



# The relationship between diversity training, organizational commitment, and career satisfaction

Relationship  
between DT,  
OC and CS

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to investigate the association between employees' perceptions of diversity training (DT) existence and effectiveness with organizational commitment (OC), and career satisfaction (CS).

**Design/methodology/approach** – The analyses in this paper utilize survey data collected between 2006 and 2007 from over 11,000 managers, professionals, and executives working in nine large organizations in corporate Canada. The survey included questions about employees' perceptions of their work experiences and outcomes and their organizations' diversity practices. Comparisons of means as well as multivariate regression analyses were undertaken.

**Findings** – The paper shows that employees who perceived DT to be effective were significantly more committed to their organizations and more satisfied with their careers than employees who perceived DT to be ineffective or non-existent.

**Research limitations/implications** – The paper examines the linkages between DT, OS, and CS based on survey responses from managers, professionals, and executives. Findings may therefore not be applicable to entry level employees.

**Practical implications** – DT, and in particular when viewed by employees to be effective, increases employees' OC and CS, which are associated with loyalty, lower turnover and higher employee engagement.

**Originality/value** – The paper found that employees' OC and CS are highest when they perceived DT to be effective. Factors associated with OC and CS are explored based on employees' perceptions of the availability and effectiveness of DT.

**Keywords** Equal opportunities, Training, Employee attitudes, Job satisfaction

**Paper type** Research paper



## Introduction

Reflecting the global talent crisis, Canada and many countries around the world, are looking to immigrants and other minority groups to help fill the occupational and skills gap in the labour market. (Gordon, 2009; Guthridge *et al.*, 2008; Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2007). However, employed immigrants and other minorities report inequitable workplace experiences and outcomes (Aydemir and Skuterud, 2008;

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Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990; Sikorska-Simmons, 2005). These workplace experiences and outcomes affect their organizational commitment (OC) and career satisfaction (CS) (Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990; Igbaria and Wormley, 1992; Mowday *et al.*, 1979), which are linked to customer satisfaction, loyalty, profitability, productivity, lower employee turnover, and higher employee engagement and performance (Abbasi and Hollman, 2000; Harter *et al.*, 2002; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Morrison *et al.*, 2007). To increase productivity, job satisfaction and retention, employers have created diversity management teams to facilitate the training of their employees in diversity awareness issues (Roberson *et al.*, 2001; Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 2000). Although diversity training (DT) aims to change employees' attitudes, knowledge, and skills to improve their behaviour however, an association between DT, OC, and CS has yet to be empirically established.

Projections estimate that companies and countries will need more than four billion people to fill knowledge worker positions by 2020, and that there will be shortages between 32 and 39 million qualified people (Foster, 2008). More specifically, projections estimate that Canada will see approximately 5.5 million job openings between 2006 and 2015, as result of retiring baby-boomers and labour market expansion. While university graduates will account for the main source of new labour, immigrants, and minority groups are expected to supplement the supply (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2007). More specifically, immigrants are expected to make up 100 percent of the net labour force growth within the next decade (Statistics Canada, 2008). Projections further estimate that visible minorities will make up 29-32 percent of the labour force by 2031 (Statistics Canada, 2010).

Although studies have found a positive association between diverse workforces, profitability, and innovation (Erhardt *et al.*, 2003; Richard, 2000; Richard and Munthi, 2008), they have also found diverse workforces to report lower levels of commitment and satisfaction than homogenous workforces (Schippers *et al.*, 2003; Tsui *et al.*, 1992). In response, DT has become widely implemented, with the aim of deterring the adverse affects of a diverse workforce and leveraging the advantages of a diverse workforce (Holladay *et al.*, 2003; Kulik *et al.*, 2007; Pendry *et al.*, 2007). Along with the increasing prevalence of DT however, have come questions about its effectiveness (Pendry *et al.*, 2007; Roberson *et al.*, 2001; Sippola, 2007). Ineffective DT for example, has been found to result in "backlash" among trainees' (Kidder *et al.*, 2004), which has been further linked to higher turnover rates and lower satisfaction among disadvantaged groups (Miller and Wheeler, 1992; Morrison and Von Glinow, 1990). Additional studies are therefore required to examine the association between DT effectiveness, OC, and CS.

The purpose of this paper therefore is to address this gap by examining the differences in OC and CS between employees who perceive their organizations' DT to be effective, compared to employees who perceive them to be either ineffective or non-existent. It further examines the associations between employees' workplace experiences and outcomes, and the OC and CS scores, between employees who perceived their organizations' diversity practices to be effective, compared to employees who perceive them to be either ineffective or non-existent.

The next section of this paper sets out a theoretical framework and our hypotheses. Subsequently, a description of the data, methodology, and variables will be provided, followed by the findings, discussion, limitations, and conclusions.

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### Theoretical framework and hypotheses

OC is a subjective measure that captures employees' perceptions of their identification with their organizations' core values, their intent to stay with their organization, and their willingness to exert more effort than expected by their organization (Mowday *et al.*, 1979). CS in turn, aims to capture employees' satisfaction with the achievement of their overall career goals, goals for income and advancement, and their goals for development of new skills (Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990). Both OC and CS are affected by employees' work experiences and outcomes, which vary across groups.

