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TITLE: Proactive career orientation and physical mobility preference as predictors of important work attitudes: The moderating role of pay satisfaction

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Proactive career orientation and physical mobility preference as predictors of important work attitudes: The moderating role of pay satisfaction

Abstract

Although protean and boundaryless career orientation have been seen mainly as different yet related constructs, a recent meta-analysis suggests a reconsideration of this career concept structure into a distinction between two independent dimensions of “proactive career orientation” (including sub-dimensions “self-directed”, “values driven”, and “boundaryless mindset”) and “physical mobility preferences” (including sub-dimension “organizational mobility preference”). To examine whether or not this new proposed structure is sustained we analyze the dynamics between the boundaryless career orientation (using with subdimensions “boundaryless mindset” and “organizational

mobility preference”) and attitudinal outcomes of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, turnover intention and pay satisfaction. The results provide empirical validation for the propositions in the meta-analysis, not only regarding career concept structure but also its dynamics. They confirm areas of similarity of “boundaryless mindset” and protean dynamics but also important differences between these dynamics for employees with a mobility preference. Boundaryless mindset employees are more intrinsically motivated and proactive in developing their career. Those having high organizational mobility preference are more extrinsically motivated and reactive when facing organizational and environmental determinants. The results show that a “traditional” boundaryless career orientation is a two-sided coin and organizations need to differentially manage the diverse profiles of a boundaryless careers.

Key words: protean and boundaryless career orientations, boundaryless mindset, organizational mobility preference, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, turnover intention, pay satisfaction.

1. Introduction

The global economy has created a complex and dynamic environment in which the frequency and intensity of changes inherent in the workplace have meant major adjustments for many employees, and the need where possible to try and take more control of their own career progress. This has led to new career models (Baruch, 2006). Traditionally, careers occurred within the context of a limited number of organizations, but more recently people have experienced more independent, self-managed, boundaryless careers, involving a greater number of positions in multiple organizations (Arthur, 2014; Guan, Arthur, Khapova and Hall, 2019). The protean and boundaryless career concepts (Hall, 1996; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) have become widely used to capture this development. They are however both conceptually and empirically different.

Although the literature has signaled some overlap between the two concepts, protean and boundaryless career attitudes have been seen mainly as different yet related constructs (Briscoe, Hall & DeMuth, 2006; Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Rodrigues, Guest, Oliveira & Alfes, 2015). However, a recent meta-analysis on protean and boundaryless career orientations conducted by Wiernik and Kostal (2019) suggested a reconsideration of that career concept structure. Based on 84 studies they found that relations among career orientation components do not support protean and boundaryless orientations as modeled and assessed above. Their results showed that the two sub-dimensions of a protean career orientation (“self-directed” and “values-driven”) and the “boundaryless mindset” subdimension of a boundaryless career share a substantial general factor and have similar patterns of criterion validity. Accordingly, they proposed that researchers jointly consider them as three components of a “proactive career orientation”. In contrast, the “organizational mobility preference” was only weakly related to protean and the other boundaryless career component, and was therefore considered as an independent component of the new career structure, named “physical mobility preferences”. This very important finding was based on zero-order correlations among the four career components. Wiernik and Kostal (2019) argued this new conceptualization has created two research needs:

- 1) to analyze whether or not this new structure of career orientation is sustained once we analyze the dynamics between the career orientation sub-components and relevant job attitudes and outcomes; and
- 2) to unveil where or why any differences between the career components and outcomes might arise.

Responding to the two research needs identified by Wiernik and Kostal (2019), the aim of this paper is twofold. First, to test whether or not the dynamics found for protean

oriented employees are also kept for those with boundaryless mindset and are different from the ones described by employees with organizational mobility preference. To do so, we replicate work by Authors (2019) that has been used to identify the behavioral pathways associated with a protean career orientation and extend the same model to a boundaryless orientation. They reported a structural model to analyze the dynamics of a protean career orientation (PCO) and resultant organizational commitment (OC), job satisfaction (JS) and turnover intention (TI). Using the protean career concept, and analyzing both the direct and indirect effects, they found that there are complex pathways between protean career orientations and work attitude outcomes – but also found that some of these pathways stimulated the intention to leave whilst others suppressed it. The necessary element of replication is to recover some previously used data in order to analyze these new dynamics and the original differences between the two subdimensions of a boundaryless career – a “boundaryless mindset” and an “organizational mobility preference” - regarding work attitudes. Do the same behavioral dynamics persist? Thus, this paper adopts the same broad design and methodology used by Authors (2019) for this new modelling.

Second, however, if there are differences between boundaryless mindset and mobility preference workers then we need to understand where these may come from. To do so, we introduce pay satisfaction (PS) - as a proxy for compensation - and analyze its role as a moderator of relationships. There are two main reasons why it is useful to test for the moderating role of pay satisfaction across the different pathways across the two sub-components. First, the literature states that boundaryless people attach more importance to subjective career success (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005) and suggests there [should be](#) a shift in the individual’s focus from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation (Crowley-Henry, Benson & Al Ariss, 2019; Arthur, 2014). We do not know however the extent to

which people with boundaryless career orientation accomplish such a shift and whether or not that shift occurs similarly regarding the different patterns of a boundaryless career. Analyzing the moderating role of pay satisfaction will indicate a direction regarding the origin of differences between the two career components. Second, organizations use different HR policies to influence attitudes and behaviors. One of those is compensation. Following suggestions by Guan et al. (2019) we test our model in a controlled population sharing similar characteristics and concentrate only on “talented” employees. Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and González-Cruz (2013) state that any definition of talent must be adapted to an organization’s needs, with any use of the term applied in a contingent way according to the organization’s objectives. As the status of talented is operationalized by their organization, we are adopting a contingency approach to talent.

To summarize, this paper contributes to the literature on careers in two main ways: first, by investigating the differences between the two sub-dimensions of a boundaryless career orientation (boundaryless mindset and organizational mobility preference), in order to confirm whether or not the new career concept structure proposed by Wiernik and Kostal (2019) is also sustained regarding the relationships to different job attitudes and outcomes. Second, it explores the moderating role of pay satisfaction in previously established relationships, providing new insight into the origin of differences of both sub dimensions. The relevance for practitioners is that their organizations need to know how and why boundaryless mindset and mobility preference orientations affect job attitudes and how this may differ according to pay satisfaction i.e. the extent to which HR compensation policies may shape attitudes and manage boundaryless talented employees.

