Against the odds: Developing underdog versus favorite narratives to offset prior experiences of discrimination☆

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ABSTRACT

Although considerable theory and research indicates that prior experiences of discrimination hinder individuals, it remains unclear what individuals can do to offset these repercussions in the context of their work and career. We introduce two distinct types of self-narratives—underdog and favorite—and test whether these types of personal stories shape the effects of prior experiences of discrimination on performance efficacy, which in turn impact performance. Across two time-lagged experiments with job seekers in both field and online settings, we theorize and find that underdog narratives are more effective than favorite narratives at moderating the effects of prior experiences of discrimination on performance through performance efficacy. Our results present new insights for theory and research on expectations, self-narratives, and resilience in the face of discrimination and adversity.

1. Introduction

Experiences of discrimination continue to be among the most pressing issues—both in society and in the workplace (Fingerhut, 2018; Kang, DeCelles, Tilcsik, & Jun, 2016; Leigh & Melwani, 2019; Milkman, Akinola, & Chugh, 2012; Pascoe & Richman, 2009; Roberson & Stevens, 2006). Indeed, members of traditionally underrepresented or stigmatized groups often experience both subtle and overt forms of discrimination as a regular part of their everyday lives in and among different organizations and institutions, such as how they are treated by employers, public services, and the criminal justice system (Brown, 2020; Williams, Yu, Jackson, & Anderson, 1997). Existing research has demonstrated that prior experiences with, and perceptions of, everyday discrimination reduce job satisfaction (Redman & Snape, 2006), hurt relationships (King, Dawson, Kravitz, & Gulick, 2012), increase substance abuse (Mays & Cochran, 2001), and can even result in significant cardiovascular problems such as elevated blood pressure (Beatty Moody et al., 2016; Pascoe & Richman, 2009). As these studies make clear, prior experiences of discrimination can harm individuals' physical and psychological well-being beyond the immediate consequences of the experience itself.

Theory and research has unveiled that one key reason discrimination hinders individuals is because it reduces efficacy (Crocker & Major, 1989; Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2002). Indeed, foundational work on the self-fulfilling prophecy argues that wrongful discrimination in the form of prejudice undermines efficacy, thereby leading individuals who are targeted to behave in ways that are consistent with the underlying assumptions of the prejudice (Merton, 1948). For example, experiencing unfair treatment in the form of stigma can lead individuals to believe that the world is unjust, reducing their efficacy (Jussim, Palumbo, Chatman, Madon, and Smith, 2000). Similarly, symbolic interaction theory indicates that discrimination threatens the self-concept since it conveys to targeted individuals that they are unworthy (Goffman, 1963). Lastly, theory and empirical research on intergroup conflict highlights how discrimination fosters a sense of powerlessness and lack of control over outcomes for targeted members (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Together, these perspectives suggest that individuals internalize prior experiences of discrimination in ways that reduce their efficacy, preventing them from performing effectively.

In light of this, scholars have called for new theory and research to understand what individuals can do to offset the repercussions of prior experiences of discrimination (Schmitt et al., 2014). One potentially

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promising avenue lies in the use of self-narratives: the stories individuals construct to make sense of their world (McAdams, 2001).[1] Emerging theory and research on self-narratives suggest that processes of story-telling alter the ways in which individuals interpret their prior experiences, providing a vehicle for reframing, reflecting on, and deriving meaning from experiences (Sherman et al., 2013). Stories also feature frequently in individuals' work and performance experiences, and have been used in organizations as tools for imparting knowledge about what is valued (Martin, 2016) and motivating employees to perform their job more effectively (Grant, 2008). From this perspective, self-narratives may ameliorate the threat of prior experiences of discrimination in reducing individuals' performance efficacy.

Despite the potential for self-narratives to reduce the ramifications of prior experiences of discrimination on performance efficacy, existing theory and research offer an incomplete understanding of which self-narratives may be more or less effective. In terms of preserving efficacy, some related research implies that formulating narratives which focus on high expectations from others may be valuable (Eden, 2003; Oz & Eden, 1994). In the context of prior experiences of discrimination, situational narratives that affirm high expectations from others may be effective because it reminds individuals of the instrumental and emotional support that family, friends and others in their social network are able to provide, enabling them to preserve their efficacy in the face of prior discrimination (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Noh & Kaspar, 2003). Yet there is limited empirical evidence of others' support actually buffering the ramifications of discrimination (Schmitt et al., 2014). Moreover, focusing on high expectations from others may suppress or fail to acknowledge the adversity that prior discrimination creates, which may inhibit effective coping and resilience (Leslie, Bono, Kim, & Beaver, 2019; Major, Quinton, et al., 2002). Because the existing literature does not fully address these limitations, organizational scholars need new theoretical perspectives and empirical investigations to deepen knowledge about the effectiveness of self-narratives in the face of prior discrimination.

In this article, we introduce underdog and favorite narratives as two types of personal success stories that may enable individuals to preserve their performance efficacy in the face of prior experiences of discrimination. Building on emerging research (Dai, Dietvorst, Tuckfield, Milk-man, & Schweitzer, 2018; Nurmohamed, 2020), we conceptualize underdog and favorite narratives as two types of situational stories that feature similar endings (i.e., success) but consist of different beginnings and narrative arcs. Specifically, underdog narratives involve individuals reflecting on a personal situation in which they defied others' low expectations, believing in their own ability to attain success, whereas favorite narratives involve individuals reflecting on a personal experience in which they affirmed their own and others' beliefs that they can be successful. Drawing on theory and research on self-narratives (Jones, Destin, & McAdams, 2018; McAdams, 2001), we theorize and propose that underdog narratives will be more effective than favorite narratives at moderating the effects of prior experiences of discrimination on performance efficacy, which ultimately affects performance. We designed theory-driven interventions of underdog and favorite narratives, and tested our full theoretical model in two time-lagged experiments with real-world job seekers in both field (Study 1) and online (Study 2) settings.

Our research offers important contributions to theory and knowledge about resilience in response to discrimination, self-narratives and expectations. First, our research provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how individuals who have previously experienced discrimination can employ different types of self-narratives that enable

them to be adaptive and resilient. The psychological and career-related costs of prior discrimination are well-documented in extant research (Schmitt et al., 2014), but some have theorized that suppressing these experiences may also be problematic for individuals (Hargrove, Creagh, & Burgess, 2002; Miller & Kaiser, 2001). Our theory and results offer support for the benefits of underdog narratives, revealing that personal stories that acknowledge, but also defy, others' low expectations can be functional in the face of prior experiences of discrimination. Second, our findings advance emerging theory on self-narratives. Specifically, we advance existing theory to consider how varying the narrative content and arcs—stories that have similar endings but differ in how they unfold—may shape the impact of prior discrimination on performance efficacy, which in turn affects performance. By doing so, we unpack how individuals leverage their own stories to offset prior adversity and perform better. Third, our research complements and expands a growing body of research that challenges prevailing assumptions regarding the liabilities of perceiving low expectations from others (Nurmohamed, 2020) and the benefits of holding or being the target of high expectations (Baumeister, Hamilton, & Tice, 1985; Dai et al., 2018; Lount, Pettit, & Doyle, 2017). Our theory and findings reveal that individuals can harness prior experiences featuring others' low expectations and high self-expectations to perform better, demonstrating that they can derive strength from adversity and pave the way for future success.

2. Theoretical background

Our focus is on how self-narratives shape the impact of prior experiences of discrimination on performance efficacy, which in turn affects performance. Performance is the effectiveness of individuals' efforts in achieving personal and work-related goals (Campbell, 1990). Performance efficacy relates to a person's perception of his or her ability to attain performance outcomes (Bandura, 1977; Gist, 1987). Prior experiences of discrimination are defined as perceptions of differential and unfair treatment in the past on the basis of group membership, including, but not limited to, race, gender, age and social class (Major, Quinton, et al., 2002). Scholars have called for more attention to the everyday and subjective experiences of discrimination across key life domains such as housing, education and the criminal justice system (Schmitt et al., 2014).

2.1. The impact of prior experiences of discrimination on performance efficacy

Extant research indicates that prior experiences of discrimination generally reduce people's sense of control over important and meaningful outcomes (Schmitt et al., 2014; Verkuyten, 1998). Existing research demonstrates that experiencing discrimination can lead individuals to feel inferior or marginalized by others (Yip, 2018). In some instances, experiences of discrimination are overt or situational, but they can also be more subtle or chronic (Pascoe & Richman, 2009). Moreover, the repercussions of discrimination are stronger when people are directly targeted compared to those who experience discrimination more indirectly, suggesting that individualized experiences are particularly harmful (Schmitt et al., 2014). Research on the self-fulfilling prophecy proposes that individuals who are the targets of discrimination are likely to experience reduced performance efficacy (Eden, 2003; Kierein & Gold, 2000; McNatt, 2000; Merton, 1948). One underlying reason for this is that prior experiences of discrimination can foster a sense of powerlessness and lack of control over performance outcomes (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Therefore, extant work suggests that prior experiences of discrimination will reduce performance efficacy.

Although prior experiences of discrimination generally impairs performance efficacy, some scholars suggest that targets of discrimination may not always internalize these generally negative experiences (Crocker & Major, 1989; Sanchez & Brock, 1996). Major et al. (2002, p.

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[1] Similar to prior research in this domain, we use the terms self-narratives, narratives and stories interchangeably (Martin, 2016; McAdams, 2001). Our research focuses on the narratives that people tell themselves, as opposed to the narratives they tell other people (or that other people tell them).