Immigrants and minorities, for example, may have poorer relationships with their managers (Igarria and Wormley, 1992), earn less money (Aydemir and Skuterud, 2008; Pendakur and Pendakur, 1998; Reitz, 2001), receive fewer promotions (Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990; Igarria and Wormley, 1995) and/or are concentrated in lower ranking positions (Balakrishnan and Hou, 1999) than other groups of employees. If organizations provide equal opportunity to their employees however, minimal group differences in work experiences and outcomes should be seen (Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990). Many organizations have therefore implemented equity policies to address any "systemic discrimination", or "patterns of behavior that are part of the social and administrative structures and culture of the workplace, and that create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage for some groups, or for individuals, on the basis of their group identity" (Agocs and Burr, 1996, p. 31).

Furthermore, in response to studies that have found organizations with diverse workforces to experience increased interpersonal conflicts (Pelled *et al.*, 1999; Polzer *et al.*, 2002) and to have lower levels of commitment and satisfaction (Schippers *et al.*, 2003; Tsui *et al.*, 1992), corporate decision-makers have also taken voluntary initiatives to manage diversity (Gilbert *et al.*, 1999). By improving interactions between managers and employees, peers, and employees and clients, diversity management policies aim to decrease conflict and stress, enhance productivity, social responsibility, and to improve morale, job satisfaction and retention (Agocs and Burr, 1996; Richard and Munthi, 2008; Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 2000). Although criticized for overlooking the more serious issues of discrimination (Agocs and Burr, 1996), DT has become the key diversity management initiative organizations are using to achieve these aims (Holladay *et al.*, 2003; Pendry *et al.*, 2007).

The three primary objectives of DT include increasing awareness about diversity issues, reducing biases and stereotypes, and changing behaviours (Hanover and Cellar, 1998; Wentling and Palma-Rivas, 2000). Effective DT has been defined by trainees' ability to "transfer" their newly learned behaviour into the workplace, while ineffective DT in turn, has been defined as occurring when "backlash" occurs (Hanover and Cellar, 1998; Kidder *et al.*, 2004; Roberson *et al.*, 2009; Santos and Stuart, 2003). No link however, between DT effectiveness and organizational outcomes, including OC and CS has been studied (Hanover and Cellar, 1998). After examining the environmental factors and the effectiveness of workforce DT however, Hanover and Cellar (1998) recommended future studies to examine the effect of DT on organizational outcomes. Similarly, after finding perceived supervisor, co-worker, and organizational discriminatory behaviours to significantly affect OC and job satisfaction, Ensher *et al.* (2001) suggested that future research in this area would be a significant contribution. Following Ensher *et al.*'s findings,

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it would be safe to assume that employees who perceive DT to be effective, will have higher OC and CS than employees who perceive DT to be ineffective or non-existent. The above leads to our main hypothesis that:

- H1.* Employees who perceive their organizations' DT to be effective will be more committed to their organization and more satisfied with their careers than employees who perceive their organizations' DT to be either ineffective or non-existent.

While diversity management practitioners aim to increase the commitment and satisfaction of employees through DT however, DT programs have been criticized for not addressing the structural or systemic practices that perpetuate inequitable work experiences and outcomes between groups of employees in the workforce (Pendry *et al.*, 2007). These demographic, human capital, subjective and objective workplace experiences, and outcomes in turn have been found to affect OC and CS. As such, this paper also examines how employees' work experiences and outcomes affect OC and CS for employees who perceive their organizations' DT to be effective, compared to those who perceive it to be either ineffective or non-existent.

Groups of employees who have reported different work experiences and outcomes than their counterparts include immigrants and visible minorities. Corley and Sabharwal (2007) found foreign-born scientists to be significantly less satisfied than US born scientists in their opportunities for advancement, salary, and intellectual challenge. Considering the lower pay and the lower ranks that foreign-born scientists experienced, compared to native-born scientists, they concluded that they were not surprised with their results. In a similar study, Sabharwal (2008) suggested that future studies that examine the association between foreign-born status and OC and CS are needed. More recently, Bell *et al.* (2009) also argued for studies to include immigrants in diversity research. As such, our second hypothesis is:

- H2.* There is a negative association between being an immigrant, and OC and CS.

Visible minority employees, those who are non-white in colour or non-Caucasian in race, have been found to be either more committed, or just as committed, to their organizations as white/Caucasian employees (Igbaria and Wormley, 1992; Kirchmeyer, 1995), although they report lower levels of CS than their counterparts (Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990; Igbaria and Wormley, 1995). As such, our third hypothesis is:

- H3.* There is a positive association between being a visible minority and OC; and a negative association between being a visible minority and CS.

When examining OC and CS, including gender and age as demographic control variables is also important. Some studies have found women to be less committed to their organization than men for example (Sikorska-Simmons, 2005), while Johnson and Chang (2006) found women to be more committed than men. Similarly, women have been found to be less satisfied with their careers than men (Poon, 2004) while others have found women to be more satisfied than men (Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990; Seibert and Kraimer, 2001). Age in turn has been found to be positively associated with OC (Al-Emadi and Marquardt, 2007; Sikorska-Simmons, 2005), and negatively associated with CS (Armstrong-Stassen and Cameron, 2005).

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Educational level and tenure have also been found to positively associate with commitment (Al-Emadi and Marquardt, 2007; Sikorska-Simmons, 2005; Johnson and Chang, 2006). The association between educational level and CS is unclear however (Seibert and Kraimer, 2001), whereas the association between tenure and CS, was found to be negative (Hochwarter *et al.*, 2004; Armstrong-Stassen and Cameron, 2005). Additionally, studies have found Canadian organizations to devalue non-Western credentials, and foreign work experience (Aydemir and Skuterud, 2008; Reitz, 2001). More specifically, Canadian employers often require immigrants to have “Canadian work experience” before hiring or promoting them, or increasing their salaries (Mitchell *et al.*, 2007). Our fourth hypothesis is therefore as follows:

*H4.* There will be a negative association between non-western credentials and foreign work experience, and OC and CS.

