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Bridge employment and full retirement intentions: the role of Person-Environment fit

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Abstract

Purpose - This study ~~attempts to explore~~ the relationship between different categories of Person-Environment fit and two types of retirement intentions (i.e. full retirement and bridge employment).

Design/methodology/approach - Data were collected from a convenience sample of 357 executives aged 50 and over, employed in French private sector companies. Hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling.

Findings - Perceptions of value congruence at vocational level and needs and supplies fit at organizational and job levels were positively related to the intention to hold a bridge employment after retirement. The fit between older worker's abilities and job demands was positively related to the two types of retirement intentions.

Originality/value - The complexity of retirement transition is taken into account with the introduction of two types of retirement intentions. Person-Environment fit is ~~shown~~ **proved** to be an antecedent of career intentions after retirement.

Keywords Person-Environment fit, Bridge employment, Full Retirement

Paper type: Research paper

Introduction

Retirement management is a major issue for Western societies that are struggling to ensure the survival of their finance systems through unpopular reforms (Oakman and Wells, 2013; Sabatier and Legendre, 2017). Several reforms and plans have been introduced in France, since the early 1990s for instance, to foster **in particular** the employment of older workers (more precisely in 1993, 2003, 2010 and 2014). Positive results¹ have been observed regarding the rate of employment of **older workers** in recent years in the southern half of European countries. ~~Besides the economic and legal spheres, organizational policies are Retirement issues certainly also affected by a renewed vision of retirement and retirees (Van Soligne and Henkens, 2014; Christin and Peretti, 2005). In the past, Instead of considering retirement was considered as a private matter and and it was assumed that employees prefer preferred to retire early (Henkens *et al.*, 2009). Nowadays, organizations can benefit from a skilled and experiencedn aging population if by developing a comprehensive suite of management strategies intended that to maintain and attract a motivated older workforce are implemented (Shacklock and Brunetto, 2011).~~ **Besides the economic and legal spheres, organizational policies are also affected by a renewed vision of retirement and retirees (Vough *et al.*, 2016; Van Soligne and Henkens, 2014).** Formerly, retirement was synonymous with the absence of paid employment among older employees (Shultz, 2003). Nowadays, confirming the conceptualization of retirement as a process that evolves over time (Beehr, 1986), **the transition to full retirement is comprised of** ~~older workers can consider~~ different pathways ~~when transitioning into full retirement~~ (Jones and McIntosh, 2010), including the form of work exercised during retirement known as “bridge employment.” Unlike full retirement that refers to a complete and definite withdrawal from the labor market, bridge employment concerns older workers taking up employment after they retire from their main career jobs.

¹ Employment rate of senior employees (over 50 years old) surpassed 50% for the first time in 2016. Source: INSEE.

Bridge employment can be exercised either part time or full time, in the same or in a different field to the career job (Feldman, 1994; Feldman and Beehr, 2011) and is becoming very common among older workers (Greenwald, 2004; Olleman, 2006). Bridge employment has become a valid retirement option for many older workers. For example, a study conducted in 2005 on individuals aged 50 years and over concluded that four out of five older workers were interested in bridge employment (Olleman, 2006). In another study, 78% of employees said they expected to continue working in some capacity during their retirement years (Greenwald, 2004). Further, research suggests that bridge employment is becoming a popular career choice for older workers (Greenwald, 2004).

Beyond the benefit of allowing organizations to keep skilled and experienced employees (Shacklock and Bunetto, 2011), bridge employment is also beneficial for individuals as it enhances life satisfaction during the retirement years (Wang and Shultz, 2010), as well as and is positively related to physical and psychological health (Zhan *et al.*, 2009). Also, It fulfills the need for both social contact (Lancee and Radl, 2012) and generativity by allowing older workers to mentor younger employees (Kerr and Armstrong-Stassen, 2011). Given the potential benefits of bridge employment at both individual and organizational levels, several scholars called for research on organizations would do well to examine the mechanisms leading why highly skilled older employees to decide to pursue their careers – by holding a career bridge employment – rather than to decide to fully retire (Bennet *et al.*, 2016; Wang and Shultz, 2010; Wang *et al.*, 2008; Zanibioni *et al.*, 2010). Developing In that perspective, conceptual models that take different integrating different retirement intentions into consideration can give us more insights into the issued needed to be developed.

Several studies have identified a Both Acknowledged antecedents of retirement intentions include . Attention has mainly been paid to the identification of personal variables (e.g. health: Talaga and Beehr, 1998; Taylor and Shore, 1995; financial situation: Adams,

1999; Mariappanadar, 2013; Wang et al., 2008; marital quality: Davis, 2003; Henkens and Leenders, 2010; personality trait: Schwaba and Bleidorn, 2018) and more recently, the identification of organizational variables (e.g. organizational commitment: Jones and McIntosh, 2010; Job satisfaction, Work stress: Wang et al., 2008; self-directed career attitude: DeVos and Segers, 2013; organizational tenure: Davis, 2003) have been shown to influence the different retirement pathways. For example, Davis (2003) found that married retirees and those who had longer organizational tenure were more likely to full retire than to engage in career bridge employment. In another study, Wang et al. (2008) found that retirees who were younger, had better health, were more educated, were less stressed and more satisfied at preretirement jobs, and thought less about retirement, were more likely to engage in bridge employment than full retirement. Wang et al., (2008), findings from previous research suggest that individual variables, such as financial situation or health, may not be the primary driving force for people taking up bridge employment against full retirement. In other words, older employees who intended to look for a bridge employment may be more driven motivated by the nature of the work environment (e.g. job design) and individual attitudes (e.g. organizational commitment) than by weak financial situation or poor health. So far, Thus, more research is needed to explore the effects of work related variables on retirement intentions. Furthermore, prior research that has studied on work related variables antecedents, has explored individual and organizational characteristics separately. However, variations in retirement intentions may not result precisely from the interaction between just the person and or his or her work environment but rather from the link between both aspects. There may not be “one best environment” for older employees, but situations of fit or misfit between employees and their work environment (Wang and Shultz, 2010). Despite the large body of research on the individual’s relationship with his or her work environment in the study of organizational behavior (Schneider, 1987; Schneider et al., 1998), and its considerable

explanatory power in predicting human-organizational behavior (Van Vianen, 2018), there is surprisingly little research was done on the role of the individual-work environment interaction in determining retirement intentions (for an exception, see Oakman and Wells, 2016).

Therefore, this study participates ~~main contributions to to the literature on retirement~~ are targeted in two ways which include theoretical and managerial contributions. First, as suggested by Topa and Alcover (2015) and Jones and McIntosh (2010) this study considers the complexity of retirement intentions is considered by distinguishing the intention to opt for full retirement from the intention to occupy some form of bridge employment, as recommended by Topa and Alcover (2015), Jones and McIntosh (2010) and Zanibioni *et al.* (2010). In this study, we mainly focus on career bridge employment as this form of employment can help address labor shortages (Jones and McIntosh, 2010) and allow older workers to fully express their human capital potential (Gobeski and Beehr, 2009). ~~Our~~ This choice is also motivated by the current need for executives in France: according to APEC² forecasts (2018), French enterprises should hire more than 230,000 executives need to be hired each year 13% more executives than in 2017 by the end of 2018 with 270,000 recruitments. This number in 2018 significantly exceeds the first pre-crisis level and the ~~and~~ hiring trend should continue in 2019; significantly exceeding the first pre-crisis level. In this context, given the knowledge and skills held by older executives, understanding the organizational factors influencing career bridge employment is of particular interest for recruiting companies.

