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## **Learning is Essential: A Study on the Influence of Career Management Practices in the Retention of Younger Generations**

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Master in Human Resources Management and Organizational Consultancy

Supervisor:  
PhD Andrea Fontes, Invited Professor,  
ISCTE-IUL

September, 2021





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Department of Human Resources and Organizational Behavior

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*“Life begins at the end of your comfort zone”*

Neale Donald Walsch



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## **Abstract**

Nowadays, Millennials and Generation Z share the workplace with older generations, Generation X and Baby Boomers. A multigenerational workforce creates enormous challenges for talent management and presupposes a necessity for strategic positioning from organizations. It is pivotal to consider individuals' different career orientations, expectations, and motivations.

This study focuses on choosing the right career management practices and promoting learning and development as starting points to retain the best talent. However, younger generations are now more encouraged to take control of their career progression rather than being driven by organizational demands. Therefore, we intend to assess the protean career orientation of Millennials and Generation Z, their learning orientation, and their retention. In this research, we focused on development opportunities as the key factor for their decision to stay in the organizations.

This research contributes to the debate on workforce retention, learning and development attitudes, as well as generational theory. This is particularly relevant to Generation Z, as existing literature is still in a nascent stage for this generation. The data was collected through an online questionnaire with 246 participants. The results showed that 1) younger generations showed a higher protean career orientation when compared to Generation X, which positively influences their learning orientation; 2) Learning orientation positively influences retention through development opportunities for younger generations; 3) Organizations' informal career management practices moderate the relationship between protean orientation and learning orientation for younger generations.

**Keywords:** Generations, Protean Careers, Career Management Practices, Retention

**JEL Classification:** 015 - Human Resources; M12 – Personnel Management



## Resumo

Atualmente, *Millennials* e Geração Z partilham o local de trabalho com gerações anteriores, Geração X e *Baby Boomers*. Equipas multigeracionais geram enormes desafios na gestão de talento e pressupõem uma necessidade de posicionamento estratégico das organizações. É fundamental considerar as diferentes orientações de carreira, expectativas e motivações dos indivíduos.

Este estudo evidencia práticas de gestão de carreira e a promoção da aprendizagem e desenvolvimento contínuos, como pontos de partida para reter os melhores talentos. No entanto, as gerações mais jovens, incentivadas a assumir controlo do próprio progresso na carreira, são cada vez menos orientadas por exigências organizacionais. Assim, procurámos avaliar a orientação para carreiras proteanas dos *Millennials* e Geração Z, para a aprendizagem, e a sua retenção. Para isso, estudámos as oportunidades de desenvolvimento como fator-chave na sua decisão de permanecer nas organizações.

Esta investigação contribui para o debate sobre retenção, aprendizagem e desenvolvimento, e teoria geracional. É particularmente relevante, no caso da Geração Z, dado que a literatura existente se encontra numa fase bastante inicial para estes indivíduos. Os dados foram recolhidos através de um questionário online com 246 participantes. Os resultados indicam que 1) gerações mais jovens, comparativamente com a Geração X, apresentam uma maior orientação para carreiras proteanas, o que influencia positivamente a orientação para a aprendizagem; 2) A orientação para a aprendizagem influencia positivamente a retenção através de oportunidades de desenvolvimento; 3) As práticas informais de gestão de carreira nas organizações moderam a relação entre a orientação para carreiras proteanas e a orientação para a aprendizagem.

**Keywords:** Gerações, Carreiras proteanas, Práticas de gestão de carreira, Retenção

**Classificação JEL:** 015 - Human Resources; M12 – Personnel Management



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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Change is one of the great constants in career and organizational life (Hall et al., 2018). To survive and grow, any organization must acquire and use resources in unique and valuable ways, or, over time, other organizations will (Boudreau, 1996). Talent is one of the most valuable and strategic resources for achieving organizational outcomes and keeping or losing it can be critical to maintain a competitive advantage (Cardy & Hall, 2011). Globalization and competition for human capital have increased the need to retain a competent and skillful workforce (Cattew et al., 2007). Simultaneously, with increasing staffing challenges, this has resulted in employee retention becoming a global concern for organizations (Ployhart, 2006).

Talent Management can be defined as the policies, practices, and systems, influencing employees' behavior (Noe et al., 2010). Knowing that a company is only as strong as its people: the ability to hire, develop, and retain a team of skilled employees is a competitive advantage for any business (Stahl et al., 2007). Nowadays, employees are encouraged to take more control of their own career progress, leading to new career models where they can derive benefits and satisfaction set by themselves rather than by an employer (Baruch, 2006). Therefore, understanding new career attitudes has become fundamental for organizations to develop effective career management and generational inclusive practices. A career is an unfolding sequence of an individual's work experiences over time. Everyone who works has one (Arthur et al., 1989).

Over the last thirty years, new or contemporary concepts of career have been discussed in business literature due to societal, technological, and economic developments. Protean (Hall, 1995) and boundaryless careers (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996), two independent yet related concepts, emphasize the role of the individual as the primary actor in managing their career and have been highly acknowledged by researchers. According to Crocitto et al. (1998), a boundaryless career can be defined as a career independent from organizational and traditional arrangements. It involves taking opportunities offered by different employers. This concept does not characterize a single career form, but a range of possible forms that defy traditional employment.

The idea of having a lifetime job, forever staying in the same organization has been replaced by protean career paths (Hall, 2002). Hall (1995) described the move from a more traditional and organizational career to the protean career, a career based on self-direction, shaped more by the individual than by their organization. This career attitude is often associated with individual intrinsic dimensions such as the way individuals perceive success, rather than by measurable factors like salary or linear progression (Gubler et al., 2014). Protean careerists are considered more proactive in finding alternative career opportunities

(Baruch et al., 2015). Nonetheless, while some studies have found a positive association between protean career orientation (PCO) and turnover intentions (Supeli & Creed, 2015), others report a negative association (Baruch et al., 2015) or non-significant (Baruch, 2014). Therefore, from these ambivalent results, we suggest that the relationship between PCO and retention may be contingent to moderating and mediating dimensions.

Alternative work arrangements taking place over traditional employment relationships (Katz & Krueger, 2017) require higher levels of adaptability and self-direction from job seekers and employers. At the same time, corporate demography is evolving and ever-changing. Today, there is a multigenerational workforce with four different generations side by side, each shaped by the context in which they emerged and by the shifts in sociocultural and socioeconomic environments (Macky et al., 2008). Research has determined that generational differences can have a significant role in individual's expectations and aspirations (Gibson et al., 2009). Understanding the events that shaped each generation's formative years can help managers understand what works best for individuals in the workplace (Williams, 2008).

Millennials and Generation Z seem to differ from workers from prior generations as they bring different personalities and attitudes to the workplace, which poses a unique challenge for managers. While Millennials have been a subject of research for many years, literature on Generation Z is still in a nascent stage (Chillakuri, 2020). As the latest generation to enter the labor market, they will become a large set of the workforce in a near future. Some literature addresses how this generation may influence the current workforce, but little research is focused on what they desire from their employers (Leslie et al., 2021). A gap in literature related with the career aspirations of Gen Z talent has been identified. It is important to understand how younger talents differ from previous generations, what it is they expect from work and the implications for career management (Pandita, 2020; Lanier, 2017).

Human resources teams must explore ways of satisfying the newcomers and trying not to neglect employees of older generations, by learning how to manage multigenerational teams (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2022). The importance of retaining qualified professionals will only grow with the entry of post-millennials into the labor market, because of their differences in work and career expectations (Snieska et al., 2020 as cited in Benitez-Marquez et al., 2022). Younger generations are demonstrating lower commitment and higher turnover intention, while their numbers are increasing in the workforce. We can also assume generational differences in learning orientation due to the increasing value of learning and continuous professional development, therefore human resources management should take these generational differences and expectations into consideration (D'amato & Herzfeldt, 2008).

The purpose of this research is to assist organizations in retaining individuals from Generation Y and Z, who are considered more proactive in finding alternative job

opportunities. We propose to investigate how ensuring development opportunities, through learning-oriented career management practices can influence the retention of protean talents from younger generations. This study assumes importance due to the lack of literature regarding the identification of Generation Z's career orientation, attitudes and factors that influence the retention of these individuals. It also provides a contribute to present literature on Millennials and allows for comparisons with their predecessors, Generation X. Furthermore, this research provides the opportunity to help managers design future strategies and organizations to adapt management practices to the needs and aspirations of professionals from younger generations.

This dissertation is assembled into six chapters. The first chapter is introductory, presenting the research problem addressed by this study, its relevance, as well as the research objectives and the dissertation structure. The first chapter is followed by a literature review divided in five topics, providing a contextualization for the study, and for our proposed hypotheses. The first topic lays out an understanding of generation cohort theory and a description of the generations composing today's workforce, followed by a theoretical background on contemporary careers, (particularly protean career orientation). The third topic is related to retention and describes the dimension development opportunities as a key factor for retention, followed by a theoretical background on learning orientation. Finally, we present the thematic of career management practices. Chapter three presents the methodology of the study, including the research method (conceptual model and hypotheses), the participants, instruments used and the data collection and analyses procedure. Subsequently, chapter four focuses on the data analysis and results of the research, while the discussion of the proposed hypotheses is presented in chapter five. Last but not least, chapter six aims to extract the study's conclusions, including practical implications, limitations, and future research. In addition, we present the references and the annexes associated with this study.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review and Hypotheses Development**

### **2.1 Generations at work**

According to Mannheim's theory of generations (1952), years of birth are one of the most distinctive elements in generational theory, but often insufficient to place a person in a specific generation. Life experiences and events, particularly in the early years, are considered to have a strong influence on one's values and attitudes (Mannheim, 1952; Strauss & Howe, 1991). Smola and Sutton (2002) suggested that work values are more influenced by generational experiences than by age and maturation. People born in the same chronological, social, and historical timeframe are called a generation (Twenge et al., 2010). Generations are defined by age, period, and cohort. Age is related to how old an individual is when life events and transitions happen. A period is what happens within the individual's lifetime. Finally, a cohort is a group of individuals with shared events and experiences in their early years that could similarly impact their attitudes and behaviors throughout their lives. (Devaney, 2015).

Generational theory and research have highlighted the evolution of the different generation groups' career needs. By studying individual's needs and their generation's perspectives, organizations can benefit via increased productivity, morale, and employee retention (Mahmoud et al., 2020). When a new age cohort enters the workplace, organizations and their employees must face changes in work dynamics and company culture. A new generation being part of the work environment will impact the professional and social context in which individuals develop their careers, which highlights the importance of human resources management on processes such as onboarding and integration (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2021). Organizations are now experiencing four generations at the same time in the workplace. As there is no consensus on where each generational cohort starts and ends, for the purpose of this research we will assume the following definitions: Baby boomers are considered as being born between 1946 and 1964, Generation X born between 1965 and 1979, and Generation Y (or Millennials) born between 1980 and 1994. Generation Z, or Gen Z, born between 1995 and 2010 is the latest generation to join the workforce. (Smola & Sutton, 2002; Lissitsa & Laor, 2021).

Previous research has determined that generational differences play a significant role in one's expectations and aspirations (Gibson et al., 2009). These differences are reflected in personality traits, work values, beliefs, attitudes, and motivations to work in ways presumed to be relevant for managers (Smola & Sutton, 2002). According to Rousseau (2000), the psychological contract can be described as an individual's held beliefs in reciprocal obligations between them and their employer. Each generation of employees has different views on the psychological contract established with their employer, as well as their trust and loyalty towards the organization, the importance of work-life balance, and the importance of teamwork

or knowledge sharing (Sessa et al., 2007; Bencsik et al., 2016). A workplace that makes a member of one generation feel comfortable is likely different from one that satisfies a member from another generation (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011). Therefore, understanding how to appeal to individuals from all generations can promote cooperation and a sense of unity, which can prevent any problems derived from a lack of understanding (Becton et al., 2014). The differences between generations affect several aspects of the functioning of an organization. Adjusting the organizational practices, and developing strategies, methods, and tools for retaining and managing a multigenerational workforce offers a chance to bring out the potential of intergenerational diversity (Mahmoud et al., 2020; Gadomska-Lila, 2020). Furthermore, generational diversity in the workplace can also be highly beneficial, as it provides unique backgrounds and perspectives on leadership, communication styles, and career development (Deluliis & Saylor, 2021).

### **2.1.1 Baby Boomers**

This is the name given to a generation of individuals born between 1946 and 1964, after World War II (Hogan et al., 2008). Growing up in post-war years, this generation is the result of economic and job-related prosperity and optimism. This generation values safety, stability, and financial certainty. These individuals are motivated by extrinsic rewards, for example, promotions and monetary rewards (Collins, 1998 as cited in Gardner, 2008). Personal improvement and recognition are also very important for Baby Boomers. They are strongly attached to their job, and they believe their position should be valued by managers. Often described as committed and reliable, they value positive relationships, trust authority, with respect for their superiors, and expect respect from others (Venter, 2017).

