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The moderating effects of single vs multiple-grounds of perceived-discrimination on work-attitudes

Protean careers and self-efficacy roles in explaining intention-to-stay

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Abstract

Purpose – Moving from a focus on a single aspect of diversity to multiple-diversity characteristics, the purpose of this paper is to develop and empirically test a model that examines whether self-efficacy (SE) and protean career (PC) measures relate to intention to stay (ITS), as a possible mediation of job satisfaction (JS). The authors then explored whether perceived discrimination – on single and multiple grounds – modify these relationships.

Design/methodology/approach – A survey of 316 US managers, of which 95 reported perceived discrimination: 51 perceived discrimination on a single ground and a further 44 on multiple grounds.

Findings – SE and PC are associated with increased ITS where there is higher JS. Furthermore, multiple discrimination results in more negative outcomes compared to a single source of perceived discrimination.

Research limitations/implications – Employees with multiple diversities might be more prone to feelings of discrimination, which in an organizational context that lacks diversity awareness can generate negative implications on performance, esteem, working relationships, and ultimately ITS.

Originality/value – The research provides valuable insights into the issue of diversity and discrimination relating to more than one single source of diversity.

Keywords Discrimination, Diversity, Careers, Graduates, Talent management

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

To improve their competitive edge in today's challenging economic climate, organizations focus on seeking talent in diverse societies (Bell, 2007; Knights and Omanović, 2016). A number of studies suggest but do not make explicit why a diverse population is likely to experience higher levels of perceived discrimination. Diversity management at work requires managers to be cognizant of the fact that discrimination can occur across different aspects of diversity (Bell, 2007), in various professions (Kalleberg, 2012), and at different educational levels (Arbaugh *et al.*, 2010).

The diversity management literature addresses issues such as workplace inequality (Kim *et al.*, 2015; Tatli, 2011; Thomas, 1990) and surface- vs deep-level diversity (Harrison *et al.*, 1998, 2002). This literature continues to proliferate, rendering this topic an established field of study (Tatli, 2011). This needs to be contextualized with changing

workplace dynamics that are now more heterogeneous than they used to be due to globalization and immigration (Briscoe *et al.*, 2012). As this trend continues, we anticipate the literature on diversity and its management will continue to gain increasing attention.

Diversity is composed of different parts or differing elements that relate to dissimilar people in groups or organizations; regarding, for example, their race, cultures, or gender (Bell, 2007). It also includes various physical, social and environmental differences that influences the way people think and behave (Thomas, 2001).

The term intersectionality was introduced by Crenshaw (1989, p. 139) as a multidimensional perspective following her work on black women. Intersectionality moves the debate "towards more complex ways of thinking and treating gender and other inequalities" (Lombardo and Verloo, 2009). This is achieved by a change from dichotomy logic of analysis that treats one type of inequality, to the point at which various inequalities intersect with each other. Indeed, most diversity and discrimination studies refer to a single ground (Berry and Bell, 2012; Wyatt and Silvester, 2015), yet few cover the dual discrimination grounds of gender and ethnic minority (Fielden and Davidson, 2012; Seaton *et al.*, 2010). A growing stream of studies focuses on additional grounds, such as sexual orientation (Day and Greene, 2008; Ozturk and Rumens, 2014). Overall, multiple diversity, when several grounds for discrimination exist is rarely touched upon (Metcalfe and Woodhams, 2008).

Studying factors that can cause discrimination in isolation only produces a partial picture of the effects of discrimination. Methodologically, studying different combinations is challenging because of the small samples it invariably entails. Yet, the impact of multiple diversity compared with single diversity is an important topic to examine. Indeed, this inquiry has gained increasing attention over the past decades (Guidroz *et al.*, 2009), particularly from a legal perspective (Wright *et al.*, 2011; Legislation.gov.co.uk, 2015).

We discuss a variety of grounds for discrimination, therefore bridging this gap while exploring the potential effects on career outcomes. Furthermore, we examine single and multiple grounds of perceived discrimination in relation to whether self-efficacy (SE) and protean career (PC) measures is associated with intention to stay (ITS), and the extent to which this is mediated by job satisfaction (JS). Subsequently, the aim is to determine whether this is moderated by perceptions of discrimination, on a single or multiple grounds. This is achieved by investigating the career success of master degree graduates, employed mainly in professional and managerial roles.

