

**Examining an Organisational Justice Model of Perceived Discrimination in the New  
Zealand Workforce**

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### **Abstract**

The current study proposes a model to examine the impact of organisational justice on perceived discrimination and work attitudes/behaviour. The model also examines the influence of ethnicity and support for diversity on these relationships. Two studies were conducted using separate samples which collected data from 1,554 employees in 2010 and 2012. Study 1 used an overall measure of perceived racial discrimination whilst study 2 used a 4-part general measure of discrimination. Regression analysis from both studies showed that interpersonal justice is active in predicting perceptions of discrimination, and these perceptions are associated with negative outcomes for work attitudes and behaviour. Support for diversity largely mitigated the negative effects of discrimination on work behaviour. A lack of predicted results for work attitudes may indicate that processes resulting from discrimination differ according to work attitudes and behaviour. Conclusions and avenues for future research are discussed.

## **Examining an organisational justice model of perceived discrimination in the New Zealand workforce**

Due to variations in fertility rates across ethnic groups and large scale migration, New Zealand is becoming increasingly ethnically diverse (Statistics NZ, 2010). The changing composition of the population is reflected in the labour force, which will continue to see increasing participation from Polynesian, Māori, and Asian ethnic groups (Department of Labour, 2010).

Among the challenges associated with a more diverse workforce will be preventing or mitigating ethnic discrimination in the workplace. Workplace discrimination is both ethically and legally wrong (Human Rights Commission, 2011a), and is detrimental to both organisational and employee wellbeing (Goldman et al., 2006).

A research-based understanding of workplace discrimination is needed to inform procedures and strategies that ensure organisations reap the benefits of a diverse workforce and avoid workplace discrimination. Local research is essential because of the distinct business environment, ethnic composition, and cultural norms of New Zealand (Jones, Pringle & Shepherd, 2000). Despite this need, there is a lack of research that examines links between workplace diversity and business outcomes in a New Zealand context (Equal Employment Opportunities [EEO] Trust, 2008).

Previous research has found that organisational justice experiences have a significant influence on perceptions of discrimination (Goldman, 2001; 2003). Harris, Lievens, and Van Hove (2004) conceptualised this process in a model which argues that organisational justice experiences influence perceptions of discrimination, which in turn negatively affect job attitudes and behaviour.

However, the model lacks empirical support as only a handful of studies have examined the influence of organisational justice on perceived discrimination. Establishing

empirical support is important as the model is in contrast to some research in the field, which conceptualises organisational justice as an outcome of perceived discrimination and work behaviours as an outcome of work attitudes (Triana & Garcia, 2009). As the model was developed primarily in the United States based on local research, Harris, et al. (2004) also recommended that their model be tested abroad to determine its cross-cultural generalisability.

Two recent lines of research relating to perceived discrimination have also provided interesting implications for the organisational justice model of discrimination. Firstly, recent studies (Triana & Garcia, 2009; Triana, Garcia, & Colella, 2010) have provided some evidence that the effect of perceived discrimination on work attitudes is attenuated by organisational support for diversity, although this effect varies across different ethnic groups. This is a line of research that has been largely ignored in the diversity literature (Smith, Brief & Colella, 2010). Secondly, research by Schmitt and Branscombe (2002a; 2002b) has explored how the effects of perceived discrimination depend on the position of one's group in the social structure. The effect of perceived discrimination on psychological wellbeing is more severe when one is a member of a disadvantaged social group.

The current study examines an organisational justice model of discrimination in the context of the New Zealand workforce. Building on recent developments in the field, the model proposed in the current study incorporates organisational support for diversity and social group (ethnic minority vs. majority) as variables that influence the processes leading to and resulting from perceived discrimination.

### **Diversity Within Organisations**

Organisational diversity refers to a workforce profile which comprising a mixture of people who show differences based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, and physical or cognitive capacity (Daft, 2003; Seymen, 2006). Diversity has received significant

attention in business, management, and organisational psychology literature over the past several decades (Janssens & Steyaert, 2003).

The benefits of greater organisational diversity can include improved cooperation, retention, creativity, innovation, and problem solving amongst staff. The negative outcomes can include greater interpersonal conflict, lower organisational commitment, lower communication and lower cohesiveness (for review articles *see* EEO Trust, 2008; Milliken & Martins, 1996; O’Leary & Weathington, 2006; Seymen, 2006; Williams & O’Reilly, 1998). Milliken and Martins (1996) aptly labelled diversity a “double edged sword” (p.403) in reference to its mixed outcomes.

The outcomes associated with organisational diversity are largely dependent on organisational attitudes towards diversity and related policies. To avoid the negative outcomes and harness the positive outcomes of diversity, organisations must successfully manage the processes and outcomes that are associated with a diverse workforce. This involves implementing policies and initiatives which support diversity, and promote justice, equity, and basic human rights (O’Leary & Weathington, 2006; Triana & Garcia, 2009; Triana, Garcia & Colella, 2010).

### **Workplace Discrimination**

A key variable involved in the processes that lead to the negative outcomes of organisational diversity is discrimination (Goldman et al., 2006). Discrimination is defined as differential treatment based on factors such as ethnicity, age, religion, physical or mental disability, and sexual orientation (Human Rights Commission, 2011a).

A Statistics New Zealand (2011) survey found that one in ten people reported being discriminated against at least once in a 12 month period in New Zealand and of these claims 39% referred to the workplace. The pervasiveness of workplace discrimination is further illustrated by a recent study of female New Zealand public sector employees which found

that almost one-third of all participants reported having experienced discrimination and two in five had experienced workplace bullying (Proctor-Thompson, Donnelly, & Plimmer, 2011). The Human Rights Commission (2011a, 2011b) puts racial/ethnic discrimination at around one-third of total discrimination claims made. Statistics New Zealand (2011) further found that within workplace discrimination specifically, the most commonly cited reason for discrimination was race/ethnicity. Māori and Asian ethnicities were two to three times more likely to perceive racial discrimination than Europeans.

Workplace discrimination has negative consequences at an individual, group, and organisational level (for review articles see Goldman, Gutek, Stein, & Lewis, 2006; Pascoe & Richman, 2009). At an individual level perceiving discrimination is associated with harm to one's physical and psychological health (Pascoe & Richman, 2009). It also negatively effects employee outcome variables such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction, and organisational citizenship behaviour (Ensher, Grant-Vallone, & Donaldson, 2001), along with employee engagement (Jones, Ni, & Wilson, 2009).

At a group level discrimination is associated with bias in the candidate interview and selection process, role ambiguity, role conflict, turnover, and work tension. At an organisational level discrimination can result in legal consequences, economic costs related to low employee performance, and damage to an organisation's reputation or brand (Goldman et al., 2006).

Perceived discrimination at all three levels has also been shown to interact to adversely affect employee outcomes at the individual level. These included employee organisational commitment, job satisfaction, and organisational citizenship behaviour (Ensher et al., 2001). The consequences of perceived discrimination illustrate the need for organisations to avoid or mitigate its occurrence. An important question therefore becomes “what causes an individual to perceive that they have been discriminated against?”

**Processes leading to perceived discrimination: Organisational justice.**

Merely having differences in employee demographics within organisations can lead to perceptions of discrimination, especially if these differences are based on ethnicity or gender (Avery, McKay, & Wilson, 2008). A negative workplace interaction or decision involving members of different demographics can lead to one party perceiving that the outcome of the interaction or decision is discriminatory. However, not every negative workplace interaction or decision involving members of different demographics results in perceptions of discrimination. This raises the question as to what factors are involved in the process from interaction or decision to perceptions of discrimination. Little research has been conducted to address this question, with discrimination research primarily focusing on actual discrimination as evidenced by claims or legal action, or focusing on the consequences of discrimination.

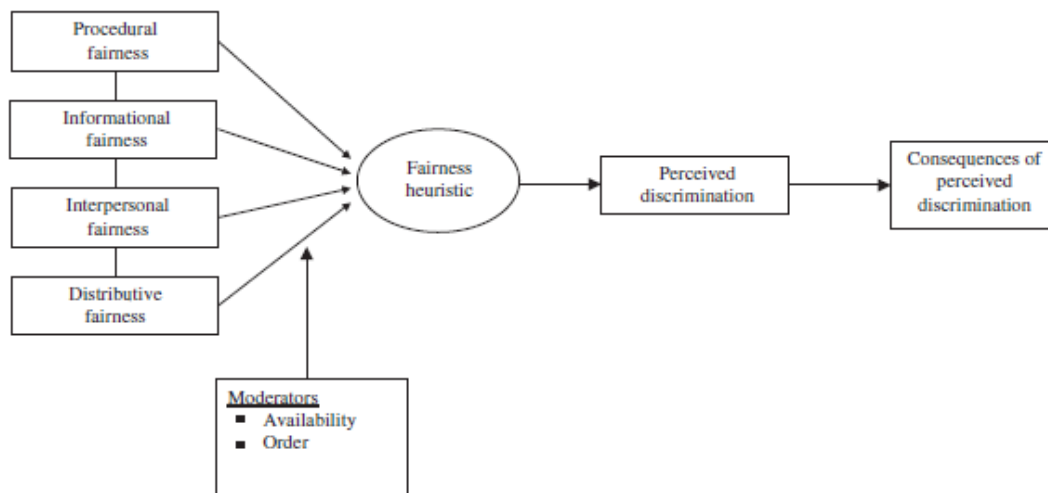
One area that has received some attention in the literature relates to organisational justice. Organisational justice comprises procedural (perceived fairness of procedures used to make workplace decisions), distributive (perceived fairness of outcomes of workplace decisions), interpersonal (perceived fairness in interpersonal interactions relating to workplace decisions), and informational justice (perceived fairness in the communication of decision procedures; Colquitt, 2001).

Discrimination at its core is unfair treatment, so it is theoretically logical that perceived workplace discrimination is associated with the perceived fairness of organisational practices and procedures. One could argue that organisational justice and perceived discrimination are therefore synonymous. However, a workplace decision can be perceived as unfair for a number of reasons. It is only in certain instances that people conclude that discrimination was the reason for the unfair outcome. Therefore, discrimination and justice are different but related variables.

Preliminary research on organisational justice supported this position by finding causal relationships between low procedural justice and employee decisions to sue their employer (Bies & Tyler, 1993) or file a wrongful termination claim (Lind, Greenberg, Scott, & Welchans, 2000). Subsequent research by Goldman (2001, 2003) found that low interactional, procedural, and distributive justice interact to lead directly to discrimination-claiming behaviour.

Harris et al. (2004) conceptualised this process with a model that attempts to explain how justice perceptions lead to perceptions of discrimination (see Figure 1). Following a workplace decision (such as a pay rise, job evaluation, or promotion decision) people assess the outcome in terms of its fairness. This is a means of reducing uncertainty about the outcome of the decision. People assess the outcome by examining the fairness of the distributions, procedures, interpersonal interactions, and information communication that led to the decision (i.e., organisational justice). If any aspects relating to the decision are assessed as unfair then people will search for reasons as to why they were treated unfairly, with discrimination being one possible reason. The information employees' use to base their fairness assessment is that which is available to them or that which they are first presented with. Therefore, it is important to note that not all fairness-related assessments and subsequent perceptions of discrimination are accurate.

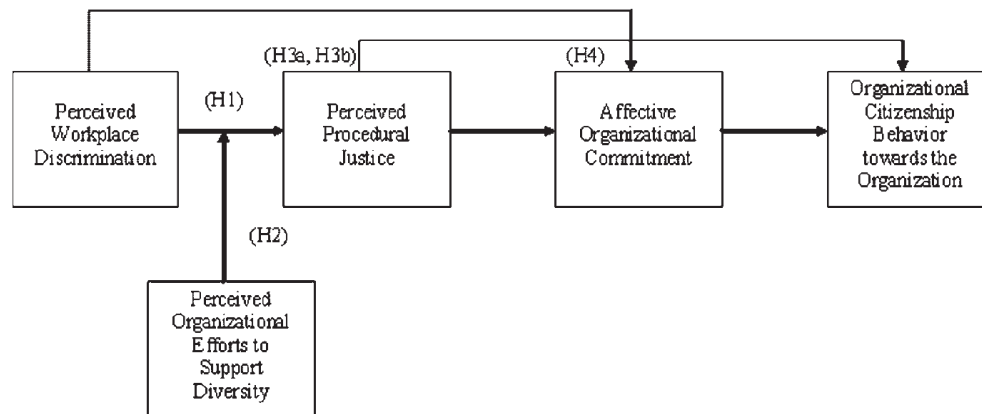
An example could be that an employee of an ethnic minority is overlooked for an internal promotion by their supervisor – who is of a different ethnicity. The employee is unsure as to why they were not selected for the promotion, and so assesses the outcome in terms of the fairness of the procedures and interactions leading up the decision, and the result of the decision itself. The employee may decide that the information regarding the vacant role was not communicated adequately, thus affecting their application. They may then conclude that the outcome is unfair, and that their unfair treatment was because of their ethnicity.



*Figure 1.* Justice model of perceived discrimination. Taken from Harris, Lievens, and Van Hove (2004).

Some research has conceptualised organisational justice as an outcome of perceived discrimination as opposed to a predictor. Triana and Garcia (2009) found that perceived discrimination was negatively related to procedural justice, and proposed a model illustrating the process that results from perceived discrimination (see Figure 2). However, this goes against the aforementioned previous research which suggests a causal effect of perceived fairness on discrimination-claiming behaviour (Bies & Tyler, 1993; Lind et al., 2000). Triana and Garcia's model also only relates to procedural justice, ignoring the influence of interpersonal, information, and distributive justice. This may be especially significant in the case of interpersonal justice, which at a theoretical level relates strongly to perceived discrimination as both concepts revolve around fair treatment in interpersonal interactions. Excluding other aspects of justice is also problematic given previous research linking distributive and interpersonal justice to discrimination (Goldman, 2001, 2003). As such Harris et al.'s (2004) model is more comprehensive and backed up by empirical research.





*Figure 2.* Process resulting from perceived discrimination as proposed by Triana and Garcia (2009).

### **The effect of organisational support for diversity.**

The detrimental consequences of workplace discrimination highlight the need for organisations to adopt strategies to reduce its occurrence or mitigate its effects. Researchers suggest promoting fair and just workplaces, and positively integrating employees of different backgrounds (Goldman et al., 2006; O’Leary & Weathington, 2006; Triana & Garcia, 2009). Such strategies can be seen as a general effort to support diversity.

Despite the extensive research on diversity in organisations, there is a dearth of research examining whether organisational efforts to support diversity can avoid or mitigate the negative effects of workplace discrimination (Smith, Brief, & Colella, 2010). Triana and Garcia (2009) found in a predominantly Hispanic student sample that the negative effect of perceived ethnic discrimination on procedural justice is attenuated when people perceive that their organisation supports diversity. Triana et al. (2010) similarly found that the negative effect of perceived discrimination on affective commitment is attenuated by support for diversity. This finding applied in both predominantly White and predominantly Hispanic samples. In a predominantly Black sample, however, the negative effect of perceived

discrimination on affective commitment was actually exacerbated by support for diversity. Triana et al. argued that in some situations being discriminated against in an organisation that supports diversity can highlight the hypocrisy of the organisation and add “insult to injury” (p. 838). This process may be unique to African Americans in the American context because of their higher levels of experiencing historic discrimination and their stronger racial identity.

These studies highlight that support for diversity can moderate the relationship between perceived discrimination and outcome variables, although the exact nature of the moderation depends on the ethnicity of the victims of discrimination. The researchers provide tentative support for the idea that support for diversity can be a useful tool in mitigating the negative effects of racial discrimination. However, research in the area is limited to few outcome variables and is applicable only in the American context. Research has also not explored whether support for diversity affects the process that leads to perceived discrimination as opposed to the process that results from perceived discrimination. In the case of the justice model of discrimination, no research has explored whether support for diversity can have an impact on the effect of organisational justice on perceived discrimination.

Following an unfair workplace outcome employees engage in an assessment of fairness, which can result in perceived discrimination (Harris et al., 2004). In an organisation which supports diversity and therefore does not tolerate discrimination, the stance of the organisation may lead employees to be less likely to associate negative justice experiences with discrimination. Therefore, support for diversity could act as a preventative measure for perceived discrimination rather than just as a tool to mitigate its negative effects. However, it is also possible that negative justice events may undermine organisational diversity policies and have no effect on the process leading to perceived discrimination. Research is needed to establish the effect of support for diversity on this process.

**The effect of group identification.**

Perceived discrimination has almost universally been associated with negative outcomes for victims. However, research on discrimination predominantly focuses on discrimination towards minority groups such as ethnic minorities and women (Pascoe & Richman, 2009) due to their experience of comparatively higher rates of discrimination. Less research has focused on how the effect of discrimination may differ according to whether one is a member of a disadvantaged/minority group or a member of a dominant/majority group.

Branscombe, Schmitt, and Harvey (1999) argue for a rejection-identification perspective to explain how the consequences of discrimination differ according to one's group status. Privileged groups are able to decide who is and who is not valued in society, and so a rejection by a privileged group implies a rejection and devaluation of one's social group in society as a whole. The discrimination against minority groups by dominant groups more often reflects pervasive discrimination, which is associated with more severe consequences for wellbeing (Branscombe et al., 1999).

Schmitt, et al (2002) provided empirical support for this perspective by illustrating that the consequences of perceived discrimination are more severe for women (disadvantaged group) compared to men (advantaged group). This result aligns with the finding by Branscombe et al. (1999) that among African Americans discrimination that is seen as pervasive is more harmful than discrimination that is not.

