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Abstract

Ethnic and gender differences in perceptions of graduate job acquisition difficulty among UK post-higher education job-seekers were investigated. Two main hypotheses were compared: the double jeopardy hypothesis (DJH), suggesting an additive or interactive increase in perceived difficulty associated with membership of different disadvantaged demographic categories; and the ethnic prominence hypothesis, arguing for the salience of ethnicity over gender in perceptions. Graduates and final year students ($N = 800$) from Black, Indian, Pakistani / Bangladeshi and White ethnic backgrounds rated the level of difficulty that a suitably qualified man and woman from their own ethnic background would encounter in attaining ten graduate jobs. Interactions between participant ethnic background and gender of job-seeker rated were examined in the context of the competing hypotheses. The perceptions of men, and Indian and Pakistani / Bangladeshi women, were consistent with the additive DJH, whereas Black women’s perceptions were not. It is concluded that: (1) the perceptions of the latter group may reflect knowledge of Black male disadvantage, or negative stereotyping with respect to employment in the UK graduate labour market; and (2) perceptions of double jeopardy by some female graduates may have negative effects on their job-seeking endeavours.

Recent studies in several countries suggest that ethnic background and gender are related to graduate labour market outcomes (Brekke, 2007; Lewis & Oh, 2009). In the UK, Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) statistics have illustrated that, collectively, graduates from UK Black and minority ethnic groups are less successful in job acquisition six months after graduation compared to White graduates (HESA, 2004). However, such homogeneous figures do not illustrate differences between minority groups; some groups are considerably more disadvantaged than others, both with respect to unemployment and positions occupied within the workforce. With regard to gender, UK working women have continued to fall behind men in terms of both pay and opportunity (Women and Work Commission, 2006). Furthermore, 2001 - 2002 UK Labour Force survey figures showed that, in terms of salary and job status, recent graduate women earned 15% less than their male counterparts (Equal Opportunities Commission [EOC], 2005). The present research considers how membership of different social groups affects perceptions of job acquisition difficulty as a contribution towards the debate as to how these demographic differences might arise.

In combination with indirect discrimination and other forms of situational disadvantage, socialization processes may lead different demographic groups to have differing perceptions of the appropriateness of certain jobs. Consequently, occupational segregation observed in the UK labour market (see, e.g., Blackburn & Jarman, 2006) may be partially explained by members of some groups avoiding occupations they perceive as inappropriate or less accessible. For example, individuals of certain social groups may perceive certain occupations to be the domain of other (possibly more advantaged) groups, either because they feel unable to be successful at such occupations or because they anticipate
lack of success due to employer allocation of positions on demographic grounds. This would be consistent with the “looking-glass self” hypothesis (Mead, 1934) which contends that stigmatization leads to low self-esteem because other people’s negative reactions become part of a person’s self-perceptions. Such lower self-esteem could result in members of disadvantaged groups avoiding certain graduate-level jobs.

The above suggests that both ethnic background and gender will affect perceptions of job acquisition difficulty. The aim of the present study was to investigate such demographic differences in the level of job acquisition difficulty perceived by people leaving higher education. In addition, the joint effects of gender and ethnic background were investigated within the framework of two competing hypotheses; the double jeopardy and ethnic prominence hypotheses. Both hypotheses relate to the fact that many individuals are members of more than one disadvantaged social group, but differ with respect to the impact of such multi-category membership.

The double jeopardy hypothesis

The social sciences have utilised the term ‘double jeopardy’ (or ‘multiple jeopardy’) to describe how risks inherent in membership of more vulnerable social groups combine or interact to intensify disadvantage if an individual has membership of more than one such group simultaneously. For example, a woman from a less advantaged minority ethnic background seeking work might be doubly disadvantaged in terms of her gender and her ethnic background, one strand of social disadvantage augmenting (or intensifying) the other. In this connection, Beale (1970) used imagery of a totem pole to illustrate the social and economic situation of African American women, who, she stated, occupied the lowest totem pole rank, with their gender, ethnic background and socio-economic situation incurring multiple disadvantage. In the same vein, Greene (1994) and Bowleg, Huang, Brooks, Black
and Burkholder (2003), who highlight sexuality, suggest that some people are in a situation of triple jeopardy.