This generation has been characterized as individuals who believe in hard work and in sacrifice to achieve success (Tolbize, 2008) They find it difficult to continue to excel in their work due to the career pressure of younger generations and their struggles with technology (Glass, 2007). Considering how millions of baby boomers are leaving the workplace at an accelerated rate each year, their retirement from the workforce allows for younger generations to take over, which creates more opportunities for them to have more impact in the workplace (Flippin, 2017).

### **2.1.2 Generation X**

The second oldest generation of today's workforce is Generation X, born from 1965 to 1979 (Berkup, 2014). This generation's members are now becoming senior members of the workforce as Baby Boomers retire. Unlike their predecessors, who associate achievement with long working hours, they desire a better work-life balance. Despite this, they are reported

to having difficulties with disappearing borders between work and private life (Gursoy et al., 2008) They are defined as self-directed, skeptical, and autonomous. They value participation and being respected by their superiors and are more defiant than Boomers as they are not impressed by authority and micromanagement. (Werth & Werth, 2011; Waltz et al., 2020; Berkup, 2014). This generation tends to have different communication preferences from younger generations. An example is their use of emails to communicate in the workplace, while Generation Z individuals, for example, would rather text (Seemiller & Grace, 2019).

Growing up in years marked by economic recessions in the early 1980s and high unemployment rates, they lived under additional economic and social uncertainty (Lyons et al., 2007) and are considered more risk averse than younger generations (Reisenwitz & Iyer, 2009). Because Generation X witnessed their predecessors' loyalty towards organizations fail to protect them from losing their jobs, they are more loyal to their profession rather than to their workplace. However, when compared to younger generations, they want to identify themselves more with the organization and remain there more often for mere obligation (Valickas & Jakštaite, 2017).

This generation works to live but works wisely rather than working long hours (Berkup, 2014). Considered "digital immigrants", this generation was not surrounded by technology, they had to learn digital skills, unlike younger generations, now considered digital natives (Lissitsa & Laor, 2021). They are therefore seen as a transitional generation between old generations, more loyal to tradition, and new generations of technology (Berkup, 2014). According to Cavanaugh and Noe (1999), this generations' psychological contract comprises, from the individuals' side a readiness to take responsibility for their career development, commitment to work, adaptability, and global mobility. In exchange, organizations should offer development opportunities, challenging work, and a guarantee of employability rather than job security. Compared to Baby Boomers, the importance of learning and continuous development increases with Generation X.

### **2.1.3 Generation Y**

The majority of Generation Y, also called Millennials (Howe & Strauss, 2000) is already in the labor market. They are digital pioneers, born between 1980 and 1994 (Francis & Hoefel, 2018) and they hold university degrees, working alongside individuals from Generation X and a growing number of people from Generation Z. Unlike individuals from previous generations, Millennials tend to evaluate the influence of other people differently, being more critical of managers while for example, those from Generation X are more likely to accept an authority's opinion unquestionably (Stanišauskienė, 2015). It is also reported that Millennials are optimistic, driven, even more goal-oriented, and demanding of the work environment than Generation X.

According to Howe & Strauss (2000), they are cooperative, trusting, and team players. They look for teamwork within their organizations to gain their personal goals (Berkup, 2014) and are more loyal to the team than the organization (Casey, 2015 as cited in Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). Employees from Generation Y are more career-oriented and care more about work/life balance, as well as having challenging work, trainings, and career development opportunities (Kong, 2013; Valickas, 2017). Compared to Generation X, these individuals not only look for balance between business and personal life, but also among business relations and personal improvement. They are more willing to take chances than members of Generation X, who show a tendency to prefer safer paths of action. Because they are willing to take risks, they consider their mistakes as opportunities for learning (Reisenwitz & Iyer, 2009; Berkup, 2014).

Considered as less loyal to their employers than previous generations (Durkin, 2008), they are independent, have strong aspirations for career growth, higher expectations for salary and flexibility in work environment (Wailand, 2015). Due to being less committed to their organizations, they are more likely to leave if not satisfied (Twenge et al., 2010). According to Howe and Strauss (2008), because Millennials grew up in a diverse world, they understand the importance of learning and embracing new perspectives. They prepare for business life through training, courses, and internships, as well as their part-time jobs. They prefer to work for an employer whom they respect and who provides learning opportunities, as they believe in the importance of lifelong learning (Hastings, 2008).

These characteristics of the Millennial generation are compatible with new career attitudes, such as Protean Careers (Kaushal & Vashisht, 2021; Cordeiro & Albuquerque, 2017). It is about viewing one's career as a route to self-fulfillment (Hall, 2004) and focusing on inner satisfaction, autonomy, life balance, and freedom, elements considered crucial for Millennials (Broadbridge et al., 2007). Baruch (2004) suggests that Millennials are less interested in lifelong jobs, care more about making a difference and having challenging and meaningful work for their self-development.

#### **2.1.4 Generation Z**

Generation Z stands out as the first true digital native generation (Leslie et al., 2017). Born between 1995 and 2010 (Lanier, 2017) this cohort comprises 32% of the global population and will make up roughly a quarter of the global workforce by 2025 (World Economic Forum, 2021). They are more agile than previous generations, individualistic, not afraid of continuous changes and they look for solutions to their problems on the internet (Bencsik et al., 2016; Berkup, 2014). Stillman and Stillman (2017) have analyzed the contrast between Gen Z's independent tendencies with Millennials' more collaborative working style. Some research

performed by Adecco (2016) also suggests this generation prefers independent work and tends to be reluctant to be involved in teamwork.

The constant connectivity with the internet and social media has these individuals consuming information faster than any generation before (Lanier, 2017). While Millennials have grown up with technology, Generation Z is the first to be connected to technology from birth and the ones with more access to information than any previous generational cohort. They perceive technology as part of their daily lives, but not an innovation. They have high digital expectations and prefer working in a technologically sophisticated environment (Stillman & Stillman, 2017). Nonetheless, they are as impatient as Generation Y, they want things to happen quickly, in great part due to the impact of the advancements of technology (Berkup, 2014).

They are more socially conscious, particularly innovative, and permanently looking for change (Kardes, Cronley, & Cline, 2014). Gen Z individuals believe equality is very important and they are very sensitive to the issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, more than any other generation (Twenge, 2017, as cited in Schroth, 2019). They also prioritize social activism and company ethics. To attract this generation, employers need to speak louder than words, they need to highlight their efforts and commit to societal challenges and be consistent when it comes to sustainability and climate change, for example. Gen Zs are the most diverse generation, not only with race and gender, but identity and orientation wise. Because they prioritize diversity, they believe companies should do the same to diversify their talent pipelines (Gomez et al., 2019)

This generation's introduction to the workplace has been challenged by a lot of uncertainty, the Covid-19 pandemic, economic downturns, and its social and labor implications (Benítez-Márquez et al., 2021). Nonetheless, these challenges do not undermine this generation's high expectations about their work (Snieska et al., 2020 as cited in Benitez-Marquez et al., 2022). They expect close relationships with leaders and colleagues and are looking for regular feedback (Turner, 2015). Learning is vital in Gen Z's career aspirations, allowing them to develop and move laterally through the organization, as opposed to vertically. They look out for mentors and coaching programs to fit their ambitions, and studies have supported the notion that these individuals would change jobs because of more learning opportunities, not necessarily because of salary (Barhate & Dirani, 2021). Some authors state that the contact between younger employees and older generations within the workplace can become an important retention strategy for this generation, as it can promote learning and mentoring (Wong & Rasdi, 2019).

According to Deloitte's 2019 report "Welcome to Generation Z", this generation is more independent and entrepreneurial, differing from Millennials when it comes to career development paths. Gen Z prefer to have more diverse careers, with entrepreneurial



opportunities, but with the safety of stable employment. Pay matters the most to this generation, but Gen Z values salary less than any other generation. Work-life balance, flexible schedules, workplace stability, alongside having perks and benefits from their employers are important career goals for this generation (Bencsik et al., 2016; Deloitte, 2019).

Employers need to take into consideration how these individuals will choose a career of their own interest (Bencsik et al., 2016). Aligned with protean career theory (Hall, 1976) this generation works to serve their personal growth, so their loyalty is not guaranteed. To hire and retain this workforce, companies need to let go of more traditional norms and regulations, they need the necessary flexibility at work to incorporate their personal aspirations with their professional aspirations. A career for Gen Zs is not about the job, but about the learning, growing, and developing on a personal and professional level (Tewari & Bhattacharyya, 2017).

## **2.2 Career path: Traditional versus Contemporary careers**

According to Arthur et al. (1989) careers are an unfolding sequence of an individual's work experiences over time. The concept of career has transformed over time, due to phenomena like globalization and consequent global competition, technological advancements, economic uncertainty, changes in organizational structures and job mobility. These are some of the factors shaping modern careers (Hirschi, 2018). To deal with the decline of permanent employment, individuals have changed attitudes, becoming more proactive and wanting more control over their career progress (Hall, 2004; Kaushal & Vashisht, 2021; Supeli & Creed, 2015). More recently, the Covid-19 pandemic has also brought further change and uncertainty to career paths (Hite & McDonald, 2020).

Throughout the twentieth century, the predominant view on careers was very traditional, based on linear upward progressions within the same organization, focus on status, responsibility, and salary (Arthur, 1994; Baruch, 2004). The individual is considered dependent and committed to the same employer as well as the conditions, opportunities, and objective rewards given to them. Employers are also given the responsibility of their employees' career development, management, and progress. (Larsen, 2004; De Vos & Soens, 2008). The traditional career structures have mostly been supplanted by boundaryless careers since the 1990s, as job opportunities go beyond the boundaries of any single employment setting and careers are not tied to a single organization (DeFillipi & Arthur, 1994; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) and by protean career orientation (Hall, 1996) both relevant concepts for contemporary careers.

### **2.2.1 Contemporary careers: Protean Career Orientation**

According to Hall (1996), the career of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is protean, coming from the name Proteus, a Greek god who could change shape at will. A protean career is a form of career orientation centered on the conception of psychological success and pursuit of continuous learning, deriving from individual career management, rather than driven by organizational demands and constraints (Briscoe et al., 2006; Hall, 1976).

The protean career mindset is comprised of multiple components, which includes cognitive, evaluative, and behavioral domains. The cognitive component is related with specific work and life values, the evaluative component is related with an individual's personal and professional goals, and the behavioral component is about acting consistently with values and goals. Ultimately, a protean career is defined by employability and a drive to learn (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Hall, 2004). Protean career orientation relates to two major competencies: adaptability and identity. It is said to be higher in individuals with higher self-directedness and a values-driven attitude. Self-directedness is related with the ability to adapt to change and

regulate behavior to meet demands in work performance, learning, and personal environment. A values-driven attitude is related to having a career in which an individual's internal values provide them the guidance and measure of success for their career (Briscoe & Hall, 2002).

Protean and boundaryless careers are independent but correlated concepts, differing more in terms of emphasis rather than in substance (Gubler et al., 2014). The protean career focuses on individuals' career management through their motives and values, while boundaryless careers seek to explain career progress across multiple organizations (Supeli & Creed, 2015). Some individuals can have protean attitudes when managing their careers and want to cross organizational boundaries, while others can have strong boundaryless and protean attitudes yet not the inclination toward physical mobility (Briscoe, Hall & DeMuth, 2006). To better understand this, and to support companies in managing employees, an example of hybrid profiles of likely career combinations is available on Table 1. Each career profile is associated with a metaphoric name, a description of their characteristics and career development challenges.

**Table 1. Protean and Boundaryless combinations: career profiles**

Career Profiles	Protean Career		Boundaryless career		Description of main characteristics (Briscoe et al., 2006; Segers et al, 2008)
	SD	VD	PM	PM	
<b>Lost/Trapped</b>	Low	Low	Low	Low	These individuals are considered trapped in the sense that they score low on four dimensions. They are not driven by personal values or by managing their own career, limiting their control and career options.
<b>Fortressed</b>	Low	High	Low	Low	Fortressed individuals are very focused on their personal values. Nonetheless, they are inflexible when directing their own career and recognize opportunities across boundaries.
<b>Wanderer</b>	Low	Low	Low	High	Career profile of individuals only driven by physical mobility. Very boundaryless physically, but not psychologically. They are essentially controlled by opportunities instead of directing them.
<b>Idealist</b>	Low	High	High	Low	They are considered values driven and psychologically boundaryless, but this may not reflect in their career management or in the crossing of physical boundaries. Their challenge is to have an idealistic career that does not require them to be flexible.
<b>Organization man/woman</b>	High	Low	High	Low	They have a strong ability when it comes to career self-management, but may not reach great potential, as they are not clear on their own values. Able to cross psychological boundaries, but not willing to do it physically.
<b>Solid Citizen</b>	High	High	High	Low	These individuals are protean, because they are self-directed and values driven. They are also psychologically boundaryless, but not physically boundaryless. The need to find a "home" for their career.
<b>Hired hand</b>	High	Low	High	High	This profile is considered a good resource for a company, as they are likely to be productive, but missing awareness and not knowing how to define their own values. They are very ambitious and built their careers at any cost, aligning themselves with the values of the organization.
<b>Protean Career Architect</b>	High	High	High	High	Their personal success depends on their own personal principles and actively managing their career themselves. They are psychologically boundaryless and have a physical mobile attitude.