The main theoretical contribution is offered by empirically testing an understudied phenomenon using career related constructs such as the PC (Hall, 2004). This provides greater understanding of the role of career orientation (protean) that better fits with contemporary boundaryless careers (Arthur and Rousseau, 2001), albeit bounded (Inkson *et al.*, 2012). To explore career barriers rigorously, we use the distinction between no perceived discrimination; single source perceived discrimination; and multiple sources of perceived discrimination. The aim was to develop and empirically test a model to identify how perceived discrimination influences careers and career related outcomes. Consequently, we contribute to ongoing debates in the field of diversity, by exploring various diversity identities through the lens of multiple discrimination.

Theoretical background and hypotheses development
Managing diversity is crucial for effective management (Cox and Blake, 1991; Kalleberg, 2012; Yang and Konrad, 2011). Although the contemporary workforce has developed strategies and policies to encourage and support diversity, many still struggle to accept it.

Managers need to recognize the multiple identities of employees, akin to a mixed heritage (Davidson, 1997). Yet, there is a tendency to study different diversity identities such as race, gender, or disability in isolation, whereas individuals are likely to represent more than one of these identities. Even a single dimension of diversity shapes organizational and societal culture in significant ways (Kelan and Dunkley Jones, 2010; Murray and Syed, 2010). However, gender on its own is no longer seen as salient, though it is still the focus of wide investigations (Kumra *et al.*, 2014).

People can feel they are being discriminated against from either a single aspect of discrimination (e.g. gender, ethnicity, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation); or from several grounds. A significant proportion of the population in many countries hold more than one diversity identity (Kulik *et al.*, 2007). Consequently, the management of diversity needs to consider this multi-identity paradigm.

Organizations are increasingly under pressure to perform more efficiently and effectively. The survival of the fittest depends on an organization's ability to recruit and retain core human assets, such as those with post-graduate qualifications. Akin to wider society, graduate cohorts have become more diverse (Denson and Zhang, 2010). The minority ethnic makeup of the population in OECD countries is increasing.

Career attitudes and ITS

The PC (Hall, 2004) is a career attitude driven by the values of career actors. That is, what individuals consider important and worthy. It is also directed through personal choice rather than by external agents such as the organization (Hall, 2004; Hall and Mirvis, 1996). The notion of the PC appears to capture the emotional demands that the contemporary era poses to career actors, such as job insecurity (Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt, 2010). Career actors are able to conduct their careers according to their values and direction of choice. Furthermore, the PC can lead to a stronger believe in subjective career success (Baruch, 2014; De Vos and Soens, 2008; Hall, 2004), leading to lower intention to leave.

Thus, PC is a process managed at the individual level which is of relevance within the context of diversity management. As the criterion of success is internal perception of psychological success, unlike external success such as hierarchy progress or salary increase (Hall, 2004), the employee's career attitude tends to be positive if they believe they are able to achieve a successful career in the organization, which means they are more likely to stay as hypothesized below:

H1. Holding positive career attitudes will be positively associated with ITS.

SE and ITS

A positive impact of human capital on both objective and subjective career success was already identified in earlier studies (Judge *et al.*, 1995). They found that educational level, institutional quality and prestige, and type of degree, predicted individual career success. Their findings were supported by follow-up studies (Baruch, 2009), drawing attention to the concept of perceived SE, suggesting that a person who believes in their own competency will perform better and will be more satisfied (Bandura, 1977a, b, 1997). Business management graduates are expected to become business leaders (Benjamin and O'Reilly, 2011) and qualities such as being able to perform effectively, largely as a result of having high leadership values, is pertinent to the leadership role, and JS (Gill, 2002). This suggests that SE can lead to higher JS, hence, higher ITS.