The double jeopardy hypothesis consists of two variants. The first, termed ‘additive’, (see Figure 1) implies that the total disadvantage perceived is the aggregate of individual demographic components. Therefore, disadvantage / discrimination perceived because one is female would be experienced in addition to that perceived because one has a minority ethnic background. The second variant is termed ‘interactive’ or ‘multiplicative’, and describes as interacting synergistically. According to this variant then, having membership of a disadvantaged ethnic group and gender would incur greater penalties than those of ethnic and gender membership added together (Rothman, 1999; Sidanius & Veniegas, 2000; Vieregge, 2003).

With respect to both variants, it has been argued that women from some ethnic minority backgrounds are doubly disadvantaged by employer assumptions about their family plans, and by attitudes towards their dress (EOC, 2005). Furthermore, some Muslim women report perceptions of such a double disadvantage (Tyrer & Ahmad, 2006). Studies of the circumstances under which either additivity or interactivity applies in the economic arena are rare, but work on labour market equality that does exist tends to focus upon wage gaps. Browne and Misra (2003) reviewed this literature and concluded that although the mechanisms by which additivity applies in some circumstances but interactivity applies in others are not well understood, US research suggests that one major reason for interactive disadvantages experienced by ethnic minority females may be stereotyping of them as only being suited to menial / servile tasks (Browne & Misra, 2003).

**The ethnic prominence hypothesis**
An alternative to the double jeopardy hypothesis suggests that ethnic minority individuals belonging to more than one disadvantaged demographic group should perceive their ethnicity as making them particularly vulnerable to disadvantage. Researching perceptions of discrimination among African American, Hispanic and White men and women, Levin, Sinclair, Veniegas and Taylor (2002) termed this the ‘ethnic prominence hypothesis’. The first strand of supporting evidence was drawn from social cognition – specifically from McGuire and McGuire’s (1988) contention that the smaller the numerical size of a social group, the greater the likelihood that membership of the group will be a salient aspect of its members’ self-perceptions. This perspective is closely aligned to the distinctiveness hypothesis, which utilizes ideas on salience from object perception (Oakes, 1987). Levin et al. proposed that, when gender and ethnic background are considered together with regard to level of discrimination expected, women from an ethnic minority background would consider their ethnicity as salient, as numerically this social category is smaller and therefore more distinctive.

As a second strand of evidence offered in support of their hypothesis Levin et al. (2002) presented evidence from Jackman (1994), who described and compared differing long-term ‘relations of inequality’ in the US based on race, gender and social class. Presupposing that human behaviour is governed by self-interest, Jackman suggests that maximization of one’s share of finite resources involves a relationship whereby a dominant group expropriates resources from a subordinate group. She argued that varying forms of ideological persuasion based on paternalism, created and subsequently used by dominant groups seeking to maintain control of resources, sustain these relations of inequality.

Jackman (1994) proposed that paternalism works less well for some social groups. Whilst gender relationship dynamics are more facilitating, ethnic spatial segregation is a barrier to the interactions which enable paternalism to be successful in relations of inequality.
She sees this as an important factor in the emergence of intergroup conflict. Levin et al. (2002) argue that for women from minority ethnic backgrounds, the greater level of conflict inherent in ethnic discrimination causes it to have greater salience than gender discrimination in their perceptions. The Levin et al. study found that, whilst White women were sensitive to general gender discrimination, the perceptions of both Latina and African American ethnic minority women were aligned to those of their male counterparts in perceiving similarly high levels of racial discrimination. There is some support for the ethnic prominence hypothesis in the occupational sphere in that the disparity in occupational earnings between ethnic minority and white women is often found to be less than the disparity between the same male demographic groups (Greenman & Xie, 2008), although in this context it might be appropriate to refer to a gender weakening effect rather than an ethnic prominence effect.

**The present study**

Jackman’s (1994) work and the ethnic prominence hypothesis contest the assumptions underpinning the double jeopardy hypothesis, which proposes that ethnic minority women are sensitized to both gender and ethnic discrimination. Some of Jackman’s writing is based on 1970s research, and she specifically examines the US situation. Levin et al. (2002) also examine data from US participants. Previously there has been no similar UK research and, to aid understanding of inequalities in the UK graduate job market, a major aim of the present study was to assess the applicability of the different hypotheses with respect to the perceptions of UK graduate job-seekers. This was achieved by surveying men and women from Black, Indian, Pakistani / Bangladeshi and White ethnic backgrounds who had either newly graduated or were due to graduate at the end of the academic year.