Second, responding to the call by Wang and Shultz (2010), this study adopts an interactionist perspective based on the theory of Person-Environment (P-E) fit. As suggested by previous research (Cable and DeRue, 2002; Greguras and Diefendorff, 2009; Yu, 2016), it

² « Perspectives de l'emploi cadre 2018 », *Les études de l'emploi cadre*, APEC, N°2018-03, février. APEC is the largest staffing firm in France, specialized in recruitment and human resource consulting

contributes to the P-E fit literature by exploring how different types of P-E fit predict retirement behavioral intentions. Previous studies (Cable and DeRue, 2002; Greguras and Diefendorff, 2009; Yu, 2016) called for a consideration of the multidimensionality of fit by examining human behaviors at work. The present study adopts a similar this integrative approach by considering the three main conceptualizations of fit proposed in by Kristof (1996) widely cited review: Needs-Supplies, Demands-Abilities and Value congruence. This approach should provide multilevel guidance for managerial actions to maintain older workers' participation in organizational performance.

Theoretical framework

Retirement intentions

An older worker began to develop expectations and to express intentions about his future retirement projects well before the effective departure to retirement. Ekerdt (1998) identifies an anticipation phase of retirement that lies between 50 and 55, when the older worker begins to organize his life around his retirement projects. According to Kosloski *et al.* (2001), the planning of retirement in its first stages can be depicted as an intention regarding the desired form that it will take. Moreover, Beehr (1986) in his well-recognized model of retirement antecedents considers retirement intention to be the first antecedent of retirement behavior. The use of intentions is motivated by both theoretical and practical reasons.

First, from the perspective of planned behavior theory (Ajzen, 1991), intention is central in the determination of actual behavior. Also, the intention to retire has been shown to be an effective antecedent of retirement behavior (Henkens and Tazelaar, 1997; Van Soligne and Henkens, 2007). For example, through a longitudinal study, Henkens and Tazelaar (1997) show that 83% of those who have expressed the intention to take early retirement realize this

intention by actually leaving their jobs three years later. Second, from a practical perspective, the use of intentions offers intervention margins to managers, especially for those who want to maintain older workers (Zanibioni *et al.*, 2010).

During career transitions, individuals deal with disruptions that involve loss of resources such as skills, relationships and identity. They may be tempted to minimize these losses through the use of different strategies. Ashforth's (2001) Role Theory (Ashforth, 2001) and Continuity Theory (Atchley, 's (1989) Continuity Theory both provide an explanatory framework of retirement intentions based on past work experiences.

Role theory and continuity theories

During career transitions, individuals deal with disruptions that involve loss of resources such as skills, relationships and identity. They may be tempted to minimize these losses through the use of different strategies. Role Theory (Ashforth, 2001) and Continuity Theory (Atchley, 1989) Continuity Theory both provide an explanatory framework of retirement intentions based on past work experiences.

Ashforth's (2001) Role Theory focuses on role identity and the role transition process. Role identity is a set of goals, values, beliefs, norms, interaction styles and time horizons. Thus, identification is encouraged when the role occupant defines him or herself entirely or partially in terms of perceived role identity. As passing from work to retirement can be viewed as a role transition, role theory is relevant to the study of retirement decision-making (Barnes-Farell, 2003). According to Ashforth's (2001) Role Theory (Ashforth, 2001), retirement means vanishing from a work-related role identity. This loss of identity related to professional role can be a source of stress at retirement. Conversely, professional workers who feel that work gives meaning to their lives identify themselves with their professional roles tend to take later retirements and even prefer to avoid retirement (Barnes-Farrell, 2003).

According to Ashforth (2001), role identity ~~can~~ is built from one or several foci of identification (i.e. vocation, organization, organizational job and workgroup). ~~Different employee populations may build their role identities largely from one or several of these foci of identification. This leads us to suggest that~~ **Therefore**, if work role identity is central to ~~global~~ **an individual's** identity, ~~older workers~~ **this person should** ~~will~~ be inclined to pursue a professional activity once retired from ~~their~~ **his or her** career job, preferably in the dominant focus of identification. Otherwise, the transition ~~will~~ **should** be oriented toward extraprofessional roles that are valued at the time of retirement (i.e. associative activities or volunteering). As a complement to identity preservation, continuity theory explains the dynamics of retirement intentions with the preservation of accustomed strategies.

Continuity theory

~~Atchley's (1989)~~ Continuity Theory (**Atchley, 1989**) posits that individuals search for continuity in their personal and professional trajectories: they can maintain and preserve internal (e.g. ideas, emotions) and external (e.g. social and physical environment) structures by using strategies they know in familiar domains. **After retirement,** ~~people who leave their career employment remain the same psychologically; that is, they still have the same likes, dislikes, temperament and inclinations; , and~~ **consequently,** ~~they still~~ engage in the same activities, sometimes including work in similar jobs (Atchley, 1989; Gobeski and Beehr, 2009). As full retirement involves the loss of the work environment, older workers search for strategies to ensure continuity.

Continuity can be found either internally or externally. Internal continuity refers to the stability of internal structures (i.e. psychological dispositions and structures, temperament, knowledge) in relation to past experiences. It corresponds to the individual's ability to connect internal changes (e.g. ideas, temperament) to his or her past and to consider this past

as supporting or justifying the new self in the aging phase (Lieberman and Tobin, 1983).

External continuity refers to the stability of physical and social environments. It is manifested through the persistence of relationships and behaviors.

Several empirical studies have confirmed the relevance of Atchley's (1989) Continuity Theory to explain the decision to pursue careers by taking on bridge employment (e.g. Gobeski and Beehr, 2009; Kim and Feldman, 2000; Wang *et al.*, 2008). Individuals who retire remain psychologically stable when they retain the same temperaments and attitudes by engaging in similar activities to those they enjoyed before retirement (Atchley, 1989; Beehr, 1986; Schmidt and Lee, 2008).

To explain retirement intentions, we integrate Role and Continuity theories offer which provide a fully-fledged theoretical framework to explain retirement intentions. More specifically, retirement intentions this choice is can be explained motivated by the desire to maintain a valued role (Ashforth, 2001) or and to act in continuity with internal and external structures (Atchley, 1989). Hence, retirement intentions are determined by the centrality of work role and possible options to preserve internal and external structures. We suggest that this phenomenon depends on the perceived fit between the person and his or her current work environment. Personal identity can be built on belonging to a specific vocation, organization, job or workgroup if the employee has developed a satisfying level of fit with these identification foci. Similarly, continuity can be planned through bridge employment in the same vocation, organization, job or workgroup if the individual perceives a propitious adjustment to them. The theoretical framework built into Person-Environment fit suggests evaluating perceived fit with the level of adequacy between needs and supplies, demands and abilities, and the level of value congruence.

Person-Environment (P-E) fit

P-E fit corresponds to “*the compatibility between the individual and the work environment that occurs when their characteristics are matched*” (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005, p. 281). P-E fit can also be considered at various ‘levels’ of work environment (Kristof, 1996): Person-Vocation fit; Person-Organization fit and Person-Workgroup fit; Person-Job fit; Person-Supervisor fit. ~~This is generally assessed by comparing the same basic dimensions, such as job demands and the person’s ability to deal with them.~~ The **High levels of** P-E fit ~~higher levels of the different dimensions of P-E fit contribute to variance in attitudes and behaviors such as~~ **are related to many work attitudes and behaviors such as** job satisfaction (Gabriel *et al.*, 2014; Hardin and Donaldson, 2014; Yu, 2016) organizational citizenship and perceived organizational support (Cable and DeRue, 2002), well-being (Ostroff and Schutlle, 2007), organizational commitment (Greguras and Diefendorff, 2009; O’Reilly III *et al.*, 1991), work performance (Ostroff and Schutlle, 2007) and organizational goal ambiguity (Sun *et al.*, 2014).

