

DEPRIVATION AT WORK: POSITIVE WORKPLACE EXPERIENCES AND THE RACIAL GAP IN QUIT INTENTIONS

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Abstract

We highlight the unique role of deprivation—i.e., missing out on positive work experiences—in shaping the racial gap in quit intentions. We predict, and empirically demonstrate, that deprivation of positive experiences in the workplace increases racial minorities' turnover intentions, independent of the presence of negative experiences. Across a nationally representative sample (Study 1; N = 6,823), and a national sample of teachers (Study 2; N= 21,156), non-white workers are exposed to more negative and less positive workplace experiences compared to their white counterparts. In both samples, deprivation of positive experiences mediates approximately 10-15% of the difference in quit intentions between White and non-White groups. We discuss the theoretical implications of these findings as well as the practical implications for diversity and inclusion efforts.

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Nationally representative data show that 58% of non-White men and women say that they are somewhat or very likely to find a new job in the next year, compared to 37% of White men and women (Smith, Davern, Freese, & Hout, 2018). At least part of the racial gap in quit intentions is explained by racial discrimination in the workplace (Bell, McLaughlin, & Sequeira, 2002; Cropsey et al., 2008; Deitch, Barsky, Butz, Chan, Brief, & Bradley, 2013; Elmers & Pike, 1997), which in turn is linked to racial minority workers' decreased well-being (Deitch et al.), lowered sense of belonging (Walton & Cohen, 2007), and lower expectations of success (Eccles, 2011). In order to effectively reduce withdrawal from the workplace and the gap in quit intentions for racial minority workers, it is important to better understand mechanisms for the racial gap in turnover intentions.

Historically, diversity efforts, driven by legal responsibility to achieve group-level representativeness, focused on reducing negative experiences such as preventing harassment and discrimination from occurring in the workplace (Kelly and Dobbin, 1998; Dobbin & Kalev, 2013). For example, equal opportunity laws have been passed that prohibit pay inequities, differential promotion and hiring practices, and insufficient accommodations for people with disabilities.

We argue that these efforts are insufficient to reduce turnover intention gaps because they fail to address the full spectrum of racial disparities in organizations. While much attention has been directed at identifying the role that negative factors (e.g., higher rates of harassment) play in contributing to higher rates of attrition among disadvantaged group members, there are also racial disparities in exposure to positive experiences. As job embeddedness research has shown,

the effects of negative shocks at work such as experiencing harassment can be buffered by positive experiences (Mitchell et al., 2001; Burton et al. 2010).

We propose that when the full spectrum (i.e., both positive and negative experiences) is considered, it becomes clear that disadvantaged group members not only have more *intentions to leave*, but also *fewer reasons to stay* in an organization than advantaged group members. While disadvantaged group members encounter more negative experiences in organizations and have *more intentions to leave* an organization, these disadvantaged group members also encounter fewer positive experiences, and thus have *fewer reasons to stay* in the organization than advantaged group members. Positive workplace experiences include receiving mentoring, accolades, awards and recognition, networking opportunities, positive interpersonal interactions, inclusion in informal and formal networks, receiving positive evaluations, help, social support, constructive feedback, and “credit” or breaks (Ely, 1994; Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990; Thomas, 2001; Väänänen, Toppinen-Tanner, Kalimo, Mutanen, Vahtera, & Peiró, 2003). Thus, efforts aimed at reducing differences in intentions to quit between disadvantaged and advantaged group members should address the full spectrum of disparities by focusing not only on the greater challenges that disadvantaged group members encounter (i.e., negative experiences), but also on what members of disadvantaged groups are deprived of in work settings (i.e., positive experiences).

The current contribution proposes two factors in determining racial inequality in working conditions that contribute to disparities in turnover: (i) the valence of the work life experience (Positive vs. Negative; Table 1), and (ii) the degree to which a quality of work life experience is present or absent in individual’s set of experiences (Present vs. Absent). Thus, workers from

advantaged groups experience privilege by the presence of specific positive experiences (i.e., privilege) as well as by the absence of certain negative experiences (i.e., protection) compared to their disadvantaged peers. Similarly, members of disadvantaged groups can be subordinated by the presence of specific negative experiences (i.e., discrimination), but also by the absence of specific positive experiences (i.e., deprivation) compared to members of advantaged groups.

Insert Table 1 about here

To create an equitable work environment, organizations need to address both forms of disadvantage: increased exposure to negative experiences as well as deprivation from positive experiences. While we are not the first scholars to recognize that positive experiences are critical to a person's career, we believe the systematic approach to workplace inequity using common Quality of Work Life surveys can highlight under-examined disparities in workplace experience. This research offers new ways of thinking about and testing the role of workplace experience on quit intentions in real world settings.

Valence of Experiences: Differences between Positive and Negative Experiences

Workers' lives are shaped by specific behaviors, performed by managers and co-workers, that frequently carry unambiguous positive and negative signals and effects (Amabile & Kramer, 2007). Taylor (1991) defines a negative event as one that has the potential or actual ability to create adverse outcomes for the individual. In contrast, positive events are those events that have the potential or ability to create advantageous outcomes for an individual. Because positive and

negative events involve different social dynamics, expectations, as well as consequences, they can both contribute to quit intentions in different ways.

