


A multilevel model of job inclusion of employees with disabilities: The role of organizational socialization tactics, coworkers social support, and an inclusive team context

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to examine the role of social context as a main mechanism to understand how organizational socialization tactics influence job inclusion of employees with disabilities (EWD). Specifically, we analyzed the influence of socialization that employees without disability received by the organization on two indicators of EWD's job inclusion, organizational learning, and desire to stay in the organization. First, we examined the mediator role of social support perceived by EWD in the aforementioned relationships. Second, we used a cross-level moderating approach to examine how an inclusive team context (affective climate toward disability and stigma shared by team members without disability) impacts on the relationship between EWD's perceptions of social support and both indicators of job inclusion. Our sample was composed by 258 employees included in 66 teams from 15 organizations. Each team included one worker with disability. Two sources of information were used: EWD to measure perceived social support and indicators of job inclusion, and coworkers to measure

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socialization tactics, team affective climate toward disability, and team stigma. We used multilevel modeling and cross-level moderation with MPLUS to test our hypotheses. Our results showed that EWD's perceptions of social support mediated the relationship between organizational socialization tactics and both indicators of EWD's job inclusion. Team affective climate toward disability and team stigma moderated the relationship between EWD's perceptions of social support and organizational learning. Thus, the social context showed potential improving EWD's job inclusion. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

KEYWORDS

employees with disabilities, inclusive team context, job inclusion, social support, socialization tactics

INTRODUCTION

Employment is a key factor for people with disabilities when it comes to reducing social isolation and poverty as well as improving their physical and mental health (Saunders & Nedelec, 2014; Schur, 2002; Schuring et al., 2011). However, only 53% and 20% working-aged men and women with disabilities, respectively, are employed (WHO, 2011), representing an underemployed workforce (Colella & Bruyère, 2011). Research conducted on people with disabilities in different countries has shown that almost 80% actively seek employment. In recent studies exploring the meaning of work (Medina & Munduate, 2012), people with disabilities were found to have higher work centrality than the rest of the population. They were also more committed to the company and demonstrated comparable performance to other employees (Colella & Varma, 1999). When fortunate enough to find an employment, employees with disabilities (EWD) must contend with worse employment conditions—including lower pay rates—than employees without disability (Schur et al., 2013) and they are 75% to 89% more likely to experience job loss (Mitra & Kruse, 2016).

Despite the importance that people with disabilities attach to being employed, once a person with disability has moving into work, they face a difficult process to attain an adequate job inclusion within the organization, mainly due to barriers from the social context. Notwithstanding the efforts of organizations to employ citizens with disability and the favorable regulation for their employment in most industrialized countries, inclusion of workers with disabilities is a challenge, and a large part of the problem can be explained by the organization itself. Workers with disabilities may experience problems related to the job context (e.g. physical and technical adaptation) but especially to the social context where employees with disabilities must be included (Corbière et al., 2013). Beside schedule adaptation and adapting to a new team, learning the organizational internal rules, the necessary skills, and abilities to do their job efficiently, and organizational culture could hinder their effective job inclusion (Corbière et al., 2013).

However, there is a limited knowledge about human resources practices related to the inclusion of employees with disabilities in the workplace (Kraus, 2017) and coworkers' specific behaviors toward socializing with newcomers with disabilities (Medina & Gamero, 2017).

A key moment in the process of including a person with a disability in a new employ is, in turn, the first meeting between the worker and the organization. This moment is called the encounter phase in the organizational socialization models (Moreland & Levine, 1982). During encounter phase, organization implements organizational socialization tactics, which help to new employees to obtain organizational information that allows them to learn the organizational culture and the key points necessary to achieve full job inclusion. Research has demonstrated that socialization tactics improve organizational learning in employees with disabilities, helping them to successfully inclusion in their workplace (e.g. Colella, 1994; Colella et al., 1993; Kulkarni & Lengnick-Hall, 2011).

In short, socialization is a key organizational process insofar as empirical evidence shows that employees with disabilities do not share the same capacity as coworkers without disability for obtaining the necessary information that allows them to learn the organizational culture; as such, it will take them longer to acquire the key organizational capabilities necessary for achieving full job inclusion and adequate performance (Medina & Gamero, 2017). One of the main reasons is the role of coworkers during socialization process of EWD. Evidence points to a strong reluctance on the part of many coworkers to interact with people with disabilities, especially employees with mental and intellectual ones (Ruiz & Moya, 2007). This reluctance may lead to fewer interactions, in turn generating feelings of distrust and exclusion. In contrast, coworkers may show a strong tendency to be overly kind with employees with disabilities and refrain from giving negative feedback to them, which is necessary for learning (Medina & Gamero, 2017). Furthermore, during the socialization process, peers or insiders play a fundamental role in the newcomers' job adjustment, given that they are the primary source of information acquisition about the organization (Slaughter & Zickar, 2006). Consequently, the employees' learning of organizational norms, culture, and key information, arise as an adequate indicator of job inclusion specially for EWD due to the organizational learning barriers mainly created from coworkers.

Likewise, relationships with team coworkers without disability and their supervisors have a high impact on the socialization process of employees with disability, providing them with social support as well as serving as a source of important information about their team and their organization (Griffin et al., 2000). The social support contributes significantly to the emotional adjustment and well-being (Gottlieb, 1983), and these feelings of comfort and commitment with their job increase the intention to stay in the organization (Chew & Chan, 2008). Additionally, the affective experiences shared by team members have been related to greater job satisfaction (Gamero et al., 2008), identification with the organization, open exchange of information and knowledge (Barsade & Knight, 2015), and an adequate EWD's job inclusion (Zijlstra et al., 2017). On the contrary, when stigma toward disability is shared by EWD's team coworkers without disability, social interaction is disrupted generating discrimination toward EWD (Crandall & Moriarty, 1995).

Two theories explain how the context perceived by the new employee will affect his or her job inclusion. According to the Symbolic Interactionist perspective (Stryker, 1980), the social environments promote a positive influence in employees by providing a context with sense for himself and for the world. In this perspective, social support operates by helping to create and sustain identity (Lakey & Cohen, 2000). Socialization is the way that people with disabilities receive information from the organization. Based on this theory, organizational learning would

be done through strong social support from coworkers. Similarly, the Affective Events Theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) explains that the experience of affective states at work depends on the work situations experienced by employees throughout their working life. For these authors, some environmental events will produce a change in individual affective states. In this sense, the perception of a positive affective climate and low levels of stigma in the organization will allow a better job inclusion.