Peterson (2009) studied career decision-making SE, questioning the extent to which career decision-making SE impacts managers' perceptions of integration with their organization. He studied the relationship between decisions to quit and career decision-making SE and perceptions of organizational integration. The findings revealed that managers who scored higher in career decision-making SE, career integration, and work-life balance were more likely to stay. Constant managerial turnover can be a major problem in any organization, having a major impact on performance (Moynihan and Landuyt, 2008).

Ng *et al.* (2005) highlighted, the distinction between internal and external career success, in addition to a number of factors that influence both intrinsic and extrinsic career outcomes. By intrinsic, scholars typically refer to career satisfaction and well-being; by external, to measurable achievements such as increased salary and promotion rate (Ng *et al.*, 2005). Such as, the human capital (Becker, 1964) acquired throughout peoples working lives, which has the capacity to contribute to their career success via the acquisition of career capital (Seibert *et al.*, 2001), and most importantly, the know-how (Arthur *et al.*, 2005). Know-how is gained via both education and work experience, and is reflected in the SE people hold regarding their managerial competence (Bandura, 1997). Indeed, SE is widely regarded as an antecedent of performance (Bandura, 1977a, b, 1997; Leonard, 2008; Boyatzis *et al.*, 2012). Lee *et al.* (1999) extended our understanding of factors and processes leading to voluntary turnover. SE is associated with career success (Day and Allen, 2004), including objective career success (Abele and Spurk, 2009) that can have a negative impact on a tendency to quit (Ng *et al.*, 2007). Having contemporary career attitudes might influence intention to quit (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009). Competence and SE influence career success of management graduates (Baruch and Peiperl, 2000). As a result of these discussions we expect:

H2. Acquiring high levels SE will be positively associated with ITS.

The mediating role of JS
The onset of the twenty-first century witnessed a resurgence of interest in analysing JS variables, recognizing that JS is correlated with labour market behaviour, in particular productivity, quitting, and absenteeism (Gazioglu and Tansel, 2006). JS as a work attitude is regarded as a key contributory factor in employee turnover and intent to leave (Coomber and Barriball, 2007; Nadiri and Tanova, 2010). This situation can be exacerbated by perceived discriminatory beliefs that can affect well-being, which can affect the relationship between job satisfaction and job separation. JS is negatively related to turnover when well-being is low (Wright and Bonett, 2007), suggesting that if well-being is high, then employees are more likely to stay, which was more evident regarding diversity (Seston *et al.*, 2009). Hence we suggest:

H3a. JS will mediate the relationship between PC measures and ITS.

H3b. JS will mediate the relationship between SE and ITS.

Perceived discrimination and its effect on talent retention
Potential effects of diversity on career outcomes
Where diversity exists, discrimination may arise, harming individuals and can be costly to organizations who risk losing talented employees (Goldman *et al.*, 2006). Discrimination is defined as "the effective injurious treatment of persons on grounds

rationally irrelevant to the situation", making an adverse distinction that could be rendered unfair, and treating equals unequally (Antonovsky, 1960). Unfair treatment of those worthy of equal treatment as the "raison d'être" renders them disadvantaged compared to others, hence discrimination. The results of discrimination are detrimental to individuals and employers (Wilson, 2008), cause high level of stress leading to withdrawal behaviour (Kemery *et al.*, 1987). According to Schmitt and Branscombe (2002), perceived discrimination depends on a person's position in a social structure. We define perceived discrimination as individual's belief that they are being treated less favourably compared to another.

A lack of awareness of diversity at the organizational level can result in behaviours towards those of difference that makes them believe they are being perceived discriminatively. Such beliefs might generate negative implications on performance, esteem, working relationships, and an inclination to leave the organization (Bell, 2007). Discrimination in the workplace can affect victims' career outcomes, even if the behaviour displayed by the other was unintentional. Perceived discrimination is linked to an increase in depression and reduced self-esteem (Seaton *et al.*, 2010) and can be detrimental to the careers of those with such beliefs.