2. Theoretical background and hypothesis development

The differences between the two career constructs of protean and boundaryless career orientations can be summarized as follows. A protean career is defined as that following

a path driven by the person, not the organization, based upon individual goals that encompass the whole life space. It focuses on an individual's motives to follow a particular self-defined career path, and is driven by psychological success rather than more objective success criteria such as pay, rank, or power (Hall, 2004). Arthur (1994) defined a boundaryless career as the antonym of the 'bounded' or 'organizational' career and Arthur and Rousseau (1996) suggested six meanings for a boundaryless career: a career that (1) moves across the boundaries of separate employers; (2) draws validation from outside the present employer; (3) is sustained by external networks or information; (4) involves breaking traditional organizational career boundaries, such as hierarchical reporting and advancement; (5) involves rejecting career opportunities for personal or family reasons; (6) is seen by the career actor as leading to a boundaryless future regardless of structural constraints (Inkson, Gunz, Ganesh & Roper, 2012). They recognized that engaging in a boundaryless career might involve crossing a variety of different types of boundaries, including organizational, relational, hierarchical, work-life and psychological ones (Guan et al., 2019).

Briscoe, Hall and DeMuth (2006) developed the most widely used measure of both career orientations (Wiernik & Kostal, 2019), further refining their meaning. They characterized the protean one as involving 1) a “values-driven” orientation - meaning that employees use their own values rather than organizational values to guide their career-- and 2) a “self-directed” orientation - implying that employees take an independent role toward career management when managing their vocational behavior. They also characterized a boundaryless career orientation (BCO) as 1) having a “boundaryless mindset” (BM) - defined as the capacity to feel comfortable in interacting with people from different organizations and seeking out opportunities for experiencing new situations that result in beneficial outcomes for the individual - and 2) an “organizational mobility preference”

(OMP) - defined as the inclination toward physically crossing organizational boundaries through employment mobility.

Authors (2019) have identified the behavioral pathways associated with a protean career orientation. This paper now extends the same model to a boundaryless orientation. In Figure 1 we outline our proposed pathways between boundaryless career orientation components and the three subsequent work outcomes of organization commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intention, and the moderating role in these pathways played by pay satisfaction. Figure 1 captures four conceptual blocks. First, the generic relationships between the outcomes of organizational commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intention found in a protean career orientation are presumed to also apply to the two components of a boundaryless orientation (H1a, H1b and H1c). Second, both components of a boundaryless orientation are presumed to have direct positive impacts on turnover intention (H2a and H2b). Third, the impacts on both organizational commitment and job satisfaction are however expected to be different – positive in the case of boundaryless mindset (H3a, H4a) but negative in the case of organizational mobility preference (H3b, H4b). Fourth, these links may have different intensity that can be attributed to the role played by Pay Satisfaction. Pay Satisfaction has the potential to moderate the direct links between a boundaryless mindset and organizational commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intention (H5a). The same form of moderation for the direct links between an organizational mobility preference and organizational commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intention is also examined (H5b).

In the next section, we develop the theoretical support for these pathways and set out the requisite hypotheses.

< Insert figure 1 around here >

2.1. Turnover intention, Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction

The first block of hypotheses relate to the generic relationships between the three work outcomes are fairly well established in the literature and so are only briefly summarized here for completeness. We would expect these relationships to simply be confirmed.

The first outcome is turnover intention. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) is based on the premise that turnover intention/intention to quit is the best single predictor of actual turnover, hence its wide use in the literature on retention (Rubenstein, Eberly, Lee, & Mitchell, 2018; Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000). The second outcome measured is organizational commitment. This is an emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). OC implies loyalty and a mobilization in the development of organizational mission, goals and purposes. It therefore reduces any intention to leave. Meta-analytic studies (Griffeth et al., 2000, Rubenstein et al., 2018) support the contention that OC is a strong predictor of turnover intention. The third outcome is job satisfaction, comprising a cognitive assessment of the amount of overlap between their expectations and the actual returns received from their current employment (Carmeli & Weisberg, 2006) and an affective/emotional response by an employee as to whether the employee likes their current job. When an employee's attitude towards his/her job becomes more positive his/her turnover intention decreases. Meta-analytic studies continue to provide strong support for this relationship between JS and TI (Rubenstein et al., 2018; Griffeth et al., 2000).

In the same vein as Authors (2019), using a behavioral commitment perspective, we argue that as talented and boundaryless employees engage more intensely in job search behaviors (McArdle, Waters, Briscoe, & Hall, 2007; Verbruggen, 2012) they are more likely to have chosen their organization as one that they wanted to work for, based upon a number of attractive employment opportunities. *As OC is an antecedent of satisfaction, although choices are made in anticipation of an organization meeting expectations, and*

these expectations might not always be fulfilled, having opted for a specific organization, individuals are likely to develop a positive attitudinal commitment to it, triggering a process through which boundaryless employees will rationalize that commitment and develop a favourable attitude of satisfaction. As commitment is hypothesized to be a positive antecedent of job satisfaction.

H1a: There is a direct and negative impact of OC on TI

H1b: There is a direct and negative impact of JS on TI

H1c: There is a direct and positive impact of OC on JS

2.2. Boundaryless career orientation, turnover intention, organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

The second block of hypotheses assume that both components of a boundaryless orientation have direct positive impacts on turnover **intention**, whilst the third block assumes that the impacts of the orientation on organizational commitment and job satisfaction is different – positive in the case of a boundaryless mindset but negative in the case of an organizational mobility preference.

The notion of a boundaryless career orientation assumes that some individuals have agency in their careers, and focus on a sequence of job opportunities that go beyond single employment settings; bridging social boundaries; and capitalizing on social (career) capital. At the individual level the orientation is characterized by patterns of behavior that include a boundaryless outlook or mentality, and a preference for organizational mobility (Briscoe et al., 2006). However, we argue, as Wiernik and Kostal's (2019) meta analysis suggests, that both these two components independently act as antecedents to (predictors of) the three work outcomes of organizational commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intention. Accordingly, we develop our working hypotheses.

Given the link noted above between a boundaryless career orientation and a person's preference to cross boundaries and belief in their capability to move, this orientation involves seeking opportunities to grow and experience enriching situations and therefore more involvement in job search behaviors (McArdle et al., 2007; Verbruggen, 2012). We therefore hypothesize that an individual's attitude toward mobility is related to their turnover intention. *Having a BM attitude implies motivation for interacting and building networks with many different people. Particularly, high BM employees are energized to interact with people from different organizations, creating networks likely helpful for finding different job alternatives outside the current organization. This, makes employees more prone to develop a turnover intention* (Rodrigues, Butler & Guest, 2019). Individuals with a high OMP will develop a higher turnover intention as they are supposed to be comfortable with, or prefer a career path across several employers and, accordingly, should be more inclined to cultivate greater intention to quit.