254) note that individuals are not passive recipients of discrimination; instead, they are "active agents who construe and negotiate their social situations in the service of self-verification and self-esteem maintenance". In fact, for certain individuals, related research has shown that encountering discriminatory attitudes in the form of negative stereotypes can actually cause individuals to react against these stereotypes as they view it as an attempt to constrain their freedom (Kray, Thompson, & Galinsky, 2001; Quick, Shen, & Dillard, 2012). Therefore, though prior experiences of discrimination should generally undermine performance efficacy, we seek to understand how individuals can offset these repercussions using self-narratives.

2.2. Self-narratives as ways of interpreting prior experiences

Narratives or stories are defined as temporally sequenced accounts of interrelated events or actions undertaken by particular characters or actors such as protagonists (Barry & Elmes, 1997). Narratives can be communicated through a variety of media, including oral or written stories (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000), and can be shared casually in everyday conversation (Hjorth & Steyaert, 2013) or can be scripted and rehearsed (Czarniawska, 2004). Narratives follow the experience of a protagonist, from a beginning point to an end, and often follow an arc or trajectory. This arc imbues an overall sentiment to the story (Vaara, Sonenshein, & Boje, 2016). For example, narratives that change in valence from negative to positive may represent a story of self-growth or optimism, whereas narratives that change in valence from positive to negative may tell a story of self-decline or pessimism (Lilgendahl & Mcadams, 2011). In other words, narratives can differ in terms of their arcs and provide multiple "routes" for moving from the beginning to end, and these different routes may activate different motivational or performance processes (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Zilber, 2007).

Furthermore, narratives can influence behavior as they constitute templates for how to behave (Dunlop & Tracy, 2013). For example, Martin (2016) found that newcomers in an organization were more likely to engage in helping behaviors when they heard stories about low-level organizational members engaging in behaviors that upheld organizational values. Moreover, research in educational settings has shown that structured writing tasks such as self-affirmations can enable students to deflect identity threats (Sherman et al., 2013). From this perspective, narratives become imbued with meaning depending on their content and arc (Maitlis, 2009). Indeed, narratives highlighting themes of agency and interpersonal relationships with others promote meaning-making and generativity (Adler et al., 2017). Therefore, narratives can act as a guide for how individuals should seek to behave in new situations, especially when they apply to the self.

2.3. The interplay of prior experiences of discrimination and underdog versus favorite narratives

Against this backdrop of research, formulating self-narratives serves as a participant-driven approach to offset the repercussions that prior experiences of discrimination have on performance efficacy. In this research, we develop theory to examine the specific role of two self-narratives—underdog versus favorite—in shaping the effects of prior experiences of discrimination on performance efficacy. In both of these self-narratives, individuals believe that they can succeed, but the difference lies in whether the stories begin with others having high or low expectations about the individual. Specifically, an underdog narrative refers to a story regarding a prior personal experience of when other people expected the protagonist to be unsuccessful, but the protagonist believed he or she could succeed and was ultimately successful. In contrast, a favorite narrative is a story of a prior personal experience in which both the protagonist and others believed the protagonist could succeed, and he or she ended up attaining success. Both underdog and favorite narratives are pervasive across cultures and time, making them particularly relevant self-narratives to develop and examine given their

appeal (Gladwell, 2009; Paharia, Keinan, Avery, & Schor, 2011; Vandello, Goldschmied, & Michniewicz, 2016).

Following prior theory on narratives (McAdams, 2001; Vaara et al., 2016), we consider underdog and favorite narratives to represent two types of personal success narratives that end in similar outcomes but involve fundamentally different beginnings, stemming from the expectations of others.[2] A central tenet of these conceptualizations is that an underdog narrative is an arc that shifts from negative (i.e., others not expecting success) to positive (i.e., performing effectively) valence, whereas a favorite narrative mostly maintains a positive valence (i.e. others expecting success and performing effectively) across the narrative. Importantly, though both underdog and favorite narratives are anchored in prior situations and experiences, we follow extant research in conceptualizing them as evolving and integrative across the past, present and future, as self-narratives communicate, "who they are now, how they came to be, and where they think their lives may be going in the future" (McAdams & McLean, 2013, p. 233).

In this research, we hypothesize that, relative to favorite narratives, underdog narratives will be more effective at offsetting the repercussions of prior experiences of discrimination on performance efficacy. Extant research has demonstrated that thinking about the benefits that arise from situations of adversity can be adaptive, as it is reassuring to individuals to reflect on their potential to accomplish goals during difficult times (Jones et al., 2018). Indeed, individuals who have experienced greater discrimination in the past are likely to have encountered significant barriers and obstacles to achieving their goals (Williams & Neighbors, 2001). Consistent with prior theory that suggests that self-narratives are more likely to be potent when they are both salient and meaningful (McAdams, 2006), we predict that underdog narratives will be more likely than favorite narratives to preserve performance efficacy in the face of prior discrimination, since both prior experiences of discrimination and underdog narratives prominently feature barriers and obstacles. As such, individuals experiencing greater discrimination who develop underdog narratives will remind themselves of their capacity to perform effectively.

In addition, underdog narratives are likely to offset the relationship between prior experiences of discrimination and performance efficacy since it portrays the self as agentic and in control. Unlike favorite narratives, underdog narratives feature the self as the central protagonist whom believes in themselves when others fail to do so, and they are responsible for marshalling the necessary resources to achieve success. Prior work on self-narratives demonstrates that narratives highlighting themes of agency and growth can offset adversity and boost efficacy (McAdams & McLean, 2013). For instance, Dunlop and Tracy (2013) found that recovering alcoholics who formulated narratives of self-redemption—that is, a positive personality change following a negative experience—were more likely to stay sober than those who did not. Similarly, adolescent students who acknowledged specific steps they took to achieve success in the face of a prior failure reported greater persistence and achieved higher academic grades (Jones et al., 2018). In this way, the arc of underdog narratives is likely to offer reassurance and concrete lessons that can be applied to performance goals, since it recognizes that others' low expectations do not always prevent individuals from achieving success. Furthermore, the discrepancy from the beginning to the end of an underdog narrative is likely to be a motivating force, offsetting the repercussions of prior experiences of discrimination on performance efficacy.

In comparison, favorite narratives may offer potential benefits, since such affirmations highlight interpersonal relationships with others, and

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[2] Although we conceptualize both underdog and favorite narratives as ending in success, we note that the focus of success for underdogs and favorites could differ. For example, success for underdogs may consist of outperforming expectations, whereas for favorites it could be not underperforming expectations (Lount et al., 2017).

remind people that others are supportive of their goals, which is adaptive for resilience (Cohen & Sherman, 2014). However, we contend that favorite narratives are less effective than underdog narratives in offsetting the ramifications of prior experiences of discrimination on performance efficacy for several reasons. Unlike underdog narratives, favorite narratives offer fewer lessons on how to overcome adversity due to the content and arc of these types of stories. Favorite narratives may also fail to highlight the ways in which individuals were responsible for their own success in these situations, which inhibits feelings of agency. Moreover, favorite narratives are less likely to be motivating since they do not feature a discrepancy between where a person starts in their story and where they end in the same way that underdog narratives do. Consequently, favorite narratives are less effective than underdog narratives for combating the effects of prior experiences of discrimination on performance efficacy.

Hypothesis 1. *Self-narrative archetype (underdog versus favorite) moderates the negative relationship between prior experiences of discrimination and performance efficacy, such that the negative relationship is less pronounced for underdog than favorite narratives.*

Building on Hypothesis 1, we also contend that performance efficacy mediates the interactive effects between prior experiences of discrimination and underdog narratives—relative to favorite narratives—on performance. Following prior research, we expect that performance efficacy is positively associated with performance (Bandura, 2009). Indeed, people with greater performance efficacy see themselves as capable of having the cognitive resources required to meet situational demands (Zimmerman et al., 1992). Based on this, individuals who experience greater performance efficacy are likely to believe they have the capabilities, as well as the motivation, to perform better. Taken together, prior experiences of discrimination are less likely to reduce performance efficacy when individuals develop underdog narratives relative to favorite narratives because underdog narratives enable these individuals to see themselves as people who overcome adversity, rather than requiring others to believe in them in order to achieve success. Moreover, underdog narratives—relative to favorite narratives—enable individuals to harness these prior experiences to consider the ways in which their capabilities were responsible for success. Due to performance efficacy (as specified in Hypothesis 1), individuals who develop underdog narratives are likely to feel more capable of achieving their goals and will be more motivated to perform effectively than those who develop favorite narratives. Therefore, we expect that performance efficacy explains why prior experiences of discrimination enable those who construct underdog narratives to perform better than those who formulate favorite narratives:

Hypothesis 2. *Performance efficacy mediates the interactive effects of prior experiences of discrimination and self-narrative archetype (underdog versus favorite) on performance.*

Given that both prior experiences of discrimination and performance efficacy are perceptual and subjective (Gist, 1987; Major, Quinton, et al., 2002), it is important to recognize that other individual-level factors may influence the above hypotheses, especially since extant theory suggests that performance efficacy is not always hindered by prior experiences of discrimination (Crocker & Major, 1989; Sanchez & Brock, 1996). For example, members of underrepresented groups may be less likely to view specific events as discrimination due to the frequency of experiencing these events in their everyday lives (Mendoza-Denton, Page-Gould, & Pietrzak, 2005). Moreover, theory and research on attributions (Major, Quinton, et al., 2002), as well as stress and coping (Feldman Barrett & Russell, 1998; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), recognize that individual differences in cognitive appraisals influence the perceptions and attributions of discrimination (Major, Gramzow, et al., 2002; Major, Kaiser, O'Brien, & McCoy, 2007; Sechrist, Swim, & Mark, 2003). Indeed, the fundamental appraisals that people make of their own worthiness, personal control and capabilities impact how individuals appraise and interpret prior discrimination, as those who fundamentally appraise themselves as higher on these attributes may be less sensitive to instances of unfair treatment (Feldman Barrett & Russell, 1998; Tepper et al., 2009). Therefore, it is important to also account for and test the impact of additional individual-level factors in the studies below.