Subjective measures have also been found to affect OC and CS. For example, OC has been found to positively affect CS (Hochwarter *et al.*, 2004; Poon, 2004) while CS has also been found to positively affect OC (Mahatanankoon, 2007). Similarly, supervisory support and recognition positively affect both OC (Kirchmeyer, 1995) and CS (Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990). In addition, employees’ perceptions of fairness of practices have been found to positively affect OC (DeConinck and Stilwell, 1996) while the association between employee perceptions of equity and/or transparency and CS in turn, still needs to be examined (Auster and Ekstein, 2001). Additionally, Hislop (2003) found that the association between employees’ perceptions of knowledge sharing activities (utilization of education/training) and OC has yet to be empirically tested. In contrast, skill use, or skills utilization, has been found to positively affect both OC (Feldman and Bolino, 2000) and CS (Aryeel, 1993). Thus:

*H5.* There will be positive associations between OC, CS and subjective measures including relationship with manager, fair talent identification process, utilization of education/training and skills utilization.

Receipt of developmental opportunities has also been found to positively affect OC (Lee and Bruvold, 2003), whereas the association between developmental opportunities and CS remains unexplored. In addition, employees’ levels of OC and CS have been found to increase as their frequency of promotions increase (Brief and Aldag, 1980; Martins *et al.*, 2002). Higher occupational rank has been found to be positively associated with commitment (Hunt *et al.*, 1985) and CS (Martins *et al.*, 2002; Burke, 2005). Similarly, Ogba (2008) found that the high-income earners in an organization expressed less commitment than their low-income counterparts, while a number of studies have found that income is positively associated with CS (Martins *et al.*, 2002; Poon, 2004; Seibert and Kraimer, 2001). As such:

*H6a.* There will be positive associations between developmental opportunities, promotions, rank and OC, whereas there will be a negative association between salary and OC.

*H6b.* There will be positive associations between developmental opportunities, promotions, rank, and salary with CS.

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## Methodology

### *Sample*

The analyses in this paper utilize survey data collected between 2006 and 2007 from over 11,000 managers, professionals, and executives working in nine organizations in corporate Canada. The survey included questions about employees' perceptions of their work environment and their organization's diversity practices. Comparisons of means as well as multivariate regression analyses were undertaken.

### *Measures*

DT availability is assessed from the responses to two questions:

- (1) Please indicate whether or not DT for senior leadership exists in your organization.
- (2) Please indicate whether or not DT for managers, professionals or staff exists in your organization.

An affirmative answer to either of these items indicates the availability of DT.

DT effectiveness is assessed from the responses to two questions:

- (1) Please rate the degree to which DT for senior management is effective in supporting the development and advancement of all employees, irrespective of ethnicity.
- (2) Please rate the degree to which DT for managers, professionals or staff is effective in supporting the development and advancement of all employees, irrespective of ethnicity.

The responses to these two questions were ranked on a five-point Likert scale, added together, and divided by ten to arrive at a percentage score. Scores in the bottom 40 percent were included in the category that perceived DT to be ineffective, while scores in the top 40 percent were included in the category that perceived DT to be effective.

Most of the perceptual measures are comprised of a number of survey items, and are created by dividing the summed responses by the sum of the highest score for each measure, to obtain a percentage score. For example, CS is calculated by summing together the score from 0 to 4, of each of the four questions pertaining to CS, to obtain a score out of 16. This number is then divided by the highest possible score (16) and multiplied by 100 to obtain a percentage score. The subjective perceptual measures used in this study will now be discussed.

CS is derived from a four-item CS scale (Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990). The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.85. This same scale has also been used to measure CS in previous empirical studies (Armstrong-Stassen and Cameron, 2005; Poon, 2004).

OC was measured using a six-item scale modified from the scale created by Mowday *et al.* (1979). This model has also been used to measure commitment by Hochwarter *et al.* (2004) and Poon (2004). The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.87.

The relationship with manager measure was calculated using an 11-item scale, as proposed by Greenhaus *et al.* (1990). The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.95.

The fair talent identification practice variable is used to assess employees' perception of talent-identification practices in their respective organizations

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(Catalyst Canada and The Diversity Institute, 2007). The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.84.

There are two single-item measures that are explored in this paper:

- (1) utilization of education/training was measured using the survey participants' responses to the statement, "I feel that my education and training have been under-utilized in my current job" (reverse-coded); and
- (2) skills utilization was measured through responses to the statement "I feel that I am able to utilize my skills in my current position."

### *Method of analysis*

Through the use of the statistical package for the social sciences various empirical techniques were employed in an effort to investigate the differences in subjective measures, based on the variability of DT in large organizations. To derive the significance of differences, mean difference tests were undertaken on the comparisons between perceived effective DT, perceived ineffective DT and no perceived DT. Subsequently, a multivariate regression analyses was administered to facilitate an understanding of the extent to which various measures influence OC and CS.