Both BM and OMP are therefore hypothesized to have positive and direct effects on turnover intention. This should be the case particularly for boundaryless employees who have also been designated as talented employees, as in this study. Talented people have a set of knowledge, skills and personality characteristics that make them desirable to organizations. In this sense, they will have greater job alternatives that they can use to pursue their goals.

H2a: There is a direct and positive effect of BM on TI

H2b: There is a direct and positive effect of OMP on TI

We now discuss the hypothesized links between the two BCO components of BM and OMP on the second of the work outcomes, that of organizational commitment.

In addition to the initial commitment that boundaryless talented people may develop when they opt for a certain organization, *as said*, having a BM attitude also implies that these individuals, especially when designated as talented, will be motivated by opportunities for interacting with other people, *also, within the current organization*. Although it might seem counter intuitive that BM can both increase TI but also commitment, these contrasting outcomes from a BM attitude will differ depending on whether the effort is directed towards external or internal networks. Whilst H2a argues that the pursuit of external networks should lead to greater turnover intention, in contrast, when effort is directed towards internal networks H3a argues that a BM attitude is likely to increase affiliation. The building of internal relationships likely leads to addressing friendship networks at work and arrange social support. All this may mean they have a higher affiliation and identification with the organization (Segers, Inceoglu, Vloeberghs, Bartram, & Henderickx, 2008) and, therefore, have a higher commitment (Briscoe, Henagan, Burton, & Murphy, 2012). BM is also depicted as an opening disposition, an overall attitude of being energized by new experiences and situations, and feeling comfortable and enthusiastic about generating and maintaining active relationships across boundaries (Briscoe et al., 2006). The development of active relationships with people from diverse areas and departments in the organization will likely create extensive internal networks, enhancing OC (Enache, Sallan, Simo, & Fernandez, 2011).

H3a: There is a direct and positive impact of BM on OC

Although psychologically mobile employees may develop OC simply as part of the process of choosing a certain organization from a set of job alternatives, if they are high in OMP they would prefer a career that moves across organizations (Briscoe et al., 2006). As OC implies a current feeling of being happy to spend the rest of one's career within the organization, we expect OMP to have a negative relationship with OC (Çakmak-

Otluoğlu, 2012). Further, as OMP is negatively associated with any preference predictability and long-term employment arrangements, individuals with a high OMP will likely tend to spend less time and exert less effort on their current employer (Verbruggen, 2012), being more inclined to invest resources to seek for work opportunities elsewhere. Long-term commitment to the organization may also limit chances in the external labor market (Direnzo & Greenhaus, 2011) by indicating to potential employers a lack of interest in changing organizations. Additionally, any job security provided by the current organization may not be as important as otherwise expected, as to achieve job security an individual with a high OMP prefers to take control over their career across organizational boundaries (Direnzo & Greenhaus, 2011). Therefore, they are expected to experience lower levels of commitment. Conversely, individuals with low OMP are more risk-averse (Enache et al, 2011) focused on security, predictability and safety, and are likely able to exert effort in the organization they belong to get it, showing higher commitment.

H3b: There is a direct and negative impact of OMP on OC

Finally, we discuss the hypothesized links between the two BCO components of BM and OMP on the third of the work outcomes, that of job satisfaction.

As mentioned previously, a BM orientation means looking for opportunity to experience enriching situations, through a variety of roles, identities and work environments that provide opportunities for individuals to engage in various forms of learning and experimenting behaviors. These behaviors help develop new career competencies, construct new identities, build new social networks and accrue new career resources (Arthur, Claman, & DeFillippi, 1995; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Ibarra, 1999). People that identify, create and pursue opportunities for self-improvement perceive greater success and satisfaction (Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999; Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001). To sum up, talented employees have the knowledge, abilities, skill that make them

“desired” by other organizations (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001). Being BCO and talented, they are better equipped to navigate towards a job and an organization that they like and that represents a good match with their needs, such as stimulating personal and professional development, facilitating learning and personal growth (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), and being a resource provider thereby making them more marketable and employable (Hall & Mirvis, 1995; Zaleska & Meneses, 2007). Thus, the chosen organization should be useful for deriving fulfilment and satisfaction (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009). Following Segers et al. (2008), job satisfaction should also be high as the chosen organization may allow talented BM employees to work with the autonomy characterizing a BM (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This self-organization would be expected to motivate individuals to cross existing boundaries, engage in positive and satisfying personal relationships, pursue different and new duties. More autonomy over job assignments entails working with different people in different departments and organizations, and establishing positive relationships with other organization members. These interpersonal bonds may contribute to a pleasant work environment and be related to a higher job satisfaction (Ilies, Fulmer, Spitzmuller, & Johnson, 2009).

All these job characteristics are intrinsically rewarding, and assumed in the literature to be causative of job satisfaction. Thus, in line with the vast majority of the literature (Guan et al., 2019) we posit

H4a: There is a direct and positive impact of BM on JS

Although the literature has shown mixed results regarding the sign of the impact of OMP on JS (Guan et al., 2019), following the results from Wiernik and Kostal’s (2019) meta-analysis, we expect that organizational mobility preference is negatively related to job

satisfaction. Research has shown that people with less organizational mobility tend to be more satisfied with their job and, reciprocally, higher likelihood of changing organizations is associated to lower levels of satisfaction (Verbruggen, 2012, Enache et al., 2011). From a stress perspective (e.g., Baruch & Vardi, 2016; Currie, Tempest, & Starkey, 2006), the preference for organizational mobility may have a negative impact on social relations and work environments, as an individual feeling preference for crossing organizational boundaries may prevent from developing networks in the current organization and may be reluctant to invest effort on or improving work climate, leading to reducing job satisfaction. Even though the change of organizations may not be actually materialized, the preference for mobility may drain own's energy and incur various costs, risks and threats related with job search and job change that would negatively impact their career development (Guan et al., 2019) or affect physical or mental health (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004), thus, reducing job satisfaction. Accordingly, we posit:

H4b: There is a direct and negative impact of OMP on JS

2.3. The moderating role of pay satisfaction

The fourth block of hypotheses predicts that hypothesized links may have different intensity according to the role played by pay satisfaction. We propose that pay satisfaction will moderate the previous hypothesized relationships in important ways, such that some relationships will be weakened and others strengthened.

Lawler (1971) defined a worker's pay satisfaction as a comparison of the worker's pay with what they feel they should be paid. Pay satisfaction comprises pay and compensations, distributive justice, and procedural justice (Williams, McDaniel, & Nguyen, 2006; Judge, Piccolo, Podsakoff, Shaw & Rich, 2010). Pay and compensation have to do with the amount of money employees have to run their lives; distributive justice refers to the degree to which employees perceive their pay amount as fair and

procedural justice is concerned with the perceived fairness of the means or methods used to determine the amount of pay.