**Note:** SD: Self-directed career management; VD: Values driven; PM: Psychological mobility; PM: Physical Mobility

Source: Briscoe et al., 2006

From Table 1, we can see how individuals with a more proactive protean career attitude desire to achieve meaningful outcomes, are more driven by personal values and personal career goals. Protean talents see their careers as a series of learning cycles, seeking freedom and growth to pursue continuous learning (Enache et al., 2011). Changing generational norms have coincided with the shift from traditional organizational careers to the current flexibility of career paths and mobility in jobs and organizations (Arthur, 2008; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 1976). We can define parallels between contemporary careers' criteria of inner satisfaction, life balance, autonomy and freedom and the values of younger generations like Millennials (Broadbrige et al., 2007) and Generation Z (Schroth, 2019).

Younger generations have adapted to boundaryless and protean careers (Briscoe et al., 2006). Their proactivity is driven by their interest in adaptability, personal growth, and extrinsic rewards linked to instrumental values. Early career individuals tend to take more risk in self-promotion, boundarylessness and training and development (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Unlike older generations, they do not view the lifelong employment relationship the same way and have a strong desire to take control of their own careers. Career anchors are elements reflecting one's understanding of strengths and weaknesses of their competence, their value system, and the vision of the career they desire. (Schein, 1996). These stabilizing, long-term factors are usually defined in early career years and influence one's career decisions. In function of acquired personal and professional experience, career anchors are evolving (Schein 1996). They reinforce individual values, self-identity, and allow decision-making under uncertainty. In the case of Millennials, research has shown the importance of these anchors, considering that failure to achieve a fit between work environment and career anchors may result in turnover intentions. For this generation, with a natural impatience for solutions, changing jobs may be a straightforward solution (Chang et al., 2012).

Contemporary careers and the inter-organizational mobility can impact talent management. Talent management practices reflecting that individual careers are complex and varied are likely to be more successful than generic or all-encompassing ones (Crowley-Henry et al., 2019). Talent management approaches need to be balanced between an employer's needs and the individual's goals and expectations (Farndale et al., 2014). Protean careerists' preference for mobility can also derive from the setting experienced in the organization. If protean talents do not feel fulfilled from their job, they will more likely leave the organization (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Understanding career attitudes and the factors that explain employee retention and turnover in younger generations is pivotal to use their skills and abilities, enhance organizational performance and success of companies (Khan et al., 2016).

## 2.3 Retention

The main goal for talent management is to “ultimately nurture and maintain a talent pool of adequate, skilled and engaged workforce” (Lewis & Heckman, 2006). Human resources management practices facilitate the attainment of goals leading to rewards, which, in turn, are related to employee satisfaction, commitment and lower turnover (Ito et al., 2013). Employee retention is a voluntary move by an organization to create an environment that is engaging for employees in the long term. The main purpose of retention is to prevent the loss of competent talent as this could impact productivity and service delivery (Chaminade, 2007 as cited in Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). Organizations face important challenges when designing recruitment and retention programs. In the path for an effective retention of talent, they should consider the changing nature of the workforce, in terms of flexibility, proficiencies and employees’ interests. Job roles should provide challenges, responsibilities, autonomy, and a sense of connectedness to the role. One way to ensure effective talent management is to focus on policies and practices appealing to current employees but also considering why would individuals enter the organization, creating a value scheme appealing to a multigenerational workforce, even though these may be influenced by individuals’ career stage or generational differences (Pandita & Ray, 2018).

Retention policies and practices are intertwined with talent management and other human resources functions. Some activities that are welcomed by employees and act as influencers include: performance management, through feedback, which gives employees the motivation to perform. Total reward strategies demonstrating fairness and equity lead to employees who deliver results and feel satisfied with their jobs. Career management, including succession planning and development plans ensure that individuals feel cared for and promote sustainability of talent (Greenhaus et al., 2009 cited in Pandita & Ray 2018). Finally, learning and development opportunities keep employees’ skills updated and allow reskilling. This refers to opportunities to learn and use knowledge and abilities to work in occupations for which the individual has training (Brown et al., 2005; Ito et al., 2013).

Generational differences have influenced recruitment and retention over time. Younger generations are said to look more for flexibility in work hours, work-life balance, and look for more protean and boundaryless careers. Thompson and Gregory (2012) suggest that it proves to be more difficult to retain a younger workforce, due to their inclination to change jobs and employers more frequently than older generations. On the other hand, previous generations focused more on employability factors. Nonetheless, as employees age, creating a family and having other obligations may increase how they value job security (Ito et al., 2013). Smola and Sutton (2002) suggest that organizations acknowledging the experience of older generations, while respecting the talent and contribution of new workers may experience

higher retention rates. Considering demographics and understanding the factors affecting the individuals' decision to stay or quit an organization is primordial. Research suggest that early-career employees have challenging work and career advancement as priorities. Mid-career employees look out for workplace flexibility, and to derive satisfaction from their work. Finally, more experienced employees look out for higher job security, benefits, and reciprocity in loyalty from organizations (Pandita & Bedarkar, 2015 cited in Pandita & Ray, 2018).

### **2.3.1 Retention and Development Opportunities**

The retention of high-performing employees has become more challenging for managers as these employees switch jobs more frequently, by being attracted by more than one employer (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). Therefore, organizations must attempt to carefully match organizational needs with those of the employees. It is very important to be proactive about retention. The inability to retain highly skilled and highly trained individuals is the most significant cost associated with employee turnover (Makhubela & Ngoepe, 2018 cited in Mey et al., 2021). A mismatch between organization and employee can generate huge opportunity costs, and recruitment costs associated with talent leaving the organization. This can not only negatively impact team morale but also financially affect the organization. Even though a high rate of turnover can be damaging, it is important to remember that, to a certain degree, organizational turnover is inevitable (McCandless & Sauer, 2010 cited in Mey et al., 2021).

Aligned with Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, Jayathilake et al. (2021) suggested that employee development in skillset and career progression, through a proper learning and development system within an organization enhances employee meaningfulness in both their personal and professional lives. Younger generations value continuous learning opportunities. One important characteristic of Millennials is their need for learning and development. They examine continuous learning opportunities provided by organizations when considering job offers. This generation wants to upgrade their knowledge and skills to stay employable (Lub et al., 2012 cited in Naim & Lenka, 2018).

When it comes to Generation Z, the Deloitte survey "Welcome to Generation Z" (Gomez et al., 2020) revealed that more than 50% of the respondents suggested they would consider leaving their present employer if the employer does not contemplate this generation's training and development preferences. According to Deloitte's "Gen Z is not Millennial Plus" (2022), organizations able to shift the focus from their environment, culture, and leadership to one focusing on continuous learning and growth will be well positioned to retain these younger professionals. From younger generations' goal of continuous learning and development, and the ability of switching jobs more frequently we present the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** There are significant differences between Generations X, Y, Z in Protean Orientation and Retention (development opportunities)

**Hypothesis 2:** Protean Orientation will present a higher correlation with Retention factors related to development opportunities for younger generations.

## **2.4 Learning Orientation**

Huber (1991) defines learning as a process enabling a certain entity to increase the range of potential behavior through its process of information. Learning orientation is conceptualized as a basic attitude towards learning, i.e., the organizational and managerial characteristics that facilitate the organizational learning process (Chiva & Alegre, 2009). According to Heslin, Keating, and Ashford (2020), staying in a learning mode is a pivotal competency in the quest for career sustainability. Dweck (1989) suggests when an individual approaches a task from a learning goal orientation, they strive to understand something new or to increase their competence in each activity. A strong learning orientation enables people to expand their knowledge and assimilate it with perspectives provided by others (Harvey et al., 2019). Those who are learning-oriented are characterized by a challenge-seeking attitude, allowing them to replace old knowledge and skills with new ones, directing them on future challenges (Matsuo, 2020).

Individual learning theories can be divided into three dimensions: behaviorist, cognitivist, and humanist (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991 as cited in Chiva & Alegre, 2009) All of them focus on the individual as self-directed and individually autonomous. Coming from cognitivist theory, explored in the works of famous authors like Kohler and Piaget, it is important to understand the cognitive perspective of organizational learning and two approaches to the topic. But before this, it is important to understand the concept of organizational learning, defined as occurring when an entity from an organization acquires knowledge that is recognized as potentially useful for that organization (Huber, 1991). Garvin (1993, p.5) says that organizational learning culture refers to an organization “skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights”.

The first approach to organizational learning is from Cook and Yanow (1993). These authors defined individual learning, as a model for organizational action, and learning in organizations based on human learning processes. Organizations are seen as having capacities, and much like individuals, they are considered capable of learning. The second approach is focused on organizational learning as individual learning in an organizational context. Theorists considered it to be a type of individual learning carried out in organizations by key individuals, where their learning is linked to possible organizational change (Dodgson,

1993; Simon, 1991). Orlikowski (1996), and Pedler et al. (1990) have shown how individual learning can lead to organizational change. The authors suggested that organizations affect the learning and development of their employees through the type of organizational structures in place. If an organization has a flatter structure, this can create a tension that increases individual's desire for personal development, and their individual learning can contribute to a process of continual transformation within the organization. Pettigrew and Whipp (1991) described less hierarchical, team-based organizations as capable of motivating individuals to engage in developing communication and interpersonal skills, creating a sense of institutionalized learning.

Learning and Development is considered one of the most crucial areas in human resources. Employees are critical assets, and companies understand the importance of continuous learning and development of their teams. Learning itself can be viewed as one of the technologies within which companies develop competence (Levitt & March, 1988). Some authors have discussed how a company's organizational learning allows for the combination of their existing resources and capabilities, transforming them into distinctive competences, which can prove to be a source of competitive advantage (Lado, Boyd, & Wright, 1992). Therefore, companies have been investing more in initiatives to develop employee skills to, in turn, maintain this competitive advantage over their competitors (Pattison, 2017 as cited in Bohlich & Oleti, 2017). Organizations with a learning culture allow employees to surpass unpredictable challenges and obstacles like needing new skills for their jobs and roles, or coping with new tasks, (Watkins & Marsick, 1997 as cited in Lin & Huang, 2020). Through a learning culture-driven environment, employees are encouraged to acquire, create, and transfer knowledge to co-workers and be open for continuous transformation (Sidan & Reese, 2018 as cited in Lin & Huang, 2020).

Millennials are considered active learners, with a need to be engaged in the learning process (Hurt & Farrell, 2014). Shaw and Fairhurst (2008) have studied the influence of technology on their learning style, and found that it increased their need for structured, hands-on, and interactive assignments. This is a generation who proactively seeks feedback, they consider it an almost critical ingredient for performance and job satisfaction (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). Members of Generation Z have a particularly unique perspective of the world. This includes attitudes, abilities, and ways of processing information differently from older generations (Gerschenson et al., 2017 as cited in Leslie et al., 2021) They want exact directions and guidance in the workplace (Nicholas, 2020). This generation wants to be connected with everyone, even their bosses, as they need regular feedback (Center of Generational Kinetics, 2018 as cited in Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021), and expect it to be direct and as constructive criticism in order to improve at their jobs. Acknowledging the learning



styles and characteristics of younger generations is pivotal due to the perceived lack of company loyalty they exhibit (Hurt & Farrell, 2014).

An organizational learning climate may also influence the employees' protean career attitude (Watkins & Marsick, 1996). Hall and Moss (1998) contributed to this argument stating that organizations should understand their part in the psychological career contract and their responsibility in fostering a continuous learning climate, helping to enhance employees' career strategies. Providing a supportive and caring atmosphere can lead to employees enhancing their career strategies and reciprocating by feeling attached and acting to achieve organizational goals (Hall & Moss, 1998). The constant changes in today's labor market have led individuals to desire to qualify themselves as protean talent. Because of their strong protean mindset, they identify career success based on personal development and the ability to follow their dreams (Briscoe et al., 2006; Hall, 1996, 2004). Protean careerists want to remain employable and valuable to current and future organizations (Vanhercke et al., 2014), this research suggests that employees following a more proactive protean career attitude seek to learn on a continuous basis and take advantages of any changes at work through goal setting (Hall & Moss, 1998; London & Smither, 1999). An individual's learning goal represents a goal orientation focusing on acquiring and mastering new skills to increase their employability (Seitjs et al., 2004).

According to McLean (2006), one of the most effective paths to assist an organization striving to become a learning organization is to help managers adopt new roles as coaches and learning facilitators. An exchange between mentors and mentees where both have high learning goal orientation, are likely to have higher aspirations, idealized behaviors, and commitment to achieving their goals (Egan, 2005). Godshalk and Sosik (2003) suggest that this relationship can provide higher psychosocial support and career development. Through mentoring, employees have additional opportunities to find their potential and motivation, which might influence organizational commitment. An organizational learning culture is a key component to enhance organizational commitment. It is also linked with enhancing the level of one's career/job satisfaction (Egan et al., 2004). Employees' job satisfaction increases, and turnover intentions diminish if they find that their organization cares and supports their career planning and development, as well as values their contribution (Harden et al., 2018; Mobley, 1982 as cited by Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). This mutual exchange of commitment can foster the capability of employees and help form a durable employment relationship (Hall, 2002).