3. Overview of studies

To test our theory, we conducted two studies among job seekers using a between-subjects design with random assignment for self-narrative archetypes. The job search is a relevant context for testing theory related to the interplay between prior experiences of discrimination and narratives on performance because it is goal-directed, requires self-motivation and involves dealing with uncertainty and rejection (Wanberg, Zhu, & Van Hooft, 2010). Using a sample of job seekers who mostly belonged to traditionally underrepresented backgrounds, Study 1 uses a field experiment to examine the role of underdog versus favorite narratives in shaping the effects of prior experiences of discrimination on performance via performance efficacy with an archival measure of employment. To strengthen support for our theory, Study 2 constructively replicates our theoretical model in an online experiment with a larger and broader sample of job seekers, lagged design across three time intervals and multiple measures of performance.

Since prior experiences of discrimination is measured—not manipulated—in our studies, we made efforts to account for additional individual-level factors that could impact the hypothesized relationships. In Studies 1 and 2, we controlled for demographic factors (minority status, age) and job search-related factors (weeks unemployed, full-time status). In addition to these factors, we also accounted for individual differences that may influence the appraisals and attributions that people make in Study 2. Specifically, we accounted for core self-evaluations, a broad individual disposition that reflects the fundamental appraisal and attributions that people make of their own worthiness, capabilities and personal control. Core self-evaluations represent a latent higher-order trait indicated by four underlying dimensions: generalized self-efficacy, self-esteem, emotional stability and internal locus of control (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003). Prior research has noted that fundamental appraisals such as these influence attributions of mistreatment (Major, Quinton, et al., 2002; Tepper et al., 2009) and performance efficacy (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001), as well as performance (Brown, Ferris, Heller, & Keeping, 2007; Wanberg, Glomb, Song, & Sorenson, 2005). Indeed, prior theory and research on attributional ambiguity in the context of discrimination implies that locus of control and neuroticism may inflate the relationship between perceptions of discrimination and self-efficacy (Major, Quinton, et al., 2002), and similarly, other researchers have noted that performance efficacy may be impacted by a person's generalized self-efficacy and self-esteem (Chen et al., 2001; Eden, 2003). To account for this possibility, we thus measured and controlled for core self-evaluations in Study 2.

Lastly, we provide an additional constructive replication of Hypothesis 1 in our online supplement among full-time employees, enhancing the generalizability of the proposed theory beyond the job search (https://osf.io/e4qzn/).

4. Study 1

4.1. Method

4.1.1. Sample and participants

Given that we were interested in how narratives shape the relationship between prior experiences of discrimination and performance via performance efficacy, we recruited 330 unemployed job seekers from two reemployment centers in a large metropolitan city in the northeastern United States between July 2017 to January 2018. The

reemployment centers offered job seekers training and consultation services to acquire employment. Participants were told that their participation would have no impact on their status at the center, and they were informed that their responses would be delivered directly to the university research team (i.e., workforce advisors at the center would not have access to their status or responses in the study).

To participate, job seekers had to attend and participate in an initial workshop at the reemployment center that they visited. They also had to affirm that they would be actively looking for a job and seek to find employment in the upcoming month. Participants were given $50 for completing the entire study. In the sample, 92.5% were female, 97.4% were demographic minorities (85.6% African American, 3.5% Hispanic, and 8.3% other non-Whites), 69.6% completed a high school degree or less (14.1% less than high school, 56.5% high school or GED, 23.3% some college, 2.6% two-year college degree, 3.2% four-year college degree, and 0.3% graduate degree), and the average age was 30.5 years. Due to the difficulty in recruiting job seekers from these groups, studies do not always include job seekers with these attributes (Côté, Saks, & Zikic, 2006; Moynihan, Roehling, LePine, & Boswell, 2003; Saks & Ashforth, 1999; for exceptions, see Wanberg et al., 2005; 2010). However, this is an important context since the unemployment rate and period of being unemployed is significantly higher for job seekers who belong to these demographic groups (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). In addition, this is a relevant context for examining our hypotheses given that we are studying prior experiences of discrimination. Indeed, pilot interviews with job seekers and workforce advisors revealed that prior discrimination was a challenge that some, though not all, job seekers had experienced.

4.1.2. Procedure

We developed a randomized field experiment (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002) with a between-subjects design comparing three different conditions for participant-constructed self-narratives. All job seekers participated in an initial workshop, called the "My Success, My Story Workshop," wherein they were instructed to construct a self-narrative, but we varied the type of narrative that job seekers constructed. We developed the workshops on the basis of our theory and prior field experiments on both narratives (Martin, 2016) and the job search (van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009), as well as feedback solicited from workforce advisors to determine what would be most effective in this context. A team of research assistants and staff members at the reemployment centers who were blind to the study hypotheses administered the workshops. Each workshop was approximately one hour long and structured in the same way: (a) an introduction by the workshop administrators, (b) survey measures about the participant, (c) instructions related to the self-narratives that would be recorded, (d) preparation of the narrative (i.e., writing down key aspects of the story), (e) recording the narrative, and (f) completion of final survey measures.

Workshop administrators began each workshop by informing participants that the reemployment center, in partnership with a university research team, had developed a workshop that would enable job seekers to have a better understanding of key experiences during their life. As part of this workshop, administrators told participants that they would prepare and create a personal story about a prior experience. After providing an introduction and overview to the workshop, administrators asked participants to complete a series of survey questions, including a measure of prior experiences of discrimination.

After completing the initial survey questions, participants moved to the self-narrative portion of the workshop. They were instructed to prepare and record a video of themselves telling a story from their life. We chose to have participants create a video narrative—rather than an alternative form (e.g., written)—for multiple reasons in this study. First, Vaara et al. (2016) argue that it is important for organizational researchers to move beyond written or oral narratives to forms such as video since it enables the speaker to better communicate their emotions and tone. Second, we wanted participants to remember their workshop

story and keep it top-of-mind during their job search. As such, we used video narratives since they would be both impactful and memorable for our study participants.

As part of the workshop, participants were introduced to the concept of stories, in accordance with existing theory. Participants were informed that stories have a "beginning, middle, and end," and that they were "unique from other communication means in that they have characters (e.g., yourself, family members, friends, coworkers, etc.) and often have a 'lesson' that can be applied in the future." Furthermore, we informed participants that we wanted to learn more about the stories that represented them as individuals.

Narrative Intervention. After delivering instructions regarding what constitutes a story, we then randomly assigned[3] each participant to one of three self-narrative workshop conditions. In the underdog narrative condition, participants read the following instructions:

"We want you to think about a story when you were seen as an underdog but believed you had what it takes to succeed. In other words, we want you to tell us about a story in which others doubted your chances of succeeding, but you believed you could succeed and could overcome the odds to be successful."

In the favorite narrative condition, participants read the following instructions:

"We want you to think about a story when others had a very high bar for your success and you also thought you could succeed. In other words, we want you to tell us about a story in which others set a high bar of expectations for you and you thought you would succeed."

Finally, scholars have noted that designing responsible and ethical field experiment research requires that researchers aim to minimize inequity between treatment groups when using random assignment (Eden, 2003; Grant & Wall, 2008). Since prior research demonstrates that developing self-narratives related to one's life can have benefits for well-being during times of trauma and adversity (Barclay & Skarlicki, 2009; Pennebaker & Seagal, 1999), including a pure control condition without a narrative prompt would have been problematic since it would likely provide job seekers with fewer benefits than those in the underdog and favorite conditions. As such, we included a situational life narrative condition as a non-equivalent control group that asked participants to tell a story from their life, but did not specify what type of self-narrative they should develop. While our core hypotheses test the differences between underdog and favorite narratives, the inclusion of this condition also provides exploratory insight into whether differences between the interventions were being driven more by underdog versus favorite narratives, as the absence of any sort of control group would provide fewer insights. Therefore, the situational life narrative prompt read:

"We want you to think about a story from your life. In other words, we want you to think of a situation in your life and tell us a story about it."

In accordance with existing narrative field experiments (Martin, 2016), we used multiple cues to reinforce the manipulation. After receiving instructions on the type of narrative (i.e., underdog, favorite or situational life), job seekers were given an example and prompts to help stimulate ideas for their story. First, participants watched an example video narrative from a prior job seeker in accordance with the condition to which they were assigned. We recorded and selected these videos as

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[3] Given that each participant was assigned to a personal computer, random assignment was done via the survey software they were using (Qualtrics). Therefore, participants doing the study at the same time were randomly assigned to different workshop conditions within the same session. To ensure that participants were not aware of the other conditions, they were unable to see others' computer screens and were seated away from other participants.

part of a pilot session that we ran to provide participants guidance on the type of story that they should create. Second, we provided time and space during the workshop to think about and write down details related to their experience that would help them create their story. For example, participants were instructed to think about what happened initially (i.e., beginning) and how things were resolved (i.e., the end). To provide guidance related to the middle of their story, we asked participants to think about the important events and people involved in their story. We told participants that they should take their time in formulating their story as it would be helpful when recording the video. Third, to help solidify their narrative and reinforce the manipulation, we had participants reflect on their story and apply it to their future. Participants were asked to write about the central message or theme of their story, the way their story aligns with who they are as a person, and what their story entails for the steps they can take as they move forward in their job search.

After completing these prompts, participants raised their hand and a workshop administrator came over to set up the video recording software. Participants were instructed to put on their headset, look into the webcam and tell their story either with or without the notes that they had taken. After completing the story portion of the workshop, participants completed a series of additional survey questions, including the measure of performance efficacy and demographics. We followed up with participants over the study period to reinforce and remind them of the workshop. As part of the email, we included the text that they had written in preparation for recording the video narrative to remind them of their story.