Both pay and justice perceptions have been proved to strongly shape job attitudes and relationships (e.g. Cloutier, Morin & Renaud, 2013; Eby, Freeman, Rush, & Lance 1999; Luna-Arocas & Tang, 2015; Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg, Kalleberg & Bailey, 2000; Judge et al., 2010; Milkovich, Newman & Gerhart, 2014).

However, there is debate within the literature about the link between the ascribed status of being talented, and the level and importance of rewards expected. The original rhetoric (Michaels et al., 2001) and critiques of elite approaches to talent management focused on the design of systems that affirmed the status of talent through differentiated and high rewards. However, to assume that all talented individuals are so motivated would seem naïve. Boundaryless individuals are also motivated to acquire new skills and experiences. In the context of a boundaryless career orientation, pay satisfaction should be viewed as a necessary but not a sufficient condition for employees to achieve their career goals. It is a necessary condition in that pay is important for all workers, talented or not. However, it is not a sufficient condition because, following boundaryless career theory, having a BCO reflects an interest in psychological success rather than pay. Therefore, goals such as fulfilment, personal growth, developing career capital, being employable, all play an important role in this orientation but are not comprised in monetary items. Financial reward is more an affirmation of success, rather than success in its own right.

Thus, although not sufficient, pay satisfaction (PS) is nonetheless important in the boundaryless career as talented employees with a boundaryless career orientation, that show career self-management behaviors, should translate that into objective career success, including compensation (Volmer & Spurk, 2011; Zeitz, Blau & Fertig, 2009). Therefore, we propose PS will moderate the relationship between BCO and attitudes of

OC, JS and TI. Based on social exchange theory, we expect that the strength in the relationship between BCO and OC, JS and TI will vary for those high pay satisfied employees in comparison to those low pay satisfied.

Pay satisfaction may be perceived by BCO employees as a fair reward if it shows recognition for their value and their work and signals that the organization wants to foster a long-term relationship. This would trigger a social exchange mechanism such that BCO employees should develop more positive attitudes towards the organization. Accordingly, given the same level of BCO, pay satisfied talented employees will feel more assured they have chosen the right organization, more encouraged to exert effort and to develop networks within the organization, higher affiliation and identification with the organization, and more convinced that the current organization offers sufficient fulfillment. Thus, they should develop higher OC, JS and less TI, intensifying the relationships $BCO \rightarrow OC$ and $BCO \rightarrow PS$ and a lessening in the strength in the relationship $BCO \rightarrow TI$. Conversely, low pay satisfaction may be perceived by BCO workers as particularly unfair, especially as they are deemed by the organization to be talented. This should trigger social exchange mechanisms that activate more negative reactions to the current organization in terms of OC, JS and TI (Judge et al., 2010; McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992). As talented and boundaryless oriented workers, their desirability in the market, their levels of autonomy and their ability to change will lead those low pay satisfied to more intensely search for higher wages or promotion opportunities elsewhere (Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005), lessening commitment and increasing intention to leave the organization in comparison to those high pay satisfied with similar levels of BCO. This means that the relationships $BCO \rightarrow OC$ and $BCO \rightarrow JS$ will be weaker and the relationship $BCO \rightarrow TI$ stronger for those not feeling high pay satisfaction.

Thus, we propose that pay satisfaction will moderate the previous hypothesized relationships in the following way:

H5a: the impact of BM on JS and OC will be more positive and the impact of BM on TI will be less positive for high pay satisfied talented employees.

H5b: the impact of OMP on JS and OC will be less negative and the impact of BM on TI will be less positive for high pay satisfied talented employees.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample and survey administration

The sample for this study is the one used in Authors (2019). The target population was Spanish and Mexican multinational organizations operating in two or more countries and having more than 100 employees – as a criterion for the existence of HRM policies. 32 organizations were identified and 17 accepted the invitation to participate in our study. Within each firm we approached those employees who were deemed by their employer to be talented. The literature notes that the institutional arrangements that any organization has for identifying their talent pool is unique (Festing & Schaffer, 2014). Therefore, in each participating organization a senior HR manager was approached as sponsor and asked to identify their talented employees, at different levels in the organization, using the standardized definition argued by a series of researchers (Tarique & Schuler, 2010; Thunnissen, Boselie, & Fruytier, 2013). We asked the sponsor to identify “those employees with a combination of knowledge, skills, abilities and personality characteristics that represent high performers and who are pivotal for the organization to the attainment of strategic goals”.

The identified talented pool of employees was sent a questionnaire that included a cover letter explaining the purpose and scope of the study, confirming their designation as

‘highly valuable for the organization’. Anonymity and voluntary participation were also ensured. 306 employees agreed to take part in the study, a response rate of over 70%.

In the sample, 62.3% were male, from America (49.9%, mainly Mexico) and Europe (50.1% mainly Spain). 65.5% of them were married or lived with their partners and the average age was 36.33 years. Regarding their education, 46% had university degrees and 45% had postgraduate degrees. Their tenure ranged from less than 3 years (45%) to more than 10 years (9.7%) and 46.6% had a directive position in the company. The organizations operate in the private sector, in the following industries: retailing (23.6%), services (17.7%), building (32.7%) and energy (9.3%).

3.2. Measures

Validated measures of all constructs were used. Responses to all items were obtained using a five-point Likert scale ranging from “1= strongly disagree” to “5 = strongly agree”.

Boundaryless mindset (BM) was measured with five items from Briscoe et al. (2006). Example items are “I enjoy jobs that require me to interact with people in many different organizations” and “I enjoy job assignments that require me to work outside of the organization”. Reliability was good ($\alpha=0.79$).

Organizational mobility preference (OMP) was measured with four items from Briscoe et al. (2006). Sample items are “If my organization provided lifetime employment, I would never desire to seek work in other organizations” (R) and “I would feel very lost if I couldn’t work for my current organization” (R). The scale reliability ($\alpha=0.65$) was

slightly inferior to the one reported by Briscoe et al. (2006) but still acceptable (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006).

Organizational Commitment (OC) was measured using 3 items from Allen and Meyer's (1990) measure of affective commitment. A sample item is "My organization has a great deal of personal meaning to me". An additional item "I have a strong sense of affinity to the organization I work for" was added. Scale reliability was 0.86.

Job Satisfaction (JS) was measured using 4 items from Bonache (2005). A sample item is "I am very satisfied with my job". Scale reliability was 0.90.

Turnover Intention (TI) was measured with 3 items from Sjöberg and Sverke (2000) as "I am actively looking for other jobs". Scale reliability was 0.86.

Pay Satisfaction (PS) was measured using 3 items from Bonache (2005). A sample item is "I am very satisfied with base pay". Scale reliability was 0.84.