Along with affecting the consequences of discrimination, social identification may alter the likelihood that one will perceive that one has been discriminated against. Racial diversity in work teams and employee–manager relationships can affect the quality of communication between employees, the level of support shown towards each other, and employee turnover (Tsui & Gutek, 1999). These effects can be the result of discrimination

(Goldman et al., 2006) and explain why perceived discrimination is higher among employees with a manager who is of a different ethnicity (Avery & McKay, 2008).

There is also evidence that the effects of organisation initiatives to support diversity vary between different ethnicities. Triana et al. (2010) found the predicted outcome that support for diversity attenuates the negative impact of discrimination on affective commitment in Whites and Hispanics. However, amongst Blacks support for diversity is associated with an exacerbation of the relationship between support for diversity and affective commitment.

Therefore, the impact of social identity, specifically ethnic identity, therefore extends from the likelihood of perceiving discrimination, to the effect of discrimination on wellbeing, and the ability for the negative effects of discrimination to be mitigated by organisational support for diversity.

An interesting question for research is whether effects of ethnic identity extend onto the relationship between justice and perceived discrimination. As members of minorities experience more discrimination and are more likely to associate experiences of discrimination as being reflective of pervasive societal attitudes, if they experience unjust organisational outcomes they may be more likely to perceive them as related to their ethnicity and therefore discriminatory. This may be particularly relevant to interpersonal justice as it relates to fairness in interactions with managers, which has been shown previously to be affected by ethnicity (Avery & McKay, 2008).

## The Current Study

The current study seeks to build on previous research by examining an organisational justice model of perceived discrimination which takes into account the additional variables of ethnic status and support for diversity.

The study builds on three central perspectives from previous research: the justice model of perceived discrimination (Harris et al., 2004), the argument that support for diversity mitigates the negative effect of discrimination (Triana & Garcia, 2009; Triana et al., 2010), and the rejection-identification model of perceived discrimination (Branscombe et al., 1999). A visual representation of the study can be seen in Figure 3 below.

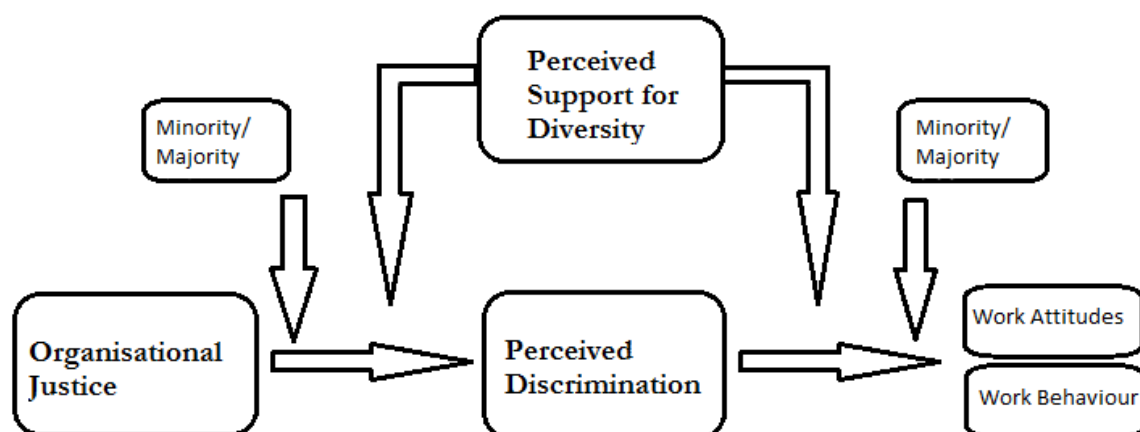


Figure 3. Theorised process of perceived discrimination

The current study is also aligned with the justice model of discrimination in its conceptualisation of the consequences of discrimination. Harris et al. (2004) argue that discrimination has an impact on people in three broad areas: psychological wellbeing, legal claiming of discrimination, and work attitudes and behaviour. The current study examines the impact of discrimination directly on work attitudes (affective commitment and engagement) and work behaviour (voice and helping), which have been shown by previous research to be

negatively linked to discrimination (Ensher et al., 2001; Jones et al., 2009; Triana et al., 2010).

While Triana and Garcia (2009) conceptualise work behaviour as an outcome of work attitudes, evidence from Ensher et al. (2001) suggests that perceived discrimination has a direct impact on organisational citizenship. Organisational citizenship behaviours and the related idea of extra-role behaviours refer to positive employee behaviours that go beyond the requirements of their role and benefit their organisation (Organ, 1988; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). These types of behaviours are more likely to occur in work environments that are fair and that provide intrinsic and extrinsic rewards for performing such acts (Ensher et al., 2001). As such, in the current study it is thought that they will be directly linked to perceived discrimination.

### **Variables of interest.**

*Work engagement* indicates a positive and fulfilling workplace state of mind characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption in one's work. Engagement has been linked to turnover, absenteeism, commitment and performance (Salanova et al., 2005). Affective organisational commitment indicates a strong emotional commitment to one's organisation. In addition to being linked to turnover, absenteeism, and performance, organisational commitment may lead to greater extra-role behaviours such as creativeness and innovation (Katz & Kahn, 1978, as cited in Mathieu & Zajac, 1990).

*Voice* indicates promotive behaviour that emphasises the expression of constructive challenge in the workplace and is important in encouraging improvement and development.

*Helping* indicates the level of cooperation and support amongst staff and is important in building positive work relationships and maintaining interpersonal harmony (Van Dyne & Le Pine, 1998).

### **Measuring perceived discrimination.**

The current study comprises two individual studies examining the same overall model. In study 1, discrimination is exclusively conceptualised as racial discrimination. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, race/ethnicity is the most commonly given reason for workplace discrimination (Statistics NZ, 2011), which is reflected by the fact that it is, along with gender, the most salient demographic factor in workplace interactions and resulting perceptions of discrimination (Avery et al., 2008). Secondly, the ethnic composition of New Zealand's labour force is continuing to undergo significant changes due to variations in population growth across different ethnic groups, meaning that ethnic discrimination is an issue that will continue to increase in importance.

Study 2 incorporates a measure of discrimination that does not specifically ask respondents about racial discrimination, but rather asks about the general way they are treated in the workplace. This allows for a more comprehensive indicator of discrimination. The overall model being tested is still largely based on racial/ethnic discrimination: however, as the moderating variables are both specifically based around race/ethnicity (perceived support for ethnic diversity and whether employees are from an ethnic minority or majority). The implications of this measurement are discussed at the conclusion of the paper.

### **Rationale for the current study.**

This study is important for several reasons. Firstly, there is a lack of research examining organisational diversity and business outcomes in a New Zealand context. New Zealand has a bi-cultural structure based on the indigenous Māori people and the settler majority Pakeha (Jones et al., 2000). In addition, large scale modern immigration from Asia and the Pacific Islands have seen pronounced demographic shifts in the population. This unique ethnic make-up brings with it a unique set of cultural norms and practices that may limit the applicability of overseas research.

Secondly, this study will build on theories from research which have not been heavily explored in the literature. The first is the justice model of perceived discrimination (Harris et al., 2004) which has tentative but not yet comprehensive support (Goldman et al., 2006). The second relates to the impact of support for diversity on perceived discrimination, which has been ignored throughout decades of diversity research (Smith, Brief, & Colella, 2010). The third is the impact of group category membership, which has not previously been taken into account when examining the relationship between justice and discrimination. The model proposed in the current study incorporates theory from all three lines of research to comprehensively examine perceived discrimination.

A final reason the current study is important is that it is aimed at helping organisations learn more about discrimination in order to mitigate or prevent it. Discrimination is ethically and legally wrong, meaning that such findings would make a positive contribution to society. The costs of discrimination to organisations are severe in terms of both financial aspects relating to employee productivity and also damage to reputation and branding. This study is in the interest of organisations that are searching for ways to successfully manage the continuing transition from a historically homogenous workforce to one that incorporates more ethnically diverse workers.

### **Model Part One: Organisational Justice to Perceived Discrimination**

#### **Hypothesis 1a: Justice will negatively predict discrimination.**

Past research has shown how low organisational justice can lead to perceptions of discrimination (Goldman, 2001; 2003) or similar behaviour such as legal action against an employer (Bies & Tyler, 1993; Lind et al., 2000). After a workplace decision or situation, people evaluate the fairness of the organisational procedures, interactions and outcomes related to it (Harris et al., 2004). If they decide that it was unfair, they may reach the conclusion that they have been discriminated against.



In the case of interpersonal justice, unfair interpersonal treatment comprises of many of the same aspects of discriminatory treatment such as disrespect, a lack of dignity, and a lack of warmth (Harris et al., 2004). Information justice is an extension of this as perceived unfairness in the communication of information relating to workplace decisions could be interpreted as being discriminatory. For instance, a prejudicial manager might not provide honest and timely information to an employee regarding the procedures associated with an important work outcome. Perceptions of procedural injustices could be interpreted as discriminatory, as unfair procedures share similarities, such as being biased and inconsistent, with aspects of discrimination in the way they affect people. Finally perceptions of distributive injustices could be interpreted as discriminatory as unfavourable outcomes lead people to evaluate why they did not receive the outcome they desired and thought they deserved. This may result in an employee interpreting the outcome in terms of unfair treatment and discrimination.

**Hypothesis 1b: Support for diversity will attenuate the justice–discrimination relationship.**

Employees assess the fairness of workplace decisions or outcomes before deciding whether they are discriminatory or not. It is expected that support for diversity will influence this decision process.

Support for diversity aims to create an organisational context where people are not treated unfairly on the basis of ethnicity. As such, in organisations that support diversity employees who perceive that the result of a workplace decision is unfair may be less likely to attribute this unfairness to discriminatory reasons on account of the stance of the organisation as a whole towards diversity and therefore against discrimination.

**Hypothesis 1c: Ethnicity will moderate the justice-discrimination relationship.**

Research has shown that minorities perceive they are discriminated against far more than

majorities in New Zealand and because they are not part of the dominant social group they may be more likely to attribute unfair treatment to their ethnicity.

As such, it is expected that the relationship between justice and discrimination will be more pronounced for minorities than majorities. The relationship will still, however, be evident in majorities for two reasons. Firstly, Statistics NZ (2011) found that members of the ethnic majority are still subject to ethnic discrimination. Secondly, employees incorporate their co-workers' perceptions and experiences of justice into their own perceptions of justice, and this in turn can effect outcome variables such as their affective commitment towards their organisation (Kraya & Lind, 2002; Stinglhamber & De Cremer, 2008). This means if a majority employee perceives that their minority colleague is being discriminated against, they themselves will perceive the organisation as less fair. The consequence of this may be that they also perceive some level of personal discrimination, even if it is unfair positive treatment.

### **Model Part Two: Perceived Discrimination to Employee Outcomes**

#### **Hypothesis 2a: Perceived discrimination will negatively affect work attitudes.**

As suggested by past research it is expected that perceived discrimination will lead to negative outcomes on the work attitudes of engagement and affective commitment (Ensher et al., 2001; Goldman et al., 2006; Jones et al., 2009). Perception of discrimination is harmful and creates negative work environments and so it is logical that it would have this effect.

#### **Hypothesis 2b: Support for diversity will attenuate the negative effect of discrimination on work attitudes.**

Past research has shown that perceived organisational support for diversity can attenuate the negative effect of discrimination on affective commitment (Triana et al., 2010). Support for diversity creates a positive work environment where discrimination does not have as severe an impact on work attitudes.

**Hypothesis 2c: Ethnicity will moderate the discrimination-work attitude relationship.**

As predicted by the rejection-identification model, it is expected that discrimination towards employees from an ethnic minority will be seen as reflective of wider societal attitudes towards their ethnic group. This will result in a greater harm to one's social identity and more severe consequences in terms of its effect on work attitudes. As such it is expected that the negative relationship between discrimination and work attitudes will be more pronounced for members of an ethnic minority.

**Hypothesis 3a: Perceived discrimination will negatively affect work behaviour.**

Past research has shown that discrimination has a negative effect on organisational citizenship behaviours (Ensher et al., 2001). Organisational citizenship behaviours have largely influenced the theory on extra-role behaviours which include voice and helping (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). It is expected that discrimination will have a negative influence on voice and helping as it will create an environment where employees have little motivation to engage in positive extra-role behaviours.

**Hypothesis 3b: Support for diversity will attenuate the negative effect of discrimination on work attitudes.**

Past research has shown that perceived organisational support for diversity can attenuate the negative effect of discrimination on work attitudes (Triana et al., 2010). It is expected that the beneficial protective effect of support for diversity will extend to the work behaviours of voice and helping. Support for diversity creates a positive work environment where discrimination has less of an effect on helping behaviour or the ability of employees to voice constructive challenge.

**Hypothesis 3c: Ethnicity will moderate the discrimination-work behaviour relationship.**

This hypothesis is based on the assumption that the rejection-identification model will apply to work behaviours. It is expected that the impact of discrimination on members of an ethnic minority will be more severe than for members of the ethnic majority, as evidenced by lower helping and voice compared to members of the ethnic majority.

## **Study 1**

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

As part of course requirements small groups of undergraduate students from a stage three course in Organisational Psychology distributed pen and paper surveys to various New Zealand organisations from March to May 2010. Individual groups collected and entered responses into template SPSS files, which were then collated by the researchers. Permission for data collection was obtained by students from a senior manager or Human Resources representative. The study was approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee.

Participants comprised of 834 employees (44.1% Male, 54.2% Female; age range 17-72 years, average age 39.06 years) from 32 New Zealand organisations. Managers consisted of 22.4% of participants with the remainder being non-managers; 88.8% were permanent employees as opposed to fixed term or contractual, 86.8% worked full-time as opposed to part-time, and 47.5% were university educated. Participants reported a range of annual income levels; the full distribution is shown in Figure 4.

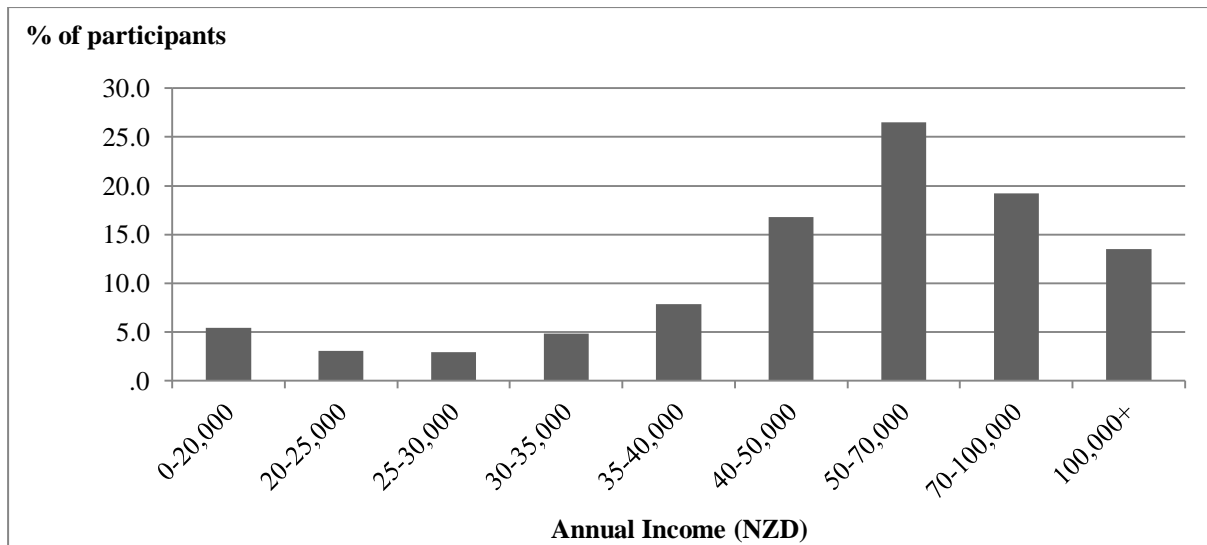


Figure 4. Percentage distribution of responses by income.

Employees from the ethnic majority (New Zealand European) comprised 74.6% of participants, while 17.4% reported being from an ethnic minority (Maori, Polynesian, Asian, other). Participants were asked “to what extent do you rate your organisation as diverse in terms of ethnicity” on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not diverse*) to 7 (*very diverse*), and the mean response was 5.06 (SD=1.49).

Of the organisations surveyed in this study, 72% were rated as large (>100 employees), 15.2% medium (30–100 employees), and 12.5% small (<30). The majority of organisations were from the public sector; the full distribution is shown in Figure 5.

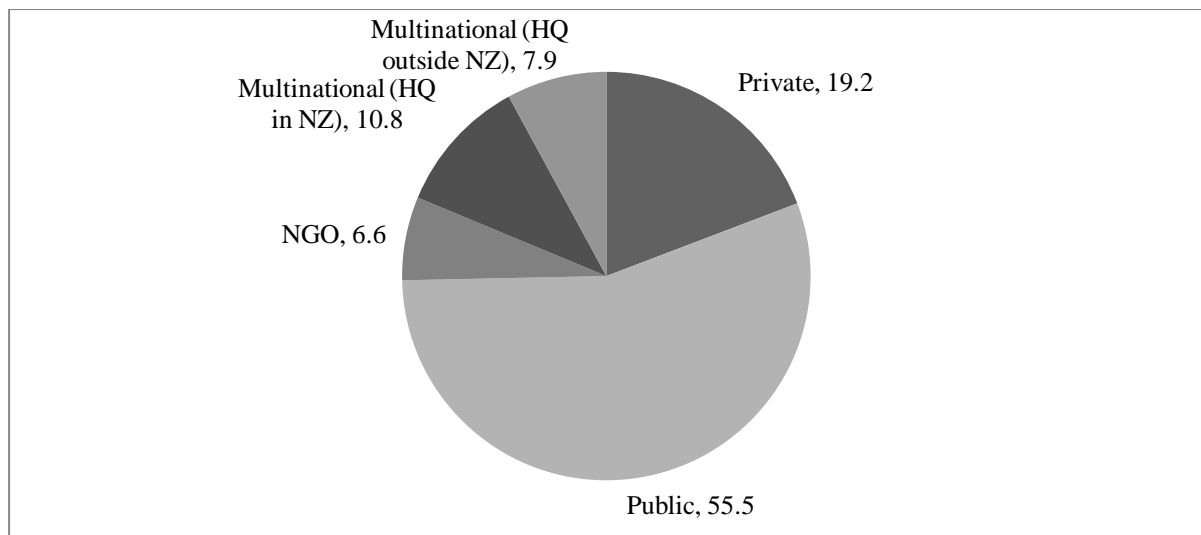


Figure 5. Percentage distribution of responses by organisation sector.

