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Perceptions of Organisational Politics, Ethnicity & Career Satisfaction
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Background

Ethnicity and Career Success
- Figure 1 shows that minority-ethnic individuals comprise approximately 11.5% of the U.K. working age population (ONS, 2010)
- There is a discrepancy between the percentage of minority-ethnic individuals of working age and those in employment
- This discrepancy is even more apparent for those who reach management positions
- It is therefore important to understand the factors that may influence differential career success for minority-ethnic groups.

Career Satisfaction
- Subjective evaluations have become an increasingly important aspect in many contemporary career paths (Hall, 2004).
- Recent research has identified that career satisfaction can predict long term salary and promotion outcomes (Hall, 2004).
- Career satisfaction is therefore important for understanding the differential career success of minority-ethnic groups

Results
- Figure 2 shows that:
  - Minority-ethnic employees perceived greater levels of POPs than White employees
  - Minority-ethnic employees reported lower levels of career satisfaction than White employees
- Correlations also demonstrate that perceiving politics was associated with lower career satisfaction (r = -.35, p<.01)

Discussion
- Findings indicate that minority-ethnic employees perceive greater levels of politics and this negatively influences their career satisfaction.
- In this study perceptions of politics related to illegitimate, self-serving and divisive processes may be political is likely to be perceived as threatening to career. Therefore any potential indication that organisational decisions and processes may be political is likely to be perceived as threatening.

Method

Sample and Procedure
- Participants were recruited from a single large U.K. public sector organisation
- Participants completed a questionnaire
- 311 questionnaire responses were received
- Minority-ethnic sample N = 114, White sample N = 197

Measures
- Ethnicity: coded minority-ethnic = 1, White = 0
- Perceived Organisational Politics: Measured using a subscale of Kacmar and Ferris’ (1993) Perceived Organisational Politics scale, measuring ‘general political behaviour’. Responses on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) Likert scale (r = .74)
- Career Satisfaction: Measured using Greenhaus, Parasuraman and Wormley’s (1990) five item career satisfaction scale. E.g. “I am satisfied with the progress I have made toward meeting my overall career goals”. Responses on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) Likert scale (r = .88)
- Control Variables: Age, Gender, Organisational Tenure and Grade were controlled for in the analysis

Practical Implications
- Organisations should look to making potentially political situations, such as informal promotion, performance appraisal, and the allocation of training and development more transparent
- Enhancing ‘political skill’ may help individuals navigate political environments and minimise the impact of negative stressors such as POP
- Political skill is an interpersonal style related to the ability to build networks, influence others, understand social situations and convey sincerity to others.
- Political skill has been found to be beneficial for career success, including career satisfaction, salary and promotion (Todd et al., 2009)
- Research suggests that political skill can be developed through mentoring, drama based training, coaching and leader-member exchange relationships (e.g. Ferris, Davidson, et al., 2005)