Control Variables: age in years, gender (0 = men; 1 = women), marital status (0 = married; 1 = single), education (1=high school diploma; 2=higher education; 3=post-graduate education) and nationality (0=America, 1= Europe) as in Authors (2019).

3.3. Analyzes

As our data were cross-sectional and self-reported, we followed Conway and Lance (2010) to provide evidence of the construct discriminant validity in the results section. Our constructs are clearly distinct both conceptually and in terms of their underlying factors, reducing any risk attributable to common method variance. Nonetheless, a Harman's one factor test (an un-rotated factor analysis on all items used in the model) was conducted to ensure this is the case. This analysis showed that explained variance by the first factor was well under half of total variance (29.31%); thus, common method bias is unlikely to be a risk.

The data were analyzed with structural equation modelling (SEM) using AMOS version 20. To estimate and test our conceptual model we used the two-step method checking for the measurement and the structural model, additionally computing indirect and total effects. To ensure the significance of them, we used bootstrapping 95% confidence intervals using the bias corrected percentile method.

Then we tested the moderating role of PS by means of multi-group analysis. Accordingly, the total sample was split based on the median reported by PS: individuals with PS over and under the median. First, we checked for measurement invariance and then we estimated different models. In the unconstrained model the structural paths were freely estimated for each group (low and high PS). Subsequently, this model was tested against six models in which each individual structural path was individually constrained to be equal (partially constrained models) to assess which of the specific paths were moderated by PS. These modified models were compared with the unconstrained model confirming moderating effects in those paths where significant deterioration in model fit, indicated by a significant $\Delta\chi^2$, was found.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics, reliability estimates (Cronbach's alpha, in brackets) and correlations are presented in Table 1.

<<insert Table 1 about here>>

Regarding constructs in the model, levels of JS and OC were also high, but less so for TI, which had the lowest mean. The highest mean was for BM, whilst OMP was lower, indicating that between the two dimensions of a BCO, BM has a wider spread. Additionally, the correlation between them was very low, suggesting only a few

employees present higher levels of both dimensions simultaneously. This low correlation of the two sub components of a BCO offers an initial empirical validation to Wiernik and Kostal's (2019) proposition.

Regarding control variables, the highest correlation is found, as expected, between age and marital status indicating that younger employees tend to be single. Significant correlation is also found between gender and age, signaling that the men in the sample tend to be younger. Finally, significant correlations with nationality indicate that Europeans (Spanish) have superior level of education.

4.2. Measurement model

Based on correlations in Table 1, before testing measurement models, several confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were conducted. We compared the measurement models with a series of alternative nested models in which different factors were loading on a single one. The final measurement model significantly fitted data better than the alternative models, confirming construct discriminant validity.

The measurement model yielded a good fit ($\chi^2 = 413.841$; $df = 235$; $\chi^2 / df = 1.761$; GFI=0.899; IFI = 0.954; TLI = 0.945; CFI = 0.953; RMSEA =0.050). The standardized regression weights (SRW) were all significant ($p < 0.001$), all of them over 0.4, supporting the convergent validity of the scales.

4.3. Structural model

We ran the structural model adding control variables age, gender, marital status, education and nationality. None of them had a significant effect, thus, we removed them to have a more parsimonious model.

The structural model presented good fit ($\chi^2 = 349.691$; $df = 177$; $\chi^2 / df = 1.976$; GFI=0.903; IFI = 0.948; TLI = 0.938; CFI = .948; RMSEA =0.057). Estimates are

shown in Table 2 (standardized direct estimates). Regarding the relationships among outcomes, as expected, we found a significant and negative effect of JS on TI and a significant and positive effect of OC on JS. However, the path $OC \rightarrow TI$ was not significant, as the relationship was fully mediated by JS. Accordingly, H1 was generally confirmed.

Moving to the proposed impact of the two boundaryless career sub-components on the three work outcomes, as hypothesized, the impact of the first component of BM on both TI and OC was significant and positive, supporting H2a and H3a. The path from $BM \rightarrow JS$ however, was not significant. This was because the relationship between BM and JS was fully mediated by OC. Therefore, H4a is only partially supported, since the impact of BM on JS is positive, but indirect.

The direct effect of the second component OMP on TI was not significant, as it was fully mediated by OC and JS, again, partially supporting H2b, as the impact is positive, but it is however indirect. The direct effect of OMP on OC was significant and negative, supporting H3b. Following our expectations, the direct impact of OMP on JS was significant and negative. So, H4b is also held in our model.

We, then calculated indirect and total effects (Table 2).

<<Insert table 2 about here>>

All the standardized indirect effects were statistically significant. The indirect impact of BM on JS was positive and the indirect impact of BM on TI was negative. Regarding OMP, the indirect effect on JS is negative and it is positive on TI. Again, as expected, the indirect effect of OC on TI was intense and negative. Finally, all the total effects were significant, except for the one linking BM and TI. BM has positive total effect on OC and

JS and OMP has a negative effect both on OC and JS and a positive effect on TI. Finally, OC has positive strong effect on JS and OC and JS have negative total effect on TI.

4.4. Moderating role of PS

First, we assessed measurement invariance conducting multigroup analysis in the measurement model. The unconstrained measurement model ($\chi^2 = 732.700$; $df=470$; $\chi^2/df = 1.559$) was tested against a model with all the regression weights fixed to be equal for both groups, high and low pay-satisfied ($\chi^2 = 753.745$; $df=488$; $\chi^2/df = 1.545$). The deterioration in model fit between them was not significant ($\Delta\chi^2 = 21.045$, $\Delta df = 18$, $p = 0.277$), supporting measurement invariance. Thus, we ran the structural unconstrained model ($\chi^2 = 524.952$; $df=316$; $\chi^2/df = 1.661$; estimates in table 3 and figure 2) and the partially constrained models. Paths actually moderated by PS (table 4, figure 1) were the ones where the significant variation in model fit was found (Redondo, Fabra & Martín, 2020).

<<Insert tables 3 and 4 about here>>

<<Insert figure 2 about here>>

Interestingly, moderating effect of PS are only found in those relationships in which OMP is the antecedent. For those with low pay satisfaction, the negative impact of OMP on OC and JS is more intense than for those with high pay satisfaction, which seems to mitigate that negative effect. However, and surprisingly, the effect on TI is different. For those with low pay satisfaction, the direct impact of OMP is negative (although, not significant), indicating that higher levels of OMP tend to be associated to lower levels of TI, meanwhile for those with high pay satisfaction, the direct impact of OMP is positive (although significant only at certain levels), suggesting that higher levels of OMP are

linked to higher levels of TI. As said, none of the relations regarding BM were moderated by PS.