Employers are responsible for providing continuous learning opportunities, and resources for individuals to manage their careers, even though, as is discussed by Hall (2002), self-direction and responsibility remain critical factors for modern careers. According to the aforementioned, individuals with a more protean career orientation seek to learn on a regular basis, and they associate career success to personal development. By promoting a learning

culture in organizations and enhancing job satisfaction, this may influence organizational commitment and encourage employee retention. Employees' decision to stay or leave their organization might depend on how challenging the work is, if they perceive the necessary support at work and if they gain personal growth (Hall, 2002). Therefore, we posit:

**Hypothesis 3:** Protean Orientation positively influences Learning Orientation for younger generations.

**Hypothesis 4:** Learning Orientation positively influences Retention (development opportunities) for younger generations.

**Hypothesis 5:** Learning Orientation mediates the relationship between Protean Orientation and Retention (development opportunities) for younger generations.

## **2.5 Organizational Career Management**

Organizational career management (OCM) is a term employed since the 1970s (e.g., Bowen & Hall, 1977) and was initially related with providing companies with guidelines to design effective succession plans. Nowadays, OCM covers the various career management policies and practices a company provides to their employees through personal development plans, trainings, and mentoring, designed to enhance their career effectiveness (Sturges, Guest Conway & Davey, 2002; Pazy, 1988). It is also known as organizational career support, indicating the range of programs and support that organizations provide to employees to increase their abilities to succeed in their careers (Kong et al., 2020). Organizations can enhance their competitiveness by providing more career success to their employees (Baruch, 2006).

To successfully manage careers, a strategy is required that meets the needs of employees and employers. To retain, develop and motivate the best employees, organizations must take action to enhance career satisfaction. It's the organization's responsibility to help employees with career management (Mayo, 1991; Walters, 1992; Baruch, 2006; Kong et al., 2012). When employees perceive organizational career support and possibility of career development, they are likely to develop a unique employee-employer psychological contract with the organization, creating a sense of job security (Latorre et al., 2016). This contract represents mutual promises and obligations between employees and employers. Any violations of this psychological contract can lead to poor performance and productivity, low satisfaction, and high turnover (Schroth, 2019).

### **2.5.1 Formal and Informal Career Management Practices**

Career management practices take place in the organizations mainly in the form of formal and informal practices (Sturges et al., 2005). Practices like receiving a personal development plan, trainings, skill development, and feedback are considered formal practices, while having a mentor, receiving career advice, and being introduced to people who can help you develop your career are seen as informal practices. Perceived OCM practices have been negatively related with turnover intentions as well as actual turnover if talent perceived career opportunities within the company to be high (Guan et al., 2015). Employees' perceptions of OCM practices include their own preferences, values and needs, which can influence attitudes and behaviors more deeply than the actual practices (Zhu & Wang, 2022). Satisfactory OCM and a high level of career adaptability are likely to contribute positively to an individual's career satisfaction (Guan et al., 2015).

The organizations' human resources practices signal and help communicate the content of this psychological contract (Rousseau & Greller, 1994; Guest & Conway, 2002). To

fulfill the organization's side of this exchange, it is very important to understand and manage employees' expectations, as perceptions of this psychological contract are dynamic. Depending on how well employers keep their promises to their employees, different individual attitude and behavior outcomes can transpire (Conway & Briner, 2005). Individuals with stronger protean career orientation are more likely to identify themselves with organizations that provide organizational career management practices that fit their career values and goals. In contrast, low protean career orientation limits their self-awareness of career aspirations and values, inhibiting their adaptability to an organization (Hall et al., 2018). Positive outcomes of organizational practices may increase affective commitment towards the organization, creating a cycle of career management. Employees with more affective commitment towards their organization are more likely to match their individual career management with their employer's expectations, and employers providing individual career management enhance the impact of these practices and organizational identification (Sturges et al., 2005; Zhu & Wang, 2022).

Management practices require different approaches depending on the needs of the individual. Millennials are seen as more career-oriented, and they expect work-life quality and career development opportunities (Kong, 2013). By putting an effort to meet their expectations, it is possible to enhance their satisfaction and commitment to their careers (Kong et al., 2015). The way individuals perceive the organizational support has been positively related to job performance and negatively linked with absenteeism and turnover. (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). Every new hire will have a set of new expectations from their employer, and Generation Z individuals are no different (Chillakuri, 2020). However, in many organizations, human resources management practices have not evolved to address individuals from younger generations (Chillakuri & Mahanandia, 2018). Companies should be alert of the needs of younger employees (Supeli & Creed, 2016). For example, individuals from Generation Z expect a friendly working environment, a workplace that keeps up with the latest technologies, ambassador programs, internships, benefits and corporate social responsibility actions and activities (Bielen & Kubiczek, 2020).

Evidence suggests that formal and informal OCM practices, such as training and development are positively related to employees' organizational commitment. These practices are associated with a fulfillment of the psychological contract, and it seems that individuals still believe employers should help them in career management. For example, Millennials have high expectations regarding their career development, if these expectations are not met, their psychological contract could be in danger of being breached (Sturges et al., 2005). Wong et al. (2008) suggest that this generation is ambitious and actively seeks career opportunities in organizations. From the literature review, we found that protean talents seek freedom and growth to pursue continuous learning (Enache et al., 2011), hence why employers should

develop formal and informal OCM practices to promote organizational support for continuous learning. Considering formal OCM practices may be taken for granted and available to all, while informal OCM help is less widely available and often more valued (Sturges et al., 2002), we posit:

**Hypothesis 6:** Perceived Informal Organizational Career Management practices serve as a moderator of the relationship between protean careers and learning orientation for younger generations.

Employers should consider individuals' expectations regarding training and development. For Generation Z, this generation can become more loyal to their employer if the organization provides them opportunities to grow, to experience new things and to achieve leading positions (Adecco, 2015). Recent research has found that most Generation Z employees would consider leaving their present employer if the organization is not concerned with their training and development plans (Gomez et al., 2019). Younger generations highly value mentoring and training because this allows them to develop new skills and to remain attractive on the labor market. Organizations with strong employee development programs and pathways for them to climb the carrier ladder within the organization can have a greater impact on increasing employees' intention to stay. (Sturges et al., (2002); Hong et al., 2012). Therefore, we posit:

**Hypothesis 7:** The mediation between Protean Orientation and Retention by Learning Orientation is influenced by Informal Career Management Practices (working as a moderator between PO and LO) for younger generations.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

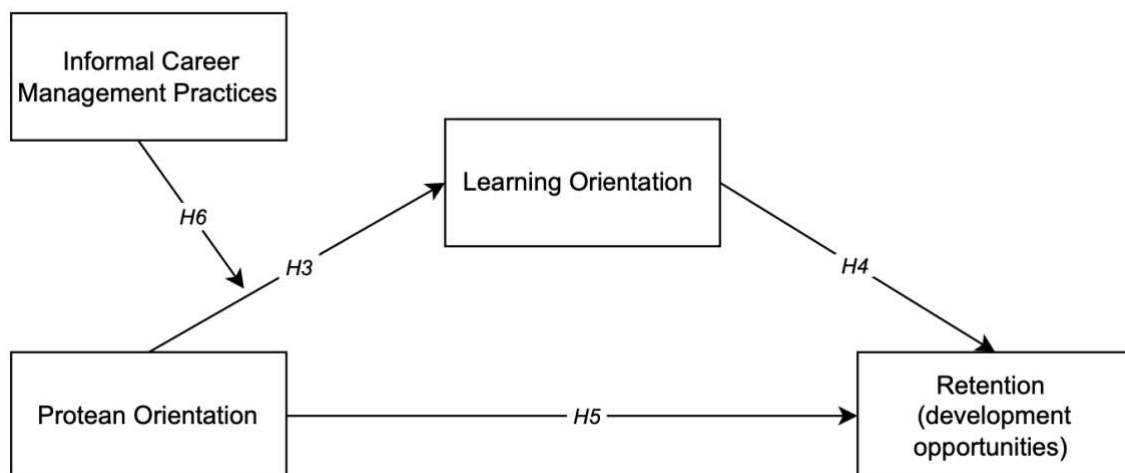
The third chapter discusses the methodology used to investigate the research problem. To complement this study and to validate it theoretically and practically, a questionnaire was designed and distributed to the target population. This chapter includes the research method that comprises a conceptual model and the research hypotheses, the sample, the instrument construction, as well as the data collection and analyses procedure.

### 3.1 Research Method

#### 3.1.1 Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

Starting from the left side of the model, we have the predictor variable or independent variable (protean orientation), that will explain changes in the outcome variable. This variable is moderated by informal career management practices. The mediator variable explains the relationship between the predictor and the outcome variable. Our mediator is learning orientation. The last variable is the dependent variable, or outcome variable, represented by a retention factor (development opportunities). Figure 1 was created as the conceptual model and visual representation of this study.

*Figure 1: Conceptual Model*



Following the identification of the variables and their relation, it is now possible to present the aforementioned study hypotheses, as follows:

- **H1:** There are significant differences between Generations X, Y, Z in Protean Orientation, and in Retention (development opportunities).

- **H2:** Protean Orientation will present a higher correlation with Retention factors related to development opportunities for younger generations.
- **H3:** Protean Orientation positively influences Learning Orientation for younger generations.
- **H4:** Learning Orientation positively influences Retention (development opportunities) for younger generations.
- **H5:** Learning Orientation mediates the relationship between Protean Orientation and Retention (development opportunities) for younger generations.
- **H6:** Perceived Informal Career Management Practices serve as moderator of the relationship between Protean Orientation and Learning Orientation for younger generations.
- **H7:** The mediation between Protean Orientation and Retention by Learning Orientation is influenced by Informal Career Management Practices (acting as moderator between PO and LO) for younger generations.

### **3.1.2 Participants**

Considering the goals of this study, the eligibility criteria for the targeted population focused on “adults and young adults, born between 1964 and 2004, who were employed or had already been employed at the time of the application of the questionnaire”. The age range of the participants was defined according to the literature expose because the participants must be part of the generations under study, and therefore varying between three intervals: Generation X: [1964 to 1979], Generation Y: [1980 to 1994] and Generation Z: [1995 to 2010]. Baby Boomers were not included in this research considering this generation’s age and current wave of retirement. For Generation Z, only the individuals older than eighteen years old were considered. The responses were sought without a specific geographic focus to increase the number of respondents from the three generations under study.

As it is not feasible to collect all the data from the studied population, it is necessary to examine data from a collected sample, selected by convenience, which means the participants were selected randomly, according to their availability and accessibility. The sampling process for this study is non-probability by convenience (Acharya et al., 2013), as there is no total representation of the population, and a snowballing effect was originated as each respondent was free to share the questionnaire’s link with others. This is the most practical method as well as the most suitable in a case where there is no sampling frame available. This sampling process came to an end when the desired number of participants was reached.

The size of the sample was determined based on a minimum number of participants necessary to perform a statistical analysis that would allow to answer the research questions.

The goal was, therefore, to reach a minimum of 200 individuals. In total, the number of respondents to the questionnaire was 351, of which 246 were valid. In terms of generational cohorts these answers reached 98 individuals from Generation Z, 89 from Generation Y, and 59 from Generation X. The 105 invalid answers are from participants considered out of the target for this study or who did not respond to at least 75% of the questionnaire. The individuals were questioned through an online questionnaire shared on social networks namely LinkedIn and Facebook, as well as with an in-person distribution of QR Codes, allowing participants to scan them with their devices and later respond to the questionnaire.

### **3.1.3 Instrument construction**

This research vows to draw conclusions and develop insights through testing the hypothesis supported by the literature. Therefore, a quantitative methodology was used, through a questionnaire (Annex A). Choosing a quantitative methodology is useful as it is oriented to create results that can be measured and statistically analyzed. Questionnaires are popular as they allow for a collection of data from a sizeable population in an economical way and allowing easy comparison. It is also easy to explain and to understand (Saunders et al., 2009). Before the distribution stage, a pre-test was made online with 5 respondents from different sociodemographic characteristics, to detect any possible errors and test the comprehension of the questions, as well as to guarantee that it follows a logical sequence. This quantitative research was made based on the data collected from the exploratory research, presented in the literature review. This data was collected from articles in scientific journals, books, and specialized magazines.

The questionnaire was composed of a total of 12 questions divided into 5 parts for employed and unemployed individuals. The questionnaire starts with an introductory text, asking for the participants' consent and explaining the academic purpose of the study, as part of a master's thesis. It is also explained how confidentiality and anonymity are preserved, alongside a disclosure of the academic institution (ISCTE Business School) and the researcher's contacts, for any questions and further clarifications. After consenting to participate, respondents must first answer to a section of sociodemographic questions to filter the participants. This includes questions on gender, year of birth, nationality, the highest level of education completed, employment status, and (if applicable) how long they have been working, how long they have been in the current company and sector of activity. If the participant does not meet the necessary requirements to be part of the target population (e.g., being a student, retired, younger than 18 years old or being born before 1964) there are mechanisms in place to not allow any further answers to the questionnaire. In the second section, the questions allow to find the respondents inclination towards a protean career orientation. The third section was developed to understand the participants' perception of the



career management practices of their employers. The goal of the fourth section is to understand how relevant several retention factors are for the participants' decision to leave or stay in a company. Finally, the fifth section is related with understanding the degree of learning orientation attitude of the participants.