Antecedents of P-E fit and their effects on work attitudes and behaviors have mainly been established with regard to new recruits (e.g. Gardner *et al.*, 2012), neglecting empirical validations on older workers. To the best of our knowledge, apart from the study conducted by Oakman and Wells (2016) in the Australian context, which examined the effects of job demands and person abilities fit on the intended timing of retirement, the relationship between P-E fit and retirement intentions has not been investigated to date. We attempt to fill this gap since **recent late career transformations suggest** ~~suggest~~ **indicate** that older workers do not necessarily adopt full retirement directly. We suggest that the perception of fit with the different components of the work environment encourages older workers to occupy a bridge **employment** once retired from their career employment.

Hypothesis development

The vocation, the organization, the job and the workgroup represent the most relevant aspects of the work environment for ~~older~~ executives, a population whose skills and abilities are needed in countries with aging populations, relevant aspects of the work environment are the vocation, the organization, the job and the workgroup. Indeed, Person-Supervisor (P-S) fit is less pertinent ~~was excluded as the~~ for ~~older~~ executives as they occupy leadership positions ~~in this study were all in positions of managerial leadership~~.³

Relationship between Person-Vocation (P-V) fit (value congruence) and retirement intentions

P-V fit is conceptualized as value congruence, which corresponds to the perceived fit between individual and vocational values (Kristof, 1996). According to Obodaru (2017), when forgone professional identities are linked to unfulfilled values, people look for ways to enact them and retain them in their self-concept. At the end of their careers, employees who perceive work as meaningful ~~tend to~~ make plans to postpone full retirement (Richardson and Kilty, 1992). In addition, older workers whose personal identity is strongly linked to a profession, are more likely to obtain a bridge **employment job** than to directly retire (Feldman, 1994).

In accordance with Ashforth's (2001) Role Theory, we suggest that P-V fit is positively ~~linked~~ **related to the** intention to occupy a bridge **employment job**. When vocational role identity is valued, career bridge employment is a way for older workers to maintain their internal structure as far as values are concerned, and consequently to ease transition to retirement.

³ Person-Supervisor fit ~~This component~~ was not cited by respondents to a preliminary qualitative study based on 12 interviews with senior French executives (methodology and results on demand).

Consistent with Atchley's (1989) Continuity Theory (Atchley, 1989), our proposition explains that future activities are chosen in continuity with past ones. Personality is built on experiences and social roles that have been assumed during life (Atchley, 1989). Once retirement age is reached, individuals continue to draw upon their past experiences to adapt to new situations.

Based on these arguments, we formulate the following hypotheses:

H1A. P-V fit (value congruence) is negatively related to full retirement intention.

H1B. P-V fit (value congruence) is positively related to bridge employment intention.

Relationship between Person-Organization (P-O) fit (needs-supplies and value congruence), Person-Group (P-G) (Value congruence) fit and retirement intentions

P-O fit is captured by two notions, 1) the match between individual needs and organizational supplies and 2) the value congruence between employee and organization (Edwards, 1991). P-O fit (needs – supplies) involves the organization satisfying employees' needs, wishes or preferences (Edwards, 1991). This concept is assessed by comparing what it results from the match between what the work environment provides (e.g., financial, physical and psychological resources) with and what the individual needs (e.g., payroll, development or training opportunities). Specifically, at the end of careers, financial needs are less important than intrinsic rewards (Kanfer and Ackerman, 2004). Moreover, Recent studies have suggested revealed that older workers who had the opportunity to learn new skills expressed the intention to stay with keep on working for their companies longer (Armstrong and Ursel, 2009; Herrbach *et al.*, 2009). As Feldman (1994) explains Indeed, bridge employment can help older employees to continue to satisfy their needs (Feldman, 1994). In line with continuity theory (Atchley, 1989), we suggest that older workers who consider that their

needs are satisfied by their organizations will continue their career by taking a bridge employment job. We thus formulate the following hypotheses:

H2A. P-O fit (needs-supplies) is negatively related to full retirement intention.

H2B. P-O fit (needs-supplies) is positively related to bridge employment intention.

As far as organizational leaders are concerned, Managerial choices and communication styles provide information that older workers use for their late career decisions (Barnes-Farrell, 2003). In addition, when stereotyped visions of older workers (e.g., poor performers, insufficiently flexible, reluctant to change) circulate in an organizational context, older workers often feel prompted to retire (Boumans *et al.*, 2008). Conversely, as explained by Ashforth's (2001) ~~Role Theory~~, the match between individual values and organizational or group values makes the related role identity central in the overall identity of older workers; full retirement represents the loss of a central and valued identity. Moreover, according to ~~Continuity Theory~~ (Atchley, 's (1989) ~~Continuity Theory~~, bridge employment helps allows older workers to maintain valued social interactions. On those premises, we argue that P-G fit incites older workers to extend their career. Thus, we formulate the following hypotheses:

H2C. P-O fit (value congruence) is negatively related to full retirement intention.⁴

H2D. P-G fit (value congruence) is negatively related to full retirement intention.

H2E. P-G fit (value congruence) is positively related to bridge employment intention.

The relationship between Person-Job (P-J) fit (demands-abilities/needs-supplies) and retirement intentions

⁴ Based on the results of the preliminary qualitative study, we excluded the relationship between P-O fit (value congruence) and the intention to hold a bridge employment job (methodology and results on demand).

P-J fit is captured by two concepts composed of two elements: 1) ~~On the one hand~~, the match between individual knowledge, skills and abilities, and the demands of the job, and ~~on the other hand~~, 2) the match between an individual's needs and desires and what is provided by the job (Edwards, 1991). Several studies have suggested that demands-abilities fit fosters bridge employment. Older workers who perceive their abilities as adequate are more dynamic in their career development and more open to change (Zanibioni *et al.*, 2010). Conversely, knowledge obsolescence increases the likelihood of retirement (Beehr, 1986). In fact, knowledge and skills ~~are~~ represent a source of personal control (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Individuals favor roles that increase their sense of control; if feelings of control in personal life are stronger than in employment, then older workers ~~will~~ opt for full retirement (Barnes-Farrell, 2003; Elovainio *et al.*, 2005). In addition, the intention to fully retire is ~~high~~ increased for ~~when~~ older workers ~~are~~ subjected to significant psychological and physical job demands (Elovainio *et al.*, 2005) and a substantial workload (Boumans *et al.*, 2008). Recent findings showed that employees with low job performance due to a demands/abilities mismatch anticipated retiring earlier than those who felt confident in their abilities (Oakman and Wells, 2013; 2016). From a continuity point of view, feelings of incompetence introduce discontinuity in the professional role (Atchley, 1989) and foster full retirement intention. Given the corollary phenomenon, feelings of competence at work thus encourage career choices in continuity with past jobs. On the basis of Atchley's (1989) Continuity Theory, we propose the following hypotheses:

H3A. P-J fit (demands-abilities) is negatively related to full retirement intention.

H3B. P-J fit (demands-abilities) is positively related to bridge employment intention.