5. Discussion

The current turbulent working scenarios have led employees to adjust and to take control of their careers, leading to protean and boundaryless career models (Baruch, 2006). Despite the overlap between the two concepts, the literature traditionally has modeled and assessed them as different but related constructs. However, Wiernik and Kostal's (2019) meta-analysis did not support that traditional career concept structure. To further investigate on this issue, we continued Authors (2019) study on the protean concept, to analyze whether or not, not only structure but also dynamics among boundaryless mindset component of a boundaryless career and job outcomes of commitment, satisfaction and turnover intention were the same than those found in Authors (2019) for protean oriented employees and were different to those described by employees showing mobility preference.

First, we confirmed both the similarity of BM and protean dynamics and the difference of those dynamics for OMP employees, providing empirical validation for Wiernik and Kostal (2019)'s proposition, not only regarding career concept structure, but also, dynamics. BM impacted positively and directly on OC; positively and indirectly on JS, as the relation was fully mediated by OC; and non-significantly on TI, as we confirmed both a direct positive and an indirect (via OC and JS) negative effects being neutralized by the other, between BM and TI. However, the direct links of OMP on OC and JS were negative and the total effect on TI was positive, as a result of a non-significant direct link and a strong positive indirect association via OC and JS because the relationship OMP-TI is fully mediated by OC and JS.

Second, to further explore the differences between the two underlying dimensions of a BCO, we tested the moderating role of pay satisfaction. Despite some opinions to the contrary (see e.g. Pink, 2011), compensation is seen as a powerful incentive in virtually every aspect of organizational functioning and can shape employee attitudes, behavior and organizational effectiveness (Gupta & Shaw, 2014). Pragmatically it is also important for career behavior as it is a major policy lever that organizations use to motivate employee attraction, performance, and retention (Gerhart & Fang, 2014). The analysis of the moderating role of pay satisfaction - as a proxy for compensation (Williams, Brower, Ford, Williams & Carraher, 2008; Judge & Welbourne, 1994; Judge et al., 2010) - provides insight into policies that might better and differentially manage boundaryless employees.

Again, we found very different results for both the BM and OMP sub-dimensions of a boundaryless career. All the relations involving OMP were moderated by pay satisfaction, indicating that PS strongly shapes the development of job attitudes for talented employees associated with an OMP. However, none of the relationships involving a BM orientation was moderated, suggesting that those talented employees high on BM are in fact not so driven by pay satisfaction at the time of developing job attitudes.

As posited, the impact BM on OC was positive in the same vein as results found by other authors (Enache et al., 2011; Çakmak-Otluoğlu, 2012). The rationale supporting this result lies in the nature of talented BM employees, being motivated for interacting with other people, building relationships, addressing friendship networks, arranging social support, what develops affective bonds within organization. The direct effect of BM on JS was non-significant. However, the *indirect*, and consequently, the total effect was significant and positive, as the relationship between the two concepts was fully mediated by OC. We can speculate how a BM-OC-JS chain might be explained. It is reasonable

to assume that that BM talented employees are more motivated to choose an organization that offers them a meaningful job, i.e. they choose organizations that offer a good opportunity for acquiring career capital, the possibility of developing networks and job experience needed to pursue their future goals (Park & Jung, 2015). As such they become committed to the organization *before* their attitudes of satisfaction emerge. Consequently, satisfaction will be a result of fulfilment from that meaningful job (Authors, 2019). These findings are consistent with previous research that highlighted the importance of a self-reliant, proactive approach to career development and management and how this proactivity is linked to success and satisfaction (Seibert et al., 1999; Seibert et al., 2001).

The relationship between BM and TI yielded a significant positive *direct effect*, in line with studies supporting the proposition that a boundaryless individual develops opportunities and/or continuous learning and has greater mobility (e.g. Briscoe et al., 2006; Verbruggen, 2012). In this sense, because they are oriented to growth and development, even if they are happy in the organization they have opted, they are open to other possibilities that are even more fulfilling and/or help them maintain their employability, as this is a key aspect in boundaryless careers. However, grounding in the boundaryless career theory, we posited, and empirically confirmed, a significant negative indirect (via OC and JS) effect linking the two variables, leading to a non-significant total effect and suggesting that BM employees are not more prone to leave. As said, these results are very similar to the ones offered by Authors (2019) for protean oriented people, signal that BM employees are led by proactivity at the time of developing a career and, thus, validate not only the structure, but also dynamics, for the new proposed career concept.

As posited, the impact OMP on OC was negative in the same vein as results found by other authors (Enache et al., 2011; Rodrigues et al., 2015; Çakmak-Otluoğlu, 2012).

Despite OMP talented employees may develop OC even in the act of choosing a certain organization, as they prefer a career that moves across organizations they show a negative relation with OC. They likely tend to spend less time and exert less effort to the current employer (Verbruggen, 2012) and may see long-term commitment to threaten chances in the external labor market for pursuing new opportunities (Direnzo & Greenhaus, 2011). Following our expectations and in the same vein as a part of the literature (Verbruggen, 2012; Enache et al. 2011; Guan et al., 2019), we found that OMP talented employees reported a negative relationship to JS. Although OMP may be motivated by individuals' pursuit of personal growth opportunities as updating their knowledge and skills that made them more job satisfied, it does not seem to be like that. Their preference for organizational mobility may be due to different reasons such as a way to react to less positive career experiences (Verbruggen, 2012), experiencing declining in job stability (Sullivan, 1999) or due to organizational or labor market determinants, rather than by career orientation (Forrier, Sels, & Stynen, 2009; Dries, Van Acker & Verbruggen, 2012). Contrary to our expectations, but in line with this reasoning, we found that talented employees high on OMP do not directly relate to TI, as it seems they are not motivated by pursuing new personal growth opportunities. However, they show a positive indirect relationship to TI. Because they are not constrained to a single organization, they develop strong TI when they are not committed to the organization and/or satisfied with their job. One plausible explanation for our findings is suggested by Feldman and Ng (2007), indicating that the intention to pursue a boundaryless career can be driven by both approach or avoidance motivations. Approach motivation refers to the sensitivity and effort to achieving positive outcomes, and avoidance motivation refers to the sensitivity and effort to preventing negative outcomes. In light of our results, a boundaryless career mindset seems to reflect an approach motivation and a mobility preference, instead of

being driven by the motivation to pursue an independent career, seems to reflect other motivations linked to avoid negative work experiences (Direnzo & Greenhaus, 2011).

This explanation is also in line with our findings regarding the impact of pay satisfaction on the development of work attitudes in the boundaryless career. Because BM talented employees seem to be driven by growth and development, the impact of PS on the development of job attitudes is not significantly different for those with low and high pay satisfaction. For talented employees high on BM, objective career success is likely less relevant than subjective career success and thus, those employees tend to be less extrinsically motivated.