## **Results**

### *Descriptive*

The difference of means in OC and CS between employees who found DT to be effective, ineffective, or non-existent is shown in Table I. Supporting *H1*, the table shows that employees who indicated their organizations to have effective DT were significantly more committed to their organizations and satisfied with their careers, than employees who indicated DT to be either ineffective or non-existent (OC:  $d = 6.7$  percent,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $d = 9.1$  percent,  $p < 0.001$ , respectively; CS:  $d = 7.0$  percent,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $d = 14.3$  percent,  $p < 0.001$ ). This table further shows the demographic, human capital, subjective and objective work experience and outcome differences between employees who found DT to be effective, ineffective or non-existent. While all of the subjective factors and most of the objective factors were found to be significantly higher for employees who found DT to be effective as compared to those who indicated it to be ineffective or non-existent, fewer demographic, and human capital were found to be significantly higher.

The means, standard deviations, and correlations for the perceptual measures are reported in Table II. Respondents' OC, skill utilization, and relationship with their managers are generally high (above 70 percent), while respondents' mean scores of utilization of education/training are lower than 60 percent. All of the correlations among the various variables were found to be significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

### *Regression*

Table III presents the results of the hierarchical regression. Demographic, human capital, objective, and subjective measures were tested hierarchically for groups of respondents who perceived DT in their organization as effective, ineffective and non-existent to show the variance explained by each group of factors. For both OC and CS, the subjective measures are seen to account for the greatest increase in the explanatory power for all three groups.

**Table I.**  
Sample characteristics

|  | [I]<br>All employees | [II]<br>Those who<br>perceived DT<br>to be effective | [III]<br>Those who<br>perceived DT<br>to be ineffective | [IV]<br>Those who<br>perceived DT<br>to be non-existent | [II]-[III] | [III]-[IV] |
|--|----------------------|--|---|---|------------|------------|
| <i>Demographic factors</i>             |                      |  |   |   |            |            |
| Foreign born (%)                       | 28.1                 | 24.5   | 26.3  | 39.3  | -1.7       | -14.7***   |
| Visible minority (%)                   | 30.4                 | 24.8   | 26.5  | 46.5  | -1.7       | -21.7***   |
| Age (%)                                | 42.2                 | 44.0   | 43.1  | 41.5  | 0.9**      | 2.5***     |
| Female (%)                             | 48.1                 | 45.2   | 45.2  | 44.8  | 0.1        | 0.4        |
| <i>Human capital factors (%)</i>       |                      |  |   |   |            |            |
| High school or less (%)                | 15.1                 | 15.3   | 17.2  | 9.4   | -1.9       | 5.9        |
| College certificate or diploma (%)     | 25.9                 | 25.9   | 27.8  | 24.2  | -1.8       | 1.7        |
| Bachelors degree (%)                   | 36.8                 | 36.2   | 34.6  | 37.3  | 1.5        | -1.2***    |
| Graduate degree (%)                    | 14.3                 | 14.0   | 14.3  | 21.2  | -0.3       | -7.1       |
| Professional degree/designation (%)    | 7.8                  | 8.5  | 6.1   | 7.9   | 2.5*       | 0.7        |
| Foreign credentials (%)                | 10.2                 | 7.6  | 8.7   | 17.2  | -1.1       | -9.6***    |
| Tenure in years                        | 13.9                 | 16.0   | 15.4  | 12.9  | 0.6        | 3.1***     |
| Years of foreign experience            | 1.2                  | 1.1  | 1.0   | 1.7   | 0.1        | 0.6        |
| <i>Subjective factors</i>              |                      |  |   |   |            |            |
| Career satisfaction (%)                | 66.0                 | 71.0   | 64.0  | 56.7  | 7.0***     | 14.3***    |
| Organisational commitment (%)          | 79.4                 | 84.0   | 77.3  | 74.9  | 6.7***     | 9.1***     |
| Relationship with manager (%)          | 72.2                 | 76.9   | 70.7  | 60.5  | 6.2***     | 16.4***    |
| Far talent identification practice (%) | 65.0                 | 71.4   | 62.9  | 51.9  | 8.5***     | 19.6***    |
| Utilization of education/training (%)  | 55.9                 | 61.2   | 55.2  | 46.4  | 6.1***     | 14.8***    |
| Skills utilization (%)                 | 76.4                 | 80.6   | 75.3  | 71.0  | 5.3        | 9.6        |

(continued)



|  | [I]<br>All employees | [II]<br>Those who<br>perceived DT<br>to be effective | [III]<br>Those who<br>perceived DT<br>to be ineffective | [IV]<br>Those who<br>perceived DT<br>to be non-existent | [II]-[III]   | [III]-[IV]   |
|--|----------------------|--|---|---|--------------|--------------|
| <i>Objective factors</i>                         |                      |  |   |   |              |              |
| Development opportunities received (%)           | 73.0                 | 78.7   | 73.8  | 66.4  | 4.9**        | 12.4***      |
| Promotions received (%)                          | 40.1                 | 46.6   | 37.8  | 36.8  | 8.9***       | 9.8***       |
| Pre-management ranks (%)                         | 9.2                  | 7.1  | 7.1   | 9.8   | 0.0          | -2.7*        |
| Management ranks (%)                             | 56.1                 | 55.6   | 59.8  | 56.2  | -4.2         | -0.6         |
| Professional ranks (%)                           | 24.7                 | 20.7   | 24.5  | 20.5  | -3.8**       | 0.3          |
| Senior management or senior leadership ranks (%) | 6.5                  | 14.3   | 5.7   | 9.3   | 8.6***       | 5.0***       |
| Other ranks (%)                                  | 3.4                  | 2.3  | 2.9   | 4.3   | -0.6         | -2.0**       |
| Annual salary (\$)                               | 81,067.31            | 93,685.70  | 82,372.74   | 80,491.01   | 11,312.96*** | 13,194.69*** |
| Number of cases                                  | 9,196                | 1,769  | 1,218   | 723   |              |              |

**Note:** Significance value at: \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

Table I.