### 3.1.4 Measures

The questions present in the survey were developed based on scales (Annex B) acquired and adapted from the literature, previously validated by empirical studies to measure the variables of interest in this study. The questions were originally developed in English and were accurately translated for the Portuguese version. Likert-style rating was used to measure the different variables (section II to V; Saunders et al., 2009), respecting the original scales from articles. To effectively measure *Protean Orientation*, we used the fourteen-item scale developed by Briscoe et al. (2006), covering self-directed and values-driven dimensions, through items such as "I am in charge of my own career" and "It doesn't matter much to me how other people evaluate the choices I make in my career", respectively. Responses were made on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (to little or no extent) to 5 (to a great extent). Cronbach alpha coefficient for this scale presented results of .784.

The twenty-item scale of *Retention*, by Ito et al. (2013) was used to understand factors that could influence the retention of respondents, rated on a point scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). The Cronbach alpha coefficient for this scale was .881. This scale is divided in six dimensions representing factors of retention: satisfaction with pay with 3 items ( $\alpha = .851$ ), including "overall pay level". Flexibility with 3 items ( $\alpha = .761$ ) including "flexible work schedule"; Security with 3 items ( $\alpha = .716$ ) including "job security"; Developmental opportunities with 4 items ( $\alpha = .770$ ), including "opportunities to learn and be trained"; Promotion with 2 items ( $\alpha = .729$ ) including "how quickly get promoted", and people factors with 5 items ( $\alpha = .851$ ) including "the opportunity to be part of a team".

*Learning Orientation* of participants was measured using an eight-item scale by Button et al. (1996) ( $\alpha = .891$ ). The items included, for example, "The opportunity to do challenging work is important to me" measure in a seven-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Finally, to measure *Career Management Practices* we used Sturges et al.'s (2002) scale, a ten-item measure ( $\alpha = .873$ ). Responses were made on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly disagree). This scale is divided in two dimensions: formal practices with 6 items ( $\alpha = .791$ ), including "I have been given training to help develop my career", and informal practices with 4 items ( $\alpha = .839$ ), including "I have been given a mentor to help my career development".

*Control variables:* The following personal information about participants was used as control variables: year of birth, nationality, gender (1 = male; 2 = female; 3 = other; 4 = prefer not to say), education (1 = Elementary School; 2 = High School degree or equivalent; 3 = Bachelor's degree; 4 = Master's degree; 5 = Doctor's degree; 6 = Other), employment status (1 = Student, 2 = Student-worker, 3 = Employed, 4 = Unemployed), sector of activity, years active and tenure (1 = <2 years, 2 = 2 – 5 years, 3 = 5 – 10 years, 4 = 10 – 15 years, 5 = >15 years, 6 = Does not apply).

### **3.1.5 Data collection, Reliability and Analyses procedure**

The questionnaire was created in the Portuguese and English language as it was intended for Portuguese as well as international individuals. The platform where this questionnaire was created was Qualtrics, which allows for automatically saving the participants' answers and the download of the information in an Excel sheet with the data. The questionnaire was available for about 2 months, from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July to the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2022. The software used to analyze the collected data was the version 28 of the *IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences* (SPSS).

To reach the necessary conclusions, a sociodemographic analysis was performed with descriptive statistics. In order to infer the internal consistency of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the Likert scale questions considering a recommended level of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2010). The alpha coefficient for all items exceeded 0.70 (Annex C), therefore they exhibited internal consistency (Saunders et al., 2009), which indicates that the research model is internally reliable. When performing parametric tests, the sample distribution was considered normally distributed as the number of observations exceeded 30 ( $n > 30$ ), by applying the Central Limit Theorem. The value of the level of significance used as decision criteria on the performed tests was 0.05. A linear correlation between the variables was confirmed with the Pearson correlation coefficient of Pearson (Annex D). Linked with hypothesis 1, One-Way ANOVA was performed to test the differences between generations. A correlation analysis between PO and RTDO was also performed, only considering younger generations, for hypothesis 2.

Furthermore, performing regression analyses, we tested the hypothesized mediation effect of learning orientation between protean orientation and retention (development opportunities), linked with hypothesis 3, 4 and 5. For hypothesis 6, we tested moderation effects where informal career management practices moderates the relationship between protean orientation and learning orientation. Finally, for hypothesis 7 we performed a moderated mediation using the Hayes Macro Process (2013). The model 4 was used for simple mediation, model 1 for moderation and model 7, for moderated mediation.

## Chapter 4: Data Analyses and Results

The following chapter presents the results and reports the analysis of the data collected through the questionnaire. After gathering all primary data and characterizing the sample, several statistical analyses were executed in order to test the hypotheses of this study: descriptive analysis, ANOVA linked with hypothesis 1, correlation analysis linked with hypothesis 2, and regression analysis linked with hypothesis 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7)

### 4.1 Socio-demographic characterization of the sample

This research focused on individuals of all genders, belonging to one of three different generations (Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z) being studied. In total, this study has a sample of 246 individuals, born between 1965 and 2004. The respondents are included in the target of this study, therefore corresponding to three generations: Generation X, Generation Y (Millennials), and Generation Z, that are employed or have been employed in any sector of activity.

**Table 2.** *Socio-demographic characterization of the sample*

<b>N = 246</b>	<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>
Gender	Male	101	41.1
	Female	142	57.7
	Other	2	0.8
	Prefer not to say	1	0.4
Generation	X (1964-1979)	59	24
	Y (1980-1994)	89	36.2
	Z (1995-2010)	98	39.8
Education	Basic Education	3	1.2
	High School Degree	34	13.8
	Bachelor's Degree (or equivalent)	126	51.2
	Master's degree	67	27.2
	Doctorate Degree	16	6.5
Employment Status	Student-worker	62	25.2
	Employed full-time	175	71.1

	Unemployed	9	3.7
Years Active	<2 years	56	22.8%
	2-5 years	44	17.9%
	5-10 years	39	15.9%
	10-15 years	26	10.6%
	>15 years	73	29.7%
	Doesn't apply	8	3.3
Job Tenure	<2 years	110	44.7
	2-5 years	35	14.2
	5-10 years	31	12.6
	10-15 years	13	5.3
	>15 years	34	13.8
	Doesn't apply	23	9.3

Regarding gender, we can conclude that there is a majority of female respondents, as they correspond to 57.7% of the total participants, while 41.1% are male. From the 246 respondents, 39.8% are part of Generation Z, closely followed by Millennials with 36.2%, and finally, Generation X, with 24%. When considering the level of education of the sample, more than half of the participants (51.2%) hold a Bachelor's Degree, followed by people with a Master's Degree at 27.2%, 13.8% have a High School Degree, and only 1.2% have Basic Education.

Considering current employment status of the participants, we can see how the vast majority, 175 individuals (71.1%), are employed full-time. Student-workers correspond to 62 respondents (25.2%), and 9 (3.7%) are unemployed. In addition, considering years active, most respondents have been active for over 15 years (29.7%), quickly followed by those who have been active for less than years (22.8%). Those active for 2 to 5 years correspond to 17.9%, followed by 5 to 10 years with 15.9%, and finally 10 to 15 years (10.6%). Finally, in terms of job tenure, the vast majority has been in the same company for less than 2 years (44.7%), 14.2% for 2 to 5 years, 13.8% for more than 15 years, 12.6% between 5 and 10 years, and, finally, 5,3% of the participants have been in their companies for 10 to 15 years.

## 4.2 Correlation Analysis

To explore the possible associations between variables, we pursued a study of the correlations. Regarding the descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and alpha coefficients) as well as the output of correlations between the study variables, these can be found in Annex D. Through the Pearson correlation coefficient, some correlations revealed to be significant. Pearson's correlation  $r$  may take on a range of values from +1 to -1, where +1 is a perfect positive correlation, while -1 is a perfect negative correlation. A correlation coefficient of zero indicates that there is no association between the measured variables.

Protean orientation revealed average values ( $M=3.80$ ) as they were around the average of the scale (1 to 5), as well as learning orientation ( $M=5.89$ ), considering this variable's Likert scale ranges from 1 to 7. Concerning the dimensions of retention on a scale from 1 to 5, individuals referred giving more importance to flexibility ( $M=4.20$ ), quickly followed by people factors ( $M=4.19$ ) and developmental opportunities ( $M=4.17$ ). The other dimensions show a higher dispersion of values, satisfaction with pay ( $SD=.85$ ) security ( $SD=.80$ ), promotion ( $SD=.78$ ). Higher standard deviation values are considered to be less concentrated and further from the mean of the dataset. Considering the bivariate correlations between variables, we can observe from the data that protean orientation is positively correlated with the individuals' generation ( $r = .14, p < 0.05$ ). Learning orientation is negatively correlated with generation ( $r = -.16, p < 0.05$ ).

Moreover, it is interesting to verify that a dimension of retention, developmental opportunities, has a very significant positive correlation with learning orientation ( $r = .36, p < 0.01$ ). The same dimension is also significantly positively correlated with protean orientation ( $r = .24, p < 0.01$ ). The two dimensions related with career management practices, formal and informal have also presented interesting correlations. In the case of formal CMP, this variable has a significant and positive correlation with protean orientation ( $r = .30, p < 0.01$ ), and it is positively correlated with learning orientation ( $r = .19, p < 0.05$ ). Informal CMP has a significant and positive correlation with generation ( $r = .29, p < 0.01$ ), a significant and negative correlation with tenure ( $r = -.26, p < 0.01$ ). Finally, it has a significant and positive correlation with protean orientation ( $r = .18, p < 0.01$ ). It can be concluded that there are no significant correlations among the variables of interest that can negatively impact the hypotheses.

## 4.3 Hypotheses Testing

### 4.3.1 Differences between generations: One-Way ANOVA

The present study proposes to highlight differences between three Generations (X, Y and Z), from a group of different variables. The parametric test One-Way ANOVA was performed, to compare means between the three independent groups. The ultimate goal is to reveal which of these variables reflect significant differences within the generations. The dependent variables protean orientation (PO), and retention (development opportunities) (RTDO), and are qualitative ordinal variables, Likert-style scales treated as quantitative variables. The independent variable is generation, a qualitative nominal variable.

To apply One-Way ANOVA, there was an initial verification of the necessary assumptions. Firstly, the assumption of independence of observations between groups is verified as the samples were drawn independently from each other. The second assumption is related with the normal distribution. The population is considered to be approximately normal according to the Central Limit Theorem (Maroco, 2010), as every population group under analysis has a sample  $N \geq 30$ . Finally, the third assumption is related with the homogeneity of variances. To verify this assumption, we applied Levene's Test for equality of variances. The tested hypotheses are:

**H<sub>0</sub>**: The population variances are equal

**H<sub>1</sub>**: The population variances are not all equal

According to Levene's Test (Annex E), we can conclude that for variables protean orientation and retention (development opportunities) we do not reject H<sub>0</sub> (p-value > 0,05). With having met all the assumptions, and to finally determine if there are differences between the generations for the aforementioned variables, we will test the following hypotheses:

**H<sub>0</sub>**:  $\mu_{\text{Generation X}} = \mu_{\text{Generation Y}} = \mu_{\text{Generation Z}}$

**H<sub>1</sub>**:  $\mu_{\text{Generation X}} \neq \mu_{\text{Generation Y}} \neq \mu_{\text{Generation Z}}$

When  $\text{Sig} \geq 0.05$  we don't reject the Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>), which means that there are no differences between the three generations. When  $\text{Sig} < 0.05$  we assume that there are differences for at least two generations, which means that the different variables influence generations in different ways. Therefore, and according to the output present in Annex E, it is possible to conclude that the ANOVA revealed no statistically significant differences between the generations in PO ( $F(2, 243) = 2.08, p = .127$ ). The same thing happens for RTDO, ( $F(2, 209) = 1.39, p = .252$ ).

With the aforementioned results we can conclude that Hypothesis 1 cannot be confirmed. Nonetheless, the descriptive statistics still showed very interesting findings. Even though it is not statistically significant, younger generations showed a higher mean for protean orientation (Annex E), particularly in the case of Generation Z ( $M = 3.84, SD = .40$ ), when

compared to Generation Y (M = 3.82, SD = .55), and Generation X (M = 3.69, SD = .50). Regarding retention, this generation was also more prone to consider development opportunities as relevant factors to stay in organizations (M = 4.27, SD = .58), followed by Millennials (M = 4.12, SD = .70), and lastly by Generation X, those less prone to consider development opportunities as a key retention factor (M = 4.10, SD = .65).

However, to refine our analysis and provide a better clarification, we have conducted a second One-Way ANOVA. From this analysis, we hoped to find statistically significant differences in PO and RTDO, considering Generation X and the younger generations (Z and Y) as two independent groups. From Table 3, we can see that only PO shows a statistically significant difference between the groups  $F(2, 243) = 2.08, p = .127$ . Therefore, we can only partially accept Hypothesis 1. An analysis of the means for RTDO (Annex E) confirms what was above mentioned. Younger generations are far more likely to consider development opportunities as key retention factor (M = 4.20, SD = .65), than their predecessors.