On the contrary, the impact of PS on the development of job attitudes is highly significant for talented OMP employees. As expected, those with low pay satisfaction show decreasing commitment to the organization and decreasing job satisfaction. This fact suggests that compensation is an important extrinsic motivator for those employees, which seem to be driven in a higher extent by objective success rather than by subjective motives. However, contrary to expectation, those with high pay satisfaction showed significantly higher TI. We explain this result based on the signaling power of compensation. Employees may be dissatisfied with pay either for perceiving they are getting low wages and/or because they do not perceive distributive justice (Williams et al., 2006). Despite being considered talented by their organization, both perceptions may be a negative signal of the employee's valuable characteristics, competences or attitudes compared to other employees inside and outside the organization (Connelly, Certo, Ireland, & Reutzel, 2011) and a negative signal about possibilities in the external labor market. Conversely, OMP highly pay-satisfied employees may perceive their wages to be a positive signal of their value in the labor market and thus, be more willing to leave the

organization to seek for new job opportunities in which that perceived value can be further materialized.

Before detailing the theoretical contribution we note that this study of course has limitations. The main one is the use of cross-sectional data, which does not allow testing for directionality and causality. Although we have used statistical models that better tap mathematical causality and we have developed the directionality of our hypotheses solidly based on theory, clearly, longitudinal studies would be needed to confirm the results. Additionally, our sample was comprised of talented employees selected by their organizations according to a contingency approach. Whilst we can be confident that the pathway revealed is relevant to an employee segment deemed talented, despite using a common definition, there might be a lack of homogeneity in the actual selection of the participants across organizations. In order to reach more generalizable conclusions, further research would be helpful.

Theoretical implications

Our work offers two main contributions to the careers literature. First, we have been able to confirm that the dynamics of boundaryless mindset employees are, on the one hand, very similar to the ones found by Authors (2019) for protean people but, on the other hand, very different than those found for OMP employees. These findings validate Wiernik and Kostal's (2019) reconsideration of traditional career concept structure, suggesting the usefulness of a dimension "proactive career orientation" involving protean and boundaryless mindset components of traditional career structure and "physical mobility preferences" including the organizational mobility preference component of a boundaryless orientation.

Second, we were able to gain better insight into the origin of differences between the two sub-components. The dynamics manifested by BM talented employees indicated, in line with the previous contributions, proactivity at the time of developing their career is likely linked to growth and development reasons. In the same vein, BM employees do not seem to be motivated by extrinsic rewards, as compensation does not seem a powerful lever to shape attitudes for them. However, the dynamics for OMP talented employees worked the other way round and signaled reactivity at the time of developing their career, where mobility seems to be a result of being less committed and satisfied, as a way to react to unfavorable organizational and market determinants. Also, it seems they are motivated by extrinsic rewards because of the impact of compensation on their attitudes. Accordingly, it seems that the need for there to be a shift in the individual's focus from extrinsic to intrinsic rewards, as signaled by many authors (Crowley-Henry et al., 2019) has mainly taken place for BM but not for OMP employees.

Practical implications

Our findings have important practical implications for better management of boundaryless talented people. The findings lead us to say that a "traditional" boundaryless career orientation is a two-sided coin: employees high on BM tend to be more intrinsically motivated and proactive at the time of developing their career. However, employees high on OMP tend to be more extrinsically motivated and reactive when facing organizational and environmental determinants. Accordingly, organizations need to differentially manage and counsel the diverse profiles of those following a boundaryless career.

6. Conclusion

The behavioral dynamics that surround a boundaryless orientation have both good and bad implications for organizations. Having a BM seems to be the “good side” of the coin, as it appears beneficial both for the individual and the organization. It is linked to higher OC and higher JS but it is not linked to higher turnover. Also, our results suggest that BM people are more driven by intrinsic rewards, such as growing and development, rather than by pay. This suggests a clear direction for HR policies to manage these talented employees. As long as the chosen organization offers talented employees good opportunities for interacting with people, working with autonomy, learning opportunities, enriching experiences, then BM talented employees will likely develop positive attitudes towards the organization and, particularly, are likely to stay. Nonetheless, although non-significantly different from highly pay-satisfied employees, our results show that BM low pay-satisfied talented employees tend to report increasing TI. Organizations should take this into account and provide BM employees with fair remuneration regarding other talented employees inside and outside the organization, as having a pay satisfaction is a necessary condition to not develop turnover intentions and, therefore be more likely to remain in the organization.

However, OMP seems to be the “bad side” of the coin, as it is associated with mutual losses for the organization and employees (Rodrigues et al., 2015). OMP employees are less committed, less satisfied and are more minded to leave. Our results suggest that OMP employees are driven by extrinsic rewards rather than by career development. However, although HR policies oriented to increasing extrinsic motivation, such as pay, may initially be thought as effective, our results pose a difficult dilemma in managing these employees, as high pay satisfaction seems likely to also signal them higher value in the external labor market, leading to a rising TI.

Whilst it is possible for a boundaryless talented employee to possess high BM and high OMP, the good news is that amongst talented employees, we found having a BM is more widespread than having an OMP. Additionally, due to the low correlation between them, organizations will not frequently find employees presented simultaneously high levels of both dimensions. In such circumstances, tailored HR policies and actions will help manage these kind of talented workers. Particularly, reinforcing commitment, satisfaction and the BM dimension of a boundaryless orientation (working with autonomy, learning opportunities, enriching experiences) should be beneficial.

Data Availability: under request to authors

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Table 1. Descriptive statistics

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Correlations										
			BM	OMP	OC	JS	ITQ	PS	Age	Gender	Marital status	Education	
BM	4.148	0.629	(0.79)										
OMP	3.313	0.749	0.160**	(0.65)									
OC	3.719	0.942	0.105	-0.268**	(0.86)								
JS	3.927	0.919	-0.020	-0.359**	0.664**	(0.90)							
ITQ	2.160	1.160	0.162**	0.310**	-0.493**	-0.691**	(0.86)						
PS	3.199	0.983	0.001	-0.134*	0.456**	0.519**	-0.375**	(0.84)					
Age	35.846	9.335	-0.052	-0.112*	0.292**	0.246**	-0.152**	0.348**					
Gender (female)	0.399	0.490	0.169**	0.037	-0.090	-0.070	0.029	-0.159**	-0.167**				
Marital status (single)	0.376	0.485	-0.016	0.167**	-0.210**	-0.203**	0.129*	-0.221**	-0.366**	0.112*			
Education	2.458	0.606	0.124*	0.200**	0.086	0.037	-0.013	0.077	0.080	0.046	0.027		
Nationality (Europe)	0.552	0.498	0.011	0.241**	-0.079	-0.139*	0.095	-0.199**	-0.070	0.089	0.115*	0.301**	

*, ** statistically significant at the 5% and 1% levels correspondingly

OC	0.324 (0.002)	-0.197 (0.081)			0.225 (0.014)	-0.520 (0.001)		
JS	0.106 (0.242)	-0.062 (0.516)	0.577 (0.000)		0.073 (0.280)	-0.361 (0.004)	0.600 (0.000)	
TI	0.164 (0.066)	0.173 (0.079)	-0.023 (0.849)	-0.672 (0.000)	0.166 (0.027)	-0.137 (0.250)	-0.083 (0.455)	-0.839 (0.000)

Table 4: Partially constrained models against unconstrained model. Moderating role of PS.