## Measures

**Organisational Justice.** The four-component measure of Organisational Justice was taken from Colquitt (2001). Participants were asked to think of a specific decision made at their workplace then rate their agreement with subsequent statements about this decision on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*to a great extent*). *Procedural justice* was made up of seven items referring to rule and procedures of the decision; a sample item is “have those procedures been free of bias?” with reliability of  $\alpha=.91$ . *Distributive justice* was made up of four items referring to the consequences of the decision made; a sample item is “is the outcome of these decisions justified, given your performance?” with reliability of  $\alpha=.91$ . *Interactional justice* was made up of nine items which referred to the person who makes decisions in the workplace. *Interpersonal justice* was measured by statements such as “has s/he treated you with dignity?” with reliability of  $\alpha=.94$ . *Information justice* was measured by statements such as “Has s/he communicated details in a timely manner?” with reliability of  $\alpha=.94$ .

**Perceived Discrimination.** The eight-item scale taken from James, Lovato, and Cropanzano (1994) asked participants to indicate their agreement to statements such as “At work I feel socially isolated because of my racial/ethnic group” on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*disagree*). Reliability was  $\alpha=.68$ .

**Perceived Organisational Support for Diversity.** A five-item scale taken from Hegarty and Dalton (1995) asked participants to rate their agreement to statements such as “my organisation values diversity” on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*agree*). Reliability was  $\alpha=.91$ .

**Employee Engagement.** A 12-item scale taken from Salanova et al. (2005) asked participants to indicate their agreement to statements such as “At work, I feel full of energy” on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*). Reliability was  $\alpha=.94$ .

**Affective Commitment (ACS).** Five items relating to affective commitment were taken from Meyer and Allen’s (1991) Organisational Commitment scale. Participants were asked to indicate their agreement to statements such as “I feel emotionally attached to this organisation” on a 7-point Likert scale. Reliability was  $\alpha=.87$ .

**Self-reported work behaviours.** Participants were asked to rate their agreement on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*extremely often*) to 23 items which measured four types of work behaviours. *Helping* was made up of seven-items such as “how often have you got involved to benefit this work group?” with reliability of  $\alpha=.80$ . *Voice* was made up of five items such as “how often have you spoken up in your group with ideas for projects or changes in procedures?” with reliability of  $\alpha=.81$  (both measures taken from Van Dyne & LePine, 1998).

## Results

Multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. Regression results are summarised in tables, and results relating to hypotheses are reported in-text. In each

regression model the control variables were coded as follows: Managerial status was coded as 0 = other, 1 = manager; ethnic status was coded as 0 = majority, 1 = minority; sex was coded as 1 = male, 2 = female; education was coded as 1 = university, 2 = other; job contract was coded as 1 = full-time, 2 = part-time; job status was coded as 1 = permanent, 2 = fixed term/contractual.

Any significant interactions were graphed using Jose's (2008) ModGraph programme. Simple slope analysis (Aiken & West, 1991) was also conducted using this programme for significant interactions to see whether the slope of each line of the moderator (support for diversity low, medium, high; minority or majority) differed from 0.

### **Model Part One: Organisational Justice to Perceived Discrimination**

A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted. Following Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2003), the variables in the interaction term were centred before creating the interaction effects to test for moderation. The regression consisted of three steps, with the dependent variable being perceived racial discrimination. The results of the regression are summarised in Table 1.

In step 1, the following control variables were entered: managerial status, income, gender, age, job status, job contract, and education. Step 2 added support for diversity, ethnic status, and the justice dimensions. Step 3 added the interaction terms: Support for Diversity x each Justice dimension and Ethnic Status x each Justice dimension.

Of the control variables managerial status ( $B = -.21$ ,  $SE = .09$ ,  $p = .01$ ), job contract ( $B = -.39$ ,  $SE = .14$ ,  $p = .00$ ), and income ( $B = -.07$ ,  $SE = .02$ ,  $p = .00$ ) affected perceived discrimination in step 1. Managers, part-time workers, and those earning a higher income were less likely to experience discrimination.

#### **Hypothesis 1a: Justice will negatively predict discrimination.**



Of the four justice dimensions, procedural ( $B=-.11$ ,  $SE=.05$ ,  $p=.02$ ) and interpersonal ( $B=-.31$ ,  $SE=.05$ ,  $p=.00$ ) were significantly and negatively related to discrimination. This provides partial support for the hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 1b: Support for diversity will attenuate the justice–discrimination relationship.**

There were no significant interactions between any of the justice dimensions and support for diversity. This does not support the hypothesis as it appears organisational support for diversity does not attenuate the impact of justice on perceived discrimination.

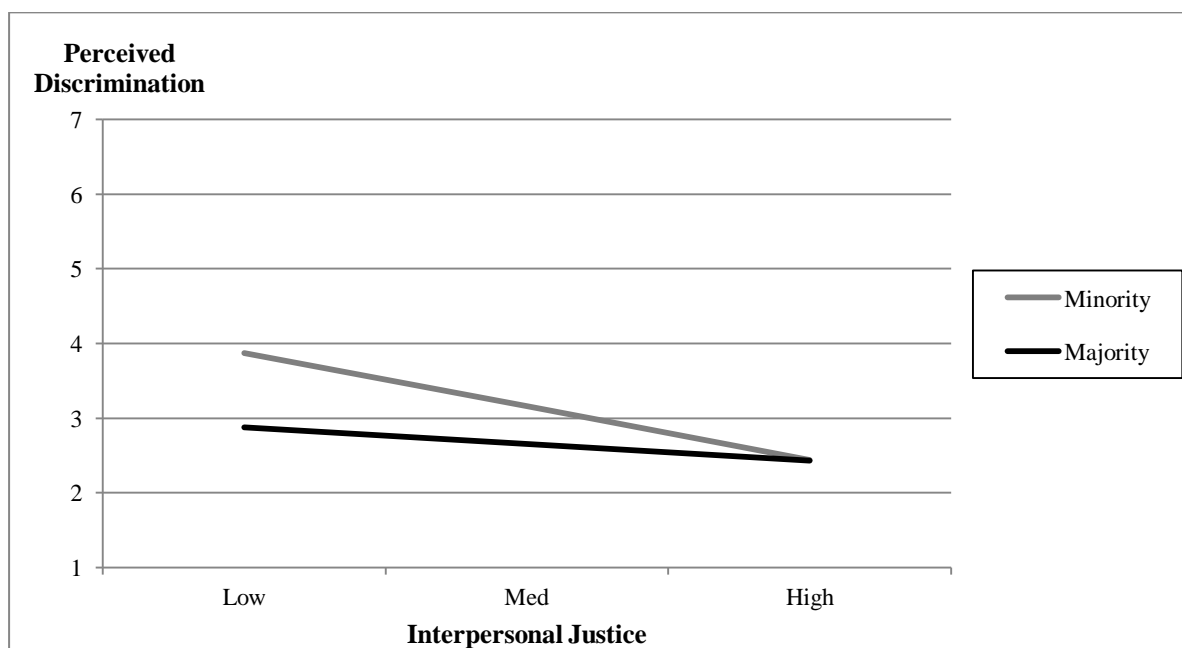
**Hypothesis 1c: Ethnicity will moderate justice-discrimination relationship.**

The only justice dimension to significantly interact with ethnicity was interpersonal justice ( $B=-.50$ ,  $SE=.13$ ,  $p=.00$ ). Simple slope analysis showed that interpersonal justice had an effect on perceived discrimination for both majority ( $\beta=-.22$ ,  $p=.00$ ) and minority ( $\beta=-.72$ ,  $p=.00$ ) employees. In support of the hypothesis, the impact of interpersonal justice on perceived discrimination was more pronounced for members of an ethnic minority (see Figure 6).

Table 1.

*Hierarchical multiple regression analysis with justice predicting perceived discrimination.*

		Perceived Discrimination
Step	1 ( <i>Controls</i> )	
	$R^2$	.04
	Adjusted $R^2$	.03
	F- Change	4.08**
	2 ( <i>Main effects of justice</i> )	
	$R^2$	.21
	Adjusted $R^2$	.20
	F- Change	24.97**
	3 ( <i>Interactions</i> )	
	$R^2$	.24
	Adjusted $R^2$	.22
	F- Change	3.27**

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ *Figure 6.* Interpersonal justice predicting perceived discrimination as moderated by ethnic status.

**Model Part Two: Perceived Discrimination to Work Attitudes/Behaviours.**

Four hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted. Each regression consisted of five steps. In step 1, the following control variables were entered: managerial status, income, gender, age, job status, job contract, and education. Step 2 added support for diversity, ethnic status, and perceived discrimination. Step 3 added the interaction terms: Support for Diversity x Perceived Discrimination and Ethnic Status x Perceived Discrimination. Step 4 added the four justice dimensions. Step 5 added the interaction terms: each Justice dimension x Support for Diversity, each Justice dimension x Ethnicity, and each Justice dimension x Perceived Discrimination. Summary of regression results is given in Table 2. Results were only examined if the overall regression step change was significant.

**Hypothesis Testing****Engagement.**

All regression steps except step-3 were significant (see table 2).

**Step 1.** Of the control variables in step 1, managerial status ( $B=.48$ ,  $SE=.10$ ,  $p=.00$ ), job contract ( $B=-.66$ ,  $SE=.16$ ,  $p=.00$ ), income ( $B=-.07$ ,  $SE=.03$ ,  $p=.01$ ), and age ( $B=.03$ ,  $SE=.00$ ,  $p=.00$ ) were significantly related to engagement. Managers, full-time workers, and older employees reported higher engagement levels. While income was negatively related to engagement it was not a strong relationship.

**Step 2.** Perceived discrimination was negatively associated with engagement ( $B=-.12$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p=.00$ ).

**Step 4.** Procedural justice had a positive impact on engagement ( $B=.24$ ,  $SE=.05$ ,  $p=.00$ ).

**Step 5.** Procedural justice had a positive impact on engagement ( $B=.28$ ,  $SE=.06$ ,  $p=.00$ ), and also interacted with ethnic status ( $B=-.36$ ,  $SE=.15$ ,  $p=.02$ ). Both interpersonal justice ( $B=-.14$ ,  $SE=.06$ ,  $p=.01$ ) and information justice ( $B=.18$ ,  $SE=.06$ ,  $p=.00$ ) interacted

with support for diversity. Distributive justice interacted with ethnic status ( $B=.36$ ,  $SE=.15$ ,  $p=.02$ ) and perceived discrimination ( $B=-.17$ ,  $SE=.06$ ,  $p=.00$ ).

Table 2. *Results of hierarchical multiple regression analysis by dependent variable.*

	Voice	Helping	Engagement	Affective Commitment
Step 1 ( <i>Controls</i> )				
R <sup>2</sup>	.23	.14	.16	.09
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.23	.13	.15	.08
F- Change	29.80**	16.21**	16.80**	9.47**
2 ( <i>Main effects</i> )				
R <sup>2</sup>	.24	.18	.28	.22
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.23	.17	.27	.21
F- Change	3.15*	10.57**	35.99**	39.67**
3 ( <i>Interactions</i> )				
R <sup>2</sup>	.25	.19	.28	.23
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.24	.17	.27	.22
F- Change	4.27*	.34	.41	2.844*
4 ( <i>Controlling for Justice main effects</i> )				
R <sup>2</sup>	.27	.19	.34	.27
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.25	.17	.33	.26
F- Change	2.64*	1.74	15.06**	9.61**
5 ( <i>Controlling for justice interactions</i> )				
R <sup>2</sup>	.29	.21	.37	.30
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.26	.18	.35	.27
F- Change	1.62*	1.54	2.46**	2.18*

\* $p<.05$ , \*\* $p<.01$

***Implications for hypotheses.***

*Hypothesis 2a.* The hypothesis stating that perceived discrimination would negatively affect work attitudes was supported in the case of engagement. Perceived discrimination was negatively associated with engagement in step 2 of the regression model. However, this association became non-significant in steps 4 and 5 once the effects of justice were taken into account, which suggests that aspects of justice (specifically procedural) are more important predictors of engagement. This may indicate that discrimination is not directly linked to engagement.

*Hypothesis 2b.* The hypothesis stating that support for diversity would attenuate the negative impact of perceived discrimination on work attitudes was not supported in the case of engagement. There were no significant interactions between these variables.

*Hypothesis 2c.* The hypothesis stating that the negative relationship between perceived discrimination and work attitudes would be exacerbated for members of an ethnic minority was not supported in the case of engagement. There was no significant interaction between perceived discrimination and ethnicity.

***Affective Commitment.***

All regression steps except step-3 were significant (see Table 2).

***Step 1.*** Of the control variables in step 1, managerial status ( $B=.67$ ,  $SE=.13$ ,  $p=.00$ ) and age ( $B=.02$ ,  $SE=.01$ ,  $p=.00$ ) were significantly related to affective commitment. Managers and older employees reported having higher affective organisational commitment.

***Step 2.*** Perceived discrimination was negatively associated with affective commitment ( $B=-.21$ ,  $SE=.05$ ,  $p=.00$ ). Ethnicity ( $B=.35$ ,  $SE=.13$ ,  $p=.01$ ) and support for diversity ( $B=.43$ ,  $SE=.05$ ,  $p=.00$ ) were also significantly associated with affective commitment.

**Step 4.** Ethnicity ( $B=.29$ ,  $SE=.13$ ,  $p=.03$ ) and support for diversity ( $B=.30$ ,  $SE=.05$ ,  $p=.00$ ) were still positively significantly associated with affective commitment. Procedural justice ( $B=.15$ ,  $SE=.07$ ,  $p=.03$ ) and distributive justice ( $B=.14$ ,  $SE=.06$ ,  $p=.02$ ) were positively associated with affective commitment.

**Step 5.** Support for diversity ( $B=.28$ ,  $SE=.05$ ,  $p=.00$ ) was still significantly associated with affective commitment. Procedural justice ( $B=.21$ ,  $SE=.07$ ,  $p=.00$ ) was positively associated with affective commitment. Both procedural justice ( $B=-.42$ ,  $SE=.20$ ,  $p=.04$ ) and distributive justice ( $B=.49$ ,  $SE=.20$ ,  $p=.01$ ) interacted with ethnicity. Both interpersonal justice ( $B=-.16$ ,  $SE=.07$ ,  $p=.03$ ) and information justice ( $B=.20$ ,  $SE=.08$ ,  $p=.01$ ) interacted with support for diversity.

#### ***Implications for hypotheses.***

*Hypothesis 2a.* The hypothesis stating that perceived discrimination would negatively affect work attitudes was supported in the case of affective commitment. Perceived discrimination was negatively associated with affective commitment in step 2 of the regression model. However, this association became non-significant in steps 4 and 5 once the effects of justice were taken into account. As with engagement, this suggests that procedural justice (significant at both step 4 and 5) is a more direct predictor of affective commitment than perceived discrimination.

*Hypothesis 2b.* The hypothesis stating that support for diversity would attenuate the negative impact of perceived discrimination on work attitudes was not supported in the case of affective commitment. Although there was one significant interaction between these variables the overall regression step (step 3) was non-significant ( $p=.06$ ). This finding is examined in the discussion.

*Hypothesis 2c.* The hypothesis stating that the negative relationship between perceived discrimination and work attitudes would be exacerbated for members of an ethnic

minority was not supported in the case of engagement. There was no significant interaction between perceived discrimination and ethnicity.

***Implications for work attitudes across overall model.***

Procedural justice and interpersonal justice were both found to predict perceived discrimination in part one of the model. However, the effect of interpersonal justice did not extend from affecting discrimination to affecting work attitudes. This suggests that interpersonal justice only operates at one stage of the proposed model. Procedural justice was found to significantly affect both affective commitment and engagement at higher steps in the regression model, as well as affecting discrimination in part one. However, the inclusion of procedural justice in the regression model resulted in discrimination losing its significant effect on work attitudes. This result is contrary to the proposed model as procedural justice seems to directly affect work attitudes over and above discrimination, rather than acting through discrimination.

The interactions observed from step 5 of the regression model also do not support the proposed model of discrimination in the case of work attitudes. Support for diversity moderated the direct effect of interpersonal and informational justice on work attitudes. Interaction graphs are not reported in this study but the trend of results was in line with Triana and Garcia (2009), as support for diversity appeared to attenuate the relationship between justice and work attitudes.

Interactions between justice and ethnicity also provided interesting results. The trend of results suggests that distributive justice has a much stronger effect on work attitudes for minority employees compared to majority employees. Conversely, procedural justice has an effect for both minority and majority employees, but the direction varies. For majority employees procedural justice is associated with more positive work attitudes, while for minority employees it is associated with less positive work attitudes.

**Voice.**

All regression steps except step-5 were significant (see Table 2).

**Step 1.** Of the control variables in step 1, managerial status ( $B=.49$ ,  $SE=.08$ ,  $p=.00$ ), income ( $B=.14$ ,  $SE=.02$ ,  $p=.00$ ), and age ( $B=.01$ ,  $SE=.00$ ,  $p=.02$ ) were significantly related to voice. Managers, higher earning, and older employees reported having a stronger voice.