Several studies indicate that when needs are met by the job, individuals are inclined to pursue their professional activities after retirement. Older workers who decide to change jobs

are willing to accept lower wages if the new position offers more flexibility and less stress compared to the previous job (Johnson *et al.*, 2009). In the same vein, older workers in jobs that offer ~~them~~ development opportunities are more likely to find a bridge **employment** job than to fully retire (Adams, 1999; Gobeski and Beehr, 2009; Zanibioni *et al.*, 2010), and are less inclined to take early retirement (Schreurs *et al.*, 2011). ~~Atchley's (1989) Continuity Theory (Atchley, 1989)~~ stipulates that individual needs are invariant, even during career transitions. ~~On the basis of this theoretical anchoring~~ **Therefore**, we propose that, through continuity, older workers who perceive P-J fit (~~needs-supplies~~) before retirement will express the intention to occupy a bridge **employment** in order to satisfy their needs. ~~This proposal leads us to~~ **Hence, we** formulate the following hypotheses:

H3C. P-J fit (needs-supplies) is negatively related to full retirement intention.

H3D. P-J fit (needs-supplies) is positively related to bridge employment intention.

Method

Data collection and sample

The population under study consists of private sector executives in France. On the one hand, the development of an economy based on the tertiary sector and technologies with high added value requires many executives to manage companies. The number of executives increased by 5.2% between 2010 and 2015. In parallel, 64% of SMEs claim to experience recruitment difficulties.⁵ On the other hand, in the private sector, executives' retirement behaviors tend to nurture this scarcity as opposed to observed behaviors in the public sector. The proportion of departures with a pro rata pension at 65 years old is higher in the public sector than in the

⁵ AGEFOS PME, 2016 (the first Inter-professional and national training insurance fund dedicated to SME-SMIs in France).

private sector. In the private sector, one in six employees **retires** before 65, even **without** the required number of annuities to obtain a full pension (Buffeteau and Godefroy, 2005). For this population, ~~retirement decision is not based on financial~~ factors other than financial ones (e.g. ~~and other factors such as~~ P-E fit) need to be investigated **in order to better understand retirement decision.**

We targeted people who met the requirements of age over 50 and held corporate executive status. ~~The field sampling method consisted~~ **Respondents were approached via the Internet and directly** ~~of directly approaching people via the Internet.~~ **The direct approach** to avoided the bias of interviewing only older executives active on social networks. Indeed, one of the reasons for being active on professional social networks is to signal one's presence on the job market. Our goal was to reach employees from diverse organizations in various sectors with different retirement intentions. Concerning online surveys, based on the title of the position and the tasks performed, we conducted a preliminary identification of profiles on the professional social network *viadeo* and then sent an introductory email about the study. Once the targeted person had agreed to take part in the study, web-based questionnaires were sent early in the morning in order to optimize the opportunities for email reading. Concerning face-to-face surveys, the questionnaires were distributed in two phases: first the principal author of the article briefly explained the issues and academic character of the study; second, once an agreement had been obtained, a questionnaire and an envelope were provided and hand delivered the following day at the same time.

A total of 1,500 questionnaires were distributed (95% online and 5% face to face). In all, 355 fully filled out questionnaires were retained for analysis, giving a response rate of 24%. This response rate is consistent with past research using online surveys. Our sample was composed of executives in different occupational categories (i.e., 18.8% in studies and consulting services, 12.9% in IT services). Most respondents were men (74%) with an

average age of 56.5 years old. Most respondents indicated they were married (84%) and highly educated (38.4% had completed college or university while 39.5% had obtained a Master's degree). The latter socio-demographic information is consistent with the nature of the executive position that requires advanced education.

Measures

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with various propositions on a five-point Likert type scale, with responses ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. In addition, to reduce non substantive and aberrant responses, some items were reversed (Nunnally, 1978; Paulhus, 1991).

Person-Vocation fit (value congruence). This construct and *Person-Organization fit (needs-supplies)* were measured through the four-item scale and the five-item scale of Kennedy (2005), respectively. Participants were asked to indicate the level of congruence between their personal and professional values. Sample items included: “*My values match or fit the values of my profession*” and “*My values prevent me from fitting in with my profession because they are different from my profession's values*” (reverse item). The scale's internal reliability was .69. *To measure Person-Organization fit (value congruence)*, Cable and DeRue (2002)'s three-item scale was used. This scale incorporates advances provided by Cable and Judge (1996), Chatman (1989), and Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001). Sample items included: “*The things that I value in life are very similar to the things that my organization values*” and “*My personal values match my organization's values and culture.*” The internal consistency of this scale was .95. *Person-Organization fit (needs-supplies)*. This construct was measured by the three-item scale of Kennedy (2005). Regarding *Person-Work Group fit (value congruence)*, as no scale was available to measure the congruence level between personal and colleagues' values, a four-item scale was generated on the basis of theoretical

research (Cable and Judge, 1996; Chatman, 1989; Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001) and qualitative interviews. *Person-Job fit (demands-abilities)* and *Person-Job fit (needs-supplies)* were measured through the scales (both with three items) of Cable and DeRue (2002). The empirical study of Cable and Judge (1996) served as a basis for developing this scale. Sample items included: “*The match is very good between the demands of my job and my personal skills*” and “*My abilities and training are a good fit with the requirements of my job.*” Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .89. Sample items included: “*My current organization meets the needs I expect an organization to meet*” and “*My current organization fails to meet my needs*” (reverse item). Internal reliability was .88.

Person Job fit (needs supplies). This construct was measured with the three item scale of Cable and DeRue (2002). This scale is based on the empirical studies of both Kristof (1996) and Edwards (1991). Sample items included: “*There is a good fit between what my job offers me and what I am looking for in a job*” and “*The attributes that I look for in a job are fulfilled very well by my present job.*” The scale’s reliability was .91.

With regard to Person Work Group fit (value congruence). As no scale was available to measure the congruence level between personal and colleagues’ values, the authors developed a four item scale on the basis of theoretical research (Cable and Judge, 1996; Chatman, 1989; Lauver and Kristof Brown, 2001) and qualitative interviews. Sample items included: “*My colleagues appreciate the same things as I do*” and “*My personal values fit perfectly with those of my colleagues.*” The scale’s internal consistency was .84. retirement intentions, several approaches have been used to measure it. Some authors (e.g. Jones and McIntosh, 2010; Topa and Alcover, 2015; DeVos and Segers, 2013) have relied on different scales to measure retirement intentions without subjecting them to all the steps recommended by scale construction paradigms (Hinkin, 1995). Other researchers (e.g. Zhan *et al.*, 2009) have used longitudinal panels such as the Health Retirement Study (HRS) or the Normative

Aging Study (NAS). Some researchers have operationalized retirement by asking about the intended timing of retirement (e.g. Oakman and Wells, 2016). Taking into account the absence of measurement scales whose reliability and validity have been rigorously demonstrated, following the recommendations of Hinkin (1995) we applied a qualitative study to generate develop the following two measurement scales (both with six items) of retirement *Bridge employment intention* and *Full retirement intention*.

Bridge employment intention. A six item scale was similarly developed by the authors (forthcoming) based on qualitative interviews. We followed the recommendations by Hinkin (1995) for scale development. Sample items included: “*Even though I can retire completely, I would still occupy a part time job in my professional field*” and “*To me, retirement and part time professional activity go together very well.*” The scale’s reliability was .95.

Full retirement intention. Similarly, a six item scale was developed by the authors (forthcoming). Sample items included: “*As soon as I can retire, I will stop all kinds of professional activity*” and “*Once in retirement, I would cease all kinds of professional activity to devote myself to something else.*” Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .93.