Constrained relationship	Chi	df	Chi/df	Dif chi	Dif df	p-val
BM-->OC	577.814	355	1.628	0.033	1	0.856
OMP--> OC	584.722	355	1.647	6.941	1	0.008
BM --> JS	577.820	355	1.628	0.039	1	0.843
OMP --> JS	587.175	355	1.654	9.394	1	0.002
OC --> JS	578.470	355	1.629	0.689	1	0.407
BM --> ITQ	577.963	355	1.628	0.182	1	0.670
OMP --> ITQ	581.567	355	1.638	3.786	1	0.052
JS --> ITQ	577.973	355	1.628	0.192	1	0.661
OC --> ITQ	577.870	355	1.628	0.089	1	0.765

Figure 1. Conceptual model

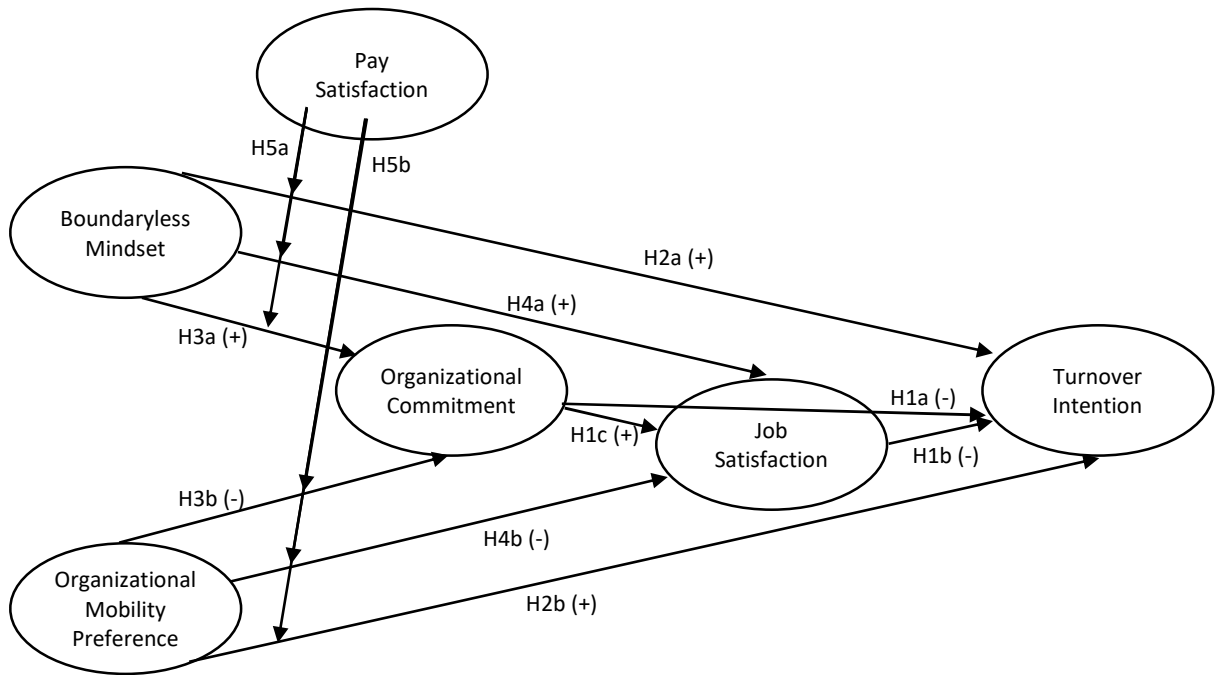
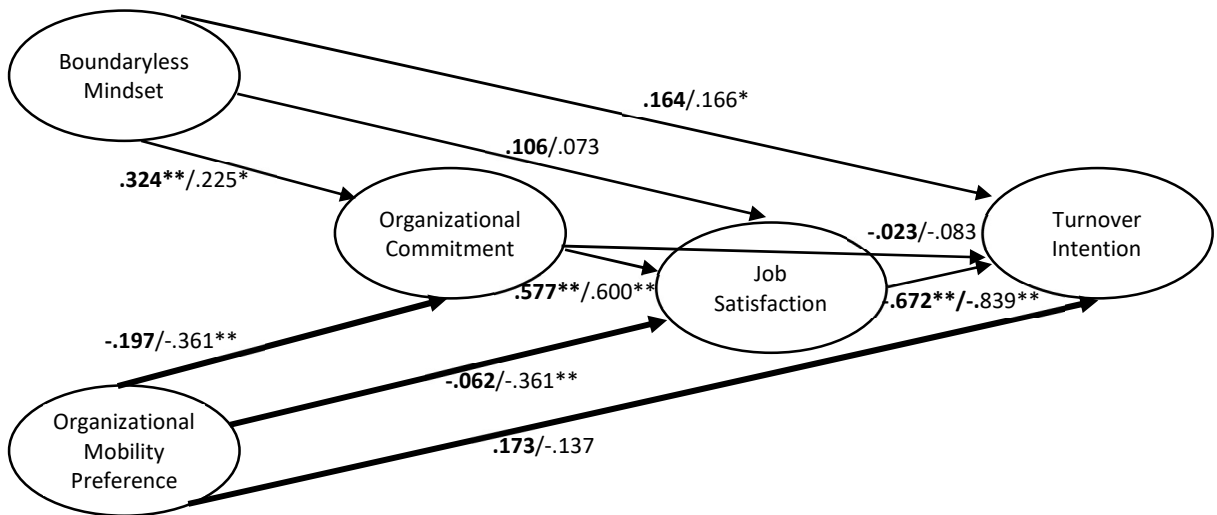


Figure 2. Moderating role of Pay Satisfaction.



Bold numbers: direct standardized estimates for High Pay Satisfaction
 Regular numbers: direct standardized estimates for Low Pay Satisfaction
 Bold arrows: Significant moderating role of Pay Satisfaction
 *, ** statistically significant at the 5% and 1% levels correspondingly