, perspective, experience, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, and cultural background.”
- Including majority identities (e.g. whiteness, male identity) as part of the diversity conversation can boost majority group buy-in for D&I initiatives ([Jansen et al., 2015](#)).
- This does not mean centering majority experiences but positioning D&I as something inclusive of all employees, encouraging shared responsibility.

4. Align Meritocracy with Inclusive Messaging—Carefully

- Combining an identity-conscious D&I message with a meritocratic message can drive engagement from both majority and minority groups ([Gündemir et al., 2017](#)).
- BUT: Ensure that these messages are clearly aligned—conflicting or disjointed messages (e.g. separate “diversity” and “merit” statements) can create confusion or skepticism.
- For example: “We foster an inclusive and open-minded workplace that values differences and seeks the most qualified individuals to join our team—this benefits our employees, clientele, and the industry at large.”