Furthermore, this is likely to have a greater impact if the discrimination is from multiple compared to single grounds, arguing a need to explore human capital theory (Becker, 1964; Boudreau and Ramstad, 2007) in context with workplace diversity (Gardenswartz and Rowe, 1998). Larson (2007) purports the importance of gaining an in-depth understanding of a wide range of diversity categories to develop a well-integrated framework for managing diversity. This affords consideration of multiple and not just single grounds of discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989), echoing Özbilgin and Tatli's (2011) integrated framework which discourages single-level conceptualizations of diversity management. Scholars need to consider this if they aim to capture the relational interplay concerns of equality.

We anticipate the relationship between the antecedents to be moderated, partially, by the level of perceived discrimination:

H4a. The associations portrayed in the above set of hypotheses will be affected by the level of perceived discrimination, and either single or multiple grounds of perceived discrimination.

Studying a combination of diversity grounds is quite rare, but may reveal intriguing findings, such as studying the impact of a combination of different race and gender (Booysen and Nkomo, 2010; King, 2003). A combination of more than one ground of diversity can be significant (Fassinger and Arseneau, 2007), though its impact has not yet been studied:

H4b. The negative impact of perceived discrimination will be higher when there are multiple sources of perceived discrimination.

Based on the above hypotheses, we propose the following model, where we suggest that perceived discrimination, either single or on multiple grounds, change the relationship between JS, protean measures, and SE with ITS (Figure 1).

Method
Sample and procedures
We distributed a questionnaire survey to graduate business alumni from a large university in South-Western USA. The university provided archive data from
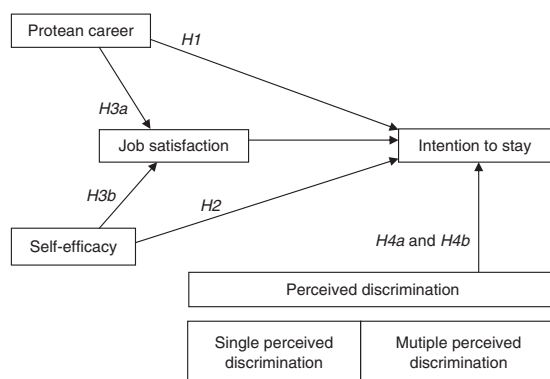
Figure 1.
The research model

the alumni participants. These respondents were asked to report the impact of
their master's level studies, their competence, skills, as well as work and career
attitudes. A separate measure identified their career success (both intrinsic
and extrinsic). Lastly, the participants were asked whether they perceived
being discriminated against at three different stages: before embarking on their
master studies, during their studies, and following the completion of their degree.
They were asked about the possible source of their perceived discrimination
(gender, race/ethnicity, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, and other), and
the significance of the perceived discrimination (a 1-5 scale from "Not at all" to
"Very significant").

Of the 1,098 questionnaires distributed, 316 surveys were completed by graduates
(with one follow-up reminder), representing approximately a 30 per cent response rate.
This rate is consistent with other studies of graduate business alumni (e.g. Dreher and
Chargois, 1998; Dreher and Cox, 2000). The participants included 203 men and 108
women (seven missing data). Ethnic origin distribution was as follows: 77 per cent
Caucasian, 3 per cent African-American, 16 per cent Asian, 3 per cent Hispanic, and
1 per cent Native Americans. Participants averaged 36.8 years old (SD = 7.1) and had
an averaged 6.5 (SD = 2.3) years of post-graduate work experience. These figures
demonstrate that management graduate population is less diverse than the general
population.

Measures

To avoid the phenomenon of common method bias we complemented the
self-reported measures with archive data. Although anonymous questionnaires
are typically used in alumni studies (e.g. Dreher and Chargois, 1998; Dreher and
Cox, 2000), self-reported data are associated with possible bias in response
(cf. Spector, 1994). To match the self-reported data with archive data, we added a
code number to each questionnaire. The archival records included grade-point-
average, standardized test scores (GMAT), and time of graduation. The specific
measures used were already well validated and tested for reliability in a number of
earlier studies. We also computed the Harman's one-factor test (as prescribed by
Podsakoff and Organ, 1986; see also Spector, 2006). No single factor accounted for the
majority of the covariance. All measures used a seven-point scale ranging from 1
(very low) to 7 (very high).