Negative experiences are often highly salient (Taylor, 1991), and documentable, which makes them easier to detect and address. In contrast, Brewer (1999) argues that intergroup discrimination is driven more by preferential treatment within an in-group, rather than by negative treatment toward an out-group. To achieve a truly equitable workplace, workers from disadvantaged groups need exposure to the positive experiences that in-group members regularly experience in the workplace.

Positive Experiences: Not Just the Opposite of Negative Experiences

Positive events are those events that have the potential or ability to create advantageous outcomes for an individual (Taylor, 1991). They are not the mere opposite or absence of negative experiences. We thus follow calls for more positive organizational scholarship that studies factors that allow individuals within organizations to flourish (Cameron, Dutton, and Quinn 2003). In health research, the “two continua” model of health and illness (Keyes, 2002; 2007) argues that the absence of mental illness does not equal a healthy person without the presence of positive feelings and positive functioning (i.e., “flourishing”; Keyes & Simoes, 2012). Moving toward a positive framing can lead to greater appreciation of the potential for human thriving (Sheldon and King, 2001). Similarly, positive psychology studies factors that allow individuals to flourish and increase well-being which is qualitatively different from the traditional focus on psychopathology and coping with mental illness (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Such paradigm shifts are rooted in the premise that positivity and negativity are not two anchors on a bipolar continuum, but rather constitute two separate continua. For example, one

expression of outgroup “hate” is the avoidance of helping behaviors, which can be seen only in the context of in-group “love” (Weisel & Böhm, 2015). Understanding and addressing the obstacles that racial minority employees face in organizations (countering outgroup “hate”) does not inform us on how racial minority individuals can flourish in organizations (building in-group “love”).

The Human Resource Management literature provides numerous examples of enriched work environments that may be inequitably experienced by employees. A set of High-Performance Work Practices (HPWPs) identified by HR scholars including enhanced employee participation and flexible work arrangements can increase organizational performance through greater job satisfaction, lower turnover, and greater participation in decision-making (H Combs, Liu, Hall, & Ketchen, 2006). HPWPs can enhance performance through improved relationships among co-workers involving shared knowledge, shared goals, and mutual respect (Gittell, Seidner, & Wimbush, 2010). Another example includes high quality connections at work that are critical to well-being (Dutton & Heaphy, 2012). These connections involve feelings of vitality and aliveness, positive regard, and mutuality.

Greater job embeddedness, which includes individuals’ connections, perceptions, and feelings of opportunity cost, predicts lower turnover (Mitchell et al., 2001; Jiang et al., 2012). Jobs that incorporate enhanced autonomy, feedback, variety, and meaningfulness into the work are evaluated more positively (Hackman & Oldhman, 1980; Wrzesniewski, LoBuglio, Durrone, & Berg, 2013). Perceiving equal access to opportunities and fair treatment reduces turnover intentions (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013). Similarly, perceptions of organizational inclusion (e.g., inclusion in decision-making structures) are associated with greater

organizational commitment, which, in turn, is associated with lowered turnover intentions (Hwang & Hopkins, 2015). Despite the advantages of creating positive work environments, there are specific challenges involved in redressing disparities in positive experiences that we discuss below.

Positive Behaviors Are Considered Supererogatory.

Whereas withholding negative experiences at work is oftentimes seen as an obligation, providing positive experiences is often considered supererogatory (i.e., good but not required). In most professional contexts, managers have a moral, and often legal, imperative not to harass or discriminate against their employees (e.g., the Civil Rights Act of 1964). On the other hand, when an individual engages in positive behaviors such as reaching out to, or complimenting, another person, these behaviors are generally seen as voluntary and reflective of the good nature of the individual engaging in them. While withholding positive experiences may create unlawful adverse impact, refraining from such behaviors may go unnoticed, and even when observed, typically does not warrant social sanctions or punishment.

Missing out on Positive Experiences Often Goes Unnoticed. Subtle discrimination can lack intention, is multidimensional, and has a detrimental impact on organizations and employees (Jones, Arena, Nittrouer, and Alonso, 2017). Just as many privileged individuals are often unaware of their privileges because these privileges are simply the norm in their daily lives (McIntosh, 1988), members of dominant groups may not always be aware of the ways in which they are advantaged. In addition, unless the positive behavior toward dominant group members is directly observed, subordinated group members might also never know that they are missing out

on certain positive experiences. For example, a Black woman who has not been invited to lunch with a group of colleagues who are all White men, may be unaware that the lunch ever occurred.

While some might argue that the woman needs to be aware of intentional social exclusion to be affected by it on a psychological level, there may also be consequences at a more objective, instrumental level absent such awareness and intent. For example, past work has shown the importance of positive relationships between a leader and members of diverse teams for turnover (Nishii & Mayer, 2009). When a leader has positive relationships with all members, demographic diversity of teams is negatively correlated with turnover. However, highest turnover occurs when the leader has positive relationships with only some, but not all, members of a diverse work group.