4.1.3. Variables and measures

Performance. To measure performance, we received archival employment data from the reemployment center on whether participants received and accepted a job within the first month (31 days) of their participation in the initial workshop. We chose this time period because participants had to affirm that they planned to look for a job over the period of a month to be eligible for the study, and it was a time period that matched well with the goals of the reemployment center based on the policies of the state and federal government. We coded this as a binary variable: 1 if they accepted employment by the end of 31 days and 0 if they did not.

Prior experiences of discrimination. Before the narrative portion of the workshop, we measured prior experiences of discrimination with nine items used in existing research (Williams et al., 2008; 1997). The questions were framed in the context of unfairness instead of discrimination since prior research has shown that routine and frequent experiences of discrimination typically involve unfair treatment in a variety of domains and asking about racial discrimination can produce demand characteristics (Roscigno, Mong, Byron, & Tester, 2007; Williams & Neighbors, 2001). Furthermore, we chose a global measure of prior discrimination rather than one that strictly focused on employment because the construct we were examining was not confined to the job search domain and because discrimination has been shown to impact individuals across contexts (Major, Quinton, et al., 2002; Schmitt et al., 2014). Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they previously experienced each statement on a scale from 1 (definitely not) to 5 (definitely yes). Sample items included: "For unfair reasons, have you ever not been hired for a job?" "Have you ever been unfairly discouraged by a teacher or advisor from continuing your education?" "Have you ever been unfairly stopped, questioned, physically threatened or abused by the police?" "Have you ever moved into a neighborhood where neighbors made life difficult for you or your family?" and "Have you ever been treated unfairly when using transportation (e.g., buses, taxis, trains, at an airport, etc.)?" ($\alpha = 0.81$).

Performance efficacy. We measured performance efficacy in the final set of survey questions after the narrative intervention of the workshop with four items used in prior research on the job search (Wanberg et al., 2010). The questions asked participants to indicate the extent to which

each of the following was likely to happen on a scale from 1 (extremely unlikely) to 7 (extremely likely): "Finding a job if I look," "Getting a good paying job," "Finding a job that I like," and "Landing a job as good as or better than the one I left" ($\alpha = 0.90$).

Control variables. Although we randomly assigned participants to narrative conditions, we included a set of control variables since prior experiences of discrimination was measured, not manipulated. Thus, our study lacks full control over assignment to experimental condition. In accordance with prior research on the job search and recommendations on the use of control variables (Bernerth & Aguinis, 2016; Wanberg, Kanfer, Hamann, & Zhang, 2016), we provide an insight into why and how our controls relate to the focal variables of interest in our research. We included a variable for whether job seekers were White or non-White since non-White job seekers are more likely to experience prior discrimination and have historically higher rates of unemployment (Aguirre & Turner, 2003). We controlled for age since job seekers who are older may face age discrimination and find it more difficult to find employment (Roscigno et al., 2007; Wanberg et al., 2016). In accordance with prior research on the job search, we also included a variable that accounted for the number of weeks that participants had been unemployed at the time of the workshop since this can affect performance efficacy and the likelihood of finding reemployment (Wanberg et al., 2010). We winsorized this variable since some individuals in our dataset were more than three standard deviations above the mean, which could skew the results. We included a binary variable related to whether participants were looking for a full-time job or not, as finding full-time employment tends to more difficult, which may affect performance efficacy and ultimately, performance. Lastly, we controlled for whether participants were receiving federal assistance or not. Participants receiving federal assistance face stigma from employers and have stringent work requirements (Stuber & Kronebusch, 2004), so they may be more likely to experience discrimination or be inclined to take any job that they find.

Data Quality: Manipulation Check and Excluded Participants. An important element of the narratives as they pertain to this study is ensuring consistency between the instructions provided to participants and the narratives that they subsequently created. To assess the degree to which each narrative fit with their respective condition, we had two research assistants (blind to the study hypotheses) code the recorded stories. The two coders displayed good initial interrater reliability (ICC (2) = 0.64, $p = .001$) and interrater agreement (average deviation = 0.92), which meets conventional guidelines (Erosa et al., 2010; LeBreton & Senter, 2008). Next, the coders met to resolve discrepancies in their coding to determine a final code. When both coders determined that the narrative "did not at all" fit the respective narrative condition, we removed the participant from our analyses, as their narrative was unlikely to have the intended effect. In most of these cases, participants generally ignored instructions and did not engage earnestly in the workshop. This resulted in the removal of nine participants from the underdog condition, six participants from the favorite condition and seven participants from the situational life condition.[4] This resulted in a final sample of 308 participants, where there were 103 participants in the underdog condition, 111 in the favorite condition and 94 in the situational life condition.

Additional check: Usefulness of workshop. Following extant research, we wanted to verify that there were no differences in the usefulness or engagement of the workshops (Heslin, Latham, & VandeWalle, 2005). Given the appeal of underdog stories (Paharia et al., 2011; Vandello, Goldschmied, & Richards, 2007), it is possible that those in the underdog narratives condition found their workshop to be more interesting and useful than those in the favorite or situational life narrative

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[4] The seven participants removed from the control condition recorded stories that were not about their lives (e.g., recorded stories that were about other people).

conditions. To investigate this possibility, we used Heslin et al. (2005) measure that asked participants about the extent to which they believed their narrative workshop was (using a 1-strongly disagree to 7-strongly agree scale): "Useful," "Thought-Provoking," "Interesting" and "Worthwhile" ($\alpha = 0.90$). A one-way ANOVA did not reveal any significant differences between the three conditions, $F(2, 306) = 0.79$, $p = .55$.

4.3. Results

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for the key study variables are displayed in Table 1. As Table 1 shows, 18.83% of our sample accepted employment within 31 days. Furthermore, although the job seekers in our sample belong to traditionally underrepresented backgrounds that may have contributed to them experiencing greater discrimination, there was sufficient variation in terms of prior experience with discrimination ($M = 2.31/5.00$, $SD = 0.98$).

Given that our mediator was a continuous variable and our dependent variable was binary, we used a set of linear and logistic regressions to test our hypotheses. Since we were primarily interested in comparing the effectiveness of underdog narratives relative to favorite narratives, we created two binary variables for underdog narratives (1 = underdog, 0 = favorite or situational life) and situational life narratives (1 = situational life, 0 = underdog or favorite) conditions (i.e., favorite narratives was the reference category). Table 2 shows the results. Hypothesis 1 proposed that underdog narratives (relative to favorite narratives) moderates the negative relationship between prior experiences of discrimination and performance efficacy, such that the negative relationship is less pronounced for underdog narratives than for favorite narratives. To test for Hypothesis 1, we first included the set of control variables and main effect variables (i.e., prior experiences of discrimination, underdog binary and situational life binary) (M1a) before including the discrimination × underdog and discrimination × situational life interaction terms (M1b). The interaction between prior discrimination and underdog narratives on performance efficacy was significant (M1b: $b = 0.39$, $p = .039$). To interpret the form of the interaction, we computed the simple slopes and plotted the interaction. As shown in Fig. 1, the slope of prior discrimination on performance efficacy was significantly negative for individuals who formulated favorite narratives ($b = -0.33$, $SE = 0.13$, $p = .011$, CI_{95} [-0.59, -0.08]), but not for those who created underdog narratives ($b = 0.05$, $SE = 0.13$, $p > .05$, CI_{95} [-0.21, 0.32]). In other words, the relationship between prior experiences of discrimination and performance efficacy is less negative for individuals who formulated underdog narratives versus those who formulated favorite narratives, providing support for Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that performance efficacy mediates the interactive effects of prior experiences of discrimination and self-narrative archetype (underdog versus favorite) on performance. As displayed in Table 2, after including the control variables and main effect of prior discrimination (M2a), performance efficacy was positively related to performance in the logistic regression analyses with

performance as the dependent variable (M2b: $b = 0.33$, $p = .010$). To test for Hypothesis 2 (i.e., a first-stage moderated mediation model) with performance efficacy as the mediator and performance as the dependent variable, we followed the bootstrapping-based analytic approach of Hayes (2017) with 10,000 resamples. Such an approach involves computing and comparing the indirect effect of prior discrimination on performance via performance efficacy for underdog narratives relative to favorite narratives after running regressions on both the mediator and dependent variable. The conditional indirect effect was significantly negative for favorite narratives ($b = -0.11$, $SE = 0.07$, CI_{95} [−0.29, −0.02]), but there was no significant effect for underdog narratives ($b = 0.02$, $SE = 0.05$, CI_{95} [−0.08, 0.14]). Moreover, the index of moderated mediation for underdog relative to favorite narratives was significantly positive as the confidence interval excluded zero ($index = 0.13$, $SE = 0.09$, CI_{95} [0.0018, 0.37]), providing support for Hypothesis 2.

4.4. Discussion

Our field experiment provides evidence for our core prediction of underdog narratives—relative to favorite narratives—moderating the effects of prior experiences of discrimination on performance efficacy. We also found support for an indirect effect of the interaction between prior discrimination and underdog narratives (relative to favorite narratives) on performance through performance efficacy. These results provide initial support for our theory, suggesting that underdog narratives are more effective than favorite narratives in combating the effects of prior experiences of discrimination on performance via performance efficacy. Moreover, results revealed that the negative indirect effect of discrimination on performance through performance efficacy for favorite narratives did not emerge for underdog narratives.