ITS

Measuring ITS is captured through the reversal of intention to quit items (Mobley *et al.*, 1979). The reliability of the four item on a seven-point scale was high ($\alpha = 0.86$). A sample item is "I frequently think of quitting my job".

JS

JS was assessed using three items ($\alpha = 0.93$) from Brayfield and Rothe (1951). A sample item is "I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in my job".

PC measures

PC was measured via five items ($\alpha = 0.71$) from a measure developed by Baruch (2014). A sample item is "I navigate my own career, mostly according to my plans".

SE

SE is measured using two items ($\alpha = 0.85$) based on Bandura (1997). A sample item is "I have the knowledge and skills necessary to perform well in my job".

The correlation matrix between the measures used in the analysis is provided in Table I.

Analysis and findings

The intermediary effect of job satisfaction

Before exploring further how discrimination relates to ITS, the hypothesized model is examined empirically.

The initial model provides a good fit (CFI = 0.926, RMSEA = 0.086). The model shows that protean attitudes have a positive effect on ITS (total effect = 0.288). When this is associated with JS this increases significantly (indirect effect = 0.553), leaving a negative direct effect (−0.264).

The situation differs for SE, as there is no relationship with ITS (total effect = 0.003), not unless JS is controlled. When doing so, it becomes clear that where SE is associated with higher levels of JS there is a positive effect (indirect effect = 0.275), but an overall negative relationship between SE and ITS (direct effect = −0.272) (Table II).

The role of perceived discrimination on single and multiple grounds

To test the role perceived discrimination plays in talent retention, we included perceived discrimination in the following analysis. Overall, reviewing the perception of discrimination post-completion of the graduates' studies, 221 (just under 70 per cent) did not have any perceived discrimination on any grounds. The rest had varying levels of perceived discrimination. Of those who perceived discrimination, 51 had a single ground of perceived discrimination (16 per cent), and over 44 (14 per cent) had multiple grounds of perceived discrimination (with two extreme cases of those of perceived discrimination to various extents on all grounds).

The vast majority of respondents reported no disability, with only five respondents feeling discriminated against on this ground (< 2 per cent). The average age was 37 and although this ranged from 24 to 69 years, the inter-quartile range was much narrower (from 32 to 40 years). The main grounds were sex and ethnicity (see Table III).

Most significantly, four in five men (80 per cent) did not feel discriminated against, compared to 51 per cent women, in line with gender-based discrimination studies

	ITS1	ITS2	ITS3	ITS4	JS1	JS2	JS3	PC1	PC2	PC3	PC4	PC5	SE1	SE2
ITS1	1													
ITS2	0.764**	1												
ITS3	0.540**	0.584**	1											
ITS4	0.543**	0.656**	0.623**	1										
JS1	0.452**	0.336**	0.299**	0.229**	1									
JS2	0.493**	0.382**	0.327**	0.259**	0.830**	1								
JS3	0.518**	0.428**	0.364**	0.351**	0.799**	0.859**	1							
PC1	0.174**	0.134*	0.095	0.162**	0.355**	0.403**	0.373**	1						
PC2	0.065	0.022	−0.085	0.056	0.167**	0.182**	0.140*	0.235**	1					
PC3	0.053	−0.012	−0.053	0.000	0.150**	0.187**	0.135*	0.208**	0.427**	1				
PC4	0.108	0.046	0.072	0.155**	0.358**	0.410**	0.393**	0.477**	0.364**	0.445**	1			
PC5	0.145**	0.128*	0.185**	0.234**	0.314**	0.324**	0.345**	0.226**	0.227**	0.261**	0.414**	1		
SE1	0.013	−0.034	0.016	0.039	0.306**	0.266**	0.200**	0.270**	0.156**	0.158**	0.297**	0.203**	1	
SE2	0.070	0.044	0.024	0.080	0.349**	0.326**	0.257**	0.258**	0.208**	0.202**	0.286**	0.276**	0.732**	1

Note: *, **Correlation is significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels, respectively (two-tailed)