**Step 2.** Support for diversity was associated with voice ( $B=.07$ ,  $SE=.03$ ,  $p=.02$ ).

**Step 3.** Support for diversity was associated with voice ( $B=.07$ ,  $SE=.03$ ,  $p=.03$ ). Perceived discrimination interacted with support for diversity to influence voice ( $B=.08$ ,  $SE=.03$ ,  $p=.01$ ).

**Step 4.** The interaction between perceived discrimination and support for diversity was still significant ( $B=.08$ ,  $SE=.03$ ,  $p=.01$ ). Procedural justice ( $B=.10$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p=.02$ ) and information justice ( $B=-.11$ ,  $SE=.05$ ,  $p=.03$ ) also had an influence on voice.

***Implications for hypotheses.***

**Hypothesis 3a.** The hypothesis stating that perceived discrimination would negatively affect work behaviour was not supported in the case of voice. No significant associations between perceived discrimination and voice were found.

**Hypothesis 3b.** The hypothesis stating that support for diversity would attenuate the negative impact of perceived discrimination on work behaviour was partially supported in the case of voice. A significant interaction between these variables was observed in step 3 of the regression model, and this interaction remained significant in step 4 when the effects of justice were taken into account. However, simple slope analysis showed that these relationships did not differ significantly from 0. Perceived discrimination did not significantly affect voice when support diversity was high ( $\beta=.05$ ,  $p=.30$ ), medium ( $\beta=-.03$ ,  $p=.56$ ), or low ( $\beta=-.10$ ,  $p=.06$ ).



Although not significant, the pattern of results implies that organisational support for diversity goes some way towards buffering the negative effect of perceived discrimination on voice. When support for diversity is low perceived discrimination is associated with lower voice; while non-significant the p-value obtained from simple slope analysis indicated this relationship was approaching significance.

*Hypothesis 3c.* The hypothesis stating that the negative relationship between perceived discrimination and work behaviour would be exacerbated for members of an ethnic minority was not supported in the case of voice. There was no significant interaction between perceived discrimination and ethnicity.

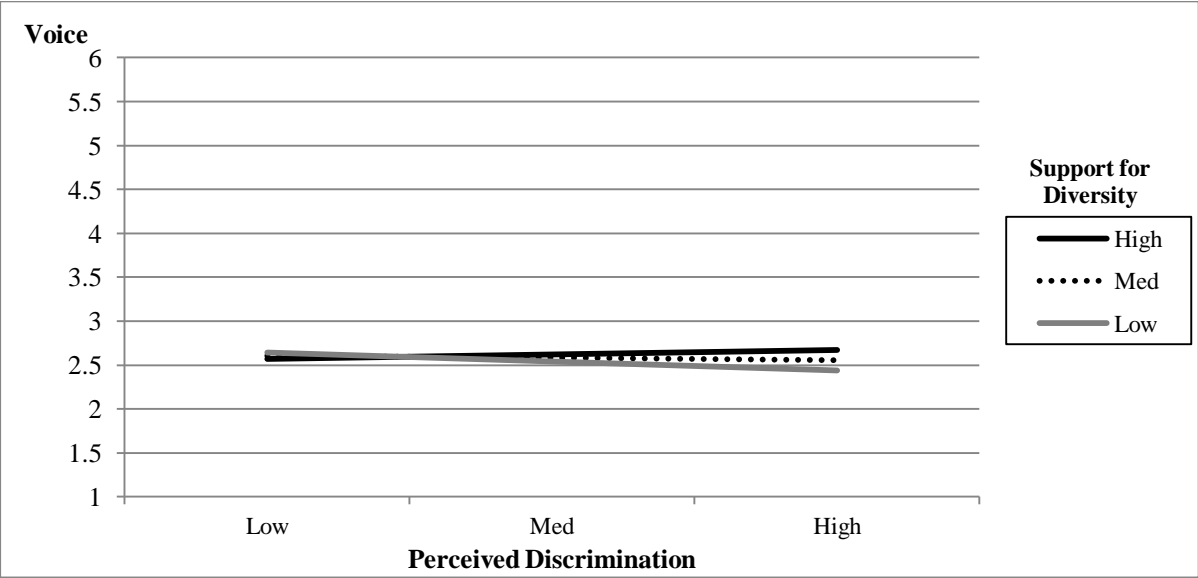


Figure 7. The impact of perceived discrimination on voice as moderated by support for diversity.

**Helping.**

Only steps 1 and 2 in the regression model were significant (see Table 2).

*Step 1.* Of the control variables in step 1, managerial status ( $B=.39$ ,  $SE=.07$ ,  $p=.00$ ), income, ( $B=.06$ ,  $SE=.02$ ,  $p=.00$ ), and age ( $B=.01$ ,  $SE=.00$ ,  $p=.00$ ) were significantly related to

helping behaviours. Managers, higher income earners, and older employees reported more helping behaviours.

*Step 2.* Ethnicity ( $B=.25$ ,  $SE=.08$ ,  $p=.00$ ) and support for diversity ( $B=.11$ ,  $SE=.03$ ,  $p=.00$ ) were significantly associated with helping.

***Implications for hypotheses.***

*Hypothesis 3a.* The hypothesis stating that perceived discrimination would negatively affect work behaviour was not supported in the case of helping. No significant associations between perceived discrimination and helping were found. It should be noted that the effect of discrimination on helping was approaching significance ( $B=-.06$ ,  $SE=.03$ ,  $p=.05$ ) yet not quite under the 5% threshold.

*Hypothesis 3b.* The hypothesis stating that support for diversity would attenuate the negative impact of perceived discrimination on work behaviour was not supported in the case of helping. There were no significant interactions between these variables.

*Hypothesis 3c.* The hypothesis stating that the negative relationship between perceived discrimination and work behaviour would be exacerbated for members of an ethnic minority was not supported in the case of helping. There was no significant interaction between perceived discrimination and ethnicity.

***Implications for work behaviours across overall model.***

Procedural justice and interpersonal justice were both found to predict perceived discrimination in part one of the model. As with work attitudes, the effect of interpersonal justice did not extend into part two of the model for work behaviours. Procedural justice, however, had a significant effect on voice at both stages of the model. More importantly this effect did not suppress the impact of discrimination. Discrimination was still found to affect voice even when procedural justice was taken into account, although this relationship depended on support for diversity. The result provides support for the proposed model.

Discrimination was only marginally associated with helping ( $B=-.06$ ,  $SE=.03$ ,  $p=.05$ ). The inclusion of interactions and justice led to the overall model becoming non-significant.

### **Discussion**

Results from study 1 suggest that interpersonal and procedural organisational justice are active in predicting perceptions of discrimination. Only procedural justice seems to continue to have an influence in part two of the model. In the case of work attitudes this influence negates the direct influence of discrimination. In the case of the work behaviour of voice the influence of procedural justice does not negate the effect of discrimination. This means that when controlling for the perceived fairness in an organisation, perceived discrimination still has an effect on employee voice although this is dependent on support for diversity.

#### **Model Part One: Justice and Discrimination**

The hypothesis that facets of justice would predict perceptions of discrimination was partially supported. Both interpersonal justice and procedural justice negatively predicted perceptions of discrimination. Following a workplace decision or outcome (e.g., job evaluation, promotion, pay rise), if an employee perceives that their supervisor or manager treated them unfairly or if they perceive that the rules and procedures leading to the decision were unfair, they are more likely to think that they are being discriminated against. The influence of interpersonal justice was almost three times stronger than that of procedural justice. This suggests that interpersonal interactions with managers are the most significant events in determining perceptions of discrimination.

This finding supports earlier research which linked procedural justice to decisions to sue one's employer (Bies & Tyler, 1993) or file a wrongful termination claim (Lind et al., 2000), and research which linked both procedural and interactional justice to discrimination claiming (Goldman, 2001, 2003). Interpersonal interactions are at the core of what

discrimination is, and so it is logical that perceived unfairness in these interactions leads to perceptions of discriminatory treatment. Organisational procedures are an extension of this as they can determine how people are treated within organisations. Unfair procedures can be biased, inconsistent, unethical, and remove the ability for people to express their views and feelings. As such it is logical that unfair procedures can lead to perceptions of discriminatory treatment.

However, contrary to the hypothesis no associations between distributive or information justice and perceived discrimination were found. This may be because these aspects of organisational justice deal less with interpersonal interactions or rules and procedures that influence interpersonal treatment. Therefore, although these types of injustices result in unfavourable outcomes for employees, people do not necessarily link these outcomes with feeling discriminated against. Goldman (2001, 2003) did find links between all forms of justice and discrimination-claiming behaviour, yet this is slightly different to perceived discrimination, which may explain the contrasting results. Further research is needed to determine the relationship between distributive and informational justice and perceived discrimination.

#### **The effect of support for diversity on the justice–discrimination relationship.**

The hypothesis that organisational support for diversity would attenuate the negative influence of justice on perceived discrimination was not supported. It was thought that when assessing the fairness of a workplace decision, being in an organisation that supports diversity would remove discrimination as a possible cause of unfair treatment in the eyes of the employee as it would be contrary to the policies of the organisation. This was not the case, however. This may be because perceiving unfairness in organisational procedures and interactions is essentially perceiving aspects of the organisation as being unfair, and this perception may undermine any policies that promote fairness and equality the organisation

has. The result is especially surprising when considering that Triana and Garcia (2009) found organisational support for diversity attenuates the negative effect of perceived discrimination on procedural justice. It may be that support for diversity attenuates some negative outcomes resulting from feeling discriminated against, but cannot actually affect perceptions of the antecedents to feeling discriminated against, such as unfair organisational procedures or interactions.

### **The effect of ethnicity on justice-discrimination relationship.**

The hypothesis that the ethnic status of employees would affect the relationship between justice and discrimination was partially supported. The negative effect of interpersonal justice on perceived discrimination was stronger for members of an ethnic minority. Unfair interactions with managers will more likely result in perceptions of discrimination amongst members of ethnic minorities than members of ethnic majorities. This is logical as members of ethnic minorities are subject to more discrimination than those from ethnic majorities, and by nature are more vulnerable to discrimination due to their minority status (Branscombe et al., 1999). The finding supports research from Avery et al. (2008), which found that racial differences between managers and employees were linked to discrimination.

### **Model Part Two: Discrimination and Work Attitudes**

The hypothesis that perceived discrimination would lead to negative outcomes for employee work attitudes was not supported. While discrimination was initially negatively associated with both engagement and affective commitment, this relationship became non-significant in later regression steps. This finding suggests that perceived discrimination may not have a direct effect on engagement or affective commitment, as procedural justice is a more important influence on these variables.

This finding is contrary to the predicted causal relationships of the proposed model. It was expected that discrimination would negatively predict work attitudes both alone and when the effects of justice had been taken into account. This was not the case, which may suggest that in the case of work attitudes a different causal relationship for perceived discrimination exists.

This finding could relate to Triana and Garcia's conceptualisation of procedural justice acting as a direct influence on work attitudes (affective commitment) subsequent to perceptions of discrimination.

**The impact of support for diversity on discrimination-work attitudes relationship.**

Contrary to the hypothesis, support for diversity did not attenuate the relationship between perceived discrimination and work attitudes. A significant interaction between perceived discrimination and support for diversity on affective commitment was observed, although the overall regression step was non-significant. Plotting the finding revealed that support for diversity had an attenuating effect on perceived discrimination in a similar fashion to the findings observed by Triana et al. (2010). The overall step was non-significant, providing only tentative evidence in support of the hypothesis.

The lack of the hypothesised interactions are disappointing, yet may coincide with earlier speculation that the causal relationship identified in the proposed model does not fully apply to work attitudes. Support for diversity attenuated the relationship between interpersonal/information justice and work attitudes. This provides support for Triana and Garcia's (2009) assertions that justice has a direct effect on work attitudes. These interactions provide interesting implications for future research to explore.

**The impact of ethnic status.**

Contrary to the hypothesis, the ethnic status of employees did not impact on the relationship between perceived discrimination and work attitudes. This was surprising given the assertions of the rejection–identification model that the effects of discrimination are more severe for disadvantaged groups (Branscombe et al., 1999). Ethnic status did, however, affect the relationship between justice and work attitudes, suggesting that the rejection identification model applies to justice. Specifically, the effect of distributive unfairness on work attitudes is more pronounced for members of an ethnic minority.

These results suggest that discrimination affects all groups equally; however, justice may not. The results may have been influenced by the fact that a direct relationship between discrimination and work attitudes was not fully established. Alternatively they may be a function of the composition of the minority group or merely specific to the New Zealand context.

### **Discrimination and Work Behaviours**

The hypothesis that perceived discrimination would lead to negative outcomes on work behaviours was not supported. Perceived discrimination had an influence on helping that was marginally significant; however, the strength of the relationship was weak.

#### **The impact of support for diversity.**

The hypothesis that support for diversity would attenuate the relationship between perceived discrimination and work behaviours was partially supported. Whilst no significant interaction was observed for helping, support for diversity did interact with perceived discrimination to influence voice. Simple slope calculations indicated a trend in line with the hypothesis: that having a high support for diversity leaves voice unaffected by perceived discrimination. Conversely, having a low support for diversity means that perceived discrimination will negatively impact voice.

#### **The impact of ethnic status.**

Contrary to the hypothesis, the ethnic status of employees did not impact on the relationship between perceived discrimination and work behaviour. This is in line with the finding regarding ethnic status and work attitudes, and fails to show support for the rejection–identification model.

## **Study 2**

Study 2 seeks to replicate the aims, method, and analysis of study 1. However, it will incorporate a different measure for perceived discrimination. There are several limitations of the measure used in study 1, and indeed of most measures of prejudice or discrimination used throughout social psychology (Sibley, 2011). Firstly, most previous measures of discrimination focus exclusively on blatant, overt, direct, and visible discrimination (Sibley, 2011). This means they have neglected to examine more benevolent and patronising forms of discrimination. Secondly, most prior measures rely on respondents making explicit judgements about past discrimination based on group-membership (Sibley, 2011). Measures such as these may miss identifying discrimination that is not specifically attributed by the victim as resulting from their group membership that they are being asked about. Thirdly, measures that ask participants to make judgements about discriminatory treatment rely on respondents' definitions of concepts such as “fair” and “discrimination” (Sibley, 2011).

These limitations led Sibley (2011) to develop a new measure of discrimination: The Behaviours from Intergroup Affect and Stereotypes–Treatment Scale (BIAS-TS). This is a self-report measure of general discrimination which distinguishes between behaviours that are direct and purposeful (active) and behaviours that are subtle and possibly unintentional (passive). The measure also distinguishes between two types of possible outcomes that result from behaviour; behaviour that results in harm and behaviour that results in facilitation.

The BIAS-TS therefore comprises four types of behaviour based along these dimensions: active harm, passive harm, active facilitation, and passive facilitation. By



differentiating along these dimensions Sibley addresses the issues of past measures by removing judgements about group membership and assessing all types of discrimination including subtle benevolent behaviour.

Active harm refers to those behaviours that seek to harm members of out-groups in a direct and intentional way, such as attacking and threatening others. Passive harm refers to behaviours that demean others and diminish their social worth through subtle means such as neglect and exclusion. Active facilitation refers to those behaviours which proactively help members of out-groups reach their goals, such as overt praise and encouragement. Passive facilitation refers to those behaviours that seek to achieve one's own goals yet inadvertently help out-group members achieve theirs. In this case the interaction with out-group members is not desired but tolerated. As such, although the outcome is facilitatory, experiencing passive facilitation seems intuitively to be perceived as negative as reflected by the items that assess it, such as "other people in my organisation only socialise or interact with me when it suits their purpose".

Therefore, active harm (AH), passive harm (PH), and passive facilitation (PF) will be discussed as negative treatment. Active facilitation will be discussed as positive treatment.

### **Model Part One: Organisational Justice to Perceived Discrimination**

**Hypothesis 1a: Justice will negatively predict AH, PH and PF. Justice will positively predict AF.**

This hypothesis remains the same from study 1 with low perceptions of fairness expected to lead to higher perceptions of negative treatment, and lower perceptions of positive treatment.

**Hypothesis 1b: Support for diversity will attenuate effect of justice on BIAS-TS variables.**

This hypothesis remains the same from study 1.

**Hypothesis 1c: Ethnicity will moderate the effect of justice on BIAS–TS variables.**

Hypothesis remains the same from study 1; the relationship between justice and perceptions of negative treatment will be exacerbated for members of an ethnic minority. A similar exacerbation effect is expected to be observed for positive treatment; fair treatment is likely to have more of an impact on perceptions of interpersonal treatment for members of an ethnic minority.

**Model Part Two: Perceived Discrimination to Employee Outcomes**

**Hypothesis 2a: Active harm, passive harm and passive facilitation will negatively affect work attitudes. Active facilitation will positively affect work attitudes.**

This hypothesis remains the same as from study 1 with negative treatment expected to be detrimental for work attitudes while positive treatment expected to be beneficial for work attitudes.

**Hypothesis 2b: Support for diversity will attenuate the effect of BIAS–TS variables on work attitudes.**

As in study 1, support for diversity is expected to reduce the impact of discrimination on outcome variables.

**Hypothesis 2c: Ethnicity will moderate the effect of BIAS–TS variables on work attitudes.**

The relationship between the BIAS–TS variables and work attitudes is expected to be exacerbated for members of an ethnic minority.

**Hypothesis 3a: Active harm, passive harm and passive facilitation will negatively affect work behaviour. Active facilitation will positively affect work behaviour.**

The hypothesis remains the same as from study 1, with negative treatment expected to reduce positive work behaviours while positive treatment is expected to lead to more positive work behaviours.