The Current Work

We set out to examine the relative contribution of disparities in the negative experience and in positive experiences (e.g., mentoring, social support, inclusion) to the racial gap in quit intentions. We study race because in nearly all workplaces, non-White workers are a minority (Ferguson & Koning, 2018). Gender is not considered in this analysis because of several complicating factors: first, while gender does not generally predict turnover in meta-analytic studies, gender is highly predictive in workplaces where men make up a larger percentage of the workforce (Rubenstein, Eberly, Lee, and Mitchell, 2018, pg. 45). Relatedly, women are a majority in many occupations and by extension workplaces due to extreme levels of gender segregation (Cohen, 2013). Finally, on average in the data we examine, women report more positive workplace experiences than men, but the data we examine cannot inform as to the percentage of men in the workplace, making gender a difficult test case for our study.

Insofar as dominant and subordinated group members have different rates of exposure to negative and positive work environments, both types of disparities need to be addressed to promote equal opportunities between these groups. As outlined above, having fewer positive experiences within an organization can lead to fewer positive feelings towards one's workplace, undermining commitment to the organization, and resilience towards challenges one may encounter and perceptions of fairness. Thus, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1a: Experienced harassment and discrimination will mediate the relationship between employee race and intentions to quit – such that racial minority employees experience more harassment and discrimination than Whites, which will be associated with greater turnover intentions among the former compared to the latter.

Hypothesis 1b: Deprivation of positive experiences will mediate the relationship between employee race and intentions to quit – such that racial minority employees are deprived of positive workplace experiences compared to Whites, which will be associated with greater turnover intentions among the former compared to the latter.

Methodology

We test these two hypotheses in two different large, national datasets. Study 1 tests these hypotheses in the General Social Survey which is a nationally representative data set collected by the National Opinion Research Center, is replicable and is available online. Study 2 examines the relationship between deprivation and turnover intention in a specific occupation. In study 2, we analyze a proprietary dataset collected and held by the American Federation of Teachers / Badass Teachers Association (BAT), and thus control for occupation and replicate Study 1 in a separate setting. Several studies that meta-analyze turnover report no relationship between race

and voluntary turnover (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Rubenstein, et al., 2018). These meta-analyses report the results of studies frequently carried out with non-national, non-representative samples within specific organizations, and do not necessarily reflect the general relationship between race and turnover. However, part of the current lack of diversity, especially at higher levels of organizations, is caused by higher attrition rates for workers from racial minority groups (Cunningham & Sagas, 2004; Doede, 2017; Mader et al., 2016;). Studies that examine diversity across multiple organizations, using nationally representative data, and focusing on specific occupations all find minority group turnover gaps are important contributors to the problem of a lack of diversity.

Study 1 – A Nationally Representative Sample from the General Social Survey (GSS)

We used multiple years of the nationally representative cross-sectional sample of the Quality of Work Life (QWL) module (2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018) of the General Social Survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (Smith et al., 2018). The GSS Quality of Working Life survey contains 76 questions, is administered every four years, and was developed in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (Centers for Disease Control, 2013). The survey identifies 11 items related to workplace climate, 3 items related to supervision, 41 items related to job level, 9 items related to health outcomes, as well as 7 items related to other outcomes including intentions to leave. We begin by creating a multi-year pooled QWL dataset with 8,553 observations. We drop 1,461 observations with incomplete information about experiences of racism and harassment at work. Following the steps described below, we then construct scales

for positive and negative experiences. Upon constructing these scales, we exclude 194 respondents with missing observations of the positive experiences scale or other independent variables entered into the regression (e.g., occupation). In ordinal logistic regression or other forms of regression using limited dependent variables, some observations perfectly predict the outcome and cannot be included in the analysis. To maintain a consistent sample across different models, all such collinear observations (75) that perfectly predict the outcome are dropped. The procedure used to drop observations and ensure a consistent sample is executed within Stata and can be performed for cases with limited dependent variables such as ordinal logistic regression, as described in Silva and Tenreyro (2011). Following these adjustments, our sample size is 6,823. The average age is 42, 51% are women, 24% are non-White. Additional summary statistics and correlations are provided in Table 2.

 Insert Table 2 about here

Scale Development

Each item in the QWL survey was examined by three individuals independently – two of the paper’s authors and a research assistant. Each rater was asked to code the variables for whether (i) they are likely to have positive, negative, or neutral consequences, and (ii) whether they relate to a concrete workplace experience. Based upon the responses, we selected the relevant variables and assigned a positive and negative valence to the item.

With two independent coders, 12 items had an indeterminate valence. For example, both coders coded the question “how often the respondent works at home” as neither unambiguously

positive or negative, and the item was removed from consideration. Inter-coder reliability was high at 87% agreement. Next, items were narrowed down to whether they were experiential or unrelated to an experience at work. Coders were instructed to identify items as experiential if they related to interpersonal relationships at work, items related to interactions with supervisors or peers, items that had a subjective element, and items related to human interaction. This narrowed the pool of items down to 29 potential experiences, of which 14 items were selected as most representative of unambiguous positive and negative experiences and included in this study.