Control variables. Several control variables were introduced on the basis of past research. *Expected adjustment to retirement* was measured with the four-item scale of Taylor and Shore (1995). The alpha coefficient of this scale was .86. *Health satisfaction* was measured through Adams and Beehr (1998)’s four-item scale ($\alpha = .9$). A nominal variable measured whether the respondents’ partner had retired (1 = Yes) or not (0 = No). Respondents were also asked to indicate *their gross annual salary*. Finally, numerical and continuous variables measured respectively the *age* of respondents and the *number of dependents*.

Results

The hypotheses were tested with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). We used the AMOS 22 software with the variance-covariance matrix as input; the parameters were estimated using the maximum-likelihood method. Following the two-step technique recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), we first examined measurement models and then the structural model.

Measurement models

Assessment of measurement models was split into two phases: in the exploratory phase, the factorial structure was explored and refined; in the confirmatory phase, we evaluated the parameters and fit indexes (Brown, 2015). Two samples were generated for this purpose from the initial 355 questionnaires. For the exploratory phase, the criterion of a minimum sample size of ten times the number of items on the largest scale was applied (Roussel *et al.*, 2002). In addition, a margin of error was considered in order to avoid a potential deletion of extreme values which could make the sample size drop below the necessary minimum. Consequently, setting up the SPSS software to randomly generate a sample from the 25% of 355 questionnaires resulted in a sample of 84 respondents. For the confirmatory phase, the recommendation of a minimum sample size of 200 observations (Kline, 2015) was respected with the remaining sample of 271 questionnaires.

Interquartile ranges (box plots) and the criterion of the Mahalanobis distance⁶ were used to respectively examine univariate and multivariate outliers. No outliers were detected in the exploratory phase. However, in the confirmatory phase, the criterion of the Mahalanobis distance detected ten outliers which were deleted from the sample.

⁶ Individual responses with a Mahalanobis distance longer than three times the total quantity of variables are considered as extremes values.

Exploratory factor analysis (N1 = 84)

Through principal component analyses, items with low correlations with their factor or other factors ($\lambda < .6$), and items with communalities below .5 were identified and deleted. Thus, an item (“My values prevent me from fitting in with my profession because they are different from my profession’s values”) from PV fit (value congruence), an item (“Few organizations could meet my needs better than my current organization”) from PO fit (need-supplies), and two items (“Even though I can retire completely, I will still be working in my professional and part-time position”, “For me, retirement and part-time work go hand in hand”) from Bridge Employment were eliminated. After item purification, only unidimensional measurement models with an explained variance superior to .6 and satisfactory internal validity (Cronbach’s means of alpha coefficients $> .7$) were retained. Table 1 contains the construct measurement scales.

Confirmatory factor analysis (N2 = 271)

Confirmatory factor analyses were conducted on the unidimensional measurement models developed after the exploratory phase. Fit indexes recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999) indicated that the measurement models were adequately adjusted to the data (Table 2). Internal validity reliability, which was evaluated using Jöreskog’s rho (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1993), was satisfactory ($\rho > .7$); convergent validity, which was evaluated with the average variance extracted (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), was also acceptable ($\rho_{vc} > .5$) as shown in Table 1. Standardized loadings are greater than .5 and are therefore considered “practically significant” (Hair et al., 2014, p. 115). All latent variables shared more variance with their own indicators than with other latent variables ($\rho_{vc} > r^2$ between latent variables), thus

establishing discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) as mentioned in Table 3. Thus, the measurement scales shown in Table 1 were validated.

Insert Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3 about here

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among variables of interest are presented in Table 4.

Insert Table 4 about here

Test of the structural model

The conceptual model presented in figure 1 (including control variables) adequately squares with the data ($\chi^2/ddl = 2.34$, $p < .00$; RMSEA = .072; GFI = .970; AGFI = .950; TLI = .877; CFI = .888). Only TLI and CFI values were slightly lower than the required cutoff value (.90). These differences can be tolerated since the two fit indexes are sensitive to sample size and model complexity (Roussel *et al.*, 2002). The direct effects of variables were assessed through standardized loading, t-test value and associated p -value. Figure 1 shows that PV fit (value congruence) has a non-significant effect on full retirement intention ($\gamma = -.054$; $t = -.634$; $p > 0.05$) which invalidates hypothesis 1A, and a significant and positive effect on bridge employment intention ($\gamma = 0.197$; $t = 2.84$; $p < 0.01$), supporting hypothesis 1B. This latter result confirms that internalization of vocational values encourages older executives to pursue their professional activities (Feldman, 1994). Unexpectedly, PV fit does not influence

retirement intention showing that decisional processes concerning retirement or bridge employment are not symmetrical.

Likewise, P-O fit (needs-supplies) has a non-significant effect on full retirement intention ($\gamma = -0.116$; $t = -1.156$; $p > 0.05$) which invalidates hypothesis 2A and a significant and positive effect on bridge employment intention ($\gamma = 0.153$; $t = 2.173$; $p < 0.05$) thus validating hypothesis 2B. Our results confirm past studies showing that a supportive organizational environment encourages older workers to remain employed (Armstrong and Ursel, 2009; Herrbach et al., 2009). Also, decisional processes concerning full retirement or bridge employment appear again to be different.

P-O fit (value congruence) has a non-significant effect on full retirement intention ($\gamma = -0.091$; $t = -0.898$; $p > 0.05$). P-G fit (value congruence) has a non-significant effect on both full retirement intention ($\gamma = -0.074$; $t = -1.157$; $p > 0.05$) and bridge employment intention ($\gamma = -0.042$; $t = 0.677$; $p > 0.05$). Hypotheses 2C, 2D and 2E are not confirmed. Contrarily to our expectations, senior executives are not sensitive to values that are promoted in their organizations and work groups when considering retirement options.

~~P-G fit (value congruence) had a non-significant effect on both full retirement intention ($\gamma = -0.074$; $t = -1.157$; $p > 0.05$) and bridge employment intention ($\gamma = -0.042$; $t = 0.677$; $p > 0.05$).~~ P-J fit (demands-abilities fit) has a significant and negative effect on full retirement intention ($\gamma = -0.172$; $t = -2.635$; $p < 0.01$) and a significant and positive effect on bridge employment intention ($\gamma = 0.173$; $t = 2.68$; $p < 0.01$), supporting hypotheses 3A and 3B. Those results confirm past studies (Beehr, 1986; Barnes-Farrell, 2003; Elovainio *et al.*, 2005, Oakman and Wells, 2013; 2016; Zanibioni *et al.*, 2010) by showing that the feeling of being competent at work impact both decisions of postponing retirement and remaining employed through bridge employment.

Finally, P-J fit (needs-supplies fit) has a non-significant effect on full retirement intention ($\gamma = -0.120$; $t = -1.48$; $p > 0.05$) which invalidates hypothesis 3C, and a significant and positive effect on bridge employment intention ($\gamma = 0.146$; $t = 2.029$; $p < 0.05$), confirming hypothesis 3D. This result confirms one more time that decisions related to full retirement and bridge employment are not symmetrical processes. In other words, the decision to fully retire is not related to the criteria of P-J fit. However, when the job fulfills employees' needs, older executives are likely to pursue their career with a bridge employment. Results of past studies on bridge employment are confirmed (Adams, 1999; Gobeski and Beehr, 2009; Zanibioni *et al.*, 2010).