**Hypothesis 3b: Support for diversity will attenuate the effect of BIAS–TS variables on work behaviours.**

As in study 1, support for diversity is expected to reduce the impact of discrimination on outcome variables.

**Hypothesis 3c: Ethnicity will moderate the effect of BIAS–TS variables on work behaviour.**

The relationship between the BIAS–TS variables and work attitudes will be exacerbated for members of an ethnic minority.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

As part of course requirements small groups of undergraduate students from a stage three course in Organisational Psychology distributed pen and paper surveys to various New Zealand organisations from March to May 2012. Individual groups collected and entered responses into template SPSS files, which were then collated by the researchers. Permission for data collection was obtained by students from a senior manager or Human Resources representative. The study was approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee.

Participants comprised 724 employees (42.1% male, 57.2% female; age range 18–76, average age 35) from 32 New Zealand organisations. Managers were 18.4% of participants with the remainder being non-managers; 79.3% were permanent employees as opposed to fixed term or contractual; 76.5% worked full-time as opposed to part-time, and 48.5% were

university educated. Participants reported a range of income levels; the full distribution is shown in Figure 8.

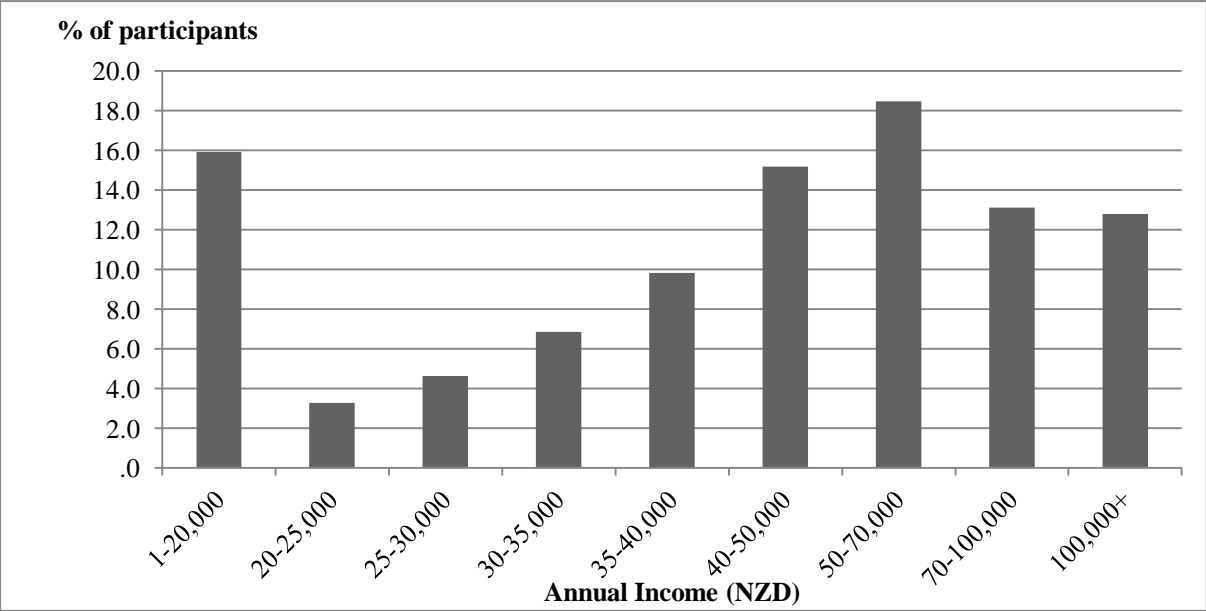


Figure 8. Percentage distribution of responses by income.

Employees from the ethnic majority (New Zealand European) comprised 71.5% of the sample while 19.2% reported being from an ethnic minority (Māori, Polynesian, Asian, other). Participants were asked “to what extent do you rate your organisation as diverse in terms of ethnicity” on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not diverse*) to 7 (*very diverse*) and the mean response was 4.99 (SD=1.56).

Of the organisations surveyed in this study, 64.2% were rated as large (>100 employees), 15.1% medium (30–100 employees), and 20.7% as small (<30). In contrast to the 2010 survey, there were more organisations from the private sector than the public sector; the full distribution is shown in Figure 9.

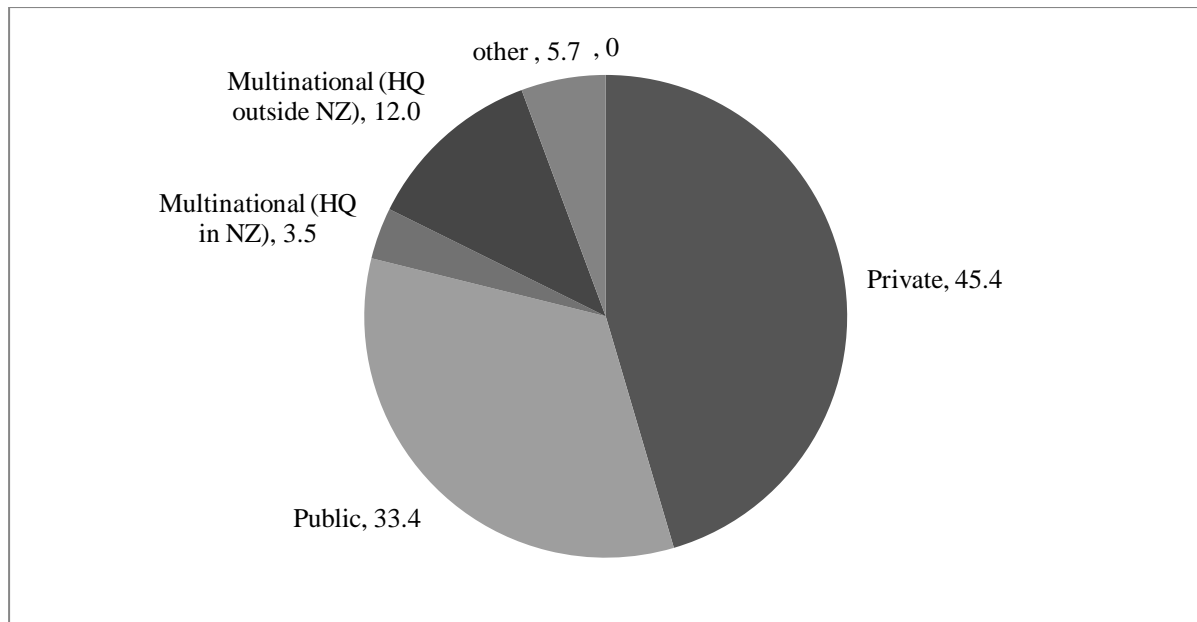


Figure 9. Percentage distribution of responses by organisation sector.

## Measures

**Active/Passive Harm and Active/Passive Facilitation.** The 12-item Behaviours from Intergroup Affect and Stereotypes–Treatment Scale (BIAS-TS; Sibley, 2011) was used. Participants were asked to indicate their agreement to statements on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *never experienced this* to *often experienced this*. *Active harm* was made up of three items such as “Other people in your organisation do things to threaten you”. Reliability was  $\alpha=.76$ . *Passive harm* was made up of three statements such as “other people in your organisation insist that they know what is best for you”. Reliability was  $\alpha=.67$ . *Active facilitation* was made up of three items such as “other people in your organisation are friendly and willing to help you”. Reliability was  $\alpha=.77$ . *Passive facilitation* was made up of three items such as “other people in your organisation treat you with respect, but avoid socialising with you”. Reliability was  $\alpha=.73$ .

**Organisational Justice.** The same four-component measure of Organisational Justice (Colquitt, 2001) from study one was used. Reliability was as follows: *Distributive justice*  $\alpha=.90$ , *information justice*  $\alpha=.91$ , *interpersonal justice*  $\alpha=.92$ , and *procedural justice*  $\alpha=.88$ .

**Perceived Organisational Support for Diversity.** The same five-item scale taken (Hegarty & Dalton, 1995) from study one was used. Reliability was  $\alpha=.87$ .

**Employee Engagement.** The same 12-item scale (Salanova, Agut & Peiro, 2005) from study one was used. Reliability was  $\alpha=.93$ .

**Affective Commitment.** The same five-item affective commitment scale (Meyer & Allen, 1991) from study one was used. Reliability was  $\alpha=.85$ .

**Self-reported work behaviours.** The same seven-item measure of *helping* from study one was used (reliability was  $\alpha=.82$ ). The same five-item measure of *voice* from study one was used (reliability was  $\alpha=.80$ ).

## Results

### Model Part One: Organisational Justice to Perceived Discrimination

Four hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted. A separate regression was conducted for each measure of harm/facilitation as a dependent variable. Each regression consisted of three steps. In step 1, the following control variables were entered: managerial status, income, gender, age, job status, job contract, and education. Step 2 added support for diversity, ethnic status, and the justice dimensions. Step 3 added the interaction terms: Support for Diversity x each Justice dimension and Ethnic Status x each Justice dimension. See Table 3 for a summary of results.

Table 3.

Results of hierarchical multiple regression analysis by dependent variable.

		Active Harm	Passive Harm	Active Facilitation	Passive Facilitation
Step	1 ( <i>Controls</i> )				
	R <sup>2</sup>	.03	.05	.01	.00
	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.02	.04	.00	-.01
	F- Change	2.61*	4.36**	1.03	.33
	2 ( <i>Main effects</i> )				
	R <sup>2</sup>	.17	.09	.22	.03
	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.16	.07	.20	.01
	F- Change	17.73**	5.11**	26.10**	2.69*
	3 ( <i>Interactions</i> )				
	R <sup>2</sup>	.19	.10	.24	.04
	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.16	.06	.22	.01
	F- Change	1.08	.14	2.67**	.86

\*p&lt;.05, \*\*p&lt;.01

### Control Variables

The control variables were examined from step 1 of each regression. The coding of variables is described in study 1.

**Active harm.** Income ( $B = -.05$ ,  $SE = .02$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and managerial status ( $B = .25$ ,  $SE = .11$ ,  $p < .05$ ) were significantly related to active harm. Managers and lower income earners were more likely to report experiencing active harm.

**Passive harm.** Age ( $B = -.02$ ,  $SE = .01$ ,  $p < .01$ ) was significantly related to passive harm. Younger employees were more likely to report passive harm. **Active facilitation.** The overall regression step was non-significant, meaning that no control variables were significantly related to active facilitation.

**Passive facilitation.** The overall regression step was non-significant, meaning that no control variables were significantly related to passive facilitation.

### Hypothesis Testing

**Hypothesis 1a: Justice will negatively predict active harm, passive harm, and passive facilitation; justice will positively predict active facilitation.**

**Active harm.** Of the four justice dimensions interpersonal justice was significantly and negatively related to active harm ( $B = -.41$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This provides partial support for the hypothesis.

**Active facilitation.** Of the four justice dimensions, interpersonal ( $B = .25$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and distributive justice ( $B = .14$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p < .05$ ) were significantly and positively related to active facilitation. This provides partial support for the hypothesis.

**Passive Harm.** Contrary to the hypothesis, no justice dimensions were significantly related to passive harm.

**Passive Facilitation.** Of the four justice dimensions interpersonal justice was significantly and negatively related to passive facilitation ( $B = -.14$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This provides partial support for the hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 1b: Support for diversity will attenuate justice-BIAS-TS variables relationship.**

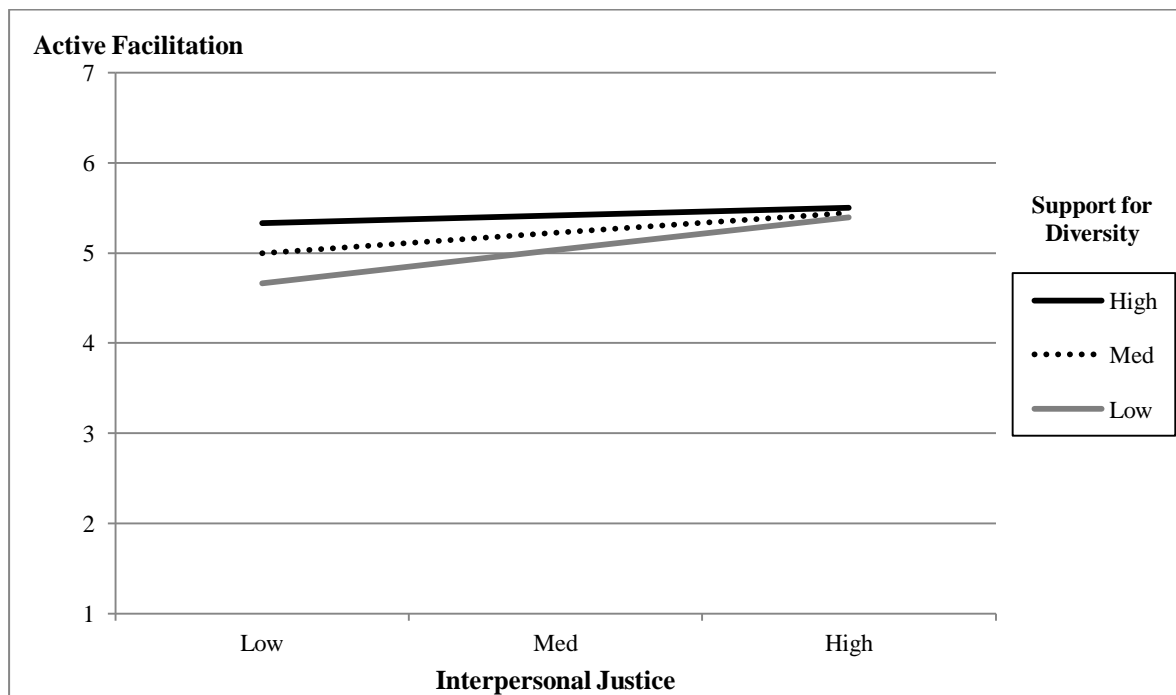
Interpersonal justice ( $B = -.14$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and distributive justice ( $B = -.10$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p < .05$ ) each significantly interacted with support for diversity to influence active facilitation. No other significant interactions were observed between support for diversity and any of the justice dimensions.

Simple slope analysis showed that interpersonal justice did not significantly affect affective facilitation when support diversity was high ( $\beta = .08$ ,  $p = .32$ ); however, it did when support for diversity was medium ( $\beta = .23$ ,  $p < .01$ ) or low ( $\beta = .37$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The same pattern



was observed for distributive justice's effect on active facilitation; the effect was non-significant when support for diversity was high ( $\beta=.00$ ,  $p=.95$ ), yet was significant when support for diversity was medium ( $\beta=.11$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and low ( $\beta=.21$ ,  $p<.01$ ).

In support of the hypothesis, this result suggests that support for diversity buffers the relationship between interpersonal/distributive justice and active facilitation. When an organisation has a high level of support for diversity, employee perceptions of how overtly and positively others treat them do not relate at all to how fairly they perceive interpersonal interactions with managers or the outcome of decisions. However, in organisations where there is less support for diversity perceptions of interpersonal and distributive fairness have a significant effect on employee perceptions of how overtly and positively they are treated. (See Figures 10 and 11.)



*Figure 10.* Interpersonal justice predicting active facilitation moderated by support for diversity.

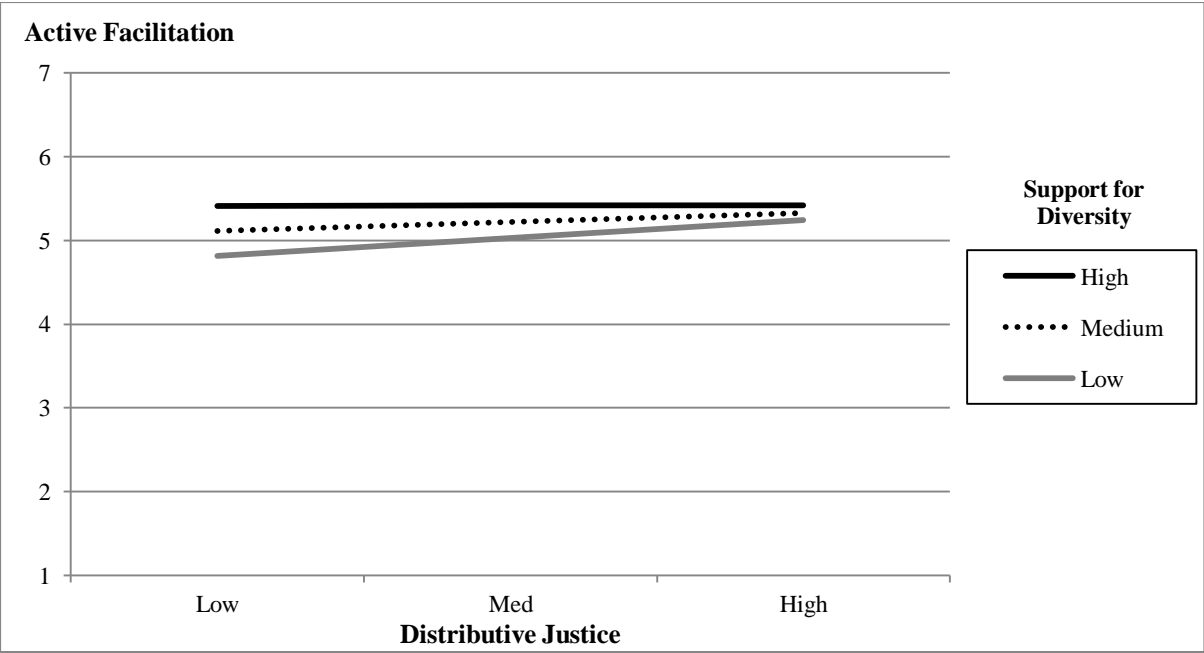


Figure 11. Distributive justice predicting active facilitation moderated by support for diversity.