The main objective of this study was to examine the role of social context as a main mechanism to understand how organizational socialization tactics influence EWD's job inclusion. First, we examined through a multilevel model the mediator role of EWD's perceptions of social support in the relationship between coworkers' perceptions of organizational socialization tactics and two indicators of EWD's job inclusion, organizational learning, and the desire to stay at organization. Second, we used a cross-level moderating approach to examine how an inclusive team context (understood as affective climate toward disability and stigma shared by team members) impacts on the relationship between EWD's perceptions of social support and both indicators of EWD's job inclusion. Figure 1 shows the EWD's job inclusion model tested in this study.

Moreover, the main contributions of this study examining the role of social context on EWD's job inclusion and providing a macroscopic view of this phenomenon are, first, considering multiple disabilities (physical-organic, sensorial, intellectual, mental illness, and autism). Real organizations include employees with different types of disabilities. Thus, this study extends the analysis of the EWD's job inclusion process to a wide range of disabilities making possible the generalizability of the findings (Dwertmann, 2016). Second, in this study, we analyze EWD's job inclusion in a real work and with a wide range of company activities (service sector, industry, commerce, and others). Usually, with some exceptions, employees with disabilities are hired in low-skilled positions and in specific sectors (Medina & Munduate, 2012). Nevertheless, this study extends the knowledge of EWD's job inclusion to a wide range of occupations and sectors of activity. Third, we examine EWD's job inclusion using the team as unit of analysis. To achieve a full job inclusion, the organization must provide the means and the workers must use the resources and structures existing in the organization through social

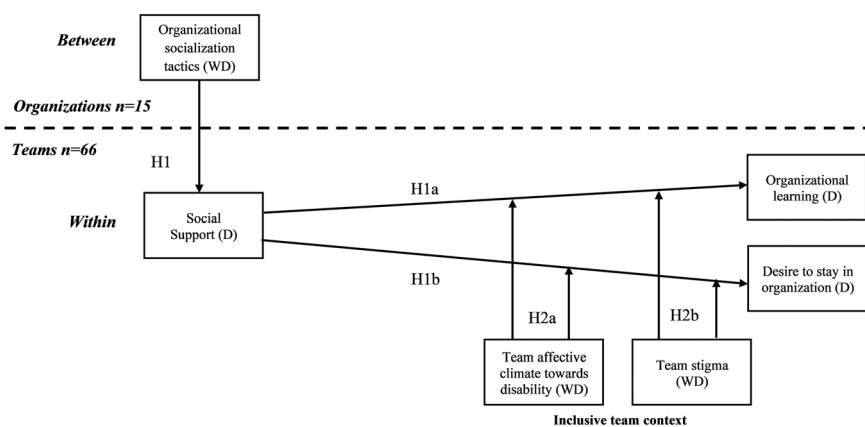


FIGURE 1 Job inclusion model of employees with disabilities in their work teams and organizations. *Note:* D = variable informed by employees with disabilities ($n = 66$). WD = variable informed by coworkers without disability ($n = 192$). ($N = 258$)

relationships with insiders (Fang et al., 2011). The analysis of work teams allows to understand the mechanisms activated in socialization processes because it captures internal processes of the group receiving an employee with a disability. Fourth, this study adopts a multi-source perspective and obtains information coming from the team members with disabilities and their coworkers without disabilities in order to obtain a more complete view of our study objective. Fifth, we consider the organizational learning as an EWD's job inclusion indicator. Learning is the main process which impacts proximal (e.g. social inclusion) and distal socialization outcomes (e.g. satisfaction and commitment) (Klein & Heuser, 2008). Finally, this study assumes a multilevel approach and considers organizational phenomena at more than one level. The nature of organizations is multilevel (Choi, 2006), and its necessary to adopt this kind of strategy to advance the scarce knowledge about social context factors improving job inclusion of employees with disabilities in their work teams and within the organization (Colella & Bruyère, 2011; Goldman et al., 2006).

The role of social support in the relationship between organizational socialization tactics and the job inclusion of employees with disabilities

When newcomers enter an organization, they find themselves immersed in an information-seeking exercise to reduce anxiety and uncertainty (Jones, 1983). Organizations employ specific socialization tactics that favor the newcomers' socialization process, shaping the information received by newcomers (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). These tactics are related to job context, job content, job-related social aspects, and organizations may guide these tactics toward more institutionalized or individualized socialization (Griffin et al., 2000). Although, traditional studies of socialization tactics demonstrates that formal and structured methods are more effective (Jones, 1986), doubts arise about if the more institutionalized tactics would be the most appropriate for the inclusion of people with disabilities. In this sense, recent research has considered a non-linear forms or socialization, first, because newcomer could experience specific periods characterized by positive or negative attitudes during socialization (Woodrow & Guest, 2020); second, because some socialization process could have negative short-term effects like conflicts or problems in acceptance of newcomers by insiders (Korte & Lin, 2013); third, because socialization is a process where satisfaction could be modified over time because of personal or relational aspects like, for example, psychological contract violation (Woodrow & Guest, 2020).

In this sense, socialization has been traditionally considered a responsibility of the newcomer; however, there is growing evidence about the relational aspects in the socialization process, showing the importance of others to facilitate the success of inclusion (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2006; Korte, 2009). We assume that others (coworkers and managers) play an important role in the inclusion of employees with disabilities. From the very first moment of workplace incorporation and during the socialization process, coworkers are their main source of information regarding the job, norms, and the organizational culture; they are also responsible for creating the right environment for successful job inclusion (Slaughter & Zickar, 2006). The quality of the newcomers' relationships with organizational members (coworkers and managers) explains the success of socialization process (Korte & Lin, 2013). Reactions of future colleagues of people with disabilities, have a significant role for different reasons. First, many adaptations require cooperation and support from others, for example, job restructuring, schedule changes, and task assigning are hard to do without the help of other coworkers (Florey & Harrison, 2000). Second, the reactions of coworkers can affect how employees with disabilities

access some workplace adaptations. If people with disabilities perceive that their coworkers do not understand their unique situation, they may hold themselves back by demanding that workplace adaptation takes place (Florey & Harrison, 2000). Third, coworkers' responses may modulate managerial decisions regarding workplace accommodations (Cleveland et al., 1997).