Concerning the control variables, age has a significant and negative effect on full retirement intention ($\gamma = -.156$; $t = -2.182$; $p < .01$) and a significant and positive effect on bridge employment intention ($\gamma = .128$; $t = 2.182$; $p < .05$). Expected adjustment to retirement has a significant and negative effect on bridge employment intention ($\gamma = -.268$; $t = -4.324$; $p < .01$) and a significant and positive effect on full retirement intention ($\gamma = .294$; $t = 4.441$; $p < .01$). Finally, 18.1% of the variance of full retirement intention and 17.9% of the variance of bridge employment intention were explained by predictors.

In sum, as shown below, the results indicate that P-V fit (value congruence), P-O fit (need-supplies), P-J fit (demands-abilities) and P-J fit (needs-supplies) are positively related to bridge employment intention (Hypotheses: 1B, 2B, 3B and 3D). In parallel, the findings show that P-J (demands-abilities) is negatively related to full retirement intention (Hypothesis: 3A).

Insert Figure 1 about here

Discussion

As management of career ends represent a major challenge for organizations and employees, the present study investigated two retirement intentions, full retirement and bridge employment, of a strategic workforce for organizations, i.e. senior executives. Our results show revealed that how retirement intentions depended on vary according to the perceived fit between senior executives and their with the work environment. Precisely, we elaborate on the three components of P-E fit, value congruence, needs-supplies and demands-abilities to discuss the results.

The influence of value congruence on retirement intentions

Assuming that work values are stable (Chatman, 1991) and affect work performance and behaviors (Schein, 1992), we analyzed value congruence at work. We hypothesized that the congruence between older workers' values and those of their profession, organization and workgroup influenced retirement intentions. Our findings indicated that only value congruence at the vocational level was positively related to bridge employment intention (H1B). This result confirms the theoretical models of Holland (1959) and Feldman (1994), as well as empirical research by Richardson and Kilty (1992) and Wöhrmann *et al.*, (2016): employees who perceive their profession as meaningful to their lives plan to postpone full retirement. This finding is line with Role Theory (Ashforth, 2001). Unexpectedly, value congruence at organizational and workgroup levels had no influence on full retirement intention. These counterintuitive results do not necessarily disconfirm Role Theory as they can be explained by the investment of older workers in substitute roles, such as associative roles, which can replace the loss of identity related to organizational or workgroup roles. These results can also be explained by the fact that older workers identifying to their current organization or workgroup by other means different from than values congruence to identify

~~with the current organization or workgroup.~~ For instance, Vough (2012) demonstrated that identification with the workgroup was highly behavioral and experiential. In other words, **identification with a workgroup might be more influenced by the emotional experience related to day-to-day actions than by the congruence of values** ~~when employees come to consider their identification with a workgroup, the most salient factors are related to their day to day experiences that impact their emotional experience rather than value congruence.~~ Another explanation ~~concerns~~ **is specific to** the population under study: vocational values may be more constitutive of older executives' identities than group and organizational values. ~~in older executives' identities as~~ Indeed, the executive profession is institutionalized and benefits from a high social status (Chreim *et al.*, 2007). Consequently, ~~compared with other types of P-E fit (i.e., P-O fit, P-G fit),~~ congruence of values at the vocational level is **the type of P-E fit – compared with other types of fit i.e., P-O fit, P-G fit – that is most** likely to influence **senior executives' identities and their** related behaviors.

The influence of needs-supplies fit on retirement intentions

We hypothesized that older workers who perceived that their needs (e.g., pay, development opportunities and recognition) were satisfied by their work environment (e.g., financial, physical and psychological resources) were more likely to occupy a bridge employment than to fully retire. ~~Indeed,~~ Our findings indicated that needs-supplies fit at the organizational level was positively related to bridge employment intention (*H2A*), confirming the proposition of Feldman (1994).

The findings also indicated that a needs-supplies fit at the job level had a positive influence on bridge employment intention (*H3D*). These results **confirm Continuity Theory (Atchley, 1989) and** are in line with **the empirical studies of** Adams (1999), Gobeski and Beehr (2009), Armstrong and Ursel (2009) and Zanibioni *et al.* (2010). For instance, Gobeski

and Beehr (2009) demonstrated that individuals holding positions that offered them development opportunities were more likely to occupy a bridge employment job during retirement. Furthermore, assuming that needs remain stable during retirement, bridge employment offers optimal continuity (Atchley, 1989) to individuals who perceive a needs-supplies fit at the job level. However, this type of fit was not related to full retirement intention, regardless of the level (H2A and H3C). This result can be explained by the pre-eminence of non-work-related needs (e.g. leisure) in determining the intention to fully retire.

The influence of demands-abilities fit on retirement intentions

This type of fit is based on a comparison between individual abilities and work demands. The results demonstrated that, unlike other types of fit, demands-abilities fit at the job level positively influenced bridge employment intention and negatively influenced full retirement intention (H3A and H3B). By considering the demands-abilities fit, these findings complement and enrich past research which focused solely on the influence of job characteristics on retirement intentions or behaviors (Elovainio *et al.*, 2005; Boumans *et al.*, 2008; Dal Bianco *et al.*, 2015; Oakman and Wells, 2013; 2016; Van Soligne and Henkens, 2014). Those results are also in line with Atchley's (1989) Continuity Theory (Atchley, 1989). Individuals keep roles over which they feel they have perceive a personal control. Conversely, perceived lack of control encourages older workers to opt for full retirement. Therefore, P-J fit (demands-abilities) induces individuals to maintain optimal continuity by occupying a career bridge employment job in the same field. Unlike other types of fit for which continuity can only be obtained within the same organization, demand-abilities fit at the job level can be achieved through a career bridge employment job in another organization – as long as the skills required remain unchanged and individuals can control their new role.

Conclusion

Contributions

By examining the relationship between the different levels of P-E fit and two retirement intentions in the French context, this study contrasts with past research on career ends in several ways. In examining the relationship between levels of P-E fit and different retirement intentions in the French context, we make several contributions to the literature. First, the analysis knowledge of the differential effects of levels of P-E fit on retirement intentions advance brings an important contribution to the knowledge understanding on First, the analysis of the differential effects of P-E fit brings an important contribution to the knowledge on retirement antecedents (Bennet *et al.*, 2016; Oakman and Wells, 2016) and answers the call made by Wang and Shultz (2010). P-E fit can be presented as a person-situation interaction that implies a correspondence between the attributes of an employee and those of the work environment (Ostroff and Schuttle, 2007). This study differs from prior research that examined individual and organizational variables separately by introducing the lens of P-E fit, offering an interactionist approach of retirement antecedents. Also, as recommended by several authors (e.g. Cable and DeRue, 2002; Greguras and Diefendorff, 2009; Yu, 2016), our study reveals the differentiated effects of various fit levels. Retirement is complex as P-E fit can influence both full retirement and bridge employment intentions but in different ways.

Second, the present study differentiates from past research that analyzed solely one form of retirement; by integrating full retirement and bridge employment in a single conceptual model, it contributes to fill a research gap research that as it conceives retirement in its plurality is still in its early stages (e.g. Topa and Alcover, 2015; Zanibioni *et al.*, 2010; Zhan *et al.*, 2009). In addition, it significantly contributes to the burgeoning literature on bridge employment (Gobeski and Beerh, 2009), and very little is known about the potential role of P-E fit variables (Wang and Shultz, 2010). As such, our study contributes to the growing literature on retirement by examining of how the perception of P-E fit by older

employees with regard to different aspects of their work environment relates to full retirement and bridge employment intentions.

