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 promotions (Abele & Spurk, 2009).
- 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)

- Mediation analysis is shown in Figure 3.

  - Higher levels of perceived organisational politics was associated with significantly lower levels of career satisfaction (B = -.25, SE = .05, t(310) = -5.20, p<.001).
  - In support of the hypothesis, there was a significant indirect effect between ethnicity and career satisfaction via perceived organisational politics (point estimate = -.06, SE = .03, 95% CI of -13 to -.03).
  - This suggests that minority-ethnic employees report lower career satisfaction due to perceiving higher levels of organisational politics

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 behaviour. Responses on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) Likert scale (α=.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 (α=.88).

- Control Variables: Age, Gender, Organisational Tenure and Grade were controlled for in the analysis.

- 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 POPs.

- Political skill: an interpersonal style related to the ability to build networks, influence others, understand social situations and convey sincerity to others.

- Practical Implications

  - 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)

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 (α=.88).

- 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 (α=.88).

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Figure 1: % minority-ethnic representation

Figure 2: Average Scores

Figure 3: Mediation Analysis

Practical Implications