**Table 3.** One-Way Anova (Generation X and younger generations)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Protean Orientation	Between Groups	.937	1	.937	4.039	.046
	Within Groups	56.631	244	.232		
	Total	57.568	245			
Retention - Developmental opportunities	Between Groups	.331	1	.331	.798	.373
	Within Groups	87.010	210	.414		
	Total	87.341	211			

#### 4.3.2 Correlation between Protean Orientation and Retention (development opportunities) in younger generations

Considering our research is related with the retention of protean talents in younger generations through development opportunities, it is important to confirm Hypothesis 2, that predicted: **H2:** Protean Orientation will present a higher correlation with Retention factors related to development opportunities for younger generations.

Through Pearson's correlation coefficient, we assessed the linear relationship between PO and RTDO, which revealed to be significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). PO has a significant and positive correlation with retention (development opportunities) ( $r = .20, p = 0.012$ ). Therefore, we can conclude that Hypothesis 2 is confirmed.

**Table 4.** Correlation between PO and RTDO

		Protean Orientation	Retention - Developmental opportunities
Protean Orientation	Pearson Correlation	--	
	N	186	
Retention - Developmental opportunities	Pearson Correlation	.200*	--
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	
	N	159	159

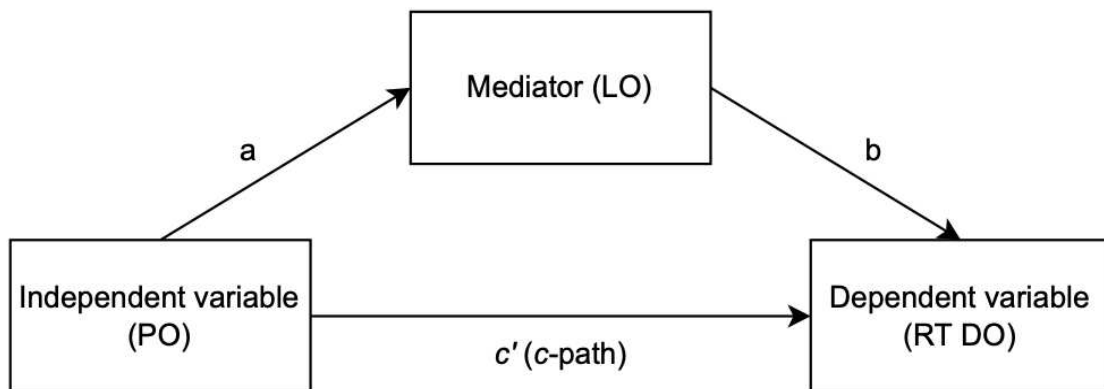
\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

### 4.3.3 The Mediating Effect of Learning Orientation

From the previous analysis on the correlation of the variables, the high correlation between development opportunities, a dimension of retention, exhibited a high correlation with protean orientation. Therefore, we propose to test learning orientation as a mediator between protean orientation and retention (developmental opportunities). For this we used a three-step procedure suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) for mediations. According to the literature, a given variable can be said to function as a mediator to the extent that it accounts for the relationship between the predictor and the criterion (Baron & Kenny, 1996).

Using model 4 of mediation (Figure 2), we will firstly test the existence of a link between protean orientation (independent variable) and learning orientation (mediator variable), which constitutes Hypothesis 3. Secondly, associate learning orientation to the independent variable, retention (development opportunities) which corresponds to Hypothesis 4. Finally, we added the mediator and test the difference in the relation between PO and RT DO (Baron & Kenny, 1996), which corresponds to Hypothesis 5. For this research, it is expected that learning orientation will have an effect on the relation between protean orientation and retention (development opportunities).

**Figure 2:** Simple Mediation (Statistical Diagram)



The first step (a-path), this step intends to verify the existence of a link between the predictor variable protean orientation and the mediator, learning orientation. According to Table 4, we can see that the relationship is supported, showing a positive direct effect of an individual's protean orientation on their learning orientation ( $a = .609$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), with [95%CI = .348, .871] which confirms Hypothesis 3.



**Table 5:** Mediation Model results

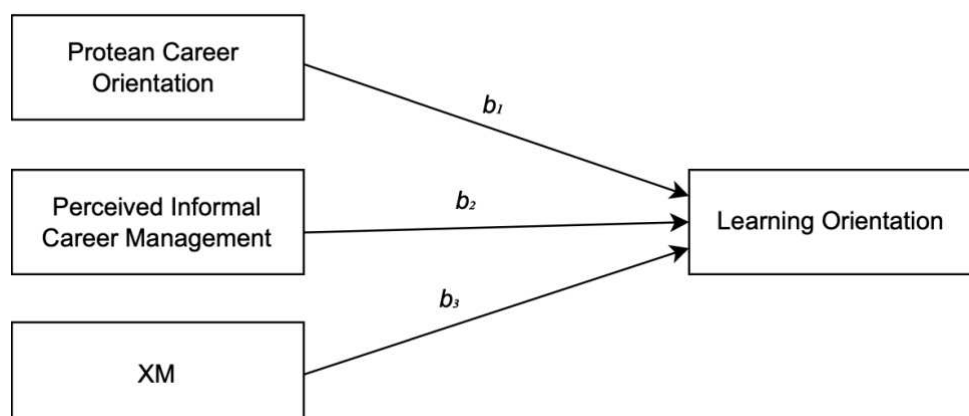
Mediation	Coeff	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
PO (X) → LO (M) (a)	.609	.132	4.602	.001	.348	.871
LO (M) → RTDO (Y) (b)	.339	.060	5.654	.001	.220	.457
PO → RTDO (c)	.054	.104	.517	.606	-.151	.259
PO → LO → RTDO (c')	.206	.079			.081	.385

Regarding the values that illustrate the relationship between the mediator learning orientation and retention (development opportunities), the relationship (b-path) appears to be statistically significant ( $b = .339$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), with [95%CI = .220, .457], which confirms Hypothesis 4. The values associating PO and RTDO indicate that there is no direct effect between PO and RTDO (c-path), as  $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ , and the interval between LLCI and ULCI includes 0 [-.151, .259]. Therefore, we must take into consideration the indirect effect of PO on RTDO, via the mediation of LO (c'-path), which indicates that they are not only positively correlated ( $c' = .206$ ,  $SE = .079$ ) but the 95% confidence interval confirms the mediation role of LO, since the interval between BootLLCI and BootULCI = [.081, .385], which does not include 0 and simultaneously remains above it. Therefore, through this analysis we can confirm the existence of a perfect mediation, and thus accept Hypothesis 5.

**4.3.4 The Moderating Effect of Perceived Career Management Practices in the relationship between Protean Orientation and Learning Orientation for younger generations.**

According to Hypothesis 6 and using Model 1 of moderation from Hayes Macro Process (2013), exhibited in Figure 3, we will test if informal career management practices can moderate the relationship between protean orientation and learning orientation.

**Figure 3:** Moderation (Statistical Diagram)



The results of the moderation analysis show that the model is significant ( $F = 8.82, p < 0.01$ ), accounting for 15% of variance in learning orientation score ( $R^2 = 0.152$ ). We found that the interaction between protean orientation and informal career management practices is indeed significant ( $b_3 = .293, SE = .134, p < 0.05$ ). The following results, presented in Table 5 indicate that informal career management practices is a moderator of the relation between protean orientation and learning orientation. Therefore, we can confirm Hypothesis 6.

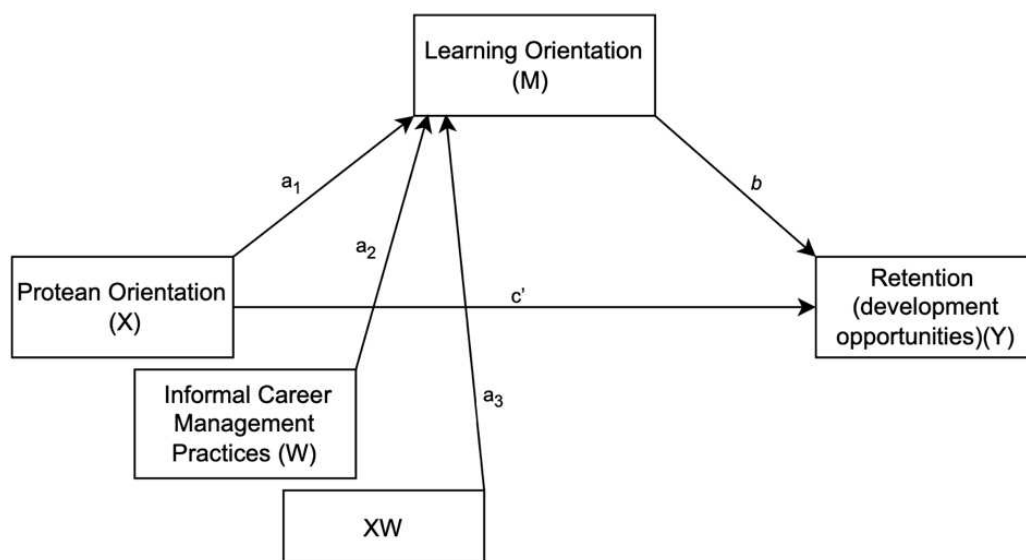
**Table 6:** Moderation Model results

Moderation (intercept)	Coeff	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
PO (X) ( $b_1$ )	-.144	.368	-.391	.697	-.870	.583
ICMP (M) ( $b_2$ )	-1.156	.539	-2.145	.034	-2.222	-.091
PO * ICMP (XM) ( $b_3$ )	.293	.134	2.191	.030	.029	.557

#### 4.3.5 The Effect of Informal Career Management Practices on a Moderated Mediation

From Hypothesis 7 we suggest that the mediational relationship between PO and RTDO, through LO will be influenced by Informal CMP for younger generations. To confirm this hypothesis, we need to consider the output of Model 7 from Hayes Macro Process (2013), exhibited in Table 6, illustrating the consequences of the hypothesized moderated mediation.

**Figure 4:** Mediated Moderation (Statistical Diagram)



From the analysis of Table 6, we can infer that the direct effect of PO on RTDO (c' on Figure 4) is non-significant, and has been discarded from the analysis, as explained during the mediation process. The interaction between PO and Informal CMP is also not statistically significant ( $a_3 = .064$ ,  $SE = .060$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Furthermore, the bootstrapping analysis revealed a non-significant moderated mediation, as the 95% confidence interval includes 0 [-.033, .209]. Therefore, these results do not support Hypothesis 7.

**Table 7.** Moderated Mediation Model Results

<b>Moderated Mediation</b>	<b>Coeff</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>LLCI</b>	<b>ULCI</b>
PO → LO ( $a_1$ )	-.144	.368	-.391	.697	-.870	.583
ICMP → LO ( $a_2$ )	-1.156	.539	-2.145	.034	-2.222	-.091
PO * ICMP → LO ( $a_3$ )	.293	.134	2.191	.034	.029	.557
LO → RTDO (b)	.339	.060	5.654	.001	.220	.457
PO → RTDO (c')	.054	.104	.517	.606	-.151	.259
<b>Mediator</b>		<b>Index of Moderated Mediation</b>			<b>95% bootstrap confidence interval</b>	
M: Learning Orientation		.099			-.033 to .209	

To refine our analysis, since Hypothesis 7 was rejected, we decided to split the sample for Generation Y and Generation Z, to test a possible moderated mediation for each cohort. According to Table 7, considering a moderated mediation for Generation Y (Millennials) we can see that the direct effect of PO on RTDO is not significant. However, the interaction between PO and Informal CMP is significant ( $a_3 = .591$ ,  $SE = .201$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, this analysis revealed a significant moderated mediation effect for Generation Y, with an index value of .203 and a 95% confidence interval [.051, .387].