Positive Experiences

The scale for positive experiences consisted of the following nine items: Having a lot of say in the job, being treated with respect at work, taking part in decisions, have freedom to decide how to do job, having a supervisor concerned about welfare, having coworkers who take a personal interest in the respondent, having a supervisor who is helpful to respondent in getting the job done, having coworkers who can be relied upon when the respondent needs help, and being likely to be praised by supervisor. The first eight items are each phrased as statements, and respondents are asked to answer on a four-point Likert scale ranging from very true to not at all true whether the statement is true with respect to the work the person does. The ninth item related to being praised by a supervisor is a three-point scale with options yes, no, and maybe. With these items, we constructed a standardized scale, mean centered at zero, for positive experiences at work ($\alpha = 0.81$).

Negative Experiences

For negative experiences, we constructed an indicator variable that captures whether the respondent reports being discriminated against or harassed, including experiences of racism, sexism, ageism, sexual harassment, being harassed or threatened. The five negative items are yes / no questions asking whether the respondent feels discriminated against because of their age, race, or gender, and one question about whether the respondent has been sexually harassed or threatened on the job in the last 12 months. Twenty-one percent of U.S. workers report one or more of these negative events, while 79% percent of workers report none of these negative events. The left panel of Figure 1 illustrates the racial gap in exposure to positive experiences using the standardized positive experiences scale, and the right panel presents the percentage of workers by race who ever had a negative experience in the GSS data.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Quit Intentions

Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner (2000) identified quit intentions as one of the most reliable predictors of turnover. The nationally representative GSS data we analyze in Study 1 shows that non-White men and women are 1.6 times more likely to report that they are somewhat or very likely to find a new job in the next year (Smith et al., 2018). In the current studies, quit intentions were assessed with a single item “how likely are you to seek a new job in the next year?” (not at all likely, somewhat likely, and very likely).

Model

Mediation models can be useful in explanation based research that examines mechanisms through which a relationship exists between a predictor and outcome variable (MacKinnon, 2012). In the current research, we model the hypothesized mediating role of positive experiences between employee race and quit intentions using a dual-mediation model to analyze the group-level differences in outcomes between White and non-White workers, and the proportion of the difference mediated by gaps in positive and negative experiences (Model 4, Hayes, 2013). All data are cross-sectional, all coefficients should be interpreted as correlational and descriptive of the underlying relationships, and not as causal effects. The quality of work life questions used as mediators contain an element of timing, as the independent variables are retrospective (“In the last twelve months...”), or contemporaneous regarding the present work environment, while the dependent variable is future oriented (“In the next twelve months...”). Thus, the constructs have the correct chronological ordering. We also note that above, in developing our hypotheses, we provide reference to diary-based longitudinal studies that do establish a causal relationship between negative and positive experiences and quit intentions (or other metrics of engagement at work), and here seek to descriptively examine the role that racial disparities in positive and negative experiences have in racial differences in quit intentions.

We followed procedures as outlined by MacKinnon & Dwyer (1993) to calculate standardized coefficients for the non-linear ordinal logistic regression and logistic regression models that we report in the figures and in the mediation analysis. In the top panels of each table of results, we report raw unstandardized coefficient estimates obtained. Ordinal logistic regression is used for models where the dependent variable is quit intentions. Logistic regression is used when the dependent variable is negative experiences. Ordinary least squared regression

was used when the dependent variable is the normalized scale of positive experiences. For the mediation analysis, we used 10,000 bootstrap samples to calculate standardized coefficients and standard errors using Stata Version 13.1 and following MacKinnon and Dwyer (1993). We estimate effect sizes using the proportion mediated approach. The indirect effect is the product of standardized coefficients a and b , the total effect is c' , and the proportion mediated is $(a*b)/c'$ (Kenny, Korchmaros, & Bolger, 1998). We report bias-corrected confidence intervals. In all models, we control for participants' self-reported gender identity.

Results

Results reported at the top of Table 3 demonstrate a consistent and significant effect of race on quit intentions. Likewise, positive experiences consistently decrease and negative experiences increase quit intention. Non-White workers have significantly fewer positive experiences, and more negative experiences. Figure 2 shows bootstrapped coefficient estimates and standard errors (in parentheses below) for each parameter estimated in the dual mediation model. Regressing past self-reports of positive experiences on race while controlling for gender reveals that non-white racial identity is significantly associated with decreased self-reported positive experiences at work $a_1 = -0.06$ (0.01); $p < 0.001$; 95% CI: [-0.09, -0.04]. Regressing negative experiences on race (controlling for gender) showed that being nonwhite is significantly associated with greater self-reported negative experiences $a_2 = 0.06$ (0.02); $p < 0.001$; 95% CI: [-0.10, -0.03]. Finally, regressing quit intentions on past positive experiences $b_1 = -0.28$ (0.02); $p < 0.001$; 95% CI: [-0.32, -0.25], negative experiences $b_2 = 0.10$ (0.02); $p < 0.001$; 95% CI: [-0.13, -0.07], and race showed that both positive and negative experiences are significant predictors of

quit intentions. The direct effect of race on quit intentions is significant $c' = 0.18$ (0.01); $p < 0.001$; 95% CI: [0.15, 0.21].