Table I.
Correlation
matrix – measures

	Initial model				Moderation model			
	Estimate	SE	CR	p	Estimate	SE	CR	p
Job satisfaction←Protean career	0.582	0.099	5.901	***	0.583	0.099	5.896	***
Job satisfaction←Self-efficacy	0.290	0.078	3.709	***	0.293	0.078	3.740	***
Intention to stay←Job satisfaction	0.949	0.111	8.561	***	0.931	0.110	8.494	***
Intention to stay←Multiple discrimination					−0.490	0.205	−2.386	0.017
Intention to stay←Single discrimination					−0.220	0.193	−1.140	0.254
Intention to stay←Protean career	−0.264	0.137	−1.935	0.053	−0.297	0.136	−2.176	0.030
Intention to stay←Self-efficacy	−0.272	0.122	−2.228	0.026	−0.242	0.121	−2.000	0.045
PC5←Protean career	1.000				1.000			
PC4←Protean career	1.472	0.192	7.667	***	1.478	0.193	7.666	***
PC3←Protean career	0.837	0.128	6.525	***	0.838	0.128	6.520	***
PC2←Protean career	0.801	0.133	6.042	***	0.800	0.133	6.031	***
PC1←Protean career	0.945	0.141	6.715	***	0.946	0.141	6.710	***
JS1←Job satisfaction	1.000				1.000			
JS2←Job satisfaction	1.196	0.049	24.397	***	1.196	0.049	24.406	***
JS3←Job satisfaction	1.198	0.052	23.069	***	1.197	0.052	23.059	***
ITS1←Intention to stay	1.000				1.000			
ITS2←Intention to stay	1.210	0.067	18.183	***	1.210	0.067	18.028	***
ITS3←Intention to stay	1.086	0.083	13.093	***	1.087	0.084	13.017	***
ITS4←Intention to stay	0.917	0.066	13.974	***	0.919	0.066	13.906	***
SE1←Self-efficacy	1.000				1.000			
SE2←Self-efficacy	1.104	0.212	5.199	***	1.127	0.224	5.039	***

Note: ***$p < 0.001$

Table II.
Regression weights for the initial model and the moderation model

					No perceived discrimination	Perceived discrimination on one ground	Perceived discrimination on several grounds	Total
Women	Ethnicity	White	n		46	22	16	84
			%		55	26	19	
		Non-white	n		9	4	11	24
			%		38	17	46	
	Total		n		55	26	27	108
			%		51	24	25	
Men	Ethnicity	White	n		139	12	10	161
			%		86	8	6	
		Non-white	n		24	12	6	42
			%		57	29	14	
	Total		n		163	24	16	203
			%		80	12	8	
Total	Ethnicity	White	n		185	34	26	245
			%		76	14	11	
		Non-white	n		33	16	17	66
			%		50	24	26	
	Total		n		218	50	43	311
			%		70	16	14	

Table III.
Breakdown of respondents by sex, ethnic category, and perception of discrimination

(Childs, 2012). Breakdown of ethnicity identified that perceptions of discrimination
are highest on multiple grounds for non-white women, but only applies to a single
ground for non-white men. This is indicative of an intersectional effect between sex
and ethnicity.

The moderating effect of single and multiple perceived discrimination
As a result, the SEM model above was refitted to examine the moderating effects of
perceived discrimination, on a single ground and also on multiple grounds, on ITS. The
moderation model (Table II) shows a good fit (CFI = 0.924, RMSEA = 0.075). Perceptions of
discrimination on a single grounds appears to have a negative effect on ITS, which is not
statistically significant in comparison to the reference group, i.e. those without perceived
discrimination. When it comes to perceived discrimination on multiple grounds, there is
a stronger negative effect on intention to say ($\beta = -0.49$, $p = 0.017$). This demonstrates,
empirically, the importance of distinguishing between single and multiple discrimination.

We assessed the model within each of the three groups: no perceived discrimination,
single ground and multiple grounds (Table IV). Within the group with no perceived
discrimination, the overall model largely holds. SE is strongly and negatively
associated with ITS as a direct path (-0.463, $p = 0.005$) and PC measures also show a
negative association although it is only slightly statistically significant (-0.281,
$p = 0.094$). The mediation effect of JS remains significant and positive compared to the
overall model. However, among those with no perceived discrimination, the direct effect
between SE and intention (-0.463) remained greater than the indirect path (0.372)
leaving overall, a small negative total effect (-0.091). The negative effects of higher
levels of SE on ITS are no longer fully over-ridden by JS.