Supported employment and the presence of specialized mentors is a widely used strategy implemented by organizations to improve job inclusion for employees with disabilities (Banks et al., 2001). Not only is it important for people with disabilities to have someone they can go to as a point of reference, but it is also important that this individual makes them feel supported. Thus, coworkers-driven social support could be the mechanism that explains the relationship between job socialization and job inclusion. Nisbet and Hagner (1988) introduced the concept of natural support to avoid discrimination due to the presence of specialized job coaches providing support and training to employees with disabilities. Natural support was defined as typical social interactions with coworkers and work routines and relationships that allow employees with disabilities to maintain a job (Rogan et al., 1993). Similarly, research suggests that the more perceptions of typical job conditions for employees with disabilities, the greater the likelihood to experience adequate social inclusion (Mank et al., 1998).

Based on these premises and the importance of coworkers in the job inclusion process of employees with disabilities, we expect the dynamics governing this process to be as follows. First, employees with disabilities will perceive their coworkers' support upon joining the company during the socialization process. Second, this support received will allow employees with disabilities to obtain information and learn about the organizational culture and norms, thus improving their organizational learning level. Third, perceived social support will enhance attachment with the organization. We will analyze the desire to stay in the organization as a way to understand how employees feel comfortable and committed with their job and increase their staying in the organization (Chew & Chan, 2008). This process implies that coworkers social support perceived by employees with disabilities is crucial to their job inclusion process, mediating relationships between company-led organizational socialization tactics, at an organizational level, and organizational learning and a desire to stay in the organization by employees with disabilities, at a team level. Thus, we posit the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis H1a. Perceptions of employees with disabilities of social support provided by coworkers, at a team level, will mediate the positive relationship between organizational socialization tactics perceived by coworkers at an organizational level and organizational learning perceived by employees with disabilities.

Hypothesis H1b. Perceptions of employees with disabilities of social support provided by coworkers, at a team level, will mediate the positive relationship between organizational socialization tactics perceived by coworkers at an organizational level and desire to stay in the organization perceived by employees with disabilities.

The role of coworkers in an inclusive team context

Newcomers' proactivity is reduced in their new work environment, as they find themselves immersed in work teams that involve interacting with their coworkers or "insiders." To achieve successful and effective socialization, the role played by these insiders and the behaviors shown

are noteworthy (Bauer et al., 1998), creating a social context essential to job inclusion (Slaughter & Zickar, 2006). Nevertheless, newcomers with disability use to face significant barriers from negative coworkers' attitudes and stereotypes (Colella & Bruyère, 2011). Moreover, coworkers' attitudes and perceptions toward newcomers have a significant impact on the latter's socialization through three psychological processes: evaluation, commitment, and role transition, affecting newcomers' attitudes and behaviors respectively (Moreland & Levine, 2002). Moreland and Levine's (1982) group socialization model posits that group acceptance is necessary to transition from a new member to a full member. However, group acceptance only occurs when coworkers' commitment levels raise their acceptance criteria. Similarly, feelings of commitment are the result of an evaluation process that encompasses past, present and future assessments of contributions made to achieve the group's goals (Moreland & Levine, 1982). Furthermore, Moreland and Levine (1982) specified several characteristics relating to small groups which must be considered prior to applying their model. These include regular interaction, interdependence, mutual feelings for each other, and a common perspective on the world.

Based on the group socialization model and the small-group characteristics identified by Moreland and Levine (1982), we chose to explore an adequate social environment created by coworkers, which we named the "inclusive team context." We argue that a favorable, inclusive team environment features high levels of team affective climate toward disability, as well as low levels of team stigma against disability. These two factors can contribute to shaping coworkers' positive feelings toward employees with disabilities, thus improving their evaluation process in order to gain high commitment levels that raise the acceptance criteria leading to full membership and to complete a successful socialization process. Furthermore, a supportive environment like our proposed inclusive team context fosters psychological safety via positive psychological mechanisms which enhance group performance (Druskat & Wolff, 2001); make employees feel freer and more comfortable, producing a sense of well-being (Jones & King, 2014); and create a context in which employees do not have to worry about stigma (Clair et al., 2005; Jones & King, 2014). We would expect team affective climate and team stigma to moderate the influence of perceived social support provided by coworkers on the job inclusion of employees with disabilities.

A positive team affective climate, defined as the positive affective experiences shared by team members, has been linked to increased job satisfaction (Gamero et al., 2008); higher levels of inclusion, identification with the organization, openness to others, and an open exchange of information and knowledge within the organization (Barsade & Knight, 2015); and greater inclusion levels of employees with disabilities, which is reflected in more frequently observed inclusion attitudes and behaviors (Zijlstra et al., 2017). Additionally, this positive affective response helps build a trusting environment which invites employees to express themselves freely and analyze their emotions and behaviors constructively (Simons & Peterson, 2000).

Conversely, one of the main barriers that people with disabilities face is social rejection or stigma in the workplace. The stigma associated with disability (i.e. the perception that individuals have about the attributes and negative consequences of disability) (Crandall & Moriarty, 1995) labels people with disabilities as unpredictable, dangerous, irrational, and unreliable (Phelan et al., 2000). These person-related characteristics are generally associated with an undesirable employee in the eyes of an organization (Medina & Munduate, 2012). The stigma is linked to different types of disability as well as physical, sensory, and mental illness. When the stigma is shared by team coworkers, it disrupts social interaction, leading to ambivalence when peers are not sure how to act toward a labeled person, which manifests itself as total, subtle or overt discrimination (Crandall & Moriarty, 1995). Team coworkers hold

stereotypes about disabilities equating to poor performance, and these generalized beliefs influence staffing decisions even though they are inherently false (Colella & Varma, 1999). Shared stereotypes and discrimination in hiring decisions persist (Gouvier et al., 2003). Furthermore, evidence largely points to social rejection, isolation, and discrimination by coworkers as driving workplace absence among people with disabilities, more so than work-related issues or the disability itself (McLaughlin et al., 2004).