Despite the strengths of Study 1, it is still subject to several limitations. For instance, it remains unclear whether these results would extend to a broader sample of job seekers with greater variation in terms of ethnicity, gender and education. Moreover, accounting for individual differences in beliefs—in addition to a greater variation in demographics—may further unpack the relative effects of underdog versus favorite narratives, since Study 1 highlighted the repercussions of favorite narratives in the face of prior experiences of discrimination. Indeed, prior work reveals that individual differences related to self-worth, competence and locus of control may influence appraisals of discriminatory mistreatment and performance efficacy, as well as influence job search behaviors related to performance (Wanberg, Ali, & Csillag, 2020; Wanberg et al., 2005). This is important, because accounting for additional individual differences may influence and alter the specific pattern of slopes observed. Lastly, while we measured prior experiences of discrimination before the intervention and performance efficacy after the intervention, collecting these two measures at different points in time would be valuable. To resolve these limitations, we conducted a multi-wave online experiment among job seekers in Study 2.

Table 1
Study 1: Descriptive statistics and correlations.

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Minority	0.97	0.16	–									
2. Age	30.42	8.49	−0.04	–								
3. Weeks Unemployed	31.07	44.76	−0.01	0.01	–							
4. Full-Time	0.89	0.31	−0.06	0.13*	−0.12*	–						
5. Federal Assistance	0.75	0.43	−0.09	0.10	−0.06	0.16**	–					
6. Prior Discrimination	2.31	0.98	−0.10	0.18**	0.01	0.00	−0.01	(0.81)				
7. Underdog Narrative	0.33	0.47	−0.14*	0.10	0.01	−0.04	0.04	0.01	–			
8. Situational life Narrative	0.31	0.46	0.06	−0.06	−0.04	−0.08	−0.10	0.04	−0.47**	–		
9. Performance Efficacy	5.43	1.44	0.11*	0.14*	−0.05	−0.01	0.04	−0.08	−0.04	−0.01	(0.90)	
10. Performance	0.19	0.39	0.03	0.02	−0.10	0.04	0.03	0.00	−0.04	−0.01	0.15**	–

Note: N = 308 participants. *** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05.

Table 2

Study 1: Summary of regression results.

Variables	M1a: Performance Efficacy		M1b: Performance Efficacy		M2a: Performance		M2b: Performance	
	b	t	b	t	b	Z	b	Z
Minority	0.92†	1.77	1.04†	1.74	0.56	0.51	0.34	0.31
	(0.52)		(0.60)		(1.09)		(1.11)	
Age	0.03*	2.89	0.03**	2.65	0.003	0.15	−0.004	−0.19
	(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.02)		(0.02)	
Weeks Unemployed	−0.002	−0.96	−0.002	−0.97	−0.01	1.75	−0.01	−1.47
	(0.002)		(0.002)		(0.004)		(0.004)	
Full-Time	−0.17	−0.64	−0.19	−0.68	0.21	0.39	0.26	0.49
	(.27)		(0.28)		(0.52)		(0.53)	
Federal Assistance	0.11	0.55	0.12	0.57	0.11	0.30	0.09	0.26
	(.19)		(0.20)		(0.36)		(0.36)	
Prior Discrimination	−0.15†	−1.76	−0.33*	−2.56	0.01	0.03	0.06	0.36
	(.08)		(0.13)		(0.15)		(0.16)	
Underdog Narrative	−0.19	−0.94	−1.06*	−2.30				
	(.20)		(0.46)					
Situational Life Narrative	−0.10	−0.48	−0.51	−0.96				
	(.20)		(0.53)					
Discrimination x Situational Life			0.18	0.89				
			(0.20)					
Discrimination x Underdog			0.39*	2.07				
			(0.19)					
Performance Efficacy							0.33**	2.58
							(0.13)	

Note: N = 308 participants. The dependent variable of each regression is indicated across the top of the table. M1a-1b used linear regression and M2a-2b used logistic regression since performance is a binary variable. Standard errors reported in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < .10$.
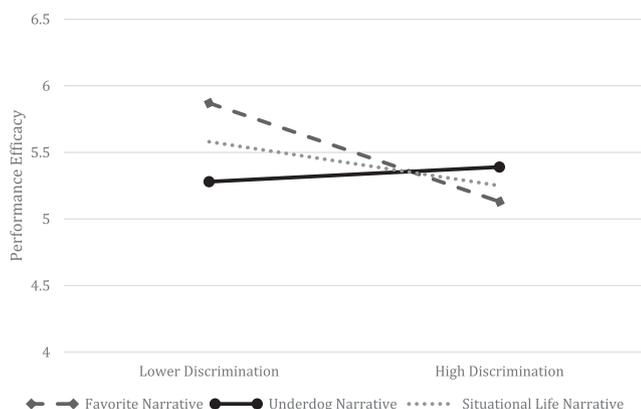
Fig. 1. Study 1: The Relationship between Prior Experiences of Discrimination and Performance Efficacy Moderated by Underdog versus Favorite Narratives.

5. Study 2

In Study 2, we aim to constructively replicate the interactive effects of prior experiences of discrimination and self-narrative archetypes on performance through performance efficacy among a sample of job seekers from a wider array of backgrounds. Using a similar experimental design with a manipulation of self-narratives, we also collected lagged measures of prior experiences of discrimination, performance efficacy and performance at three separate time points to reduce method bias and strengthen causal inferences in our study design (Podsakoff, MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012). Furthermore, we included an additional measure of performance to reflect the quality of individuals' effectiveness in achieving their goals related to the job search. Lastly, to examine the robustness and pattern of our hypothesized effects, and to rule out alternative explanations for our findings related to key individual differences in attributions and appraisals of perceived discrimination and performance efficacy, we included a measure of core self-evaluations (Judge et al., 2003). We also conducted additional supplementary analyses with and without this additional measure to explore the hypothesized interactive effects further.

5.1. Method

5.1.1. Sample and participants

We used CloudResearch to recruit a larger and broader sample of job seekers in the United States from June to July 2019 (Litman, Robinson, & Abberbock, 2017). To qualify, job seekers had to pledge to complete each wave of the study on their computer and be actively looking for a job over the next month (if they responded "no" to either of these questions, they were prohibited from participating). For the initial online workshop, we sought to recruit 800 job seekers. To boost the effective response rate, participants earned more for completing the subsequent surveys than the initial survey (i.e., $4 for completing the initial workshop, $6 for completing the second survey, and $6 for completing the final survey). 3891 participants attempted to participate in the study and, of those, 771 job seekers qualified and participated in the first survey based on the eligibility criteria. One week later, we sent a link to the second survey via CloudResearch to those who participated in the initial workshop, and we received 599 responses, for an effective response rate of 77.7%. We then sent out a final survey approximately two weeks after the second survey—and one month (i.e., 31 days) after the first survey—via CloudResearch to those who completed the first two waves, and we received 531 completed responses, for an effective response rate of 88.6%. Of the job seekers who completed all waves of the study, 56.3% were female, 35.2% were demographic minorities (12.6% African American, 10.0% Hispanic, 7.7% Asian, and 4.9% other non-Whites), 6.2% completed a high school degree or less (0.6% less than high school, 5.6% high school or GED, 25.5% some college, 12.5% two-year college degree, 40.6% four-year college degree, and 15.3% graduate degree), and the average age was 36.6 years.

5.1.2. Procedure

Since we were primarily interested in constructive replication (Lykken, 1968), we again measured prior experiences of discrimination and manipulated the self-narrative archetype. The procedure was largely consistent with the prior study, as we randomly assigned job seekers to one of the three narrative conditions that were present in Study 1: underdog narratives, favorite narratives, or situational life narratives. Study 2 notably differed from Study 1 in the following ways. First, we conducted the narrative intervention online instead of in-

person at a reemployment center. Second, participants did not observe an example of a narrative prior to the creation of their story to reduce the possibility that the examples they heard shaped the stories they developed. Third, instead of using webcams, participants only recorded audio self-narratives as we wanted to protect confidentiality, make the online workshop logistically smoother (i.e., audio could be more easily recorded within the web browser) and recruit a larger sample of participants. Fourth, given that prior experiences of discrimination may be associated with individuals' sense of control, and performance efficacy may be related to individuals' generalized self-efficacy, we included a measure of core self-evaluations in the initial survey to account for this possibility. Fifth, participants completed the measure of performance efficacy one week after the initial workshop. Although interaction effects are less susceptible to common method biases (Evans, 1985; Siemsen, Roth, & Oliveira, 2010), this approach strengthens our inferences and reduces potential biases. Lastly, we included two measures on the final survey to capture objective and subjective dimensions of performance.

5.1.3. Variables and measures

Performance. To constructively replicate our findings from Study 1, we operationalized performance with two separate measures on the third and final survey. Similar to Study 1, we assessed performance objectively based on whether participants indicated that they received and accepted a job within the first month (31 days) of their participation in the initial workshop (i.e., 1 if yes by the end of 31 days and 0 if they did not). Second, we measured performance more subjectively with seven items from prior research (DeRue & Morgeson, 2007) that we adapted to the job search on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Sample items included: "I have performed very well in my job search," "My overall performance in the job search has been outstanding," "Overall, I have been very effective in fulfilling my goals in the job search," and "I have been very effective in finding a job" (α = 0.96). We used this second measure because it reflects the effectiveness of individuals' efforts in achieving personal and work-related goals, which is consistent with the definition of performance (Campbell, 1990).

Prior experiences of discrimination. We measured prior experiences of discrimination before the narrative portion of the workshop on the first survey using the same nine-item measure employed in Study 1 (α = 0.81).

Performance efficacy. We measured performance efficacy using the same four items from Study 1 on the second survey (Wanberg et al., 2010) (α = 0.90).