Insert Figure 2 about here

Insert Table 3 about here

Mediation analysis showed that both positive ($a_1b_1 = 0.02$ (0.00); $p < 0.001$; 95% CI: [0.01, 0.02]) and negative ($a_2b_2 = 0.01$ (0.00); $p < 0.001$; 95% CI: [0.00, 0.01]) experiences significantly mediated the relationship between race and quit intentions (see Figure 2).

Proportion-mediated effect size estimates for the individual mediation pathways indicated that the disparity in positive experiences (8.75%) conveyed a larger portion of the effect of race on quit intentions, compared with negative experiences (3.25%). Given the significant direct effect of the race on quit intentions, as well as the remaining unexplained proportion of this effect, additional mediators are likely to exist between race and quit intentions. Altogether, this suggests that approximately 12% of the racial gap in quit intentions can be explained by the racial gap in quality of work life experiences, with positive experience gaps explaining 73% of the racial gap due to gaps in quality of work life experiences.

Robustness Checks

Despite concerns about adding control variables (Carlson and Wu, 2011), we report on the robustness of the model by accounting for additional control variables. Therefore, in Table 3,

four separate models are reported with a progression of controls added. Model 1 controls for gender. Model 2 adds year fixed effects. Model 3 adds controls for the respondent age and highest level of education fixed effects. Model 4 adds controls for union membership, supervisory status, working for the government, self-employment status, team membership, as well as fixed effects for occupation and number of workers at local work site. Between 6 and 10 percent of the total gap in intentions to quit is explained by racial disparities in positive experiences. Across all models, approximately 70% of the gap that can be explained by quality of work life experiences is explained by the positive experience gap.

Study 2 – Teachers Data

Sample

In 2015, the Badass Teachers Association (BAT) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) circulated a survey to members and non-member educators regarding their quality of working life. The AFT union represents 1.6 million members, and has been active since 1916. BAT is an activist organization of teachers that was founded in 2013. BAT and the AFT circulated the survey on e-mail and through social media between April 21 and May 1, 2015. This represents the first national survey of educators of its kind, asking a battery of questions related to stressors, working conditions, and well-being in the education sector. While the survey solicited input from multiple occupations, including paraprofessionals / teachers' assistants, counselors, librarians, administrators, and special education teachers, we focus on 21,156 primary and secondary teachers who completed the survey.

White and minority group variables were built based upon self-reported group membership. In response to the question "I consider myself to be a member of the following

groups:” we constructed a White variable for those who identified as “White” exclusively, and a “non-White” variable for those who identify as “African American”, “Latino”, “Asian”, “Other,” or a biracial or multiracial combination of available options. Following these definitions, 78.4% of the teacher sample was mono-racial White.

Scale Development

We identified the positive, negative, and control variables in the AFT/QWL teacher survey by comparing the available survey items with the items selected from the General Social Survey (GSS).

Positive Experiences

Positive experiences were captured on four point Likert scales that ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree (“strongly agree,” “agree,” “disagree,” and “strongly disagree” were the options). For the teacher survey, the nine positive items are: “My job allows me to make a lot of decisions on my own”; “I am given opportunities to work collaboratively as part of a team”; “My school has a good mentoring program, especially for new teachers”; “In my position, my colleagues and I take part in making decisions that affect us”; “I can count on my supervisor or manager for support when I need it”; “I am treated with respect by my manager”; “I am treated with respect by my coworker”; “My school administrator or supervisor is concerned about the welfare of the teachers”; “I trust my manager.” From these nine items, we created a summative scale of positive experiences ($\alpha = 0.86$) that represents a broad array of positive experiences at work. The scale was mean centered at zero and standardized in order to enable consistent comparison with other work life surveys and ease interpretation of group differences.

Negative Experiences

For negative experiences, respondents were asked whether each the following negative events occurred in the last 12 months: Having been harassed, assaulted, threatened, bullied, or discrimination on the basis of race, age, religion, sex, national origin, LGBTQ status, or other category. The result of summing the responses to these variables was a count variable that is non-normally distributed, and the most frequent observation is zero for any given item. When the total of possible negative experiences is summed, many more individuals have encountered some form of negative event at the workplace. We find that 50.4% of the sample had no negative experiences, while 49.6% had at least one. To maintain a similar structure as in Study 1, a dichotomous variable indicates whether a person has experienced any of the eleven possible negative experiences.

Quit Intentions

Similar to Study 1, we used a single ordinal item that asks individuals how likely they are to seek employment outside the field of education in the next year. This measure is subtly different from the measure in Study 1 as it asks about employment outside of the field, not just the organization, and as such is a possible limitation. There are three possible responses: Not likely at all, somewhat likely, and very likely. As in Study 1, ordinal logistic regression is used in models where quit intentions are the dependent variable. While 20% of non-White respondents were very likely to seek outside employment, only 13% of White respondents were. Table 4 presents weighted means, standard errors, and correlations among the key variables in the analysis for the 21,156 survey respondents for which full data was available.