Coworkers' social support behaviors toward employees with disabilities would not have an impact on indicators of job inclusion if does not exist a favorable social context (Slaughter & Zickar, 2006). People with disabilities should feel accepted and fully included into their social environment (Moreland & Levine, 1982). In an inclusive social context, social support behaviors would be interpreted as sincere signs of acceptance and willingness to help. However, when social support occurs in a social context characterized by a low team affective climate toward disability and a high stigma shared by team members, coworkers' support behaviors could be interpreted as untrue actions or even imposed by the organization. Likewise, people with disabilities could consider that their coworkers perceive them as defenseless people without the ability to develop (Prins, 2013) and that they are being excessively kind to them (Medina & Gamero, 2017). Thus, when social context is not consistent with social support perceived by EWD, the positive impact of coworkers' support behaviors would disappear.

Considering the earlier reviewed literature, we would expect to find the two inclusive team context factors analyzed (team affective climate and team stigma) moderating the positive influence that employees with disabilities' perception of social support have on their job inclusion. Thus, we posit the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis H2a. Team affective climate toward disability will moderate the relationship between perceived social support and organizational learning and desire to stay in the organization of employees with disabilities. As such, the stronger the team affective climate toward disability, the more positive an impact social support will have on organizational learning and desire to stay in the organization.

Hypothesis H2b. Team stigma will moderate the relationship between perceived social support and organizational learning and desire to stay in the organization of employees with disabilities. As such, the greater the team stigma, the less positive an impact social support will have on organizational learning and desire to stay in the organization.

METHOD

Participants and procedure

One of the participating organizations facilitated the explanation of the project by the researchers in an annual professional network meeting of HRM directors. In this meeting, some organizations expressed their willingness to participate in this study facilitating access to work teams in exchange for receiving a research report. As some of these organizations were

multinationals companies, data collection was focused on the existing centers in the south of Spain. Organizations provided us with the contacts of all employees with disability who liked to participate in this study, as well that their team co-workers. The initial sample comprised 463 employees from 25 different companies. Our study target was centered exclusively in work teams including employees with disabilities with a minimum of three team members. Accordingly, we removed work teams with less than three employees and without employees with disabilities (161 cases) and cases with missing values (44 cases) following Rubin (1987). Thus, the final sample included 258 employees from 15 different companies. Specifically, 44% of the participants were women, and 25.6% were employees with disabilities. The age ranged from 18 to 62 years. Employees were distributed across 66 work teams, ranging from 3 to 7 employees per team. Each team had one worker with a disability. Our sample teams met the work team characteristics specified by Kozlowski and Bell (2003) related to work teams' nature, composition, formation, socialization, and development. In terms of company activity, more than 57% of employees worked in the service sector; 11.7% in the industry sector; 16.4% in the commerce sector; and 15% in other activities. The job type held by employees in the workplace varied. Examples include administrative, cleaner, machine operator, concierge, cashier, shopkeeper, educator, and technician. The type of disability in our sample is broken down as follows: 26.4% were employees with a physical-organic condition; 23.6% with a sensorial (auditory or visual) impairment; 40.3% with an intellectual disability; 5% with a mental illness; and 4.7% on the autism spectrum. Regarding job tenure, 80.2% of employees had been at the company more than 1 year at the time of data collection. The analysis comparing demographic characteristics between the initial and final samples did not indicate significant differences between them. Accordingly, the two samples can be considered similar in demographic characteristics. Employee participation was voluntary, and an agreement document was signed by the collaborating companies to ensure confidentiality in the collection and processing of employee data throughout the research process. Two questionnaires were distributed among participants: one specifically designed for employees with disabilities and another for coworkers without disability; common and specific scales featured in each questionnaire. Both questionnaires were completed in group administration sessions during working hours and under the supervision of a researcher. Each questionnaire was preceded by a cover page displaying the instructions, study motivation, and acknowledgment to participants. Each scale was also preceded by specific instructions. To avoid and control for potential common-method variance bias in our data, we took on board Podsakoff et al.'s (2012) recommendations: First, to balance positive and negative items and vary the scale types and anchor labels to avoid any motivation to respond stylistically; second, to separate the criterion and predictor measures in the questionnaire; third, to use a "multiple study" cover story to camouflage our interest in criterion and predictor variables; and fourth, to obtain measures from different sources, namely, employees with disabilities and coworkers without disability.

Measures

Organizational socialization tactics

Perceptions about the practices adopted by the company to socialize individuals when they join the organization were measured using Jones' (1986) scale, featuring 18 items. An example item was "I have been extensively involved with other new recruits in common, job-related training

activities.” Responses ranged from 1 “*Totally disagree*” to 7 “*Totally agree*.” The scale covers six bipolar continuum dimensions: collective-individual, formal-informal, sequential-random, fixed-variable, serial-disjunctive, and investiture-divestiture. High scores on this scale correspond to the end of the dimensional continuum “collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture” and are related to institutionalized socialization. Conversely, low scores on this scale correspond to the end of the dimensional continuum “individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divestiture” and are related to individualized socialization (Jones, 1986). Only coworkers without disability responded to the scale. Prior to aggregation, first we assessed within-organization agreement using the Average Deviation index ($AD_{Md(J)}$, AD hereinafter) (see Burke et al., 1999; Burke & Dunlap, 2002; Dunlap et al., 2003). To interpret the AD value, we adopted Burke and Dunlap’s (2002) criterion of $AD \leq c/6$ (see Burke & Dunlap, 2002, for its justification). In the present case, $c = 7$ and $c/6 = 1.16$. The average AD value obtained was 1.10 ($SD = .38$). We also carried out a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to ascertain whether there was statistically significant between-organization discrimination on the scale. The observed F value was statistically significant ($F_{(14,133)} = 2.82, p < .001$). These results showed adequate within-organization agreement and between-organization discrimination on average scores, supporting the validity of the aggregated measure (Chan, 1998). Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .71 and McDonald’s omega coefficient was .82.

Social support at work

Perceptions of functional and affective support received in the workplace were measured using Broadhead et al.’s (1988) scale, featuring 11 items. An example item was “I get love and affection.” Responses ranged from 1 “Much less than I desire” to 5 “As much as I desire.” Only employees with disabilities responded to the scale. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .91 and McDonald’s omega coefficient was .93.