Control variables. We included the same control variables from the prior study in our analyses with the exception of the federal assistance binary variable (which was less relevant in this broader population sample). Beyond these demographic and job search-related factors, we also controlled for core self-evaluations, as individual differences in these self-views may influence the relationship between our independent, mediating and dependent variables in the job search context. It is possible that individuals who have higher core self-evaluations may have greater performance efficacy and/or be less likely to report prior experiences of discrimination due to having less sensitivity towards these events (Feldman Barrett & Swim, 1998). As such, we controlled for core self-evaluations using the 12 items developed by Judge et al. (2003) anchored at 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree) to account for this possibility (e.g., "I determine what will happen in my life" and "When I try, I generally succeed"; α = 0.92). This helps mitigate concerns that our results are driven merely by those who appraise themselves more positively, and who may have developed adaptive coping processes when facing discrimination (Feldman Barrett & Swim, 1998; Major, Quinton, et al., 2002), while also allowing us to examine the nature of our hypothesized interaction above-and-beyond these more general self-views.

Data Quality: Manipulation Check and Excluded Participants. As in

Study 1, two research assistants blind to the study hypotheses assessed the degree to which each narrative fit with their respective conditions. The two coders displayed good initial interrater reliability (ICC(2) = 0.85, p < .001) and interrater agreement (average deviation = 0.56). Similar to Study 1, we also had the coders meet to clarify discrepancies in their coding to determine a final code. When both coders determined that the narrative "did not at all" fit the respective narrative condition, we removed the participant from our analyses. This resulted in the removal of four participants from the underdog condition, six participants from the favorite condition and one participant from the situational life condition. Finally, in the first survey, we included an attention check that asked participants to respond in a specific way to a question. Nine participants failed this attention check question and were thus excluded from our analyses. This resulted in a final sample of 511 participants, where there were 176 participants in the underdog condition, 157 in the favorite condition, and 178 in the situational life condition.

Additional check: Usefulness of workshop. Using the same four items from Study 1, a one-way ANOVA revealed that there were no significant differences between participants in each of the narrative conditions in terms of their usefulness, $F(2, 509) = 1.70, p = .82$.

5.2. Results

Table 3 displays the means, standard deviations and correlations for the key study variables. As expected, there was a significant negative correlation between core self-evaluations and prior experiences of discrimination ($r = -0.33$) and a significant positive correlation between core self-evaluations and performance efficacy ($r = 0.51$). Given that core self-evaluations was both theoretically and empirically related to our focal variables of interest, we controlled for core self-evaluations in our focal analyses below (Becker, 2005). Comparing the descriptive statistics of this sample to those of Study 1, a higher proportion of our participants found jobs in this sample, with 27.79% reporting that they had accepted employment (vs. 18.83% in Study 1). Similarly, these Study 2 participants had been unemployed for a shorter duration ($M = 6.96$ weeks), on average, relative to those in Study 1 ($M = 31.07$). Study 2 participants also tended to be older ($M = 36.56$) than those in Study 1 ($M = 30.42$ years), and a lower percentage of them were minorities ($M = 35\%$) compared to those in Study 1 ($M = 97\%$).

As in Study 1, we compared underdog narratives to favorite narratives by creating two binary variables for the underdog narratives (1 = underdog, 0 = favorite or situational life) and situational life narratives (1 = situational life, 0 = underdog or favorite) conditions (i.e., favorite narratives was the reference category). Table 4 displays the results. We first included the set of control and main effect (i.e., prior experiences of discrimination, underdog binary and situational life binary) variables (M1a), and subsequently included the discrimination × underdog and discrimination × situational life interaction terms (M1b). Hypothesis 1 proposed that self-narrative archetype moderates the negative relationship between prior experiences of discrimination and performance efficacy, such that the negative relationship is less pronounced for underdog narratives relative to favorite narratives. Consistent with Study 1, we found a significant interaction of prior discrimination and underdog narratives on performance efficacy (M1b: $b = 0.35, p = .025$). To interpret the interaction, we computed the simple slopes and plotted the interaction. As shown in Fig. 2, the slope of prior discrimination on performance efficacy was significantly positive for individuals who constructed underdog narratives ($b = 0.24, SE = 0.10, p = .019$, CI$_{95}$ [0.04, 0.44]), but not for those who created favorite narratives ($b = -0.11, SE = 0.12, p > .05$, CI$_{95}$ [−0.35, 0.13]). In other words, the relationship between prior experiences of discrimination and performance efficacy was actually more positive for individuals who formulated underdog narratives versus those who formulated favorite narratives, providing general support for the expected benefit of underdog—relative to favorite—narratives in Hypothesis 1 (though there is an unexpectedly significant positive slope for underdog

Table 3

Study 2: Descriptive statistics and correlations.

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Minority	0.35	0.48	–										
2. Age	36.56	10.90	−0.25**	–									
3. Weeks Unemployed	6.96	12.37	−0.03	0.07	–								
4. Full-Time	0.81	0.39	0.04	−0.07	−0.02	–							
5. Core Self-Evaluations	4.73	1.18	0.00	0.09*	−0.13**	−0.02	(0.92)						
6. Prior Discrimination	2.32	0.89	0.11*	0.06	0.04	0.03	−0.33***	(0.81)					
7. Underdog Narrative	0.34	0.48	0.05	−0.03	0.06	0.05	−0.09*	0.08	–				
8. Situational Life Narrative	0.35	0.48	0.01	0.05	−0.02	−0.05	0.06	−0.01	−0.53***	–			
9. Performance Efficacy	4.52	1.45	0.11*	−0.07	−0.19***	0.09*	0.51***	−0.12**	−0.04	0.04	(0.90)		
10. Performance (Employment)	0.28	0.45	0.02	−0.15***	−0.02	−0.04	−0.01	0.05	0.01	−0.06	0.13**	–	
11. Performance (Subjective)	3.71	1.67	0.06	−0.08	−0.08	0.05	0.29***	−0.02	0.02	0.02	0.42***	0.49***	(0.96)

Note: N = 511 participants. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table 4

Study 2: Summary of regression results.

Variables	M1a: Performance Efficacy		M1b: Performance Efficacy		M2a: Performance (Employment)		M2b: Performance (Employment)		M3a: Performance (Subjective)		M3b: Performance (Subjective)	
	b	t	b	t	b	Z	b	Z	b	t	b	t
Minority	0.23† (0.12)	1.95	0.23† (0.12)	1.95	−0.14 (0.22)	−0.62	−0.20 (0.22)	−0.91	0.06 (0.15)	0.42	−0.03 (0.15)	−0.21
Age	−0.01* (0.005)	−2.30	−0.01* (0.005)	−2.35	−0.04*** (0.011)	−3.36	−0.03** (0.01)	−3.25	−0.02* (0.01)	−2.42	−0.01 (0.001)	−1.79
Weeks Unemployed	−0.01** (0.004)	−2.95	−0.01* (0.004)	−2.95	−0.002 (0.008)	−0.25	0.001 (0.008)	0.17	−0.004 (0.006)	−0.62	0.001 (0.001)	0.30
Full−Time	0.33* (0.14)	2.40	0.35* (0.14)	2.52	−0.30 (0.25)	−1.19	−0.39 (0.25)	−1.52	0.17 (0.18)	0.97	0.04 (0.17)	0.25
Core Self-Evaluations	0.64*** (0.05)	13.01	0.64*** (0.05)	13.04	0.06 (0.09)	0.67	−0.12 (0.11)	−1.07	0.46*** (0.06)	7.19	0.20** (0.07)	2.86
Prior Discrimination	0.08 (0.07)	1.15	−0.11 (0.12)	−0.91	0.19 (0.12)	1.58	0.17 (0.12)	1.40	0.16† (0.09)	1.93	0.13† (0.08)	1.64
Underdog Narrative	0.05 (0.14)	0.37	−0.76* (0.38)	−1.99								
Situational Life Narrative	0.08 (0.13)	0.61	−0.25 (0.37)	−0.66								
Discrimination × Situational Life			0.15 (0.15)	0.97								
Discrimination × Underdog			0.35* (0.16)	2.25								
Performance Efficacy							0.28** (0.09)	3.18			0.40*** (0.06)	7.28

Note: N = 511 participants. The dependent variable of each regression is indicated across the top of the table. M1a-1b and M3a-3b used linear regression and M2a-2b used logistic regression since the DV is a binary variable. Standard errors reported in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, † $p < .10$.
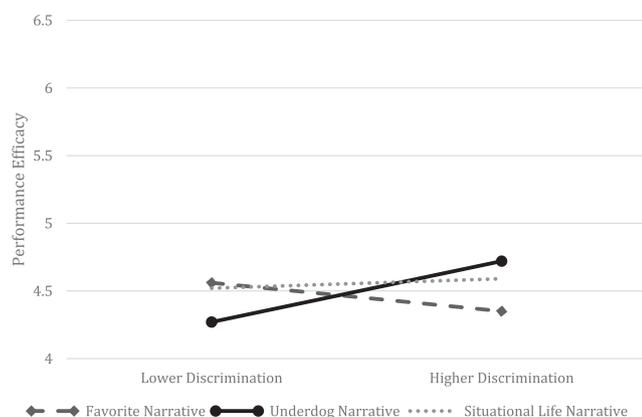
Fig. 2. Study 2: The Relationship between Prior Experiences of Discrimination and Performance Efficacy Moderated by Underdog versus Favorite Narratives.

narratives).

Hypothesis 2 proposed that performance efficacy mediates the interactive effects of prior experiences of discrimination and self-narrative archetype (underdog versus favorite narratives) on performance (i.e., first-stage moderated mediation model). We first conducted our analyses with employment (i.e., binary variable) as the dependent variable. After accounting for the control variables and main effect of prior discrimination (M2a), performance efficacy had a significant positive association with employment in the logistic regression analyses (M2b: $b = 0.28$, $p = .0015$). As in Study 1, we conducted our analyses of the conditional indirect effects using the bootstrapping-based analytic approach of Hayes (2017) with 10,000 resamples to test for Hypothesis 2. We found a significant positive indirect effect of prior discrimination on employment via performance efficacy when underdog narratives were formulated ($b = 0.07$, $SE = 0.04$, CI_{95} [0.01, 0.16]), but when individuals developed favorite narratives, we did not observe a significant indirect effect ($b = -0.03$, $SE = 0.04$, CI_{95} [-0.11, 0.04]). As in Study 1, the index of moderated mediation was significantly positive as the

confidence interval excluded zero (*index* = 0.10, *SE* = 0.06, CI$_{95}$ [0.01, 0.23]), indicating that the indirect effect of prior experiences of discrimination on employment through performance efficacy is moderated by underdog narratives (relative to favorite narratives) in support of Hypothesis 2.