Insert Table 4 about here

Results

Figure 3 shows bootstrapped coefficient estimates and standard errors for each parameter estimated in the dual mediation model, and Table 5 reports results. Regressing past self-reports of positive experiences on race while controlling for gender reveals that non-White racial identity is significantly associated with decreased self-reported positive experiences at work $a_1 = -0.04$ (0.01); $p = 0.010$; 95% CI: [-0.06, -0.01]. Regressing negative experiences on race (controlling for gender) showed that race is not significantly associated with negative experiences, $a_2 = 0.02$ (0.01); $p = .167$; 95% CI: [-0.04,0.01]. Finally, regressing quit intentions on past positive experiences $b_1 = -0.37$ (0.01); $p < 0.001$; 95% CI: [-0.39,-0.34], negative experiences $b_2 = 0.06$ (0.01); $p < 0.001$; 95% CI: [-0.09,-0.04], and race showed that both positive and negative experiences are significant predictors of quit intentions. The effect of race on quit intentions is significant $c' = 0.09$ (0.01); $p < 0.001$; 95% CI: [0.06,0.12].

Insert Figure 3 about here

Insert Table 5 about here

Mediation analysis showed that positive experiences significantly mediated the relationship between race and quit intentions (see Figure 3) $a_1b_1 = 0.01$ (0.01); $p = 0.008$; 95% CI: [0.00,0.02], and negative experiences did not $a_2b_2 = 0.00$ (0.00); $p = 0.196$; 95% CI: [-

0.00,0.00]. Proportion-mediated effect size estimates for the individual mediation pathways indicated that the disparity in positive experiences mediated 12.9% of the racial gap in quit intentions.

Robustness Checks

Similar to Study 1, we ran the model with additional controls. Model 1 controls for gender, Model 2 adds controls for teacher years of experience in education and years in current position as well as for whether the respondent is credentialed, Model 3 adds fixed effects for the grade level taught in (from pre-school to high school) and controls for whether the school is a public, charter, private, or parochial school, and Model 4 controls for whether the school is urban, rural, or suburban, and adds state fixed effects. In Model 4 that controls for state, as well as urban, rural, and suburban schools, non-White teachers do not report significantly fewer positive experiences than White teachers. Indeed, 72% of non-White teachers work in an urban setting, compared to 42% of White teachers, $F(1.80, 38043.98) = 165.52, p = 0.000$. Thus, the racial disparity in teaching in terms of positive experiences may be due to selection or sorting of minority teachers into urban schools that have fewer resources or greater challenges. In the first three models, positive experiences mediate 13% - 15% of the racial gap in quit intentions, and as the negative experiences are in no model significant, the gap in positive experiences carry the dominant effect of quality of work life on quit intentions.

As an additional robustness check, we ran models that change the form of the negative experiences variable from a dichotomous variable to a count variable, and utilized negative binomial regression instead of logistic regression to estimate the effect of race on negative experiences. These results, reported in Appendix Table 1, find that the effect of race on negative

experiences is significant, and that for Models 1-3, positive experiences mediate between 12.9% - 14.6% of the racial gap in quit intentions, and negative experiences mediate between 2.4% - 3.1%. Thus, in the teacher data, more than 80% of the racial gap in quit intentions that can be explained by quality of work life experiences is explained by the positive experience gap.

Limitations

Due to the cross-sectional nature of the data, future work will need to provide more evidence for any causal claims to be made. Moreover, although concern with common method bias and within-person reliability makes a single point in time survey imperfect (Dalal, Bhawe, & Fiset, 2014; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003), QWL surveys are often the only, and the best, available data regarding how workers are being treated, and whether there are racial or other disparities in equitable treatment, especially with regard to a specific workplace. Due to ethical and practical constraints to varying working conditions, and the small sample size and close observation necessary to carry out a longitudinal study, the present approach represents a balanced approach that can be subject to wide scale replication to address an important question. Taken together, the results are consistent and robust in their message: Deprivation of positive experiences in the workplace disproportionately disadvantage employees of racial minority groups compared to Whites.

General Discussion

We find that non-White group members not only encounter more negative experiences than Whites do, but the former also miss out on more positive experiences than the latter. Missing out on positive experiences mediates approximately 10-15% of the difference in quit intentions between White and non-White groups. Moreover, positive experiences explain over

70% of the racial disparity in quit intentions that can be explained by quality of work life experiences. Studying disparities through the lens of the presence versus absence of positive and negative workplace conditions provides a useful simplification for both academics and practitioners. Studying these two dimensions separately, and in the context of group disparity, enables an examination of their unique, combined, and interactive effects on psychological and organizational outcomes.