Team affective climate toward disability

Team members’ affective response related to working with people with disabilities was measured using our own team affective climate scale developed by INDRHO (Human Resources and Organizations Research and Development Group). The items were preceded by the following headline: “Think about the person with disabilities you are working with. How do you feel when you have to work with this person as a coworker?” Using a semantic differential method, this scale features four pairs of opposite adjectives. Responses ranged from 1 “*Bad*” to 7 “*Good*” for Item 1; from 1 “*Difficult*” to 7 “*Easy*” for Item 2; from 1 “*Unsatisfactory*” to 7 “*Satisfactory*” for Item 3; and from 1 “*Harmful*” to 7 “*Useful*” for Item 4. Only coworkers without disability responded to the scale. The average AD value obtained was .41 ($SD = .37$). In this case, $c = 7$, so $c/6 = 1.16$ following the $AD \leq c/6$ criterion. Furthermore, the F value was statistically significant ($F_{(65,126)} = 2.65, p < .001$). These results showed adequate within-team agreement and between-teams discrimination on average affective scores, supporting the validity of the aggregated affective climate measure (Chan, 1998). Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .91 and McDonald’s omega coefficient was .97.

Team stigma

Team evaluative perceptions addressed to people with disabilities were measured using Verdugo et al.'s (1995) scale, featuring 28 items. An example item was "People with disabilities are usually less intelligent than other people." Responses ranged from 1 "Totally disagree" to 7 "Totally agree." Only coworkers without disability responded to the scale. The average *AD* value obtained was .56 (*SD* = .21). In this case, $c = 7$, so $c/6 = 1.16$ following the $AD \leq c/6$ criterion. Furthermore, the *F* value was statistically significant ($F_{(65,126)} = 2.28, p < .001$). Results showed adequate within-team agreement and between-teams discrimination on average stigma scores, supporting their aggregation. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .87 and McDonald's omega coefficient was .92.

Organizational learning

The acquisition of information and the learning of the organization's norms, behaviors, languages, and characteristics was measured using Chao et al.'s (1994) scale, featuring 12 items. An example item was "I know the organization's long-held traditions." Responses ranged from 1 "Totally disagree" to 5 "Totally agree." The scale covers six dimensions: background, language, policies, people, goals-values, and skills. Only employees with disabilities responded to the scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .78 and McDonald's omega coefficient was .86.

Desire to stay in the organization

The turnover intentions of employees with disabilities to leave or stay in the organization were measured using González-Romá et al.'s (1992) scale, featuring three items. An example item was "If everything continues as it is, I will not mind staying in my current job until my retirement." Responses ranged from 1 "Totally disagree" to 7 "Totally agree." Only employees with disabilities responded to the scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .69 and McDonald's omega coefficient was .83.

Control variables

The type of disability was considered as a control variable. The different types in our sample were physical-organic, sensorial (auditory or visual), intellectual, mental illness, and autism. Based on prior research into coworkers' reluctance to interact with employees with mental and intellectual disability especially (Ruiz & Moya, 2007), and the high stigmatization of mental illness (Elraz, 2018) related to perceptions of danger and violence (Hinshaw & Stier, 2008), we decided to transform the "type of disability" variable into a dummy variable with two categories. A value of zero was assigned to physical-organic and sensorial disability, whereas a value of 1 was assigned to intellectual disability, mental illness, and autism. Additionally, the team size and the organization size were considered as control variables. The team size could affect team variables as the team affective climate toward disability and the team stigma (Gamero et al., 2008). Likewise, the organization size could affect organizational variables as the organizational socialization tactics (Jones, 1986).

Data analysis

Once data were collected, we calculated Box's M statistic to check whether the data pertaining to all 15 participating organizations could be combined and analyzed together. Box's M statistic tests the null hypothesis according to which the covariance matrix between the study variables is the same across the 15 organizations. To jointly analyze the data from the 15 organizations, the null hypothesis should be accepted. Additionally, to meaningfully aggregate individual responses to team level in the two team variables and to organizational level in the one organizational variable, we assessed within-team and within-organization agreement using the Average Deviation index ($AD_{Md(J)}$) (see Burke et al., 1999; Burke & Dunlap, 2002; Dunlap et al., 2003). And a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out to ascertain whether there was statistically significant between-team and between-organization discrimination on the respective scales. Finally, scale reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and McDonald's omega coefficient (McDonald, 1999). McDonald's omega coefficient measures the overall reliability of a series of heterogeneous yet similar items, showing to be a more sensible index of internal consistency than alpha coefficient (Dunn et al., 2014).

Our hypotheses were tested using multilevel modeling with MPLUS (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). All product variables were mean centered. The calculation of d as effect size was done through means and standard deviations. Specifically, d values between .20 and .30 represented a small effect, around .50 was a medium effect, and values greater than .80 represented a large effect (Cohen, 1988). The two-way simple slopes analyses, one standard deviation below and above the mean, were calculated with MPLUS to test and plot the interaction effects using procedures proposed by Aiken and West (1991). Additionally, we applied the Harman's single-factor test (Podsakoff et al., 2003) via confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test for potential common-method variance bias in our Hypotheses 1a and 1b due to self-report measures administered at the same time and from the same source (employees with disabilities). Thus, if common-method variance is present in the sample, a single factor will emerge from the CFA (Podsakoff et al., 2003). This statistical technique is widely used to address the issue of common-method variance (Tehseen et al., 2017).

RESULTS

Using Box's M statistic (Box, 1949), we tested the null hypothesis that the covariance matrix among the study variables was equal across all 15 participating organizations. Box's M statistic was calculated separately by the three type of respondent (entire sample, employees with disabilities, and employees without disability). The result for variables responded to by the entire sample ($N = 258$), namely, organizational socialization tactics and organizational learning, was $M = 49.80$, $p = .36$; for variables responded to by employees with disabilities only ($n = 66$), namely, social support at work and desire to stay in the organization, it was $M = 34.28$, $p = .18$; and for variables responded to by employees without disability only ($n = 192$), namely, team affective climate toward disability and team stigma, it was $M = 18.72$, $p = .14$. All three null hypotheses were accepted. Therefore, data gathered from the 15 organizations were combined and analyzed together.