Table IV shows regression results from the OC and CS of employees who indicated DT to be effective, ineffective or non-existent. The overall power of the model for explaining the variance in OC was similar for employees who indicated DT to be effective (adjusted  $R^2 = 35$  percent) and ineffective (adjusted  $R^2 = 36$  percent). In contrast, the model explained only 27 percent of the variance for employees who indicated DT to be non-existent. The overall power of the model for explaining the variance in CS was similar for all three groups (adjusted  $R^2 = 49, 50,$  and  $52$  percent for effective, ineffective and non-existent DT, respectively).

More specifically, being an immigrant was found to be positively associated with OC ( $b = 1.576, p < 0.001$ ), and negatively associated with CS ( $b = -1.365, p < 0.001$ ), thus partially supporting *H2*. Surprisingly, being an immigrant increased the OC of employees who found DT to be ineffective by 3.8 percent ( $p < 0.01$ ), whereas being an immigrant increased the OC of employees who found DT to be effective by only 1.9 percent ( $p < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, being an immigrant decreased the CS of employees who found DT to be effective, by 3.6 percent ( $p < 0.01$ ).

Supporting *H3* in turn, visible minority was found to positively associate with OC ( $b = 2.924, p < 0.001$ ) and negatively associated with CS ( $b = -2.789, p < 0.001$ ). In addition, for employees who found DT to be effective, being a visible minority increased their OC by 2.5 percent ( $p < 0.01$ ). For employees who found DT to be ineffective or non-existent however, being a visible minority decreased their CS by 5.1 percent ( $p < 0.001$ ) and 6.6 percent ( $p < 0.001$ ), respectively.

While foreign work experience was found to positively associate with OC ( $b = 0.214, p < 0.001$ ) and CS ( $b = 0.158, p < 0.05$ ), non-western credentials were only found to significantly positively associate with OC ( $b = 1.479, p < 0.05$ ), thus partially supporting *H5*. Furthermore, for employees who indicated DT to be effective, their OC increased by 0.32 percent ( $p < 0.01$ ) for every year of foreign experience that they had. For employees who indicated DT to be non-existent, their OC increased by 0.67 percent ( $p < 0.01$ ) for every year of foreign experience. In addition, for employees' who perceived DT to be ineffective, having foreign credentials increased their CS by 0.42 percent ( $p < 0.05$ ).

With the exception of the utilization of education/training factor, all subjective factors are positively associated with OC. In addition, all subjective perceptual measures are positively associated with CS. As such, *H5* is partially supported. More specifically, employees experienced a 0.8 percent ( $p < 0.001$ ), 1.0 percent ( $p < 0.001$ ), 2.9 percent ( $p < 0.001$ ), and 0.7 percent ( $p < 0.001$ ) increase in OC for every 10 percent increase in CS, relationship with manager, fair talent identification practice and skills utilization, respectively. Employees also experienced a 1.1 percent ( $p < 0.001$ ),

| Perceptual measures                    | Means (%) | SD   | 1         | 2         | 3         | 4         | 5      |
|--|-----------|------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| 1. CS                                  | 66.0      | 23.4 | $r(0.85)$ |           |           |           |        |
| 2. OC                                  | 79.4      | 17.7 | 0.437*    | $r(0.87)$ |           |           |        |
| 3. Relationship with manager           | 72.2      | 23.0 | 0.504*    | 0.422*    | $r(0.95)$ |           |        |
| 4. Fair talent identification practice | 65.0      | 22.3 | 0.633*    | 0.541*    | 0.601*    | $r(0.84)$ |        |
| 5. Utilization of education/training   | 55.9      | 32.5 | 0.395*    | 0.237*    | 0.312*    | 0.370*    |        |
| 6. Skills utilization                  | 76.4      | 24.3 | 0.478*    | 0.350*    | 0.382*    | 0.429*    | 0.390* |

**Notes:** \*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed) with Cronbach's alphas at the diagonals; items 5 and 6 are single-item measures

**Table II.**  
Correlation matrix,  
means and standard  
deviations for perceptual  
measures

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|                     | OC            |                        |  |   | CS            |  |  |   |
|---------------------|---------------|------------------------|--|---|---------------|--|--|---|
|                     | All employees | Those who perceived DT | Those who perceived DT to be ineffective | Those who perceived DT to be non-existent | All employees | Those who perceived DT to be effective | Those who perceived DT to be ineffective | Those who perceived DT to be non-existent |
|                     |               | DT                     | DT                                       | DT  |               | DT                                     | DT                                       | DT  |
| Demographics        | 0.018         | 0.018                  | 0.012                                    | 0.018                                     | 0.047         | 0.027                                  | 0.041                                    | 0.120                                     |
| Human Capital       | 0.009         | 0.010                  | 0.020                                    | 0.029                                     | 0.014         | 0.011                                  | 0.021                                    | 0.036                                     |
| Subjective Measures | 0.324         | 0.330                  | 0.334                                    | 0.238                                     | 0.438         | 0.443                                  | 0.427                                    | 0.350                                     |
| Objective Measures  | 0.003         | 0.003                  | 0.009                                    | 0.006                                     | 0.014         | 0.019                                  | 0.022                                    | 0.027                                     |
| Adjusted R-squared  | 0.352         | 0.351                  | 0.363                                    | 0.266                                     | 0.511         | 0.493                                  | 0.502                                    | 0.517                                     |