The simplification of workplace disparities that we study here may hold potential in future empirical work. Academic research on workplace discrimination has considered many novel forms discrimination (Cortina, 2008; Jones et al. 2017). One direction for future research is to establish better measures of the frequency, severity, and quality of workplace events as captured in survey research on the quality of work life. If psychological outcomes (e.g., motivation at work) and organizational outcomes (e.g., retention rates) are shaped by an interplay of positive and negative experiences, future work can identify which interventions are most effective in reducing the gap in positive experiences, and combating detrimental effects of negative experiences. The current contribution constitutes an important step in that direction.

Our empirical analysis shows that reducing disadvantaged group members' exposure to negative experiences can reduce gaps, but are insufficient to resolve disparities in the workplace. Given the widespread use of employee QWL surveys, it should be very practical for HR at any workplace to start identifying gaps in positive experiences. These results suggest that effective HR programs could then focus on increasing positive experiences at work for minority employees. Efforts to promote exposure to positive experiences could significantly reduce quit intentions and withdrawal. As the interest around positive organizational scholarship shows, both

managers and scholars can benefit from efforts to move from a framework focused on curing illness to one focused on promoting health.

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Table 1*The Two Forms of Group Advantage and Disadvantage and Examples*

	Present	Absent
Negative Experiences	<p><i>Discrimination</i>(disadvantage): Subordinated groups are exposed to more negative experiences</p> <p>Ex: Sexual harassment, discrimination, exclusion, and bullying</p>	<p><i>Protection</i> (advantage): Dominant groups are shielded from negative experiences</p> <p>Ex: Receiving benefit of the doubt, transgressions are forgiven, room for error</p>
Positive Experiences	<p><i>Privilege</i> (advantage): Dominant groups are exposed to more positive experiences</p> <p>Ex: nepotism, gender wage gap, preferential hiring, preferential promotion</p>	<p><i>Deprivation</i> (disadvantage): Subordinated groups miss out on positive experiences</p> <p>Ex: exclusion from networks, no mentoring, thwarted sense of belonging, absence of role models</p>

Table 2
GSS Data Summary Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Error	Negative	Positive	Female	Non-White	Union	Supervisor	Government	Age	Degree	Self-Employed	Quit Intentions
Negative	6823	0.21	0.01	1										
Positive	6823	0.01	0.01	-0.25***	1									
Female	6823	0.51	0.01	0.08***	-0.00	1								
Non-White	6823	0.24	0.01	0.05***	-0.07***	0.05***	1							
Union	6823	0.07	0.00	0.06***	-0.07***	-0.04**	0.01	1						
Supervisor	6823	0.34	0.01	0.02	0.15***	-0.09***	-0.03*	-0.04***	1					
Government	6823	0.17	0.01	0.07***	-0.00	0.09***	0.02	0.22***	0.00	1				
Age	6823	42.04	0.19	-0.09***	0.09***	-0.00	-0.12***	0.03**	0.03*	0.06***	1			
Degree	6823	1.74	0.02	-0.00	0.13***	0.02*	-0.10***	0.03**	0.13***	0.18***	0.10***	1		
Self-Employed	6823	0.13	0.01	-0.07***	0.16***	-0.09***	-0.07***	-0.09***	0.03**	-0.16***	0.19***	0.02	1	
Quit Intentions	6823	1.58	0.01	0.16***	-0.28***	0.01	0.18***	-0.05***	-0.07***	-0.08***	-0.27***	-0.09***	-0.09***	1

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 3

*Effects of Positive Experience Deprivation and Harassment on Quit Intentions GSS Data
(Unstandardized Coefficients)*

Variable	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
<i>DV Try New Job</i>								
Negative Experiences (<i>b</i> ₂)	0.42***	0.07	0.42***	0.07	0.36***	0.07	0.41***	0.07
Positive Experiences (<i>a</i> ₂)	-0.96***	0.06	-0.97***	0.06	-0.94***	0.06	-0.96***	0.07
Non White (<i>c</i> ')	0.78***	0.07	0.78***	0.07	0.66***	0.07	0.69***	0.07
<i>DV Positive Experiences</i>								
Non White (<i>a</i> ₁)	-0.09***	0.02	-0.09***	0.02	-0.06***	0.02	-0.05**	0.02
<i>DV Negative Experiences</i>								
Non White (<i>b</i> ₁)	0.27***	0.08	0.29***	0.08	0.22**	0.08	0.22**	0.08
<i>Mediation Analysis (Standardized Coefficients)</i>								
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)				
N	6823	6823	6823	6823				
Total Effect of Positive	0.20	0.20	0.17	0.17				
Total Effect of Negative	0.19	0.19	0.16	0.17				
Indirect Effect of Positive (<i>a</i> ₁ <i>b</i> ₁)	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01				
Indirect Effect of Negative (<i>a</i> ₂ <i>b</i> ₂)	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00				
Proportion Mediated by Positive Experiences	9.59%	9.55%	7.57%	6.25%				
Proportion Mediated by Negative Experiences	3.36%	3.58%	2.81%	3.01%				
Percent of QWL Disparities Mediated by Positive Experiences	74%	73%	73%	67%				