Theoretical implications

P-E fit can be presented as a person-situation interaction that implies a correspondence between the attributes of an employee and those of the working environment (Ostroff and Schuttle, 2007). Responding to the call by Wang and Shultz (2010), this study contributes to knowledge of retirement antecedents by exploring the role of P-E fit. More specifically, it differs from prior research that examined individual and organizational variables separately by introducing the lens of P-E fit, offering a fresh approach to research into retirement antecedents. Also, as recommended by several authors (e.g. Cable and DeRue, 2002; Greguras and Diefendorff, 2009; Yu, 2016), our study reveals the differentiated effects of various fit levels. Retirement is complex as P-E fit can influence both full retirement and bridge employment intentions.

Nevertheless, The results of this study showed that, contrary to the intention to fully retire, bridge employment intention was closely related more closely to the different levels of P-E fit. These findings can be explained by the fact that, When contemplating anticipating the eventuality of holding a bridge employment job, older employees take evaluate carefully the quality of their interaction-fit with their organization and career job; by contrast, into consideration more than when envisaging full retirement, which is liable to be related older employees might consider other spheres of life (e.g., marital status, dependent persons) to a greater extent. Thus Finally, by exploring the effects of P-E fit on both full retirement and bridge employment intentions, we can conclude that the results of this study give greater insights reveals into the work-related nature of bridge employment.

Managerial implications

To establish career plans, managers need to know about the availability of their older colleagues. Identifying high-potential aging executives who intend to occupy a bridge **employment** once retired could encourage HR strategies designed to recruit them by improving their P-E fit. This practice can be beneficial to all parties. On the one hand, organizations would avoid the loss of human capital caused by retirement (Wang *et al.*, 2008). On the other hand, older employees could gradually prepare their full retirement through a bridge **employment**.

The P-E fit scales, which present good psychometric qualities, provide HR managers with tools to follow the evolution of older workers' fit levels over time. For organizations interested in maintaining older employees, a lack of fit with the work environment would alert managers and help to shape corrective actions.

The results indicated that bridge employment intention was positively related to needs-supplies fit at organizational and job levels. Older workers' needs, which are dominantly intrinsic, can be satisfied at organizational level through policies such as competency development and career planning. In addition, managers can respond to the needs of their older executives by offering greater flexibility, a recurrent requirement among older workers (Tremblay and Larivière, 2009).

The influence of demands-abilities fit on different retirement intentions also raises questions on how to maintain older workers' employability. ~~The aim is to manage the timing and form of their retirement.~~ According to Ilmarinen (2009), older workers' employability depends on their functional capacity (physical and mental health), skills updating, motivation to continue working and the work itself (work environment and management style). Thus, organizational practices in favor of work-life balance, continuous learning, and work-related

flexibility are more likely to satisfy older workers' needs and to retain those who wish to continue expressing their potential (Wang *et al.*, 2013).

In addition, improving the work environment of older employees could be beneficial for all employees ~~whatever their age~~ (Munk, 2003). In an examination of work-related organizational structures, Griffiths (2007) asserted that, to date, research has been conducted with age-free models that fail to capture age-related changes and therefore, cannot account for shifts in work attitudes that occur with aging. ~~She argues that~~ New models should take into account predictors of retirement into account in order to support effective strategies benefitting the retention of older employees.

Limitations and future research

~~Despite our contributions, this study presents some limitations that need to be addressed.~~
~~First, regarding the sample,~~ The interviews **respondents** were predominantly with male private sector executives working in France. A generalization of the findings would require the inclusion of more female and international respondents. ~~Second,~~ As the majority of retirement intention studies use self-report measures, common method bias can skew the results to some extent (Naudé *et al.*, 2013). We nonetheless took some measures to minimize these potential biases: **separation of** ~~First,~~ the sets of items of variables (i.e., independent or dependent) ~~were separated~~ into different sections; **use of** ~~Second,~~ different question formats ~~were used~~ within each set of items (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). ~~Third, the current study only relies on subjective measures of P-E fit. However, as recommended by Verquer et al. (2003) in their meta-analysis of P-O fit outcomes, future studies should investigate the different effects of both subjective and objective fit on retirement intentions.~~ ~~Fourth,~~ Several researchers acknowledge the changing nature of P-E fit over time, recognizing it as “dynamic” rather than “static” (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2002). Longitudinal data ~~could help us~~ would be required to

assess the stability of older workers' intentions over time. Such data could also be used to assess actual retirement behavior rather than intentions.

Fifth, with regard to the variables included in our conceptual model, we suggest that for a deeper understanding of retirement intentions, future studies should include other types of bridge employment, such as non-career bridge employment (Topa and Alcover, 2015) or bridge employment in the same organization (Jones and McIntosh, 2010). For instance, older employees may want to maintain some aspects of their role identities that are specific to their organizational roles (e.g., linked to the status and seniority achieved in their current positions) by holding a bridge employment in the same pre-retirement organization. Sixth, the model can also be extended by incorporating mediating variables such as job satisfaction or different commitment foci in the relationship between P-E fit and retirement intentions. Assessing actual retirement behavior rather than intentions is another potential research avenue. Seventh, this study does not distinguish misfit directions. For example, individuals may feel that their skills undermatch or overmatch the job requirements (Cable and DeRue, 2002). Therefore, future research should investigate the directions of P-E misfit as antecedents of retirement intentions and behaviors.

Although further research is needed, it is encouraging from the present study that retirement decisions concerning full retirement and bridge employment are not symmetrical processes. In addition, bridge employment can be noticeably influenced by P-E fit; this result makes compatible the consideration of career idiosyncrasies (as P-E fit is specific to each employee) and the identification of patterns of bridge employment intentions.

Finally, all the respondents came from France. Our findings should therefore be considered as preliminary supporting evidence that needs to be corroborated by further

empirical validations in other countries which present comparable job market dynamics and work legislation.

Conclusion

The management of career ends represents a pending issue for aging societies striving to finance their pension systems, for organizations confronted to the loss of expertise, and for aging employees preoccupied by the potential loss of valued internal and external structures (Atchley, 1989) and valued role identity (Ashforth, 2001) after retirement. In this regard, bridge employment is likely to become an increasingly frequent form of employment after the age of retirement due to aging populations and to the lengthened life span in most developed countries.

As bridge employment seems to be an increasingly prevalent option for older workers (Bennet *et al.*, 2016), more needs to be understood about its implications for individuals, families, employers and society as a whole. In addition to the human capital held by older employees, some organizations might be interested in employing retired workers because they are frequently paid less than active employees (Feldman, 1994).

Our study attempted to expand the understanding of predictors of bridge employment and full retirement intentions by testing their relationship with different levels of P-E fit. It also reveals that decisional processes differ for full retirement and bridge employment. Precisely, full retirement intention is only negatively influenced by one type of P-E fit, i.e., P-J fit; whereas bridge employment is positively influenced by P-V fit, P-O fit (needs-supplies and value congruence) P-J fit (demands-abilities and needs-supplies). Bridge employment presents a work related nature, as opposed to full retirement, presumably dominantly related to the sphere of personal life. Therefore, *The results show that organizations could use*

foster bridge employment to facilitate the pursuit of careers after retirement by increasing the level of P-E fit—i. Instead of acting on variables such as health, family constraints or pension levels, organizations could act on the level of P-E fit. The main contribution of this study is its assessment of the influence of P-E fit on retirement intentions, as it reflects the compatibility of older workers with their work environment. Depending on the level or the conceptualization of P-E fit, managerial actions could be put in place to promote the employment of older workers.