**Table III.**  
Contribution of demographic, human capital, subjective and objective factors to explaining changes in OC and CS

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Table IV.  
Regression results

|                                 | OC                                     |       |          | CS                                       |          |       | CS                                       |       |           |       |          |       |           |       |           |       |
|---------------------------------|--|-------|----------|--|----------|-------|--|-------|-----------|-------|----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
|                                 | Those who perceived DT to be effective |       |          | Those who perceived DT to be ineffective |          |       | Those who perceived DT to be ineffective |       |           |       |          |       |           |       |           |       |
|                                 | B                                      | se.   | sc.      | B  | se.      | sc.   | B  | se.   | sc.       |       |          |       |           |       |           |       |
| Demographic factors             |  |       |          |  |          |       |  |       |           |       |          |       |           |       |           |       |
| <i>Canadian born</i>            |  |       |          |  |          |       |  |       |           |       |          |       |           |       |           |       |
| Foreign Born                    | 1.576***                               | 0.453 | 1.933*   | 0.884                                    | 3.776**  | 1.221 | 1.822                                    | 1.858 | -3.563**  | 0.521 | -3.563** | 1.164 | -0.622    | 1.394 | 0.143     | 2.158 |
| <i>White Caucasian</i>          |  |       |          |  |          |       |  |       |           |       |          |       |           |       |           |       |
| Visible Minority                | 2.924***                               | 0.412 | 2.481**  | 0.821                                    | 1.913    | 1.152 | 2.616                                    | 1.683 | -2.789*** | 0.475 | -1.486   | 1.084 | -5.055*** | 1.304 | -6.578*** | 1.941 |
| Age in Years                    | -0.006                                 | 0.152 | 0.262    | 0.315                                    | 0.140    | 0.440 | -0.499                                   | 0.567 | -0.701*** | 0.175 | -0.061   | 0.415 | -0.640    | 0.500 | -0.737    | 0.658 |
| Age in Years Squared            | 0.002                                  | 0.002 | -0.003   | 0.004                                    | -0.001   | 0.005 | 0.008                                    | 0.007 | 0.007***  | 0.002 | -0.001   | 0.005 | 0.006     | 0.006 | 0.008     | 0.008 |
| <i>Male</i>                     |  |       |          |  |          |       |  |       |           |       |          |       |           |       |           |       |
| Female                          | 1.192***                               | 0.310 | 1.778**  | 0.613                                    | 0.594    | 0.839 | -0.190                                   | 1.222 | 2.902***  | 0.356 | 1.904*   | 0.809 | 2.983**   | 0.951 | 3.187*    | 1.413 |
| Human capital factors           |  |       |          |  |          |       |  |       |           |       |          |       |           |       |           |       |
| <i>High school or less</i>      |  |       |          |  |          |       |  |       |           |       |          |       |           |       |           |       |
| College Certificate or Diploma  | 0.485                                  | 0.491 | 1.659    | 0.958                                    | -1.796   | 1.277 | -3.919                                   | 2.274 | -0.830    | 0.566 | 0.650    | 1.264 | -0.458    | 1.455 | -5.091    | 2.638 |
| Bachelors degree                | -1.449                                 | 0.497 | -0.137   | 0.962                                    | -3.126*  | 1.320 | -5.776*                                  | 2.264 | -1.961*** | 0.572 | -1.075   | 1.268 | -1.695    | 1.505 | -8.750    | 2.619 |
| Graduate degree                 | -0.984                                 | 0.625 | 0.107    | 1.209                                    | -4.096*  | 1.861 | -3.224                                   | 2.596 | -2.971*** | 0.720 | -1.403   | 1.594 | -1.099    | 1.894 | -11.182   | 2.986 |
| Professional degree/designation | -0.152                                 | 0.685 | -0.984   | 1.296                                    | -0.817   | 1.991 | -3.486                                   | 2.915 | -0.526    | 0.789 | -0.380   | 1.708 | -0.323    | 2.265 | -3.606    | 3.383 |
| Foreign credentials             | 1.479*                                 | 0.638 | -0.345   | 1.378                                    | 3.385    | 1.837 | -3.463                                   | 2.125 | 0.356     | 0.735 | -1.671   | 1.816 | 4.208*    | 2.090 | 1.489     | 2.470 |
| Tenure in years                 | 0.090                                  | 0.070 | -0.031   | 0.149                                    | -0.221   | 0.197 | 0.386                                    | 0.289 | -0.130    | 0.080 | -0.297   | 0.196 | 0.263     | 0.225 | -0.540    | 0.335 |
| Tenure in years squared         | -0.002                                 | 0.002 | 0.004    | 0.004                                    | 0.008    | 0.006 | -0.012                                   | 0.009 | 0.009***  | 0.002 | 0.014*   | 0.006 | 0.001     | 0.007 | 0.016     | 0.010 |
| Years of foreign experience     | 0.214***                               | 0.058 | 0.316*** | 0.119                                    | 0.007    | 0.189 | 0.671***                                 | 0.211 | 0.158*    | 0.066 | -0.013   | 0.157 | 0.162     | 0.215 | 0.193     | 0.247 |
| Subjective factors              | 0.079***                               | 0.009 | 0.066*** | 0.018                                    | 0.088*** | 0.025 | 0.093**                                  | 0.032 | 0.105***  | 0.012 | 0.115*** | 0.031 | 0.114***  | 0.033 | 0.125**   | 0.044 |
| CS                              |  |       |          |  |          |       |  |       |           |       |          |       |           |       |           |       |
| OC                              |  |       |          |  |          |       |  |       |           |       |          |       |           |       |           |       |