**Hypothesis 1c: Ethnicity will moderate justice-BIAS–TS variables relationship.**

Contrary to the hypothesis, no significant interactions were observed between ethnicity and any of the justice dimensions. It appears that the relationship between organisational justice and aspects of discrimination relating to the BIAS–TS measures is unaffected by organisational efforts to support diversity.

**Model Part Two: Perceived Discrimination to Work Attitudes/Behaviours**

Four hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted. Each regression consisted of five steps. In step 1, the following control variables were entered: managerial status, income, gender, age, job status, job contract, and education. Step 2 added support for diversity, ethnic status, and each BIAS-TS measure. Step 3 added the interaction terms: Support for Diversity x each BIAS-TS measure and Ethnic Status x each BIAS-TS measure. Step 4 added the four justice dimensions. Step 5 added the interaction terms: each Justice dimension x Support for Diversity, each Justice dimension x Ethnicity, and each Justice dimension x each BIAS-TS

measure Summary of regression results is given in Table 4. As in study 1, results were only examined if the overall regression step was significant. Only relevant results are reported.

Table 4.

Results of hierarchical multiple regression analysis in 2012.

	Voice	Helping	Engagement	Affective Commitment
Step 1 ( <i>Controls</i> )				
R <sup>2</sup>	.12	.06	.07	.07
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.11	.05	.05	.06
F- Change	11.63**	5.69**	6.01**	6.08**
2 ( <i>Main effects of BIAS variables</i> )				
R <sup>2</sup>	.17	.16	.18	.21
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.15	.14	.16	.19
F- Change	6.07**	11.50**	13.96**	18.32**
3 ( <i>Interactions</i> )				
R <sup>2</sup>	.19	.19	.20	.22
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.16	.16	.17	.20
F- Change	1.75	2.70**	1.85	1.32
4 ( <i>Controlling for justice</i> )				
R <sup>2</sup>	.21	.20	.25	.26
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.18	.17	.22	.23
F- Change	4.37**	2.50*	9.93**	6.80**
5 ( <i>Controlling for justice interactions</i> )				
R <sup>2</sup>	.25	.25	.27	.29
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.18	.18	.21	.23
F- Change	1.12	1.38	.77	1.23

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01

## Hypothesis Testing

### Engagement.

Regression steps 1, 2 and 5 were significant (see Table 4).

*Step 1.* Of the control variables in step 1, managerial status ( $B=.40$ ,  $SE=.11$ ,  $p<.01$ ), job status ( $B=.32$ ,  $SE=.12$ ,  $p<.05$ ), job contract ( $B=-.32$ ,  $SE=.14$ ,  $p<.05$ ), and age ( $B=.01$ ,  $SE=.00$ ,  $p<.01$ ) were significantly related to engagement. Managers, along with permanent, full-time and older employees were more engaged.

*Step 2.* Active facilitation ( $B=.13$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and support for diversity ( $B=.28$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p<.01$ ) were positively associated with engagement.

*Step 4.* Support for diversity was still positively associated with engagement ( $B=.22$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Ethnicity was associated with engagement ( $B=-.57$ ,  $SE=.29$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Passive harm significantly interacted with both support for diversity ( $B=.08$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and ethnicity ( $B=.19$ ,  $SE=.08$ ,  $p<.05$ ) to influence engagement. Procedural justice ( $B=.16$ ,  $SE=.05$ ,  $p<.01$ ), interpersonal justice ( $B=.12$ ,  $SE=.05$ ,  $p<.05$ ), and distributive justice ( $B=.10$ ,  $SE=.05$ ,  $p<.05$ ) were significantly associated with engagement.

### Implications for hypotheses.

*Hypothesis 2a.* The hypothesis stating that active harm, passive harm and passive facilitation would negatively affect work attitudes was not supported in the case of engagement. None of these measures were significantly associated with engagement at any stage of the regression model. The aspect of hypothesis 2a stating that active facilitation would be positively associated with work attitudes was supported in the case of engagement. However, the significant effect of active facilitation in step 2 became non-significant in step 4 once the effects of justice were taken into account. As in study 1, this suggests that justice overrides the effect of discrimination on work attitudes.

*Hypothesis 2b.* The hypothesis stating that support for diversity would attenuate the impact of BIAS–TS variables on work attitudes was supported in the case of engagement. While step 3 of the regression analysis was not significant, in step 4 once the effects of justice had been taken into account passive harm did significantly interact with support for diversity to influence engagement ( $B=.08$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p<.05$ ). This interaction was not evident in step 3 ( $B=.08$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p=.06$ ) although it was close to significance. This may be because justice had a suppressive effect on extraneous variables.

Simple slope analysis showed that passive harm significantly affected engagement when support for diversity was low ( $\beta=-.16$ ,  $p<.05$ ) but not when it was medium ( $\beta=-.08$ ,  $p=.17$ ) or high ( $\beta=.01$ ,  $p=.92$ ).

This finding supports the hypothesised direction of effects, as support for diversity acts as a buffer against the negative effects of passive harm on engagement. When support for diversity is absent from an organisation, experiencing passive harm is associated with decreases in engagement. However, when it is present there is no relationship between passive harm and engagement. As such, support for diversity has an attenuating effect on engagement, supporting the hypothesis. See Figure 12.

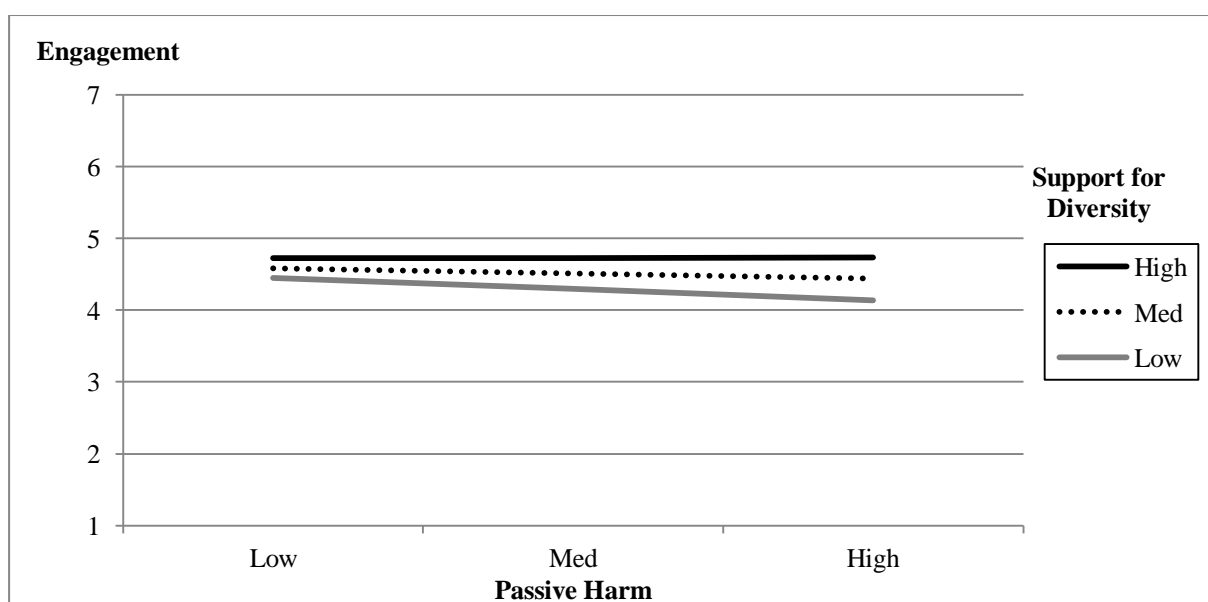


Figure 12. Passive harm predicting engagement as moderated by support for diversity.

*Hypothesis 2c.* The hypothesis stating that the relationship between BIAS–TS variables and work attitudes would be exacerbated for members of an ethnic minority was not supported in the case of engagement.

There was a significant interaction between passive harm and ethnicity in step 4 of the regression model ( $B=.19$ ,  $SE=.08$ ,  $p<.05$ ). However, simple slope analysis showed that the effect of passive harm on engagement was not significantly different from 0 for majority ( $\beta=-.08$ ,  $p=.17$ ) or minority ( $\beta=.11$ ,  $p=.12$ ) employees (see figure 13).

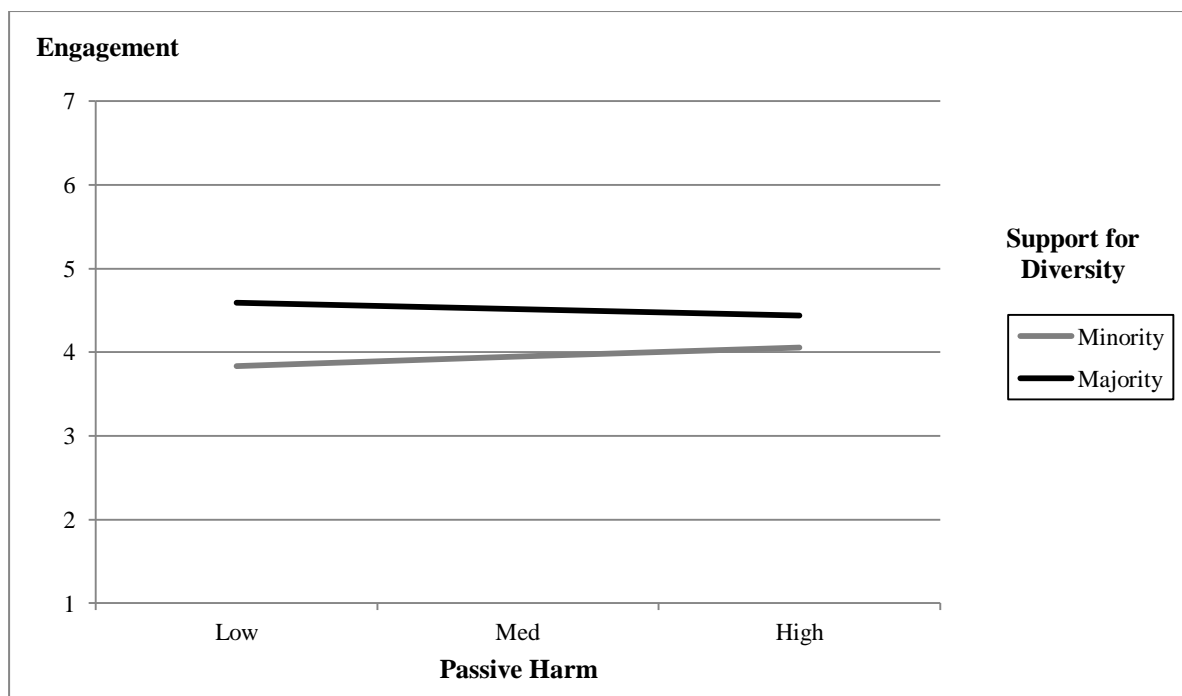


Figure 13. Passive harm predicting engagement by ethnicity

### **Affective Commitment.**

Regression steps 1, 2 and 4 were significant (see Table 4).

*Step 1.* Of the control variables in step 1, managerial status ( $B=.65$ ,  $SE=.14$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and job contract ( $B=-.40$ ,  $SE=.19$ ,  $p<.05$ ) were significantly related to ACS. Managers and full-time employees had higher affective organisational commitment.

**Step 2.** Active harm ( $B=.11$ ,  $SE=.06$ ,  $p<.05$ ), active facilitation ( $B=.34$ ,  $SE=.06$ ,  $p<.01$ ), passive facilitation ( $B=-.14$ ,  $SE=.06$ ,  $p<.05$ ), ethnicity ( $B=-.24$ ,  $SE=.12$ ,  $p<.05$ ), and support for diversity ( $B=.28$ ,  $SE=.05$ ,  $p<.01$ ) were all associated with affective commitment.

**Step 4.** Active facilitation ( $B=.26$ ,  $SE=.07$ ,  $p<.01$ ), passive facilitation ( $B=-.13$ ,  $SE=.06$ ,  $p<.05$ ), support for diversity ( $B=.21$ ,  $SE=.05$ ,  $p<.01$ ), ethnicity ( $B=-.91$ ,  $SE=.38$ ,  $p<.05$ ), and procedural justice ( $B=.16$ ,  $SE=.07$ ,  $p<.05$ ) were all associated with affective commitment.

### ***Implications for hypotheses.***

**Hypothesis 2a.** The hypothesis stating that active harm, passive harm, and passive facilitation would negatively affect work attitudes was partially supported in the case of affective commitment. Passive facilitation was negatively associated with affective commitment in both step 2 and step 4 once the effects of justice had been taken into account. Contrary to predictions, active harm was positively related to affective commitment. While active harm and passive harm were significantly associated with affective commitment in step 2, these relationships became non-significant once justice was entered in step 4. As with study 1, this suggests justice is a more important predictor of work attitudes than discrimination.

The aspect of hypothesis 2a stating that active facilitation would be positively associated with work attitudes was supported in the case of affective commitment. Active facilitation was positively associated with affective commitment in both step 2 and step 4 once the effects of justice had been taken into account. This suggests that experiences of active facilitation increase affective commitment regardless of the effects of justice.

**Hypothesis 2b.** The hypothesis stating that support for diversity would attenuate the impact of BIAS variables on work attitudes was not supported in the case of affective

commitment. No significant interactions were observed between the BIAS-TS variables and support for diversity.

*Hypothesis 2c.* The hypothesis stating that the relationship between BIAS-TS variables and work attitudes would be exacerbated for members of an ethnic minority was not supported. No significant interactions between BIAS-TS variables and ethnicity were observed.

***Implications for work attitudes across overall model.***

Interpersonal justice was found to be a strong and consistent predictor of perceived discrimination in part one, and also significantly affected engagement in part two. Distributive justice predicted active facilitation, and also had a later influence on engagement. These results suggest that organisational justice operates at both stages of the model.

However, the addition of justice in the regression model reduced the effects of active facilitation on engagement. This result is in line with the finding from study 1, specifically the replicated finding that procedural justice exerts a strong influence over engagement at higher steps in the model.

A similar effect was found for affective commitment. Initially active and passive facilitation were found to predict affective commitment; however, this relationship disappeared as a result of the influence of procedural justice. In both cases procedural justice exerted a direct influence on work attitudes that nullified the effect of discrimination. The findings of study 1 and 2 with regard to work attitudes are more in line with Triana and Garcia's (2009) conceptualisation of perceived discrimination as a predictor of procedural justice, which in turn has a direct influence on work attitudes (affective commitment in their study).

**Voice.**

Regression steps 1, 2 and 4 were significant (see table 2).



**Step 1.** Of the control variables in step 1, managerial status ( $B=.45$ ,  $SE=.09$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and income ( $B=.07$ ,  $SE=.02$ ,  $p<.01$ ) were significantly related to voice. Managers and higher income earners reported a stronger voice.

**Step 2.** Active facilitation ( $B=.14$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and support for diversity ( $B=.10$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p<.05$ ) were significantly related to voice.

**Step 4.** Active facilitation ( $B=.16$ ,  $SE=.05$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and support for diversity ( $B=.08$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p<.05$ ) were still associated with voice. Procedural justice ( $B=.11$ ,  $SE=.05$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and information justice ( $B=-.14$ ,  $SE=.05$ ,  $p<.05$ ) were significantly associated with voice. Passive harm interacted with support for diversity to influence voice ( $B=.09$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

### ***Implications for hypotheses.***

**Hypothesis 2a.** The hypothesis stating that active harm, passive harm, and passive facilitation would negatively affect work behaviour was not supported in the case of voice. None of these variables were significantly related to voice. The aspect of hypothesis 2a stating that active facilitation would be positively associated with work behaviour was supported in the case of voice. Active facilitation was positively associated with voice in both step 2 and step 4 of the regression model. This suggests that experiences of active facilitation increase employee voice independent of justice.

**Hypothesis 2b.** The hypothesis stating that support for diversity would attenuate the impact of BIAS-TS variables on work behaviour was partially supported in the case of passive harm on voice. Whilst step 3 of the regression was non-significant overall, there was a significant interaction between passive harm and support for diversity ( $B=.08$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p<.05$ ). This interaction remained significant in step 4, which was also significant overall.

Simple slope analysis showed that the relationship between passive harm and voice did not significantly differ from 0 when support for diversity was low ( $\beta=-.02$ ,  $p=.72$ ) or

medium ( $\beta=.07$ ,  $p=.13$ ). However, when support for diversity was high the effect of passive harm on voice was significantly greater than 0 ( $\beta=.15$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

This suggests that when support for diversity is absent from an organisation, passive harm has no effect on employee voice. However, when an organisation displays a high level of support for diversity then experiencing passive harm leads to an increase in employee voice. (See Figure 14.)

*Hypothesis 2c.* The hypothesis stating that the relationship between BIAS-TS variables and work behaviours would be exacerbated for members of an ethnic minority was not supported in the case of voice. No significant interactions between BIAS-TS variables and ethnicity were observed.