Regarding the variance (R^2) explained by the model (see Figure 1), at level 1 (teams), the results were $R^2 = .19$ for desire to stay in the organization, and $R^2 = .09$ for organizational learning. At level 2 (organizations) the result was $R^2 = .93$ for social support. The multilevel

model showed a good fit to data indexes ($\chi^2 = 17.954, df = 4, p = .0013, RMSEA = .000, CFI = .99, TLI = 1, SRMR \text{ within} = .001, SRMR \text{ between} = .012$). The estimated intraclass correlations for the dependent variables were ICC = .30 for social support, ICC = .06 for organizational learning, and ICC = .26 for desire to stay in the organization. Therefore, the outcome variables showed substantial variance related to organizations (level 2) suggesting the use of multilevel modeling for analyzing our model. Regarding the Harman's single-factor test (Podsakoff et al., 2003), the CFA results did not reveal a good fit to data ($\chi^2 = 2347.70, df = 902, p < .001, RMSEA = .157, CFI = .42, AGFI = .32, NFI = .32$), demonstrating that the single-factor failed to emerge. This suggests that our results were not affected by common-method bias.

The means standard deviations, and correlations for the study variables, are shown in Table 1. Regarding the correlations for variables informed at level 1 (teams) by employees with disabilities, social support at work was significant and positively associated with organizational learning ($r = .26, p < .05$), desire to stay in the organization ($r = .46, p < .01$) and organizational socialization tactics ($r = .31, p < .05$). Regarding the correlations for variables informed at level 1 (teams) by coworkers without disability, team stigma was significant and negatively associated with team affective climate toward disability ($r = -.48, p < .01$). Regarding the correlations for variables informed at level 2 (organizations) by coworkers without disability, organizational socialization tactics showed non-significant association with the study variables at organizational level. Regarding the control variables, type of disability was significant and positively associated with team stigma ($r = .50, p < .01$) and organizational socialization tactics

TABLE 1 Descriptive statistics and correlations for the study variables

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Level 1 (teams $n = 66$)											
1 Type of disability (D)	—	—	—								
2 Team size	3.91	1.13	.10	—							
3 Organization size (number of teams)	7.18	3.91	.58**	.24*	—						
4 Social support at work (D)	4.38	.59	.09	.04	.14	—					
5 Organizational learning (D)	3.83	.60	-.14	-.08	-.05	.26*	—				
6 Desire to stay in the organization (D)	5.92	1.16	.07	-.06	.02	.46**	.12	—			
7 Team stigma (WD)	2.08	.52	.50**	.05	.24*	.14	-.03	.09	—		
8 Team affective climate toward disability (WD)	6.28	.76	-.41**	.05	-.46**	-.07	.13	-.08	-.48**	—	
9 Organizational socialization tactics (WD)	4.59	.25	.49**	-.09	.41**	.31*	-.05	.14	.16	-.15	—
Level 2 (organizations $n = 15$)											
10 organizational socialization tactics (WD)	4.52	.35	—	-.01	.24	.33	-.30	.20	.15	-.05	—

Note: D = Variable informed by employees with disabilities, WD = Variable informed by coworkers without disability. Type of disability is a dummy variable: 0 = physical-organic and sensorial disability; 1 = intellectual disability, mental illness, and autism.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

($r = .49, p < .01$), and it was significant and negatively associated with team affective climate toward disability ($r = -.41, p < .01$). Likewise, organization size was significant and positively associated with team stigma ($r = .24, p < .05$) and organizational socialization tactics ($r = .41, p < .01$), and it was significant and negatively associated with team affective climate toward disability ($r = -.46, p < .01$). Finally, team size did not show any significant association.

Regarding hypotheses H1a and H1b concerning the mediating role of coworkers' social support in the job inclusion process of employees with disabilities, the results are shown in Table 2. We conducted a multilevel model testing the mediation effects of social support in the relationships between organizational socialization tactics, at an organizational level (level 2), and organizational learning (H1a) and desire to stay in the organization (H1b), at a team level (level 1). Consistent with our hypotheses, organizational socialization tactics at level 2 (organizations) was positively related to social support at level 1 (teams) ($\gamma = .27, p < .05$), whereas social support was positively related to organizational learning ($\gamma = .32, p < .05$) and desire to stay in the organization ($\gamma = .47, p < .001$) at level 1 (teams). Accordingly, our findings indicate that organizational socialization tactics at level 2 (organizations) showed a significant relationship with social support at level 1 (teams), meanwhile social support acted as a mediator between organizational socialization tactics and organizational learning (H1a), and desire to stay in the organization (H1b) at level 1 (teams). Consequently, we concluded that hypotheses H1a and H1b were supported.

Regarding hypotheses H2a and H2b concerning the moderating effects of the coworking inclusive team context (team affective climate toward disability and team stigma) on the social

TABLE 2 Multilevel model of EWDs job inclusion with mediation and moderation effects

Level 1 within level	Organizational learning (D)		Desire to stay in the organization (D)				
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE			
Intercept	.000	.13	.000	.15			
Social support at work (D)	.32*	.19	.47***	.13			
Residual variance	.91***	.18	.80***	.11			
Interaction effects		Estimate	SE	ΔR^2	Estimate	SE	ΔR^2
Team affective climate TD (WD)		.06	.09		-.11	.15	
Team affective climate TD (WD) \times social support at work (D)		.43**	.13	.08*	.25	.28	.01
Team stigma (WD)		-.14	.14		.01	.22	
Team stigma (WD) \times social support at work (D)		-.53**	.15	.10**	-.42	.23	.02
Level 2 between level		Social support at work (D)					
Intercept		Estimate	SE				
Organizational socialization tactics (WD)		.27*	.12				
Residual variance		.01	.04				

Note: D = Variable informed by employees with disabilities, WD = Variable informed by coworkers without disability. TD = Toward disability. Level 1 Teams $n = 66$; Level 2 Organizations $n = 15$. Unstandardized coefficients are showed. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

support-organizational learning relationship and on the social support-desire to stay in the organization relationship, the interaction results are shown in Table 2. When team affective climate toward disability was considered a moderator in the social support-organizational learning relationship, our results showed that the interaction of social support and team affective climate toward disability was positive and significant ($\beta = .43, p < .01$). Furthermore, team affective climate toward disability showed non-significant relationship with organizational learning ($\beta = .06, p = .54$). Additionally, the simple interaction analysis showed a significant incremental of R^2 due to interaction (team affective climate toward disability \times social support) of ($\Delta R^2 = .08, p < .05$). Likewise, the simple slopes analysis (see Figure 2) indicates that the slope was positive and significant for high levels of affective climate ($t = 5.52, p < .01$), but not for low levels of affective climate ($t = -.01, p = .99$). The interaction effects showed that significant differences in organizational learning effects between low and high social support on employees with disabilities were only detected when team affective climate toward disability generated by coworkers was high. The results suggest that the highest levels of organizational learning in employees with disabilities were achieved when high levels of team affective climate toward disability and social support were present.