For a deeper understanding of retirement intentions, future studies should include other types of bridge employment, such as non-career bridge employment (Topa and Aleover, 2015) or bridge employment in the same organization (Jones and McIntosh, 2010). For instance, older employees may want to maintain some aspects of their organizational roles identities (e.g., identities linked to the status and seniority achieved in their current positions) by holding a bridge job in the same pre-retirement organization. Future research could also investigate mediating variables such as job satisfaction or different foci of commitment in the relationship between P-E fit and retirement intentions. Another future direction would be to investigate the directions of P-E misfit (i.e. undermatch or overmatch: Cable and DeRue, 2002) as antecedents of retirement intentions and behaviors. As bridge employment appears as an increasingly prevalent option for older workers (Bennet *et al.*, 2016), more needs to be understood about its implications for individuals, families, employers and society as a whole.

Although further research is needed, it is encouraging from the present study that retirement decisions concerning full retirement and bridge employment are not symmetrical processes. In addition, bridge employment can be noticeably influenced by P-E fit; this result makes compatible the consideration of career idiosyncrasies (as P-E fit is specific to each employee) and the identification of patterns of bridge employment intentions.

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Table 1

Psychometric properties of measurement models

Measurement models and items	Stand. Loading	Internal Reliabilit.	AVE
PV fit (Value Congruence)		0.743	0.501
My profession represents my personal values.	0.792		
My current profession represents my personal values better than other professions.	0.782		
My values match or fit the values of my profession.	0.512		
PO fit (Needs-Supplies)		0.924	0.753
My current organization meets the needs I expect an organization to meet.	0.933		
The attributes I look for in an organization are fulfilled by my present organization.	0.918		
My current organization fails to meet my needs (reverse scored).	0.721		
There is a good fit between what my organization offers me and what I am looking for in an organization.	0.883		
PO fit (Value Congruence)		0.949	0.861
The things that I value in life are very similar to the things that my organization values.	0.884		
My personal values match my organization's values and culture.	0.941		
My organization's values and culture provide a good fit with the things that I value in life.	0.957		
PG fit (Value Congruence)		0.846	0.588
My colleagues appreciate the same things as I do.	0.765		
My personal values fit perfectly with those of my colleagues at work.	0.865		
My personal values prevent me from agreeing with my colleagues because they are not the same.	0.522		
My colleagues and I share the same values.	0.864		
PJ fit (Demands-Abilities)		0.867	0.688
The match is very good between the demands of my job and my personal skills.	0.730		
My abilities and training are a good fit with the requirement of my job.	0.965		
My personal abilities and education provide a good match with the demands that my job places on me.	0.774		
PJ fit (Needs-Supplies)		0.930	0.816
There is a good fit between what my job offers me and what I am looking for in a job.	0.895		
The attributes that I look for in a job are fulfilled very well by my present job.	0.962		
The job that I currently hold gives me just about everything that I want from a job.	0.849		
Bridge Employment Intention		0.906	0.711
Working part-time during retirement is not a disadvantage for me.	0.763		
During retirement, I don't exclude practicing in my professional field but part-time.	0.981		
During retirement, it is not excluded that I return to work part-time in my current field of activity.	0.902		
I don't intend to resume my professional activity during my retirement, even part time (reverse scored).	0.698		
Full Retirement Intention		0.921	0.665
As soon as I can retire, I will stop all kinds of professional activity.	0.811		
To me, retirement and work do not go together very well.	0.664		
Once in retirement, I will cease all kinds of professional activity to devote myself to something else.	0.885		
Once retired, I will definitely turn the page on the professional activity.	0.937		
Whatever the nature of the job, I don't intend to work during retirement.	0.906		
I do not envisage retiring completely from my professional activity during retirement (reverse scored).	0.642		

Table 2

Goodness-of-fit indexes of measurement models

Measurement Models	Absolute indices			Incre. indices		Parsimony indices	
	χ^2 (ddl)	GFI-AGFI	RMSEA	TLI	CFI	χ^2 /ddl	CAIC (indep. model)
PV fit (Value Congruence)	.600 (1)	.999-.991	.000	1.006	1.000	.600	33.55 (210.73)
PO fit (Needs-Supplies)	2.453 (1)	.995-.977	.003	.988	.996	1.227	55.18 (147.41)
PO fit (Value Congruence)	1.723 (1)	.996-.974	.052	.997	.997	1.723	34.67 (824)
PG fit (Value Congruence)	2.641 (2)	.995-.975	.035	.996	.999	1.32	55.30 (502.73)
PJ fit (Demands-Abilities)	.003 (1)	1.000-1.000	.000	1.008	1.000	.003	32.92 (419.25)
PJ fit (Needs-Supplies)	2.227 (1)	.994-.967	.068	.994	.998	2.270	35.14 (685.87)
Bridge Employment Intention	4.651 (9)	.994-.987	.000	1.006	1.000	0.517	83.65 (1218.20)
Full Retirement Intention	2.790 (2)	.995-.974	.039	.997	.999	1.400	55.37 (811.58)

Table 3

Discriminant validity of measurement models

Measurement models	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. PV fit (Value Congruence)	.502										
2. PO fit (Needs-Supplies)	.288	.753									
3. PO fit (Value Congruence)	.434	.581	.861								
4. PG fit (Value Congruence)	.272	.134	.078	.588							
5. PJ fit (Demands-Abilities)	.182	.138	.112	.120	.688						
6. PJ fit (Need-Supplies)	.315	.321	.449	.114	.162	.816					
7. Full Retirement Intention	.029	.033	.045	.022	.044	.019	.665				
8. Bridge Employment Intention	.061	.032	.060	.019	.048	.019	.610	.711			
9. Expec. adjustment to Retirement	.031	.076	.056	.023	.021	.027	.023	.022	.884		
10. Health Satisfaction	.033	.010	.009	.001	.031	.008	.016	.004	.008	.563	

Note. The non-diagonal elements are the squared correlation between latent variables while the diagonal elements (in bold) are the AVEs

Table 4

Means, standard deviations and correlation matrix

Measurement models	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. PV fit (Value Congruence)	3.51	.79	-										
2. PO fit (Needs-Supplies)	2.85	.61	.434**	-									
3. PO fit (Value Congruence)	3.32	1.02	.528**	.726**	-								
4. PG fit (Value Congruence)	3.33	.97	.407**	.374**	.228**	-							
5. PJ fit (Demands-Abilities)	3.93	.77	.338**	.356**	.325**	.301**	-						
6. PJ fit (Need-Supplies)	2.72	.49	.471**	.549**	.635**	.329**	.410**	-					
7. Full Retirement Intention	2.46	.76	-.116	-.182**	-.220**	-.124*	-.203**	-.156*	-				
8. Bridge Employment Intention	3.02	.64	.185**	.172**	.226**	.105	.204**	.142*	-.825**	-			
9. Expected Adjustment to Retirement	3.15	.53	.153*	.204**	.201	.073	.081	.130	.130	-.104	-		
10. Health Satisfaction	3.95	.49	.152*	.092	.092	.034	.185**	.097	-.129*	.074	.050	-	
11. Chronological Age	55.42	4.32	.139*	.196**	.167**	.071	.111	.233**	-.159*	.176**	.136*	.090	-
12. Dependents	1.78	1.09	-.069	.030	.028	.051	-.028	-.076	.022	.005	-.089	-.073	-.308**

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Figure 1

Validated structural model