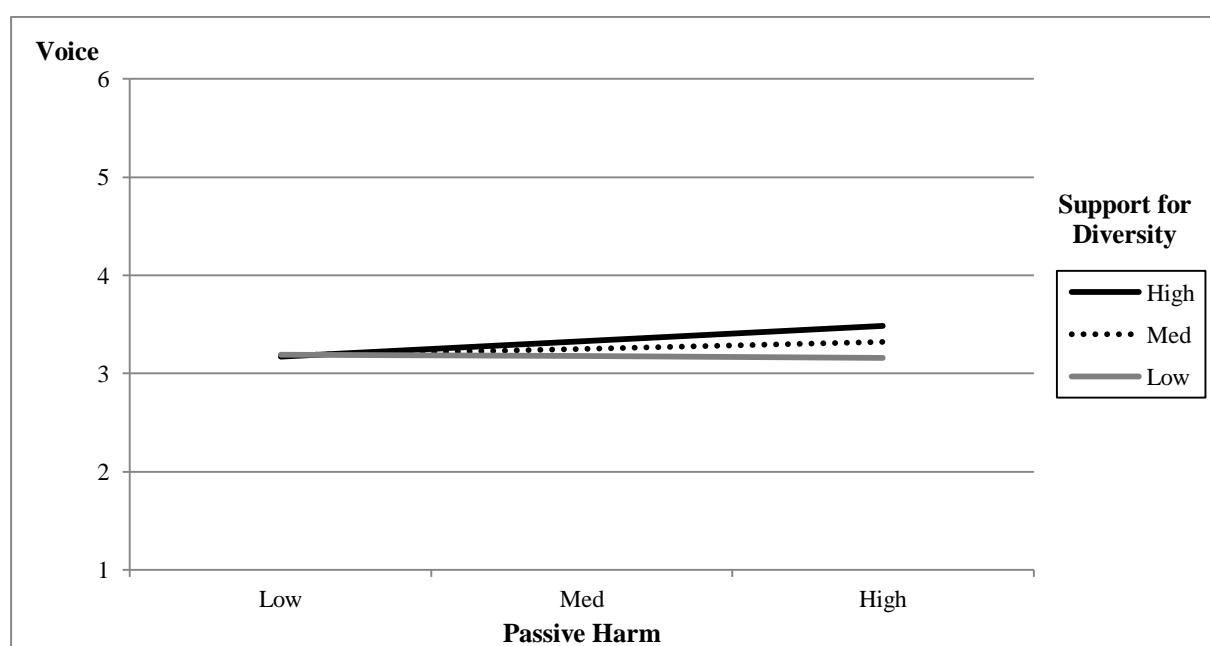


Figure 14. Passive harm predicting voice as moderated by support for diversity.

### Helping.

Regression steps 1–4 were significant (see table 2).

**Step 1.** Of the control variables in step 1, managerial status ( $B=.42$ ,  $SE=.08$ ,  $p<.01$ ) was significantly related to helping behaviours. Managers reported more helping behaviours.

**Step 2.** Active facilitation ( $B=.20$ ,  $SE=.03$ ,  $p<.01$ ), passive facilitation ( $B=-.07$ ,  $SE=.03$ ,  $p<.05$ ), passive harm ( $B=.11$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p<.01$ ), and support for diversity ( $B=.08$ ,  $SE=.03$ ,  $p<.05$ ) were related to helping.

**Step 3.** Active facilitation ( $B=.20$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p<.01$ ), passive facilitation ( $B=-.10$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p<.05$ ), passive harm ( $B=.11$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p<.05$ ), and support for diversity ( $B=.07$ ,  $SE=.03$ ,  $p<.05$ ) were still related to helping. Active harm ( $B=-.06$ ,  $SE=.03$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and passive harm ( $B=.11$ ,  $SE=.03$ ,  $p<.01$ ) interacted with perceived support for diversity to influence helping.

**Step 4.** Active facilitation ( $B=.19$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p<.01$ ), passive facilitation ( $B=-.10$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p<.05$ ), and passive harm ( $B=.12$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p<.05$ ) were still related to helping. Active harm ( $B=-.06$ ,  $SE=.03$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and passive harm ( $B=.11$ ,  $SE=.03$ ,  $p<.01$ ) still interacted with support for diversity to influence helping. Information justice was also negatively associated with helping ( $B=-.09$ ,  $SE=.04$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

### ***Implications for hypotheses.***

*Hypothesis 2a.* The hypothesis stating that active harm, passive harm, and passive facilitation would negatively affect work behaviour was partially supported in the case of helping. In support of the hypothesis, passive facilitation was negatively related to helping at steps 2, 3 and 4 suggesting that experiencing passive facilitation leads to less helping amongst employees. Contrary to the hypothesis, passive harm was positively related to helping at steps 2, 3 and 4 suggesting that experiencing passive harm leads to a greater level of helping amongst employees. Active harm was not related to helping at any step.

The aspect of hypothesis 2a stating that active facilitation would positively affect work behaviours was supported in the case of helping. Active facilitation was positively

related to helping behaviours at steps 2, 3 and 4 suggesting that experiencing active facilitation at work leads to more helping behaviour.

*Hypothesis 2b.* The hypothesis stating that support for diversity would attenuate the impact of BIAS-TS variables on work behaviour was partially supported in the case of helping. Active harm and passive harm both interacted with support for diversity to impact helping in step 3, and these interactions remained significant in step 4 with the introduction of justice.

Simple slope analysis showed that passive harm was significantly related to helping when support for diversity was high ( $\beta=.22$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and medium ( $\beta=.12$ ,  $p<.05$ ), but not when it was low ( $\beta=.01$ ,  $p=.87$ ).

This result is contrary to the hypothesis, as support for diversity strengthens rather than mitigates the relationship between passive harm and helping (see Figure 15). This suggests that when support for diversity is absent from an organisation, passive harm has no effect on employee helping behaviours. However, when an organisation displays a medium to high level of support for diversity, experiencing passive harm leads to an increase in employee helping behaviours.

Simple slope analysis showed that the relationship between active harm and helping was not different from 0 at any level of support for diversity (high  $\beta=-.09$ ,  $p=.12$ ; medium  $\beta=-.02$ ,  $p=.61$ ; high  $\beta=.04$ ,  $p=.46$ ; see Figure 16). This result does support the hypothesis as it suggests that support for diversity does not significantly alter the effect of active harm on helping behaviours.

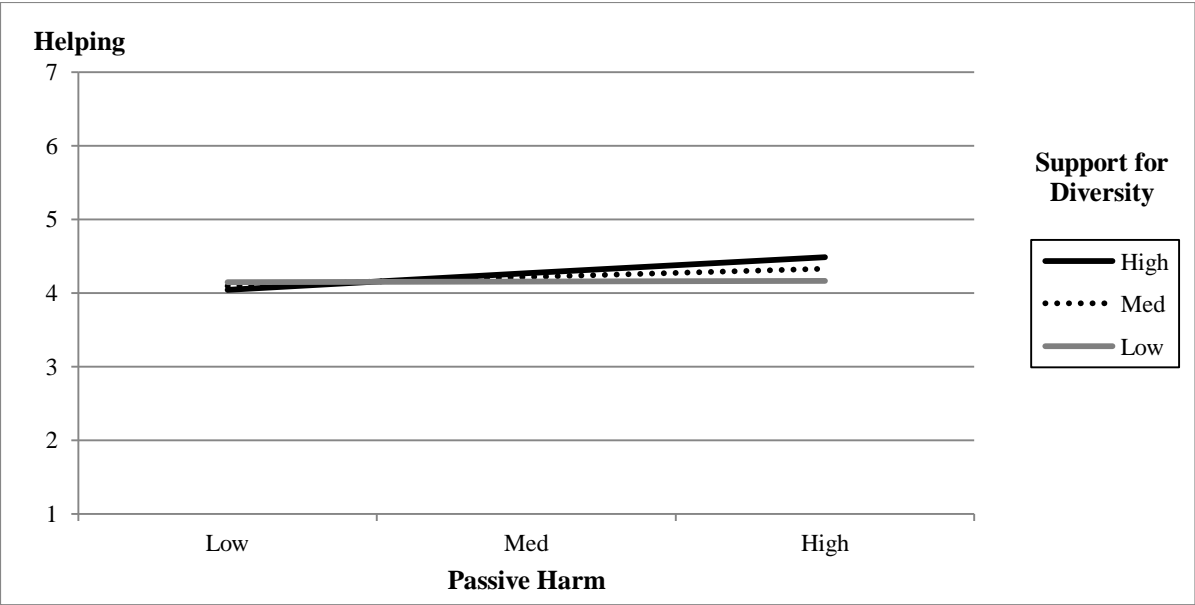


Figure 15. Passive harm predicting helping moderated by support for diversity.

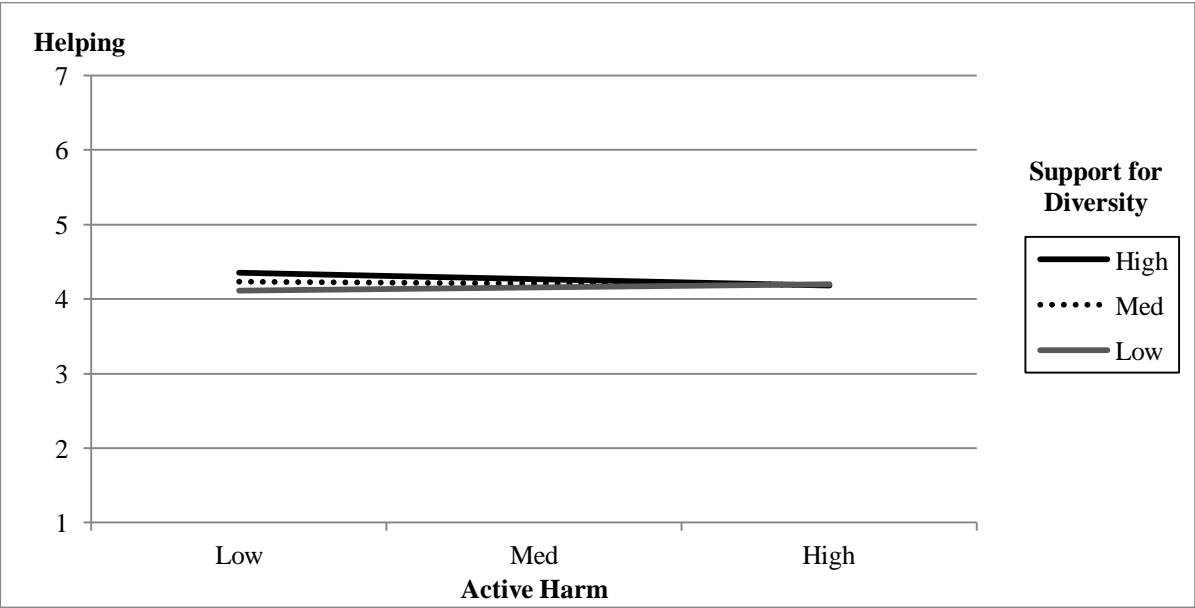


Figure 16. Active harm predicting helping moderated by support for diversity.

*Hypothesis 2c.* The hypothesis stating that the relationship between BIAS-TS variables and work behaviours would be exacerbated for members of an ethnic minority was not supported in the case of helping. No significant interactions between BIAS-TS variables and ethnicity were observed.

***Implications for work behaviours across overall model.***

Interpersonal justice was found to predict all BIAS-TS variables except passive harm, yet did not in turn affect work behaviour. This suggests that the influence of interpersonal justice is limited to forming judgements about interpersonal treatment rather than also impacting on actual employee behaviour.

Helping significantly related to all BIAS-TS variables except active harm both before and after justice were included. In addition, active harm interacted with perceived support for diversity to influence helping. This provides support for the hypothesised model as the BIAS-TS variables predicted helping even when taking into account justice. In the case of active harm, the model may only apply in certain organisational contexts.

A similar effect was observed for voice. Active facilitation predicted voice before and after justice was included in the regression model, providing support for the hypothesised relationship. Passive harm also interacted with support for diversity to influence voice both before and after justice was included in the model. This suggests that in certain organisational contexts passive harm influences voice.

**Discussion**

Results from study 2 suggest that interpersonal justice is active in predicting perceptions of active harmful behaviours, along with both active and passive facilitatory behaviours. As with study 1, although these aspects of justice exerted an influence on work attitudes later in the model the influence of discrimination was diminished. Specifically the strong influence of procedural justice may point towards Triana and Garcia's (2009) model. The impact of discrimination on work behaviours largely follows the pattern from study 1, providing support for the proposed model of perceived discrimination.

**Model Part One: Justice and Interpersonal Treatment**

The hypothesis that facets of justice would negatively predict perceptions of harm/passive facilitation and positively predict perceptions of active facilitation was partially supported. Interpersonal justice was negatively associated with active harm and passive facilitation, and positively associated with active facilitation. Following a workplace decision or outcome (e.g., job evaluation, promotion, pay rise), if an employee perceives that their supervisor or manager treated them unfairly then they are more likely to perceive that people in their workplace actively treat them badly or only treat them positively if it is not genuine. Conversely, if an employee perceives that such an interaction was fair, they are more likely to perceive that other people in their workplace actively treat them well.

This corresponds with the finding from study 1 and suggests that interpersonal justice appears to be the most active justice dimension in determining whether an employee feels they have been mistreated. This may be because experiencing negative treatment from a manager is more personal and direct than experiencing negative treatment as the result of an organisational policy or outcome. Evidently it is easier to blame people rather than systems when making attributions for unfair outcomes. This blame can be manifested by perceiving this target as the instigator of discriminatory treatment.

Distributive justice was also positively related to active facilitation. This suggests that following a workplace decision, if someone perceives the outcome as being fair then they are more likely to perceive that other people in their workplace actively treat them well. The strength of the relationship is much weaker than that with interpersonal justice; however, it is still an interesting finding given that distributive justice was not associated with perceived discrimination in study 1. The finding is, however, in line with research by Goldman (2001, 2003) which found that distributive justice influences discrimination claiming.

These results largely support those from study 1, particularly the finding that interpersonal interactions with managers are again the most important of the examined

variables in influencing how employees perceive they are treated at work. Unlike study 1 there was no association found between discrimination and procedural justice. As in study 1, no associations were found between discrimination and information justice.

### **The effect of support for diversity on the justice–discrimination relationship.**

The hypothesis that organisational support for diversity would attenuate the effect of justice on perceived discrimination was supported in the case of the effect of interpersonal and distributive justice on active facilitation. In an organisation that supports diversity, employees' experiences of justice do not affect how positively they perceive they are overtly treated by others. However, in organisations that have less support for diversity experiences of justice can alter these perceptions of interpersonal treatment.

This finding illustrates the benefits associated with supporting diversity; it ensures that unfair interactions with managers or unfair decision outcomes have less negative consequences for employees. One could experience this type of unfairness, yet still perceive one is treated well by other employees.

### **The effect of ethnicity on justice–discrimination relationship.**

The hypothesis that the ethnic status of employees would moderate the effect of justice on harm/facilitation was not supported. Unlike study 1, no significant interactions were observed. This may relate to the fact that the BIAS-TS measures of discrimination/interpersonal treatment do not specifically measure ethnic discrimination. Ethnic discrimination is more often experienced among members of an ethnic minority, and so it is logical that in study 1 members of a minority were more likely than majorities to associate unfairness with perceived ethnic discrimination. In study 2, however, there is no difference because the questions from the BIAS-TS measure assess discrimination by asking respondents about interpersonal treatment in general.

## **Model Part Two: Discrimination and Work Attitudes**



The hypothesis that experiencing passive harm, active harm, and passive facilitation lead to negative outcomes on employee work attitudes was partially supported. Passive facilitation was negatively related to affective commitment across the regression model. This suggests that the subtle behaviour that leads to positive outcomes for others has a negative impact on their affective commitment if the intentions behind it are selfish or not genuine.

Contrary to predictions, active harm was positively related to affective commitment, although this relationship became non-significant upon the inclusion of justice. This suggests that when a person is actively treated badly by those around them they will develop a stronger emotional connection with their organisation. However, as the result did not remain significant throughout the regression model it may have been affected by extraneous variables that justice later suppressed.

The hypothesis that active facilitation would positively predict work attitudes was supported. Experiencing overt positive treatment from others leads to a higher engagement in one's work and emotionally based commitment to one's organisation. This seems logical: being treated positively by others at work would create a more positive work environment that is reflected by increased engagement and affective commitment. In the case of engagement the effect of active facilitation became non-significant in later regression steps, reiterating the suggestion from study 1 that organisational justice (specifically procedural justice) has a stronger direct influence on work attitudes than discrimination.

#### **The effect of support for diversity on discrimination-work attitude relationship.**

The hypothesis that support for diversity would attenuate the relationship between discrimination and work attitudes was partially supported. In organisations that do not support diversity experiencing passive harm leads employees to become less engaged in their work. Conversely, if support for diversity is present then experiencing passive harm has no

effect on engagement. As in study 1, this finding illustrates the potential benefit of creating a positive work environment where cultural diversity is supported.

No such effect was observed for affective commitment. This is surprising given that an attenuating relationship was tentatively suggested by results in study 1, and given the finding by Triana et al. (2010). This may relate to the fact that active harm was found to be positively associated with affective commitment, and based on methodological similarity to past measures of discrimination this was the BIAS-TS variable most likely to be affected by support for diversity. The relationship between these variables may be more complex and could be the subject of future research because of the relative modernity of the BIAS-TS measures.

#### **The effect of ethnicity on discrimination-work attitude relationship.**

The hypothesis that the ethnic status of employees would moderate the impact of discrimination on work attitudes was not supported. While a significant interaction between passive harm and ethnicity was observed on engagement, these relationships were not significantly different from 0. This is in line with the results from study 1 which failed to find differential effects of discrimination between minority and majority employees.

#### **Model Part Two: Discrimination and Work Behaviours**

The hypothesis that experiencing passive harm, active harm, and passive facilitation would lead to negative outcomes on employee work behaviours was partially supported. As predicted, experiencing passive facilitation led to lower helping behaviours among employees. Even though the outcome is positive, the selfish and superficial motivations behind the behaviour create a more negative work environment where people are less inclined to go beyond their job requirements to help other employees.