Similarly, when team stigma was considered a moderator in the social support-organizational learning relationship, we found that the interaction of social support and team stigma was negative and significant ($\beta = -.53, p < .01$). Furthermore, team stigma showed non-significant relationship with organizational learning ($\beta = -.14, p = .33$). Additionally, the simple interaction analysis showed a significant incremental of R^2 due to interaction (team stigma \times social support) of ($\Delta R^2 = .10, p < .01$). Likewise, the simple slopes analysis, as shown in Figure 3, indicates that the slope was positive and significant for low levels of team stigma ($t = 6.96, p < .01$), but not for high levels of team stigma ($t = .31, p = .76$). The interaction effects showed that significant differences in organizational learning effects between low and high social support on employees with disabilities were only detected when team stigma generated by coworkers was low. The results showed that the highest levels of organizational learning in employees with disabilities were achieved when high levels of social support and low levels of team stigma were present. Moreover, the interactions of team affective climate toward

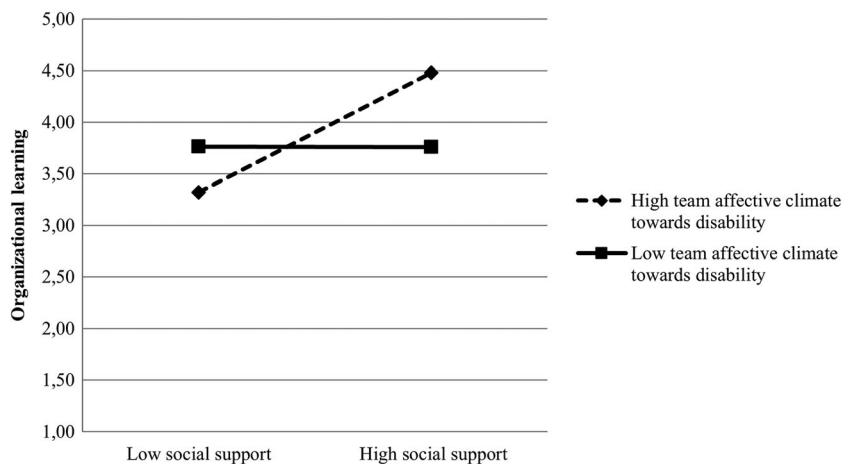


FIGURE 2 Interaction effects of social support and team affective climate toward disability on organizational learning

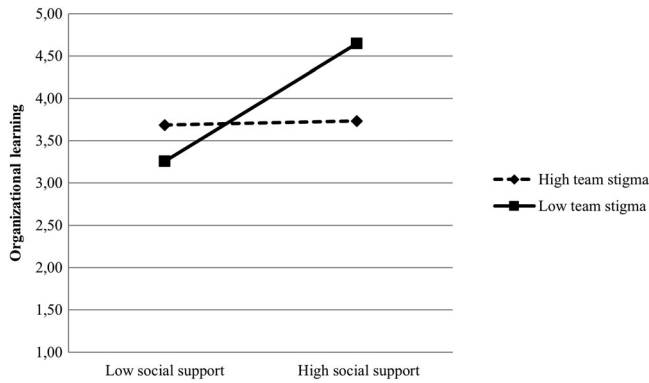


FIGURE 3 Interaction effects of social support and team stigma on organizational learning

disability ($\beta = .25, p = .37$) and team stigma ($\beta = -.42, p = .23$) in the social support-desire to stay in the organization relationship were not significant. These results partially support hypotheses H2a and H2b.

Finally, considering control variables, first, the “type of disability” control variable was negatively related to team affective climate toward disability ($\beta = -.40, p < .001$) and positively related to team stigma ($\beta = .50, p < .001$) and organizational socialization tactics ($\beta = .49, p < .001$); nevertheless, it showed non-significant relationships with the other study variables. Second, the “team size” control variable did not show any significant relationship with the study variables. Finally, the “organization size” control variable was negatively related to team affective climate toward disability ($\beta = -.46, p < .001$) and positively related to team stigma ($\beta = .24, p < .05$) and organizational socialization tactics ($\beta = .41, p < .001$). However, it showed non-significant relationship with the other study variables.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to examine the role of coworkers' social support as a main mechanism to understand how organizational socialization tactics influence EWD's inclusion. Likewise, we examine the moderator role of two indicators of an inclusive team context (team affective climate toward disability and team stigma) on the relationship between perceived social support and EWD's inclusion. Our study provides evidence about how perceptions of social support act as an explanatory mechanism in the relationship between organizational socialization tactics and organizational learning and desire to stay in the organization of employees with disabilities. At the same time high levels of coworkers' team affective climate toward disability and low levels of coworkers' team stigma shaped a favorable inclusive team context, thus improving the job inclusion of employees with disabilities by enhancing their organizational learning level. Thus, these findings suggest that coworkers' support was the key to the job inclusion process of employees with disabilities. It is important for workers with disability to perceive that other team members are ready to share their doubts, ask for help or information or just explain their concerns. This finding is in line, first, with Slaughter and Zickar's (2006) research about the positive influence of coworkers as the main source of information for newcomers when learning about the job, norms, and organizational culture. And

second, with Cleveland et al. (1997), who highlighted the effects that coworkers' characteristics, attitudes, perceptions, and reactions have on the job inclusion process of employees with disabilities. Although organizations use socialization tactics to provide information about the context, content, and social aspects of the job (Griffin et al., 2000), socialization tactics affects job inclusion when enhance in team members support to the EWD reinforcing their desire to stay in the organization and increasing their organizational learning.