	Estimate	SE	p	Estimate	SE	p	Estimate	SE	p
Job satisfaction←Protean career	0.558	0.110	***	1.577	1.165	0.176	0.386	0.192	0.044
Job satisfaction←Self-efficacy	0.379	0.092	***	0.198	0.158	0.210	0.002	0.025	0.948
Intention to stay←Job satisfaction	0.982	0.148	***	1.095	0.293	***	0.821	0.209	***
Intention to stay←Protean career	−0.281	0.168	0.094	−1.355	1.194	0.256	−0.065	0.216	0.762
Intention to stay←Self-efficacy	−0.463	0.163	0.005	0.041	0.173	0.813	−0.030	0.314	0.924
PC5←Protean career	1.000			1.000			1.000		
PC4←Protean career	1.411	0.222	***	2.688	1.907	0.159	1.178	0.270	***
PC3←Protean career	0.751	0.145	***	2.310	1.653	0.162	0.796	0.216	***
PC2←Protean career	0.861	0.167	***	0.949	0.795	0.233	0.763	0.230	***
PC1←Protean career	0.965	0.171	***	2.769	1.954	0.156	0.607	0.197	0.002
JS1←Job satisfaction	1.000			1.000			1.000		
JS2←Job satisfaction	1.162	0.056	***	1.452	0.197	***	1.117	0.084	***
JS3←Job satisfaction	1.123	0.058	***	1.381	0.205	***	1.172	0.084	***
ITS1←Intention to stay	1.000			1.000			1.000		
ITS2←Intention to stay	1.170	0.074	***	1.369	0.205	***	1.307	0.214	***
ITS3←Intention to stay	1.054	0.099	***	1.157	0.237	***	1.164	0.222	***
ITS4←Intention to stay	0.851	0.072	***	1.118	0.202	***	0.897	0.213	***
SE1←Self-efficacy	1.000			1.000			1.000		
SE2←Self-efficacy	1.161	0.216	***	1.906	1.920	0.321	0.098	0.971	0.920

Note: ***$p < 0.001$

Table IV.
Regression weights
multi-group
structural equation
models by type of
perceived
discrimination (none,
single ground,
multiple grounds)
and controlling for
ethnicity

The moderation model does not fit as well for the two other groups. Among those perceiving single ground discrimination, neither SE nor PC measures provide a good fit. Instead, the only meaningful positive relation to ITS is JS. Similar results apply for multiple grounds of perceived discrimination, although the importance of PC measures remains significant, with a positive association to JS, but no direct effect with ITS.

A main conclusion to be drawn from this multi-group analysis is the different dynamics at play in relation to SE and PC. These factors are key as far as ITS is concerned for those without perceived discrimination, suggesting that there is greater trust in individual level attributes that can help navigate a career and achieve desired career outcomes at work. On the other hand, the emphasis for the two other groups appears to be more focused on JS, possibly suggesting a good fit between individual identity and values and the organization's context.

Discussion and conclusions

Our study is the first to explore the impact of single vs multiple grounds of diversity and perceived discrimination on such a wide scale of possible grounds of discrimination, answering earlier calls (Berry and Bell, 2012; Özbilgin, 2009). The impact of the single factors identified in these studies can be materialised in both intrinsic and extrinsic career outcomes (Ng *et al.*, 2005). Gaining knowledge about the possible outcomes of discriminations is of high importance for individuals and organizations to pay attention to (Goldman *et al.*, 2006).

Talent management, particularly retention, has become ever more topical and imperative in today's business environments (McCauley and Wakefield, 2006). Managing talent is what helps to retain key employees necessary for creating long-term organizational success (Ashton and Morton, 2005), and is one of the important career practices organizations need to employ (Baruch, 1996).

This paper contributes to understanding how the factors that affect ITS, including protean measures, JS, SE, and in particular perceived discrimination, impact individuals and organizations. It connect different elements in the typically fragmented career literature (Baruch *et al.*, 2015; Lee *et al.*, 2014).