Contrary to predictions, experiencing passive harmful treatment leads employees to make an effort to help others more in the workplace. It was thought that experiencing harmful

treatment would create a negative work environment and reduce positive extra-role behaviours. However, whilst unexpected, the actual finding is logical as experiencing harm may motivate employees to help their co-workers more in an effort to mitigate the negative effects of harm on others. As this type of negative treatment is subtle and hard to identify, employees may be especially willing to proactively help victims as they may feel that this type of discrimination goes unnoticed by other employees or even the organisation itself.

Both passive harm and passive facilitation had a significant impact on helping after justice was controlled for, providing further support for the proposed model in the case of work behaviours.

The hypothesis that experiencing active facilitation would have a positive effect on work behaviours was supported. Experiencing overt positive treatment from other employees leads people to help others more and offer more constructive challenges to try encourage improvements. This finding reflects the prediction that instances of positive interpersonal treatment create a more positive work environment in which employees make an effort to help each other.

**The impact of support for diversity on the discrimination–work behaviour relationship.**

The hypothesis that support for diversity would attenuate the relationship between discrimination and work behaviours was not supported as, contrary to predictions, support for diversity strengthened these relationships. In organisations with a high support for diversity experiencing passive harm leads employees to go beyond their role to voice constructive challenge in the workplace and to help other employees. Conversely, if there is less support for diversity then passive harm will not have any effect on employee voice or helping behaviours. This illustrates the positive benefit of supporting diversity as it can help facilitate a positive outcome from the negative experience of discrimination. Greater voice in

workplaces is positive, as employees who go beyond their role to raise issues do so for the purposes of improvement and development. Similarly more helping is good as it promotes a positive team environment amongst employees.

There was no direct relationship between passive harm and voice in the regression model, yet it did significantly interact with support for diversity in steps 3 and 4. This finding corresponds to study 1 as it implies that discrimination relates to voice only in certain organisational contexts.

### **The impact of ethnic status on discrimination-work behaviour relationship.**

In accordance with the result for work attitudes and the general results of study 1, being a member of an ethnic minority did lead to worse outcomes from discrimination. Again it appears that the assumptions made by the rejection-identification model do not apply. This finding will be further discussed in the general discussion.

## **General Discussion**

Results from studies 1 and 2 indicate some support for the proposed model of perceived discrimination. Both studies illustrated that perceptions of organisational justice have an influence on perceptions of discrimination. All facets of organisational justice except information justice were found to affect perceived discrimination across the two studies. The influence of interpersonal justice was particularly strong compared to the other dimensions, and was found to significantly impact on perceived discrimination across both studies.

This result suggests that interpersonal interactions between employees and their managers have a strong influence on the way in which employees perceive they are treated by others in their organisation. Perceived discrimination relates to fair treatment and so it is understandable that following a workplace decision, the perceived fairness of interactions with supervisors leading up to the decision is the key factor in determining if employees feel they have been discriminated against. Since discrimination involves interpersonal treatment,

unfairness may be more easily attributed to discrimination if an employee perceives a person rather than an organisational system or procedure as the reason for the unfair treatment.

Study 1 found that employees from an ethnic minority were more likely to interpret unfairness in these interpersonal interactions as being the result of racial discrimination. This finding reflects research by Avery et al. (2008) who found that ethnic differences in supervisor–employee relationships increase the likelihood employees will perceive discrimination. This finding was not replicated in study 2, which may be in part due to the fact that a general measure of discrimination was used as opposed to a measure specific to racial discrimination.

The result highlights the importance of managers being sensitive to cultural issues during interactions with employees from another ethnicity, especially if such interactions are subsequent to justice-sensitive outcomes such as reward allocation or selection decisions. Failure to do so may result in members of an ethnic minority perceiving that unjust outcomes are a result of discrimination based on their ethnicity. This is especially relevant as diverse work teams and work relationships will become more common in New Zealand.

Studies 1 and 2 did not provide comprehensive support for the idea that support for diversity affects the impact of injustice on perceptions of discrimination. Support for diversity did mitigate the effect of justice on active facilitation, meaning that despite experiencing injustice employees will still perceive that they are treated well by others if their organisation supports diversity. However, the general trend of the results point towards the conclusion that once an injustice has occurred organisational support for diversity has no effect on stopping this from resulting in feelings of mistreatment. Policies promoting fairness and equality may be seen as hollow to an employee who has just been treated unfairly, and therefore not positively affect the way they process the situation.

While interpersonal justice was active in predicting perceptions of discrimination, the effect of perceived discrimination does not generally continue through to the second part of the model to influence work attitudes. In both studies 1 and 2 the effect of discrimination on work attitudes became non-significant upon the inclusion of justice variables. Procedural justice particularly appeared to become a more important predictor of work attitudes.

This result suggests that two different processes may operate for perceived discrimination and work attitudes. While interpersonal justice influences perceived discrimination, the overall affective reaction to the organisation and employees' work is shaped by the perceived fairness of organisational policies and procedures.

Therefore the proposed model of discrimination does not acutely reflect the process leading to and resulting from discrimination in the case of work attitudes. Triana and Garcia's (2009) model of perceived discrimination may be more applicable in this case as their study also found that procedural justice, rather than perceived discrimination, acts directly on work attitudes.

Results from the current study expand upon Triana and Garcia's model by illustrating that both interpersonal and information justice may influence work attitudes. As this effect is dependent on support for diversity, the current study contextualises the model more as a function of organisational context. The trend of results suggests that support for diversity has an attenuating effect on the relationship between interpersonal justice and work attitudes. The results also suggest that support for diversity results in a positive relationship between information justice and work attitudes, while a lack of support for diversity results in a negative relationship between information justice and work attitudes. Results from study 1 also indicated that ethnic status impacts on the relationship between distributive/procedural justice and work attitudes. A visual representation of a possible model of perceived discrimination on work attitudes is seen in Figure 17.

Unlike Triana et al. (2010) the current study did not provide evidence that support for diversity attenuates the effect of discrimination on work attitudes. Study 1 did provide tentative evidence for an attenuating relationship of discrimination on affective commitment, yet this result did not meet our criteria for statistical significance. Study 2 found that support for diversity attenuated the impact of passive harm on engagement; however, this was the only significant interaction between discrimination and support for diversity across both studies.

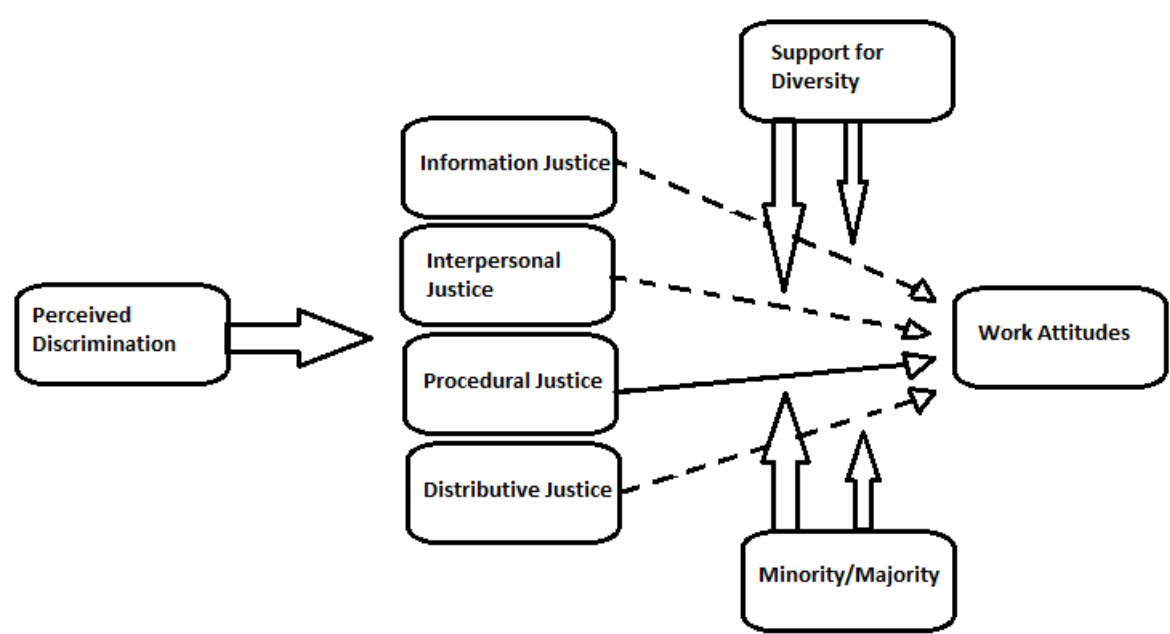


Figure 17. Proposed model of perceived discrimination on work attitudes.

This result is particularly surprising in the case of affective commitment, as Triana et al (2010) found a significant attenuating effect of support for diversity using the same measures and a similar procedure as the current study. The lack of a significant replication may therefore relate to the context in which the study was conducted and the samples used. Triana et al. used both general population samples from the internet and samples of students

from an MBA course. These samples differ from those used in the current study, which exclusively used employees from various organisations.

Triana et al. also had access to large non-White samples, which were affected differently by discrimination and support for diversity compared to White samples. The current study used a workplace sample with 71.5–74.6% of participants reporting being from the ethnic majority, which is representative of New Zealand workplaces in general. Although Triana et al. still found the hypothesised interaction in a predominantly White sample, the demographic makeup and climate for racial discrimination may mean that this is unique to the White majority in the United States, hence the lack of a replication in New Zealand. It is also possible that the Triana et al. finding relates specifically to racial discrimination. Study 1 almost replicated the result found by Triana et al. using a measure of racial discrimination, yet study 2 found no further evidence for this. Study 2 used a measure of general discrimination rather than asking participants to think specifically about racial discrimination.

Although results did not support the proposed model in the case of work attitudes, evidence was provided for the model for work behaviours. Both study 1 and study 2 found that in certain organisational contexts perceiving discrimination affected employee voice. The trend of results suggests that in organisations that support diversity, experiencing discrimination (specifically racial discrimination or passive harmful types of discrimination) increases the likelihood that employees will feel able to voice constructive challenge in the workplace. In organisations that do not support diversity perceived discrimination may have no effect on employee voice.

Helping behaviours were found to be affected both directly by perceived discrimination and in conjunction with support for diversity. Support for diversity had the same effect on helping behaviours as it did for voice; in organisations that support diversity experiencing discrimination (specifically passive harmful types of discrimination) increases



the likelihood employees will go beyond their work requirements to help other employees in the workplace.

The relationships between perceived discrimination and work behaviours were not overpowered by the influence of procedural justice as in the case of work attitudes. This suggests that the proposed model of perceived discrimination applies for work behaviours; interpersonal treatment by supervisors determines perceived discrimination, which results in changes to employee work behaviours. However, these changes can be dependent on the organisational context for diversity. A revised visual representation of this process is illustrated in Figure 18 below.

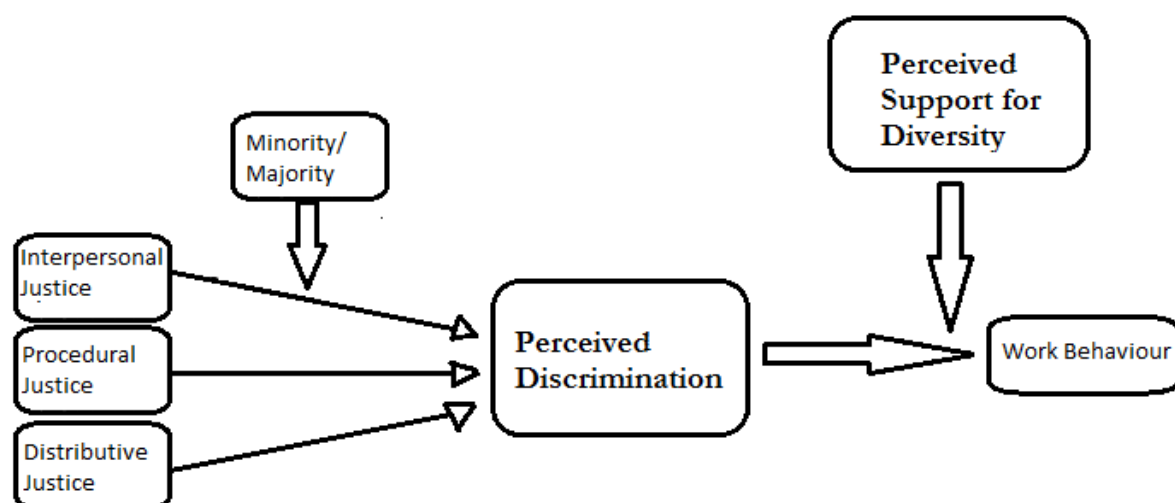


Figure 18. Model of perceived discrimination on work behaviours.

The current findings regarding work behaviours counter Triana et al.'s (2010) conceptualisation of work behaviours resulting from work attitudes as it shows work behaviours can be directly influenced by discrimination. The finding partially reflects the work by Ensher et al. (2001) who found that discrimination directly affects work behaviours. However, the pattern of results does not completely align with Ensher et al. who found that perceived discrimination negatively affects employee work behaviours. However, the current

study illustrates that the direction of the relationship depends on both the type of discrimination observed and the context for organisational support for diversity. Discrimination that is passive and facilitatory results in decreases in helping behaviours, discrimination that is passive and harmful results in increases in helping behaviours. This novel finding illustrates the benefits of including a more comprehensive measure of perceived discrimination that allows the researcher to distinguish specifically between different types of discrimination.

A general finding across studies 1 and 2 for both work attitudes and behaviours is that the ethnic status of employees does not affect the severity of the consequences of discrimination. This runs counter to the assumptions of the rejection–identification model, which argues that majority to minority discrimination has a stronger negative impact on social identity as it is perceived as reflecting wider social attitudes. The current study, however, found that discrimination affects employees from ethnic minorities and majorities in the same way.

This result may be a function of the unique New Zealand racial context. It is possible that the model does not apply here in the case of race and ethnicity because of a different racial climate and history of race relations. It may also be a function of the composition of the group “minority”. Participants reporting as being from any non-White ethnicity were included in this category, which is a very broad range of different groups. This includes indigenous New Zealanders, immigrants from several generations past, new immigrants, those born in New Zealand, and those born abroad. This is significant as variables such as cultural identity and place of birth have been shown to influence the effect of discrimination (Sanchez & Brock, 1996; Schaafsma, 2011).

### **Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

There are several limitations of the study which should be considered. Firstly, it is possible employee responses were affected because the data collection process was part of a university assignment. Employees may have taken the study less seriously than if it was part of an internal survey with the support of management, or could have been discouraged from responding truthfully. However, this was the most practical means to collect data and the data collection process is not seen as a fundamental limitation but rather an issue to consider.

Second, the current study relies on self-report measures to investigate organisational phenomena rather than any actual objective measures. This means that all results are a function of and dependent on employee perceptions, which may be especially an issue for the measures that indicate observable behaviour. Spector (1994) discussed the issues of relying on self-report measures in organisations. Collecting self-report data from different measures makes it harder to determine causality and means the potential for alternative explanations exists. However self-report measures do provide a useful picture of how people feel about their jobs and how they feel at work and the study should be interpreted from the point of view of employees. The issue of establishing causation is particularly relevant to the current study, which makes assumptions about the relationships between variables. While this should be considered in the interpretation of the results, the assumptions made are backed up by previous research and models based on sound psychological theory.

Thirdly, the study did not distinguish between specific ethnicities but grouped them into the two categories of minority and majority. This was largely done because separating participants into their respective ethnic groups would leave too few in each group for practical analysis. It also meant that comparisons would have been made across groups with vastly different sample sizes. It is a potential limitation because, as mentioned earlier, there are a wide range of different groups that make up the minority category. This could

confound results as the impact of support for diversity and discrimination, for instance, has been shown to vary across ethnic groups that all come under the term “minority” in the US (Triana et al., 2010). Future research with access to larger and more diverse samples could examine the proposed model in the current study across different ethnic groups. Future research could also examine the influence of variables such as place of birth, length of time in New Zealand, and language.

### **Strengths of the current study**

Conclusions from the current study are useful for several reasons. Firstly, a key strength of the study is that it uses employee responses from organisations across a wide range of sectors and industries. External validity is higher than if the study had used student samples, and conclusions drawn have a real applicability to a business environment. The data was obtained locally and so conclusions are specific to the New Zealand business context. This is important as the vast majority of research on discrimination comes from abroad.

Secondly, the study comprises two separate studies, which means that results found consistent across the two studies are more reliable. The use of two separate measures of discrimination also increases the reliability and applicability of these results. The BIAS–TS measures present an exciting and more theoretically valid way to examine discrimination. By using a measure which addresses many of the limitations of past discrimination research the current study is more reliable.

### **Conclusion**

The current study provides new information about the relationships between important organisational variables, and provides a foundation for future research to build on. Future research could further explore these variables to determine what processes occur for each. Currently the field consists of disparate models and future findings could help align

these and advance our knowledge on the interaction between justice discrimination and organisational level policies which support diversity.

The current study has provided evidence for the proposed model in the case of work behaviours, and provided suggestions of a separate process for work attitudes. Evidence accrued is tentative at times, however, and many questions remain unanswered. The interaction between support for diversity, ethnicity and justice on outcome variables at higher levels of the regression model is one example. Future research can build on the current findings to expand our knowledge about the important issues of workplace discrimination.

With regard to organisations, results from the current study illustrate the importance of remaining sensitive to issues of fairness in the workplace. Such perceptions have a fundamental effect on various outcomes for employees. The current study also illustrates the value of organisational policies that seek to increase tolerance, awareness, and equality amongst staff. Organisations seeking to successfully navigate the issue of changing workforce demographics would do well to acknowledge the implications of the current study: that support for diversity is an important tool in facilitating more positive outcomes from negative employee experiences. Specific policies depend on the nature of the particular organisation and it is up to managers and Human Resource professionals to implement policies that are appropriate to the needs and aims of their organisation.

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