We also conducted our analyses with subjective performance as the dependent variable using the seven-item measure. After including the control variables and main effect of prior discrimination (M3a), performance efficacy was positively related to subjective performance in the linear regression analyses (M3b: *b* = 0.40, *p* < .001). We next found a significant positive indirect effect of prior discrimination on subjective performance through performance efficacy when individuals developed underdog narratives (*b* = 0.10, *SE* = 0.04, CI$_{95}$ [0.02, 0.18]), but we did not observe a significant indirect effect for favorite narratives (*b* = -0.04, *SE* = 0.05, CI$_{95}$ [-0.14, 06]). Lastly, the index of moderated mediation was significantly positive as the confidence interval excluded zero (*index* = 0.14, *SE* = 0.06, CI$_{95}$ [0.02, 0.27]). Therefore, we found support for Hypothesis 2 using both measures of performance as dependent variables.

5.3. Supplementary analyses and study

Given the differences in the slope patterns between the results in Studies 1 and 2, we conducted additional supplementary analyses (Table 5). Since a key difference between Studies 1 and 2 was the inclusion of core self-evaluations in our analyses, we excluded this variable in exploratory analyses to examine whether it altered the pattern of results related to performance efficacy. Excluding core self-evaluations resulted in a marginally significant prior discrimination × underdog interaction term on performance efficacy (M4a: *b* = 0.34, *p* = .061). Exploratory simple slopes analyses revealed that the slope of prior discrimination on performance efficacy was significantly negative for individuals who created favorite narratives (*b* = −0.36, *SE* = 0.14, *p* = .009, CI$_{95}$ [−0.59, −0.14]) and situational life narratives (*b* = −0.28, *SE* = 0.12, *p* = .015, CI$_{95}$ [−0.47, −0.09]), but not for those who developed underdog narratives (*b* = −0.026, *SE* = 0.12, *p* > .05, CI$_{95}$ [−0.22, 0.17]). As additional exploratory analysis, we also conducted models excluding all of the control variables; the prior discrimination × underdog interaction term on performance efficacy remained marginally

Table 5
Study 2: Supplementary analyses.

Variables	M4a: Performance Efficacy		M4b: Performance Efficacy	
	b	*t*	*b*	*t*
Minority	0.34* (0.14)	2.47		
Age	−0.003 (0.006)	−.0.46		
Weeks Unemployed	−0.02*** (0.005)	−4.10		
Full-Time	0.34* (0.16)	2.13		
Core Self-Evaluations				
Prior Discrimination	−0.36** (0.14)	−2.63	−0.35** (0.14)	−2.45
Underdog Narrative	−0.80† (0.44)	−1.81	−0.76† (0.45)	−1.68
Situational Life Narrative	−0.05 (0.43)	−0.12	−0.06 (0.44)	−0.14
Discrimination × Situational Life	0.08 (0.18)	0.46	0.08 (0.18)	0.46
Discrimination × Underdog	0.34† (0.18)	1.88	0.32† (0.18)	1.73

Note: *N* = 511 participants. The dependent variable of each regression is indicated across the top of the table. M4a-b used linear regression analysis. Standard errors reported in parentheses. *** *p* < 0.001, ** *p* < 0.01, * *p* < 0.05, † *p* < .10.

significant in these models (M4b: *b* = 0.32, *p* = .084). Exploratory simple slopes analyses indicated that the slope for favorite narratives (*b* = −0.35, *SE* = 0.14, *p* = .015, CI$_{95}$ [−0.62, −0.07]) and situational life narratives (*b* = −0.26, *SE* = 0.12, *p* = .026, CI$_{95}$ [−0.49, −0.03]) were both significantly negative, but the slope for underdog narratives was not significant (*b* = −0.027, *SE* = 0.12, *p* > .05, CI$_{95}$ [−0.26, 0.21]) when excluding all of the control variables. As such, excluding core self-evaluations from the Study 2 analyses results in a slope pattern that mirrors the pattern observed in Study 1, which did not have core self-evaluations measured. Therefore, the inclusion of core self-evaluations in our analysis may explain why we observed a slightly different pattern of results across Study 1 and in the focal analyses of Study 2.

In order to generalize our findings beyond the job search context, as well as further examine the variations in the simple slopes across Studies 1 and 2, we conducted an additional supplementary study (study materials and analyses are available here: https://osf.io/e4qzn/). Study S3 provides additional support for the moderating role of underdog narratives—relative to favorite narratives—on the relationship between prior experiences of discrimination on performance efficacy in a sample of full-time employees focused on pursuing a work-related goal. As in Study 2, the interaction term for prior discrimination and underdog narratives was statistically significant when accounting for core self-evaluations in our analyses (*b* = 0.38, *p* = .030). Consistent with the findings in the Study 2 focal analyses, the relationship was again significantly positive for those who developed underdog narratives (*b* = 0.25, *SE* = 0.11, *p* = .03, CI$_{95}$ [0.03, 0.47]), but not for those who developed favorite narratives (*b* = −0.13, *SE* = 0.14, *p* > .05, CI$_{95}$ [−0.39, 0.14]). Follow-up exploratory analyses demonstrated that when we did not account for the control variables (e.g., core self-evaluations), the relationship between prior discrimination and performance efficacy was still moderated by underdog narratives, as the prior discrimination × underdog narratives interaction term remained statistically significant (*b* = 0.40, *p* = .034). Interestingly, however, the simple slopes analysis revealed a slope pattern consistent with that observed in Study 1 and the supplementary analyses of Study 2 when we excluded the control variables. Specifically, the relationship between prior experiences of discrimination and performance efficacy was significantly negative among those who developed favorite narratives (*b* = −0.30, *SE* = 0.15, *p* = .04, CI$_{95}$ [−0.59, −0.02]), but not for those who formulated underdog narratives (*b* = 0.10, *SE* = 0.12, *p* > .05, CI$_{95}$ [−0.14, 0.34]). As such, the supplemental study offers additional support for Hypothesis 1, as well as further evidence for the role of core self-evaluations in accounting for the differential pattern of our hypothesized interaction across studies. Indeed, the results across Study 2 and the supplementary analyses uncover a positive relationship between prior experiences of discrimination and performance efficacy for underdog narratives after having controlled for core self-evaluations.

5.4. Discussion

Study 2 provides a constructive replication of Hypotheses 1 and 2 in a broader sample of job seekers recruited online. Overall, the results support the effectiveness of underdog narratives compared to favorite narratives in response to prior experiences of discrimination, and the role of performance efficacy in explaining why the interactive effects of prior discrimination and underdog narratives are more effective for performance. Comparing the focal analyses of Study 2 to the supplementary analyses (i.e., excluding core self-evaluations and the constructive replication in our online supplemental Study S3) reveals that accounting for core self-evaluations influences the observed interactive effects between prior experiences of discrimination and underdog narratives on performance efficacy. Specifically, excluding or accounting for core self-evaluations influences whether underdog narratives result in a null or significantly positive relationship between prior experiences of discrimination and performance efficacy, as well as whether favorite narratives result in a significantly negative or null relationship

between prior discrimination and performance efficacy. This suggests that the fundamental appraisals that people make of their own worthiness, personal control and capabilities impact how they appraise discrimination and their performance efficacy, as the results indicate that people who fundamentally appraise themselves as higher on these attributes may be less sensitive to instances of prior discrimination and hold greater performance efficacy. Moreover, the observed relationships generally hold across multiple samples and contexts (i.e., job seekers and full-time working employees), providing further evidence of the robustness of these effects. We discuss the implications of these results in our General Discussion.

6. General discussion

Prior experiences of discrimination affect individuals in their work and careers, but extant research remains unclear on how individuals can be resilient in the face of such adversity. Our research reveals that the narratives people tell of themselves shape the impact of prior experiences of discrimination on performance efficacy, which subsequently affect their performance. Drawing on prior work related to self-narratives, we theorized that underdog narratives would be more beneficial than favorite narratives in offsetting ramifications of prior discrimination. Study 1 provided support for underdog narratives (relative to favorite narratives) moderating the relationship between prior experiences of discrimination and performance efficacy. Moreover, we found support for an indirect effect of the interaction of prior discrimination and underdog narratives on an archival measure of performance (i.e., finding employment in the job search) via performance efficacy. Study 2 provided a constructive replication of our results in an online experiment of job seekers with a lagged research design and multiple measures of performance. We again found that underdog narratives were more beneficial than favorite narratives in ameliorating the repercussions of prior discrimination on performance efficacy and ultimately, performance. Although the pattern of results were slightly different across Studies 1 and 2, supplementary analyses reveal that accounting for individual differences such as core self-evaluations play a role in the pattern of results. Our online supplemental study, Study S3, provides further evidence for the benefits of underdog narratives relative to favorite narratives among full-time employees, providing greater generalizability and clarifying the pattern of findings across the two studies. When combined, the field and online experiments provide insights on how individuals can be resilient in the face of prior discrimination by developing underdog instead of favorite narratives. Our theory and results offer important theoretical contributions for research on expectations, self-narratives and resilience in the face of prior discrimination.