(continued)

|   | OC                                     |       |           | CS                                       |           |       | CS                                       |        |            |       |           |       |          |        |           |        |
|---|--|-------|-----------|--|-----------|-------|--|--------|------------|-------|-----------|-------|----------|--------|-----------|--------|
|   | Those who perceived DT to be effective |       |           | Those who perceived DT to be ineffective |           |       | Those who perceived DT to be ineffective |        |            |       |           |       |          |        |           |        |
|   | B                                      | se.   | sc.       | B  | se.       | sc.   | B  | se.    | sc.        |       |           |       |          |        |           |        |
| Relationship with manager                   | 0.097***                               | 0.008 | 0.081***  | 0.018                                    | 0.074**   | 0.023 | 0.105***                                 | 0.029  | 0.122***   | 0.010 | 0.098***  | 0.023 | 0.087*** | 0.026  | 0.108**   | 0.034  |
| Fair talent identification practice         | 0.294***                               | 0.010 | 0.268***  | 0.020                                    | 0.314***  | 0.028 | 0.203***                                 | 0.035  | 0.384***   | 0.011 | 0.407***  | 0.026 | 0.427*** | 0.031  | 0.363***  | 0.039  |
| Utilization of education/training           | -0.008                                 | 0.005 | -0.006    | 0.011                                    | -0.039**  | 0.015 | -0.002                                   | 0.019  | 0.063***   | 0.006 | 0.060***  | 0.014 | 0.075*** | 0.017  | 0.036     | 0.022  |
| Skills utilization                          | 0.068***                               | 0.007 | 0.077***  | 0.015                                    | 0.122***  | 0.020 | 0.043                                    | 0.024  | 0.164***   | 0.008 | 0.166***  | 0.020 | 0.109*** | 0.023  | 0.151***  | 0.028  |
| Objective factors                           |  |       |           |  |           |       |  |        |            |       |           |       |          |        |           |        |
| Development opportunities                   | -1.049**                               | 0.352 | -0.398    | 0.757                                    | -1.763    | 0.973 | -0.887                                   | 1.350  | 3.963***   | 0.403 | 4.004***  | 0.994 | 4.645*** | 1.101  | 4.164     | 1.559  |
| Promotions received                         | 0.808*                                 | 0.321 | 0.321     | 0.641                                    | 0.247     | 0.883 | 1.132                                    | 1.290  | 2.427***   | 0.389 | 2.667**   | 0.842 | 3.972*** | 0.998  | 3.219*    | 1.493  |
| Pre-management rank                         | -1.866***                              | 0.550 | -0.943    | 1.205                                    | -3.140    | 1.678 | 0.573                                    | 2.168  | -2.450***  | 0.633 | -5.652*** | 1.583 | 3.121    | 1.910  | -5.286*   | 2.507  |
| Management rank                             | -1.126**                               | 0.372 | -0.795    | 0.775                                    | -1.598    | 1.008 | -0.139                                   | 1.583  | -0.965*    | 0.429 | -3.399**  | 1.019 | 1.057    | 1.148  | -0.469    | 1.837  |
| Senior management or senior leadership rank | 1.889**                                | 0.691 | 1.676     | 1.025                                    | 5.091**   | 1.931 | 4.226                                    | 2.350  | -1.041     | 0.796 | 0.504     | 1.352 | -1.216   | 2.204  | -2.530    | 2.732  |
| Other rank                                  | -0.985                                 | 0.839 | 2.246     | 1.995                                    | -0.528    | 2.482 | 2.531                                    | 3.007  | -1.912*    | 0.967 | 3.485     | 2.629 | -0.133   | 2.824  | -5.704    | 3.485  |
| Annual salary (\$10,000 increments)         | -0.090                                 | 0.052 | -0.025    | 0.083                                    | -0.053    | 0.161 | -0.206                                   | 0.207  | 0.483**    | 0.060 | 0.191     | 0.109 | 0.738*** | 0.181  | 1.005***  | 0.238  |
| Constant                                    | 39.359***                              | 3.157 | 38.836*** | 6.644                                    | 38.886*** | 9.191 | 56.189***                                | 11.891 | 18.847***  | 3.661 | 8.060     | 8.841 | 13.018   | 10.529 | 28.655*** | 13.975 |
| F-statistic                                 | 200.912                                |       | 6.416     |  | 28.702    |       | 11.467                                   |        | 385.853*** |       | 69.722    |       | 49.993   |        | 31.874    |        |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> (%)                 | 35                                     |       | 35        |  | 36        |       | 27                                       |        | 51         |       | 49        |       | 50       |        | 52        |        |
| Number of cases                             | 9,196                                  |       | 1,769     |  | 1,218     |       | 723                                      |        | 9,196      |       | 1,769     |       | 1,218    |        | 723       |        |

Notes: Significance at: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ ; reference categories in italics

Table IV.

1.2 percent ( $p < 0.001$ ), 3.8 percent ( $p < 0.001$ ), 0.6 percent ( $p < 0.001$ ), and 1.6 percent ( $p < 0.001$ ) increase in CS for every 10 percent increase in OC, relationship with manager, fair talent identification practice, utilization of training/education, and skills utilization, respectively.