Note. Columns present results from different models, numbered 1-4. Model 1 controls for gender, Model 2 adds year fixed effects, Model 3 adds controls for the respondent age and highest level of education fixed effects, Model 4 adds controls for union membership, supervisory status, working for the government, self-employment status, team membership, as well as fixed effects for occupation and number of workers at local work site.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 4*Teacher Data Summary Statistics*

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Error	Negative	Positive	Female	Non-White	Quit Intentions
Negative	21156	1.05	0.02	1				
Positive	21156	0.04	0.01	-0.40***	1			
Female	21156	0.76	0.01	0.02**	-0.02**	1		
Non-White	21156	0.88	0.00	0.04***	0.05***	0.00	1	
Quit Intentions	21156	0.41	0.01	0.20***	-0.31***	-0.01	0.09***	1

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 5

*Effects of Positive Experience Deprivation and Harassment on Quit Intentions Teachers Data
(Unstandardized Coefficients)*

Variable	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
	<i>DV Try New Job</i>							
Negative Experiences (<i>b</i> ₂)	0.22***	0.05	0.22***	0.05	0.22***	0.05	0.20***	0.05
Positive Experiences (<i>a</i> ₂)	-0.97***	0.04	-1.00***	0.04	-1.00***	0.04	-1.01***	0.04
Non White (<i>c</i> ')	0.39***	0.06	0.37***	0.06	0.38***	0.06	0.35***	0.07
	<i>DV Positive Experiences</i>							
Non White (<i>a</i> ₁)	-0.06**	0.02	-0.06**	0.02	-0.06**	0.02	-0.020	0.02
	<i>DV Negative Experiences</i>							
Non White (<i>b</i> ₁)	0.09	0.06	0.09	0.06	0.17	0.06	-0.012	0.06
	<i>Mediation Analysis (Standardized Coefficients)</i>							
	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)	
N	21156		21156		21156		21156	
Total Effect of Positive	0.10		0.10		0.10		0.08	
Total Effect of Negative	0.09		0.08		0.09		0.08	
Indirect Effect of Positive (<i>a</i> ₁ <i>b</i> ₁)	0.013		0.01		0.02		0.00	
Indirect Effect of Negative (<i>a</i> ₂ <i>b</i> ₂)	0.00		0.00		0.00		-0.00	
Proportion Mediated by Positive Experiences	13.2%		14.7%		14.9%		5.8%	
Proportion Mediated by Negative Experiences	1.3%		1.5%		1.8%		0.0 %	
Percent of QWL Disparities Mediated by Positive Experiences	91%		91%		89%		91%	

Note. Columns present results from different models, numbered 1-4. Model 1 controls for gender, Model 2 adds controls for teacher years of experience in education and years in current position as well as for whether the respondent is credentialed, Model 3 adds fixed effects for the grade level taught in (from pre-school to high school) and controls for whether the school is a public, charter, private, or parochial school, and Model 4 adds controls for whether the school is urban, rural, or suburban, and adds state fixed effects.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Appendix Table 1

Negative Binomial Regression of Effects of Positive Experience Deprivation and Harassment on Quit Intentions Teachers Data (Unstandardized Coefficients)

Variable	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
<i>DV Try New Job</i>								
Negative Experiences (<i>b</i> ₂)	0.11***	0.02	0.12***	0.02	0.12***	0.02	0.12***	0.02
Positive Experiences (<i>a</i> ₂)	-0.94***	0.04	-0.96***	0.04	-0.97***	0.04	-0.97***	0.04
Non White (<i>c</i> ')	0.38***	0.06	0.37***	0.06	0.38***	0.06	0.36***	0.07
<i>DV Positive Experiences</i>								
Non White (<i>a</i> ₁)	-0.06**	0.02	-0.06**	0.02	-0.06**	0.02	-0.02	0.02
<i>DV Negative Experiences</i>								
Non White (<i>b</i> ₁)	0.10**	0.04	0.11**	0.04	0.13***	0.04	0.03	0.04
<i>Mediation Analysis (Standardized Coefficients)</i>								
	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)	
N	21156		21156		21156		21156	
Total Effect of Positive	0.10		0.10		0.10		0.08	
Total Effect of Negative	0.09		0.09		0.09		0.08	
Indirect Effect of Positive (<i>a</i> ₁ <i>b</i> ₁)	0.01		0.01		0.01		0.00	
Indirect Effect of Negative (<i>a</i> ₂ <i>b</i> ₂)	0.00		0.00		0.00		-0.00	
Proportion Mediated by Positive Experiences	12.9%		14.4%		14.6%		5.6%	
Proportion Mediated by Negative Experiences	2.4%		2.8%		3.1%		0.0%	
Percent of QWL Disparities Mediated by Positive Experiences	91%		91%		89%		91%	

Note. Columns present results from different models, numbered 1-4. Model 1 controls for gender, Model 2 adds controls for teacher years of experience in education and years in current position as well as for whether the respondent is credentialed, Model 3 adds fixed effects for the grade level taught in (from pre-school to high school) and controls for whether the school is a public, charter, private, or parochial school, and Model 4 adds controls for whether the school is urban, rural, or suburban, and adds state fixed effects.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.