6.1. Theoretical contributions

By conceptualizing underdog and favorite narratives, our research advances scholarly understanding of how individuals can effectively harness the expectations of themselves and others in the past to perform better in the future. Our theory and findings revisit the prevailing assumption in the self-fulfilling prophecy literature that it is beneficial to perceive high expectations from others, and detrimental to be the target of others' low expectations for success (Eden, 2003; McNatt, 2000). Our results may thus be surprising from this perspective, since abundant management research on the self-fulfilling prophecy has centered on how high performance expectations from authority figures benefit the performance of subordinates (e.g., military commanders-cadets, teachers-students, and managers-subordinates). However, Merton's (1948) foundational paper on the self-fulfilling prophecy did not concern managerial high expectations; it instead focused on how society generally reinforces discrimination and prejudice and actually suggested that the ramifications of experiences with discrimination can be disrupted by changing how individuals see themselves. Our findings

highlight that narratives consisting of the combination of others' low expectations and high self-expectations—rather than uniformly high self- and others' expectations—can offset the ramifications of prior discrimination on performance efficacy and performance. As such, we revitalize theory on expectations by introducing how individuals can harness prior experiences featuring others' low expectations and high self-expectations to overcome adversity and pave the way for future success.

By investigating different types of self-narratives, we also contribute to emerging theory on narratives in shaping individuals' effectiveness (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Martin, 2016; Vaara et al., 2016). Extant work on self-narratives has showcased the way in which writing stories benefit subjective well-being, especially when individuals have experienced trauma (Barclay & Skarlicki, 2009; McAdams, 2001; Pennebaker & Seagal, 1999). However, prior theory and empirical research rarely theorize and test how specific self-narrative archetypes shape the impact of adversity on performance. Our emphasis on two common but unexamined self-narratives—underdog and favorite—addresses this theoretical omission. Both underdog and favorite narratives end in success, but feature varying arcs in terms of how the stories progress from beginning to end. Accordingly, our theory and findings demonstrate that the type and arc of self-narratives can enable individuals to respond more effectively to the adversity that they are experiencing.

Our theory and findings also deepen scholarly understanding of resilience in the face of prior experiences of discrimination. Researchers have argued that attributional ambiguity may enable individuals to cope with the repercussions of discrimination (Crocker & Major, 1989; Major, Quinton, et al., 2002), but empirical support for this idea is weak (Schmitt et al., 2014). Others have questioned whether individuals should actively suppress prior experiences of discrimination, as doing so could hamper individuals' well-being and success (Hargrove et al., 2002; Miller & Kaiser, 2001). We bridge these ideas and advance current theory by demonstrating that stories that recognize, but also defy, others' low expectations can be adaptive when dealing with prior experiences of discrimination. Our work thus answers Schmitt and colleagues' (2014) call for new insights on how individuals can endure experiences with discrimination since, "denial and minimization might have some psychological benefits, [but] they will not be helpful in dealing with the problem directly or bringing about change" (Schmitt et al., 2014, p. 937).

6.2. Strengths, limitations and future directions

Our contributions should be qualified in light of the strengths and limitations of our work. Study 1 tested our hypotheses using a randomized field experiment that featured in-depth, multimedia workshops with job seekers from traditionally underrepresented groups. The combination of survey measures in the field and an archival performance outcome (one month later) strengthen the external validity of this research. Furthermore, a constructive replication of our results in Study 2 with lagged measures of performance efficacy and multiple (i.e., objective and subjective) measures of performance advance the internal validity of our research. The online supplement, Study S3, enhances the generalizability of this research by testing the effectiveness of underdog versus favorite narratives among full-time employees. Thus, the use of an intervention with random assignment across two samples of job seekers and one sample of full-time employees is a unique strength of this work, but we encourage future research to examine underdog and favorite narratives in other contexts.

It is important to consider our results in light of prior research on discrimination. We observed a significant negative correlation between prior experiences of discrimination and performance efficacy in Study 2, but not in Studies 1 or S3. Furthermore, we did not observe a significant negative relationship between prior experiences of discrimination and performance efficacy when accounting for the control variables (e.g., core self-evaluations) and self-narrative conditions in Studies 2 and S3.

Although this may appear surprising, it is actually consistent with theory suggesting that individuals experiencing discrimination may try to protect their self-esteem (Halaby, 2003; Major, Quinton, et al., 2002), and a strength of our research is that we accounted for the role of individual differences such as core self-evaluations in the analyses. Moreover, given that every participant in our studies developed self-narratives, it is also possible that self-narratives generally buffered the ramifications of prior discrimination on performance efficacy, which could explain why we did not observe an overall negative relationship. This is consistent with prior work establishing that self-narratives ameliorate the threat of adversity on the self (Barclay & Skarlicki, 2009; Pennebaker, 1997).

While there were no significant differences between the favorite and the situational life narrative conditions in Studies 1 and 2, simple slopes analyses revealed that favorite narratives were the only type of self-narratives that resulted in a significantly negative relationship between prior experiences of discrimination and performance efficacy in Study 1. It is possible that favorite narratives resulted in lower performance efficacy in response to prior experiences of discrimination because the benefits of experiencing greater perceived support were outweighed by the external locus of control it highlights. This is consistent with prior work that demonstrates others' support is insufficient for offsetting the repercussions of discrimination (Schmitt et al., 2014). Furthermore, self-verification theory suggests that favorite narratives may be less effective in response to prior experiences of discrimination since high expectations of others is less congruent with, and authentic to, these individuals' prior experiences (Swann, Rentfrow, & Guinn, 2003). This may have been particularly relevant due to the sample characteristics in Study 1, and may also explain why situational life narratives resulted in a null relationship in the focal analyses of Study 2. Since we are in the early stages of theory building on underdog and favorite narratives, we encourage future work to explore additional theories and mechanisms to understand why favorite narratives may be less effective than other types of self-narratives.

Relatedly, other types of self-narratives may be useful for expanding theory at the intersection of narratives and expectations, but we were reluctant to examine some of the possibilities as doing so could have increased identity threats (Brockner & Sherman, 2019; Sherman & Cohen, 2006) or hurt the efficacy of our participants given our use of field experiments (Eden, 2003). Future research could include a comparison condition where participants did not formulate narratives to help determine whether favorite narratives truly backfired or whether underdog narratives truly sparked a positive relationship between prior experiences of discrimination and performance efficacy. Moreover, future work would also benefit from understanding the effectiveness of stories that end in failure—rather than only success—as these also have value for individuals. Indeed, although we tested for underdog, favorite and situational life narratives, we neither included conditions that consisted of stories in which individuals experienced low expectations from others and had low efficacy nor stories in which individuals experienced high expectations from others but had low efficacy themselves (e.g., choking under pressure or impostor stories). To reduce concerns related to the harm and inequity dilemmas (Grant & Wall, 2008), we encourage researchers to capitalize on archival or naturally occurring field data to understand how these types of self-narratives compare to the underdog and favorite narratives introduced in this research.

In addition, future research should explore when and why individuals employ different forms of narratives. This is particularly relevant for organizational leaders who may use narratives strategically to motivate employees to perform better. Future research should explore when leaders may be more or less inclined to use underdog versus favorite narratives when communicating with their employees. For example, leaders may use underdog narratives when outsiders are questioning their potential to succeed as a way to harness underdog expectations that their employees are experiencing (Nurmohamed,

2020). In other cases, leaders may employ favorite narratives to build connections between their employees and important stakeholders, as these types of narratives highlight togetherness and harmony with others (Adler et al., 2017). We encourage researchers to investigate how key stakeholders respond to narrative archetypes to help build a more comprehensive and unifying theory.

6.3. Practical implications

Given that we conducted our studies in the context of the job search and work, our research offers important contributions for practice. Job placement and workforce advisors who work with job seekers may encourage job seekers to reflect on times in which they were seen as underdogs—but succeeded—if they learn that job seekers have previously experienced discrimination or related forms of adversity in their lives. On the other hand, other types of narratives may be beneficial when job seekers have experienced little discrimination or adversity in the past. Job seekers should also recognize the importance of storytelling as a vehicle for self-reflection and building self-efficacy in the job search. Our studies had job seekers not only focus on prior experiences, but also connect these experiences to the job search explicitly by having them develop takeaways for the impending job search. Therefore, simply retelling stories is not enough. To be effective, job seekers must apply their stories to their future goals. Job seekers may also want to consider the best way to do this. One option is to create a private blog or journal to reflect on and apply these experiences in the job search, but job seekers may also want to consider other mediums such as sharing stories with close family and friends in person or online. Family and friends may also be able to facilitate this process by reminding job seekers who have previously experienced discrimination of times in which they succeeded when others doubted them, rather than playing up the ways in which they or others may have contributed to job seekers' success in these instances. Our research also shows that these implications hold outside the context of the job search, and similar recommendations can be made in the context of accomplishing other work-related goals.

6.4. Conclusion

Our research introduces new theory on underdog and favorite narratives to examine whether self-narratives can shape the relationship between prior experiences of discrimination and performance efficacy, which ultimately affects performance. Our results demonstrate that underdog narratives, relative to favorite narratives, are more effective in response to prior experiences of discrimination for performance through performance efficacy. Our theoretical perspective and empirical findings revisit the prevailing wisdom of exclusively focusing on others' high expectations, as we demonstrate that stories that end in success but involve others' low expectations can enable individuals to be more resilient. Indeed, targets of discrimination exhibit extraordinary resilience in their everyday lives. Our research provides an insight into how self-narratives enable individuals to perform more effectively in the face of prior experiences of discrimination, as well as how organizational scholarship can learn from the experiences of individuals who endure this pressing form of adversity.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Samir Nurmohamed: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Investigation, Data curation, Supervision, Project administration, Funding acquisition. **Timothy G. Kundro:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Investigation, Data curation, Project administration. **Christopher G. Myers:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Project administration.

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