**Table 8.** Moderated Mediation (Gen Y)

<b>Moderated Mediation</b>	<b>Coeff</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>LLCI</b>	<b>ULCI</b>
PO → LO (a <sub>1</sub> )	.701	.200	3.515	.001	.303	1.100
ICMP → LO (a <sub>2</sub> )	-.238	.106	-2.238	.029	-.451	-.026
PO * ICMP → LO (a <sub>3</sub> )	.591	.201	2.942	.005	.190	.992
LO → RTDO (b)	.344	.084	4.112	.001	.177	.511
PO → RTDO (c')	.159	.140	1.135	.260	-.121	.438
<b>Mediator</b>		<b>Index of Moderated Mediation</b>			<b>95% bootstrap confidence interval</b>	
M: Learning Orientation		.203			.051 to .387	

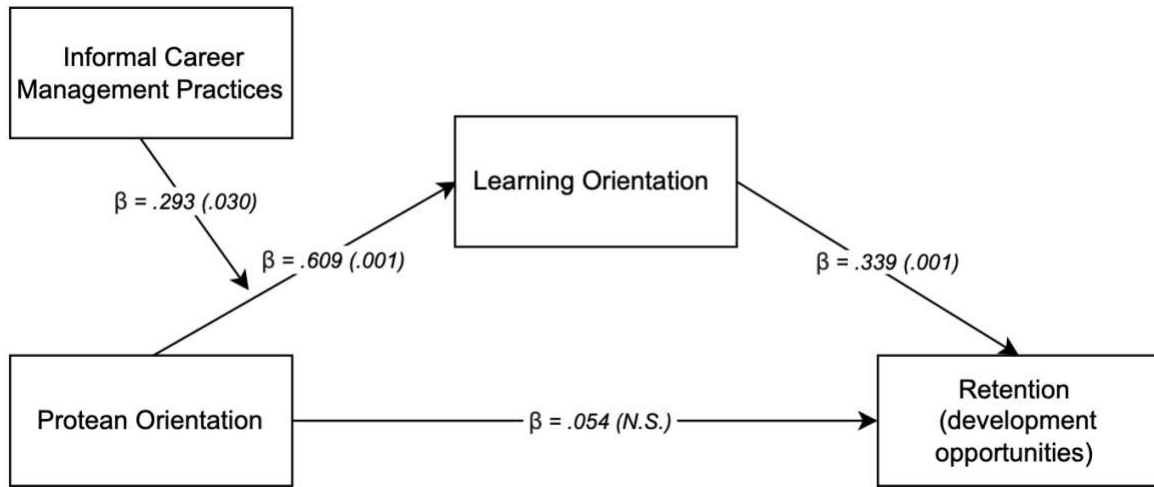
From Table 8, exposing a moderated mediation for Generation Z, we can see the direct effect of PO on RTDO is not significant. Similarly, the interaction between PO and Informal CMP is not significant (a<sub>3</sub> = -.272, SE = .205,  $p > 0.05$ ). Finally, the bootstrapping analysis revealed a non-significant moderated mediation, as the 95% confidence interval includes 0 [-.270, .096].

**Table 9.** Moderated Mediation (Gen Z)

<b>Moderated Mediation</b>	<b>Coeff</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>LLCI</b>	<b>ULCI</b>
PO → LO (a <sub>1</sub> )	-.144	.368	-.391	.697	-.870	.583
ICMP → LO (a <sub>2</sub> )	-1.156	.539	-2.145	.034	-2.222	-.091
PO * ICMP → LO (a <sub>3</sub> )	-.272	.205	-1.326	.189	-.679	.136
LO → RTDO (b)	.351	.087	4.017	.001	.177	.525
PO → RTDO (c')	-.119	.159	-.748	.457	-.436	.198
<b>Mediator</b>		<b>Index of Moderated Mediation</b>			<b>95% bootstrap confidence interval</b>	
M: Learning Orientation		-.095			-.270 to .096	

#### 4.4 Overall Structural Model

Figure 5: Structural Model Results (Overall)



From the overall structural model (Figure 5) and considering younger generations (Generation Y and Z), the path from protean orientation to learning orientation ( $\beta = .609$ ,  $p = .001$ ), and from learning orientation to retention (development opportunities) ( $\beta = .339$ ,  $p = .001$ ) revealed to be statistically significant. The path from protean orientation to retention (development opportunities) ( $\beta = .054$ ,  $p = .606$ ) revealed to be non-statistically significant. Nonetheless, the mediator learning orientation allows for PO to have an indirect effect on RTDO ( $\beta = .206$ ,  $SE = .079$ ), since the interval between BootLLCI and BootULCI = [.081, .385] does not include 0. Informal CMP proved to be a moderator of the relationship between protean orientation and learning orientation ( $\beta = .293$ ,  $SE = .134$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Finally, the bootstrapping analysis revealed that this model does not represent a significant moderated mediation for younger generations (Generation Z and Y), as the 95% confidence interval included 0 [-.270, .096].

## 4.5 Verification of the Hypotheses

**Table 10: Hypothesis validation**

Hypotheses	Accepted/Rejected
H1: There are significant differences between Generations X, Y, Z in Protean Orientation and Retention (development opportunities)	<b>Partially accepted</b>
H2: Protean Orientation will present a higher correlation with Retention factors related to development opportunities for younger generations.	<b>Accepted</b>
H3: Protean Orientation positively influences Learning Orientation for younger generations.	<b>Accepted</b>
H4: Learning Orientation positively influences Retention (development opportunities) for younger generations.	<b>Accepted</b>
H5: Learning Orientation mediates the relationship between Protean Orientation and Retention (development opportunities) for younger generations.	<b>Accepted</b>
H6: Perceived Informal Career Management Practices serve as moderator of the relationship between Protean Orientation and Learning Orientation for younger generations.	<b>Accepted</b>
H7: The mediation between Protean Orientation and Retention through Learning Orientation is influenced by Informal Career Management Practices (acting as moderator between PO and LO) for younger generations.	<b>Rejected for Y and Z, but accepted for Generation Y</b>

Source: Developed by the Author, 2022

## Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter aims to critically analyze the results presented above while considering the literature review and the research question. This study contributes to a better understanding of younger generations, Millennials and Generation Z, and allows for comparisons with their predecessors, Generation X. We also propose an anticipation of the next steps concerning talent management practices for the younger generations, particularly to promote their retention.

The current workforce is composed by several generations interacting in the workplace. These generations have different expectations from their employers, as well as different attitudes and behaviors (Smola & Sutton, 2002), thus managers must consider these differences when developing their management strategies. It was defined, as **H1**, that there are significant differences between Generation X, Y, and Z in protean orientation and in retention (development opportunities). From our analysis, there were no statistically significant results to support this hypothesis. However, we found that the younger the generation, the higher was the mean for protean orientation, with a relevant gap between the younger generations and Generation X. Similarly, Generation Z was also more prone to consider development opportunities as a key factor of retention, followed by Millennials, and lastly by Generation X. These results are aligned with generational and protean career theory, where it is suggested that generational norms have coincided with the shift from traditional organizational careers to the current flexibility in career paths and job mobility (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 1976). We can also define parallels between the values of younger generations (Broadridge et al., 2007; Schroth, 2019) and inner characteristics of contemporary careers.

After analyzing the differences between generations, our focus remained solely on the younger generations, from the second and following hypothesis, for the sake of the research question. According to Deloitte's "Welcome to Generation Z" (2020) survey, 50% of the respondents suggested they would consider leaving their employer if they did not respect this generation's training and development preferences. An even more recent survey from Deloitte, from 2022, suggested that the organizations able to shift focus from their culture and leadership to continuous learning and growth would be in a privileged position to retain the younger generations, Gen Z and Millennials. From this, we were able to formulate **H2**: Protean Orientation will present a higher correlation with Retention factors related to development opportunities for younger generations. This hypothesis was accepted through the Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r = .20, p < 0.05$ ).

Protean talents see their careers as a series of learning cycles, these individuals seek freedom and growth to pursue continuous learning (Enache et al., 2011). The third hypothesis

was defined as the following: **H3**: Protean Orientation positively influences Learning Orientation for younger generations. From our analysis, we found a link between protean orientation and learning orientation. This relationship was supported, showing a positive direct effect of an individual's protean orientation on their learning orientation ( $a = .609, p < 0.01$ ), which is in accordance with the literature. Individuals with a more protean career attitude seek to learn on a continuous basis (Hall & Moss, 1998; London & Smither, 1999), as they wish to remain valuable, and employable (Vanhercke et al., 2014). As previously mentioned, the fact that younger generations value learning is an idea defended by many authors. Thus, **H4** hypothesis was built, which states: Learning Orientation positively influences Retention (development opportunities) for younger generations. This relationship was statistically significant ( $b = .339, p < 0.01$ ). The literature supports this hypothesis with Hall (2002) stating in his theory of careers in organizations that employees' decision to stay or to leave their organization might be contingent on how challenging their work is, if they perceive that they have the necessary support at work and if they can gain personal growth from it. Studies have also supported the notion that these individuals would change jobs because of more learning opportunities, not necessarily because of salary (Barhate & Dirani, 2021).

From the aforementioned hypothesis testing, we found that there was no direct effect between protean orientation and retention (development opportunities). Therefore, we took into consideration the indirect effect of PO on RTDO via a mediator, with **H5** stated as: Learning Orientation mediates the relationship between Protean Orientation and Retention (development opportunities) for younger generations. The positive correlation between PO and RTDO is confirmed by our results ( $c' = .206, SE = .079$ ), and the 95% confidence interval confirmed the presence of a perfect mediation. The literature supports the essential role of learning to retain protean talents, as is proposed by Hall and Moss (1998). The authors state that providing a supportive atmosphere can lead to employees enhancing their career strategies and to reciprocate by feeling attached and acting to achieve organizational goals. This is particularly relevant for protean talents as these individuals have a natural preference for mobility that can be derived from the setting they experience in the organization. If protean talents do not feel fulfillment from their job, they will more likely leave the organization (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Research on career attitudes suggests that for Generation Z, a career is not about the job, it's about the learning, growing, and development (Tewari & Bhattacharyya, 2017). In the case of Millennials, this generation cares more about making a difference, having challenging and meaningful work for their self-development.

Hypothesis 6 was stated as **H6**: Perceived Informal Career Management Practices serve as moderator of the relationship between Protean Orientation and Learning Orientation for younger generations. The results of the moderation model were statistically significant, with the moderation by Informal CMP accounting for 15% of variance in learning orientation



of protean talents. This is aligned with previous research, as according to Egan (2005), informal practices like exchanges between mentors and mentees where both have high learning goal orientation, are more likely to have higher aspirations, idealized behaviors, and commitment to achieving their goal.

The last hypothesis is the one that predicts the moderated mediation of our research model. It was stated as **H7**: The mediation between Protean Orientation and Retention through Learning Orientation is influenced by Informal Career Management Practices (acting as moderator between PO and LO) for younger generations. However, this hypothesis was rejected by the quantitative results of the present study when analyzing together generation Y and Z. The direct effect of PO on RTDO is non-significant and the interaction between PO and Informal CMP was also found not statistically significant. The bootstrapping analysis revealed a non-significant moderated mediation, as the confidence intervals includes 0. However, in an effort to refine our analysis we analyzed the younger generations independently. The results showed that there was a statistically significant moderated mediation for Millennials, but that was not the case for Generation Z. Considering Generation Z is the newest generation to enter the workforce, there is limited research on this cohort, therefore it is perhaps premature to predict the motives for non-significant results. Contrary to Generation Z, most Millennials are no longer entering the workforce, instead they are progressing to mid-level managerial and leadership positions (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). This generation is well researched, and already knows what they want from an employer. They are career oriented, care more about work-life balance, as well as having challenging work, trainings, and career development opportunities (Kong, 2013; Valickas, 2017). They prefer to work for an employer whom they respect and who provides learning opportunities, as they believe in lifelong learning (Hastings, 2008).

The interplay of PO, LO, and development opportunities as a key factor for retention of younger generations, further adds to recent research on the contingencies of social exchange theory, provides an important contribution to generational theory and for the development of talent management strategies. For managers, HR, and practitioners, the results of this dissertation point out the importance of an adequate talent management strategy. Focusing on the relevance of accommodating generational differences in the workplace, considering individuals' different career attitudes, desires and expectations learning and development, as the long-term sustainability of organizations is heavily reliant on the retention of high performing talent.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

The sixth chapter is a review of the most important findings of this research. Moreover, we present the practical implications, contribution to future research, as well as its limitations.

### **6.1 Practical Implications**

Organizations are facing challenges to retain a competent and skillful workforce. The main purpose of this study is to assist them on how to retain employees from younger generations. Several studies can be found concerning management of multigenerational teams, protean talents, organizational career management, and many establish links between learning and development and retention. However, the added value of this research comes from the assessment made of the career attitudes of younger generations. This includes not only Millennials, but also the most recent and understudied generation to enter the workplace, Generation Z. Through this research, we sought to deepen the available information on these individuals' protean career orientation, and how their pursuit of continuous learning may influence which factors make them stay in the organizations. In this study we focused on development opportunities as a key factor of retention.

In addition, this study confirms that generational differences should be taken into consideration when managing teams. Younger generations, particularly Generation Z, seem to be more protean career oriented than their predecessors, Generation X. Even though these differences were not statistically significant, we found that the differences in means between the generations were in conformity with the literature and were relevant to draw conclusions on their career attitudes. Managers must consider their unique positions to promote employee development and their role in carrying out informal career management practices, which include, for example, mentoring and career advisory, as these were found to positively influence protean talents' learning orientation. This study revealed that protean talents' learning orientation can positively influence their retention if companies provide these individuals with development opportunities.

In conclusion, we can state that the presented research has an added value as it presents important academic and managerial insights for talent management. This brings implications on how managers should look at the management of multigenerational teams, take into consideration individuals' different career attitudes and expectations, nurture these relationships with informal career management practices, promote continuous learning and provide development opportunities, which may promote talent retention, particularly for younger generations. This research acts as well as a reasonable base for further researchers and authors interested in the study of organizational career management practices, talent retention and intergenerational diversity in the workplace.

## 6.2 Limitations and Future Research

Despite proposing to fulfil a gap in the literature review and contributing to research on how to provide adequate career management practices, manage expectations and promote retention in younger generations, this investigation is not invulnerable to limitations to be considered for future research. Considering the chosen methodology, even though it is a very efficient and economical way of collecting responses, we must consider the limitations of applying a self-administered online questionnaire. It was mainly distributed through social media platforms, and we found a low interest from participants to fill in the questionnaire, possibly due to the high number of other questionnaires being shared, resulting in a small sample for each generation. The study was mostly focused on the author's network, therefore, a more disperse distribution would be beneficial for future studies.