Partially supporting *H6a*, receipt of developmental opportunities and being a professional were found to be negatively associated with OC ( $b = -1.049, p < 0.01$ ;  $b = -1.126, p < 0.01$ ), whereas receipt of promotions and senior management rank were found to be positively associated with OC ( $b = 0.808, p < 0.05$ ;  $b = 1.889, p < 0.001$ ). No significant association was found between salary and OC. Therefore, *H6b* is also only partially supported. Receipt of developmental opportunities, promotions and salary were found to positively associate with CS ( $b = 3.963, p < 0.001$ ;  $b = 2.427, p < 0.001$ ;  $b = 0.483, p < 0.01$ ), whereas pre-management, professional and other rank were found to be negatively associated with CS ( $b = -2.450, p < 0.001$ ;  $b = -0.965, p < 0.01$ ;  $b = -1.192, p < 0.05$ ).

## Discussion and implications of the study

### *Discussion*

Results from this paper found that employees who indicated DT to be effective are more committed to their organization and more satisfied with their careers than employees who indicated DT to be either ineffective or non-existent. Supporting previous studies it further confirmed that demographic, human capital, subjective and objective factors affect OC and CS (Armstrong-Stassen and Cameron, 2005; Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990; Igarria and Wormley, 1992; Kirchmeyer, 1995; Lee and Bruvold, 2003; Mahatanankoon, 2007; Martins *et al.*, 2002; Ogba, 2008; Poon, 2004; Seibert and Kraimer, 2001; Sikorska-Simmons, 2005), with subjective measures accounting for most of the variance. With the exception of one group (where employees perceived DT to be non-existent) for OC however, the explanatory power of all the factors used in this study varied little across models, indicating that additional factors may be helpful in explaining the OC and CS differences between employees who found DT to be effective, ineffective or non-existent.

### *Implications for researchers*

This study attempted to clarify the relationship between OC and CS, and DT effectiveness, ineffectiveness, and unavailability. The findings show significant relationships between these variables. To explain the OC and CS differences found between employees who indicated DT to be effective as compared to those who found it to be ineffective or non-existent however, future studies should include additional variables to the ones used in this study.

Organizational environment variables including: organizations that are employment equity regulated, organizations that are members of the federal contractors program and organizational size are three factors that future studies should consider including. Employment equity policies that aim to address systemic discrimination through the removal of barriers to equitable work experiences and outcomes for disadvantaged groups and DT programs that aim to eliminate discriminatory behaviours by improving relations among employees may be more successful when implemented together rather than in silo (Agocs and Burr, 1996). It therefore seems possible that the addition of the employment equity policy factor and the examination of the link between both employment equity policy and DT with OC and CS, may

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illuminate the cause of the OC and CS differences found in this study. In addition, larger organizations are more likely to adopt DT than smaller organizations (Rynes and Rosen, 1995), possibly resulting in less discriminatory behaviours at work, which may also help explain the differences found in this study.

Sample size permitting, future studies should also examine the OC and CS differences between the advantaged and disadvantaged groups of employees. After examining whites' reactions to diversity programs for example, Kidder *et al.* (2004) found DT to result in "backlash" among trainees. While "backlash" to employment equity policies has been found to increase turnover and decrease satisfaction of the disadvantaged groups (Miller and Wheeler, 1992; Morrison and Von Glinow, 1990) lumping both the advantaged and disadvantaged groups' (immigrant and native-born, visible minorities and white/Caucasians and women and men) perceptions of the three DT models together may have restricted our ability to identify the cause of the OC and CS differences found in this study. Using the concepts in this study, future studies should therefore examine the advantaged groups and disadvantaged groups separately.

Future studies should also consider establishing causality between the concepts used in this study in addition to the organizational environment and backlash concepts proposed above. While demographic, human capital, subjective and objective factors affect OC and CS for example, how does DT mediate these relationships? Do employees' perceptions of DT affect their workplace experiences and outcomes, thus improving their OC and CS, or do employees' workplace experiences and outcomes affect their perceptions of DT, improving their OC and CS? Furthermore, is there a relationship between these factors, employment equity policies, DT and backlash? And if so, what does it look like? Does DT ameliorate the backlash caused by employment equity policies thus improving OC and CS for example, or does it intensify it? Or, do employment equity policies work with DT to improve employees' demographic and objective outcomes, and their subjective and human capital experiences, respectively, to improve their OC and CS?

#### *Implications for managers*

The results of this study indicate that employees' perceptions of DT effectiveness, ineffectiveness and availability are important for employers to consider. Employees who perceive DT to be effective are more likely to report higher OC and CS scores than employees' who found DT to be ineffective or non-existent. Furthermore, the results show that subjective factors explain most of the variance in OC and CS for all DT models included in this study. As such, increasing employees' OC, relationship with manager, fair talent identification practice, utilization of education/training, and skills utilization is likely to increase their overall OC and CS. As DT can cause backlash among employees, which in turn, has been found to increase turnover and decrease satisfaction, it is extremely important that diversity management practitioners make sure employees' perceive DT to be effective.

#### **Conclusion**

This paper found that employees, who perceived DT to be effective, were more committed to their organization and more satisfied with their careers than employees who found DT to be either ineffective or non-existent. While we cannot establish a causal link between DT effectiveness, ineffectiveness, and availability, with OC and

CS, the significant associations found indicate that the concepts are related. Researchers should therefore examine these associations further to identify the cause of the differences, and diversity management practitioners should ensure that trainees' perceive DT to be effective. In addition to the demographic, human capital, subjective and objective factors used in this study, future studies should consider including organizational environment factors.

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### Further reading

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