We also analyzed how the social context influences the job inclusion of employees with disabilities. From this perspective, high levels of coworkers' team affective climate toward disability and low levels of team stigma improved the positive impact of social support, acting as a positive inclusive context and enhancing their job inclusion. Our results coincide with the conclusions drawn by Barsade and Knight (2015) and Zijlstra et al. (2017) regarding the positive effects of affective relationships, and with Colella and Varma (1999) and Crandall and Moriarty (1995) about the negative effects of stigma on the job inclusion process of employees with disabilities.

Theoretical and practical implications

Our findings lend additional support to Moreland and Levine's (1982) group socialization model. First, because coworkers' social support and group acceptance are needed to transit from a new to a full member. In this sense, a successful socialization is not only the responsibility of the newcomer but also of the people who receives the new employees in the organization (coworkers and managers). This study provides evidence to the relevance of the relational aspects in the socialization process as suggested by Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2006). Likewise, the findings allow supporting the mechanism by which socialization influences the inclusion of people with disabilities, through socialization tactics the necessary conditions are created so that the social support perceived by the EWD allows inclusion in the organization. These findings also represent a contribution to the research of social support, supporting the social constructionist perspective on the stress-coping perspective. Thus, social support is the product of an interpretation of the organizational context by EWD.

This study has also made possible to test the influence of two team context variables such as team affective climate and team stigma. Moreover, there is a recent interest in understanding which are the variables that the organization should consider within an inclusive climate (Luu, 2019; Nelissen et al., 2017; Nishii, 2013). These variables should be studied as basic, both, in the theoretical explanatory and practical approach to inclusion. Furthermore, this study shows how socialization tactics are effective for the inclusion of people with disabilities if they can generate social support.

And, second, because coworkers' attitudes and perceptions toward newcomers have a significant influence on their socialization process. Furthermore, the inclusive team context tested in our work improves the analysis of the inclusive climate proposed by Luu (2019). First, because the inclusive team context encompasses different variables as suggested based on prior research. And, second, because the inclusive team context is stable over time as opposed to the change inherent to the climate concept as suggested by Luu (2019). Future studies should further our knowledge about the job inclusion process of employees with disabilities through adopting different ways. First, cluster analyses considering the different types of disabilities and their influence on inclusion processes should be performed to determine the differences in perceptions of team affective climate toward disability and team stigma among the coworkers. Second,

researchers could conduct analysis exploring the job inclusion process for each kind of disability across different levels of impairment and different organization sizes. Third, the moderator role of other inclusive team context variables, for example, team disability culture, team disability attitude, and team communication and feedback, could be examined.

In terms of the practical implications of our study, data suggest that Human Resources Management (HRM) need to work more closely with the insiders than with the employees with disabilities in their socialization processes, creating an inclusive environment and promoting support. Organizations also need to work at reducing coworkers' stigma given the disruptive consequences on the job inclusion of employees with disabilities. Based on this study, we suggest the following actions: (a) HRM should implement socialization tactics paying special attention to the specific characteristics of each EWD throughout the whole socialization process and using mentors if required; (b) in relation to coworkers' social support and according to Broadhead et al. (1988), HRM should encourage coworkers to look after new employees with disabilities, giving them affection, the chance to talk about their personal and work-related issues, inviting them out to do things together, and offering advice about important organizational matters; and (c) in relation to coworkers HRM must realize that educational experiences surrounding disability are not enough to bring about favorable changes in coworkers' attitudes toward employees with disabilities. Thus, proximity to and contact with employees with disabilities are important factors when it comes to tackling negative attitudes toward people with disabilities. In addition, data showed differences in team stigma and affective climate depending on the organization size suggesting an easier inclusion in small than big companies. Larger organizations should make an extra effort in the socialization of employees with disabilities.

Limitations

Our research presents some limitations. First, we are unable to conclusively establish any causal relationships due to the cross-sectional design of the study. A longitudinal design could fix this and improve future research. Second, our data were obtained from self-report measures resulting in subjective data with a potential problem of common-method bias, causing a possible overestimation of the relationships under analysis (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Nevertheless, we followed Podsakoff et al.'s (2012) recommendations to avoid common-method variance bias in our data as much as possible. We also obtained data from different sources which help to reduce common-method bias. Third, the study restrictions based on the analysis of work teams including employees with disabilities with three or more members produced a drop in sample size. Consequently, some valuable information was lost in this process. Despite the obvious difficulties and complexity of the data collection in this sample, future data collection should be addressed in a more efficient way to avoid loss of information. Fourth, the "type of disability" and "organization size" control variables analysis suggests possible differences in the effects of the inclusive team context variables examined, between the two categories of disabilities considered (physical-organic-sensorial and intellectual-mental-autism) and across different organization sizes. In this sense, the purpose of this study did not was to establish these differences being us unable to determine it with the study design adopted. Likewise, we consider that the analysis of these differences using only these two categories of disabilities could be inadequate. This could be due to the high level of heterogeneity on the two categories of disabilities coming from the high number and diversity of types of disabilities included on each category. We suggest a more precise future research on EWD's job inclusion analyzing specific types of

disabilities and not considering only two big categories of disabilities losing valuable information and maybe indicating not real differences. In addition, this future specific disabilities analyses that we propose opens a vast research field on this topic.

CONCLUSIONS

This study provides two main conclusions in order to explain the mechanisms underlining the relationship between organizational socialization tactics and several indicators of EWD's job inclusion. First, the social support perceived by employees with disabilities and provided by their coworkers had a positive influence on the organizational learning and desire to stay in the organization of employees with disabilities, thus explaining the effects of company-implemented organizational socialization tactics on these variables. This proves that social support is necessary to achieve an adequate workplace inclusion process. Second, high levels of coworkers' team affective climate toward disability and low levels of coworkers' team stigma created a positive inclusive team context, thus enhancing organizational learning and reinforcing the desire to stay in the organization of employees with disabilities, improving their job inclusion process.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This project was approved by the Junta de Andalucía ethical committee with the protocol number IEG2016/0254-N-16.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data available on request from the authors

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