The sample also lacks a constant geographic distribution, as it was made available for Portuguese and non-Portuguese individuals with the goal of increasing the number of respondents. The measurement instruments were translated from English for the Portuguese version, which may have resulted in misinterpretation of the questions. For future research, it is important to validate the translation of scales to Portuguese. Nonetheless, several precautions in the data collection procedure were taken into consideration. There were still efforts to minimize the fact that the collected data is limited by potential common method variance. A snowballing methodology ensured anonymity and confidentiality and the scales used in the questionnaire were adapted from well-validated measures and previously used in literature, to avoid any misinterpretations when explaining variances.

Furthermore, there are limitations in determining exact temporal points from where we can differentiate the various generations. It should also not be assumed that all members of a given generational cohort have experienced the same socioeconomic and sociocultural events the same way. Culture, social class, gender, and ethnicity can impact the way individuals experience these events (Giancola, 2006). To add to this, there may be distinct subgroups within the generations that are not being considered in the research (Leslie et al., 2021). Finally, it is equally important to promote longitudinal research to draw causal conclusions and find whether patterns across generations are a result of factors like age, generation, or life stage. Longitudinal research in later stages of their careers would be particularly relevant to deepen research on Generation Z. Mehta et al., (2000) provides evidence that employee attitudes differ across career stages, and Guest and Conway (2002) suggested that organizations need to tailor their human resources practices to individuals' different career stages, in order to adequately manage their employees' needs and expectations.

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# Annexes

## Annex A. Questionnaire

English ▾

Dear participant,

In order to finish my Master's in Human Resources Management and Organizational Consulting at ISCTE Business School, I am doing a research project about career pretensions of the several generations, which would allow companies to develop their management practices.

Your participation consists in filling this survey, with an approximate duration of 10 minutes. For every question you must choose the option that most represents your opinion, or that is more adequate to your experience.

The survey is anonymous, confidential and your participation is voluntary. If you accept to participate, you can stop doing so at any moment. The collected data's purpose is purely for academic research.

This study is being conducted by Miguel Cadima (macoa1@iscte-iul.pt) under PhD Andrea Fontes's guidance (andrea\_fontes@iscte-iul.pt), whom you may contact for any further questions.

Please select if you accept or not to participate. By filling the survey it is concluded that you understand and accept these conditions and you are willing to participate.

Thank you for your time.

---

I ACCEPT

I DON'T ACCEPT

0%  100%

Página Seguinte →

English ▾

What is your gender?

---

Male

Female

Other

Prefer not to say

Year of birth:

---

What is your nationality?

---

Portuguese

Other. Which one?

What is the highest degree / level of school you have completed?

---

Elementary School

High School degree or equivalent

Bachelor's degree

Master's

Doctorate's degree

Other

What is your current employment status?

---

- Student
- Student-worker
- Employed full-time
- Unemployed
- Retired
- Other

How long have you been working?

---

- <2 years
- 2-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-15 years
- > 15 years
- Doesn't apply

How long have you been working in your company?

---

- <2 years
- 2-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-15 years
- > 15 years
- Doesn't apply

What is your activity sector?

---

- Business management
- Psychology
- Teaching / Training
- Sport
- Health and wellness
- Communication
- Politics
- Hospitality/Tourism
- Human Resources
- Consultancy
- Other. Please specify

- Doesn't apply

1. Please indicate the extent to which the following statements are true for you, using the following response scale. (If you're not currently employed, please think of your last professional experience)

	To little or no extent	To a limited extent	To some extent	To a considerable extent	To a great extent
I am responsible for my success or failure in my career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, I have a very independent, self-directed career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Freedom to choose my own career path is one of my most important values.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am in charge of my own career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ultimately, I depend upon myself to move my career forward.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Where my career is concerned, I am very much "my own person."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the past I have relied more upon myself than others to find a new job when necessary.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I navigate my own career, based upon my personal priorities, as opposed to my employer's priorities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When development opportunities have not been offered by my company, I've sought them out on my own.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It doesn't matter much to me how other people evaluate the choices I make in my career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
What's most important to me is how I feel about my career success, not how other people feel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'll follow my own guidance if my company asks me to do something that goes against my values.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
What I think about what is right in my career is more important to me than what my company thinks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the past I have sided with my own values when the company has asked me to do something I don't agree with.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



2. To what extent have you experienced different kinds of organizational career management help? (If you're not currently employed, please think of your last professional experience)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have been given training to help develop my career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My superiors make sure I get the training I need for my career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been taught things I need to know to get on in this organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been given a personal development plan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been given challenging work which has developed my skills for the future.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My superiors give me clear feedback on my performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been given impartial career advice when I needed it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been introduced to people at work who are prepared to help me develop my career	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been given a mentor to help my career development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My superiors have introduced me to people who will help my career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Thinking about the possibility of leaving your company. Check below a list of factors and indicate how important each of them would be in your decision to stay or to leave the company? (If you're not currently employed, please think of your last professional experience)

	Not Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Neutral	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Overall pay level.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Salary level compared to what is practiced in the company.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Salary level compared to what is practiced in other companies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work hours that fit my lifestyle.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexible work schedule.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The time my work schedule leaves for leisure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job security.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The company's retention policy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pension/RRSP savings plan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Opportunities to use important skills and abilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oportunidades to learn and be trained.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to work in the occupation of my choice.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to work in the profession I am trained for.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Number of opportunities for advancement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How quickly people get promoted.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The emphasis placed on concern for people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The emphasis placed on achievement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The emphasis placed on honesty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The fairness of decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to be part of a team.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Next, you will find some sentences related with your attitude towards work. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of these sentences.

	(Strongly Disagree)						(Strongly Agree)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The opportunity to do challenging work is important to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I fail to complete a difficult task, I plan to try harder the next time I work on it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I prefer to work on tasks that force me to learn new things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The opportunity to learn new things is important to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do my best when I'm working on a fairly difficult task.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try hard to improve on my past performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The opportunity to extend the range of my abilities is important to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I have difficulty solving a problem, I enjoy trying different approaches to see which one will work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Annex B. Scale's authors and number of items

Variable	Author(s)	Number of Items
Protean Career Orientation	Briscoe et al., (2005)	14
Retention	Ito et al., (2013)	20
Learning Orientation	Button et al., (1996)	8
Organizational Career Management Practices	Sturges et al., (2002)	10

## Annex C. Reliability analysis of the variables in the model

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach alpha
Protean Orientation	3.447	4.000	6.786	3.242	.784
Retention (Development Opportunities)	4.033	4.406	4.172	2.574	.770
Learning Orientation	5.397	6.260	5.885	6.651	.889
Informal Organizational Career Management Practices	2.864	2.504	2.685	4.189	.839

## Annex D. Correlations matrix

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Gender <sup>a</sup>	1.61	.530	--														
2. Generation <sup>b</sup>	2.16	.785	-.016	--													
3. Tenure	2.57	.791	.106	-.614**	--												
4. Protean Orientation	3.796	.485	-.109	.141*	-.118	<b>(.784)</b>											
5. Learning Orientation	5.885	.831	-.001	-.157*	.095	.353**	<b>(.891)</b>										
6. Retention	4.045	.500	.113	.076	-.044	.154*	.240**	<b>(.881)</b>									
7. Retention - Satisfaction with Pay	3.888	.847	.062	.260**	-.202**	.207**	.036	.569**	<b>(.851)</b>								
8. Retention - Flexibility	4.204	.736	.006	.052	.006	0.135	-0.025	.583**	.284**	<b>(.761)</b>							
9. Retention - Security	3.65	.804	.124	-.093	.125	-.070	.050	.652**	.199**	.251**	<b>(.716)</b>						
10. Retention - Developmental opportunities	4.172	.643	.060	.115	-.118	.243**	.355**	.762**	.282**	.241**	.41**	<b>(.770)</b>					
11. Retention - Promotion	4.021	.778	.025	.033	-.062	.018	.231**	.697**	.379**	.246**	.341**	.525**	<b>(.729)</b>				
12. Retention - People factors	4.187	.648	.143*	-.042	.047	.071	.302**	.816**	.223**	.397**	.444**	.609**	.532**	<b>(.813)</b>			
13. Career Management Practices	3.035	.844	.009	.212**	-.220**	.266**	.105	.172*	.269**	-.001	.043	.158*	.088	.122	<b>(.873)</b>		
14. Formal Career Management Practices	3.269	.845	.041	.112	-.148*	.298**	.178*	.181**	.245**	-.003	.044	.153*	.106	.163*	.928**	<b>(.791)</b>	
15. Informal Career Management Practices	2.685	1.04	.031	.293**	-.264**	.175**	-.006	.129	.247**	.000	.032	.134	.049	.050	.893**	.660**	<b>(.839)</b>

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). N=246

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Notes. Numbers on the diagonal represent the alpha coefficients. <sup>a</sup>Gender is coded with 1 = Male, 2 = Female, 3 = Other; <sup>b</sup>Generation is coded with 1 = Generation X, 2 = Generation Y, 3 = Generation Z

## Annex E. One-Way ANOVA

### 1. Differences between Generation X, Y, and Z

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Gender <sup>a</sup>	Generation X	60	1.68	.469	.061	1.56	1.80	1	2
	Generation Y	89	1.51	.586	.062	1.38	1.63	1	4
	Generation Z	97	1.65	.501	.051	1.55	1.75	1	3
	Total	246	1.61	.530	.034	1.54	1.67	1	4
Employment Status <sup>b</sup>	Generation X	60	2.98	.225	.029	2.93	3.04	2	4
	Generation Y	89	2.94	.409	.043	2.86	3.03	2	4
	Generation Z	97	2.52	.561	.057	2.40	2.63	2	4
	Total	246	2.78	.493	.031	2.72	2.85	2	4
Tenure <sup>c</sup>	Generation X	60	4.18	1.255	.162	3.86	4.51	1	6
	Generation Y	89	2.74	1.709	.181	2.38	3.10	1	6
	Generation Z	97	1.42	1.249	.127	1.17	1.67	1	6
	Total	246	2.57	1.791	.114	2.35	2.80	1	6
Protean Orientation	Generation X	60	3.6869	.50079	.06465	3.5575	3.8163	1.71	4.86
	Generation Y	89	3.8170	.54844	.05813	3.7015	3.9325	1.64	4.86
	Generation Z	97	3.8432	.39965	.04058	3.7626	3.9237	2.93	4.79
	Total	246	3.7956	.48474	.03091	3.7347	3.8565	1.64	4.86
Retention - Developmental opportunities	Generation X	53	4.1038	.64754	.08895	3.9253	4.2823	1.50	5.00
	Generation Y	74	4.1182	.70495	.08195	3.9549	4.2816	1.75	5.00
	Generation Z	85	4.2618	.57852	.06275	4.1370	4.3865	2.75	5.00
	Total	212	4.1722	.64338	.04419	4.0851	4.2593	1.50	5.00

a. Gender is coded with 1 = Male, 2 = Female, 3 = Other;

b. Employment Status is coded with 1 = Student, 2 = Student-worker, 3 = Employed, 4 = Unemployed

c. Tenure is coded with 1 = < 2 years, 2 = 2-5years, 3 = 5-10 years, 4 = 10-15 years, 5 = > 15 years

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	Between Groups	1.439	2	.720	2.597	.077
	Within Groups	67.313	243	.277		
	Total	68.752	245			
Employment Status	Between Groups	11.652	2	5.826	29.538	<.001
	Within Groups	47.929	243	.197		
	Total	59.581	245			
Tenure	Between Groups	286.473	2	143.237	69.653	<.001
	Within Groups	499.710	243	2.056		
	Total	786.183	245			
Protean Orientation	Between Groups	.969	2	.485	2.080	.127
	Within Groups	56.599	243	.233		
	Total	57.568	245			
Retention - Developmental opportunities	Between Groups	1.145	2	.573	1.389	.252
	Within Groups	86.195	209	.412		
	Total	87.341	211			

### 2. Differences between Generation X and younger generations (Y and Z)

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Protean Orientation	Generation X	60	3.6869	.50079	.06465	3.5575	3.8163	1.71	4.86
	Younger generations (Y + Z)	186	3.8306	.47553	.03487	3.7619	3.8994	1.64	4.86
	Total	246	3.7956	.48474	.03091	3.7347	3.8565	1.64	4.86
Retention - Developmental opportunities	Generation X	53	4.1038	.64754	.08895	3.9253	4.2823	1.50	5.00
	Younger generations (Y + Z)	159	4.1950	.64241	.05095	4.0943	4.2956	1.75	5.00
	Total	212	4.1722	.64338	.04419	4.0851	4.2593	1.50	5.00

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Protean Orientation	Between Groups	.937	1	.937	4.039	.046
	Within Groups	56.631	244	.232		
	Total	57.568	245			
Retention - Developmental opportunities	Between Groups	.331	1	.331	.798	.373
	Within Groups	87.010	210	.414		
	Total	87.341	211			