We determined that an indirect effect exists between protean measures and ITS. Although the two are not directly associated, protean measures positively affect JS, which, consequently is positively associated with ITS.

We also identified a path of partial mediation of SE between JS and ITS. This demonstrated that a positive relationship exists between JS and ITS. In addition, it showed that JS is also related to higher levels of SE, which in turn (and perhaps surprisingly) lowers ITS. JS therefore needs to be nuanced in how it is understood. Based on the results, it seems there is potential for positive outcomes both at the personal (SE) and organization level (ITS).

Nonetheless, SE can boost confidence and the belief that a career move would be a positive development. This should be viewed by management as a positive outcome. This is because if employees feel what they gained from their experience in the organization has made them more confident in their ability to succeed elsewhere, then employers can draw on this outcome to attract other talent to work for them.

Lastly, the moderation of single and multiple perceptions of discrimination nonetheless show significant reduction in the ITS, suggesting that perceived discrimination can cancel out all efforts at organizational level to increase JS.

Theoretical implications
Our results add significant knowledge for the intersection between career studies (Arthur, 2008; Arthur *et al.*, 1989; Gunz and Peiperl, 2007), human capital theory (Becker, 1964), and diversity (Bell, 2007; Özbilgin and Tatli, 2011), as well as for the wider career field (Lee *et al.*, 2014). Our study adds the following main contributions.

First, the relationship between JS and ITS holds approximately equally across all types of individuals. Second, the relationship between JS and ITS can be expended and better understood by drawing on the concepts of SE and PCs, creating a wider explanatory framework. Third, we have demonstrated that perceived discrimination can transform these relationships, with further differences noted in the case of single and multiple grounds of perceived discrimination. For those with no perception of discrimination, both PC measures and SE play an important role in the system and therefore needs to be considered in talent management and retention. However, the effects of SE disappears completely where there is a perception of discrimination – both on single or multiple groups – while protean measures disappear where there is a perception of discrimination on a single ground.

These insights draw attention to several key issues; perceived discrimination can affect self-confidence, JS, commitment, and ITS (Sanchez and Brock, 1996). Moreover, perceived discrimination is positively associated with harmful effects on quality of work life, and therefore needs to be viewed more seriously (Mays and Cochran, 2001). Further exploration of the causes and consequences of perceived discrimination is necessary to know how to effectively manage diversity in the workplace (Pavalko *et al.*, 2003).

Managerial implications
In this paper we offer certain insights and lessons for managers at all level of the organization, but particularly for HRM. The importance of perceived discrimination is significant to organizational success. Consequently organizations aspiring to be socially responsible need to recognize the need to adopt diversity management practices (Shen, 2011). Organizations need to find a way of managing diversity related tension by developing and nurturing their staff and promoting security and a sense of belonging, which employees regard as important factors (Den Hartog *et al.*, 2007).

Yet it is insufficient to explore a single ground of perceived discrimination in isolation from the wider context. With growing workforce diversity, there will be more cases where people will belong to a number of sub-categories of diversity. The meaning and impact of single ground of diversity is different than that which emerges from multiple-diversity grounds. Organizational policies regarding diversity can have a significant impact (Grima, 2011) and HR managers should be aware of it.

Limitations and future research
The study was conducted using graduates of management studies from a single university in the USA. Furthermore, while exploring a comprehensive set of diversity bases, the absence of newly emerging other grounds of diversity and prospect grounds of discrimination such as obesity is noted (Puhl *et al.*, 2008). It used a quantitative analysis, but as the main focus is on perceptual bias, an interpretative methodological approach might be useful for in-dept understanding of the nature of the perceived discrimination. Future studies may employ narrative analysis for such a purpose.

As acknowledged earlier, future studies may widen the framework and enable wider comparative analysis to gain greater understanding of the significance of diversity in the workplace today and in the future.

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1. Andreas Hirschi, Vanessa K. Jaensch, Anne Herrmann. 2016. Protean career orientation, vocational identity, and self-efficacy: an empirical clarification of their relationship. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* 1-13. [CrossRef]