It was hypothesized first, that there would be a main effect of participant ethnic background; specifically, that those from a less advantaged ethnic background would
perceive greater job acquisition difficulty for job-seekers of their own ethnic group than would those from the more advantaged ethnic background (H1). Second, it was hypothesized that there would be a main effect of target gender; that is, across both male and female participants, female job-seekers would be perceived to be more disadvantaged than male job-seekers (H2). The main effects of participant ethnic background and target gender (H1 and H2) are predicted by all three of the alternative models under consideration. However, they are distinguished by different predictions concerning their interaction. First, if the double jeopardy hypothesis were supported, mean job acquisition difficulty ratings would resemble those in either Figure 1 or Figure 2. For the additive variant (Figure 1) there would be no significant interaction between these variables. On the other hand, the interactive variant of the hypothesis predicts a significant interaction with divergent rating slopes (H3a, Figure 2). Critically, the extent to which difficulty in job acquisition is perceived to be greater for women than it is for men is greater for those from less advantaged ethnic backgrounds than it is for those from more advantaged backgrounds.

Figures 1 and 2 here

Finally, the ethnic prominence hypothesis predicts a significant interaction between participant ethnic background and target gender with convergent rating slopes (H3b, Figure 3). In this case, mean ratings would resemble those in Figure 3. That is, participants from a less advantaged ethnic background would perceive men and women job-seekers of their ethnicity as likely to encounter a similarly high level of job acquisition difficulty, whereas those from the more advantaged background would perceive a significant difference. It should be noted that since links between socio-economic background and labour market disadvantage have previously been demonstrated, it was necessary to take these into account when testing the above hypotheses.

Figure 3 here
Method

Design

A cross-sectional survey employing self-report questionnaire methodology was used, enabling recruitment of participants over a wide geographical area. Data were analyzed using an analysis of variance (ANOVA) framework, with (a) two between-groups factors: participant ethnic background (White, Indian, Pakistani / Bangladeshi, Black); and participant gender (male, female); (b) one within-groups factor: target gender (male, female), i.e. whether the gender of the job-seeker being rated for job acquisition difficulty was male or female. The dependent variable was the rating of perceived job acquisition difficulty. In preliminary analyses socio-economic status was included as a covariate in all analyses to provide statistical control and test its relationship with the dependent variable. However, the covariate was not a significant predictor of the dependent variable in any of the analyses. Therefore since socio-economic status did not have any function as a covariate the results of ANOVAs are reported.

Participants

Participants were men and women who had either newly graduated, or were third year undergraduates due to graduate at the end of the academic year. At the start of their courses participants’ mean age was $M = 19$ years ($SD = 2.9; N = 794, n$ missing $= 6$). All had participated in full-time higher education and were (or would be) seeking employment in the UK. They had not undertaken postgraduate study. Participants provided ethnicity data by indicating their group membership according to the ethnicity codes used by the UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (2004). They were of Black, Asian and White British ethnic backgrounds. Where ethnic categories were combined, this was based upon their common
cultural heritage and the term “ethnicity” was retained to avoid confusion. Black participants included job-seekers from African, Caribbean and Other Black backgrounds. These groups were combined because of low sample sizes. Asian participants were assigned to two groups since religion was considered to be a possible salient factor; one combining Pakistani and Bangladeshi job seekers (predominantly Muslim), and one consisting solely of Indian participants (predominantly Hindu). Initial tests were performed to ascertain the viability of combining the three Black groups (ANOVA) and the Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups (t-test). No significant differences were found.

Initially a paper-based questionnaire was used to target a purposive sample of new graduates and pre-graduates from higher education institutions in the North of England, the Midlands and London. Following this, data were collected via a questionnaire placed on the Internet. In total, respondents from 21 UK higher education institutions participated via the web. Given the mixture of data collection methods employed, it is important to note that comparisons of data collected from 58,288 college students using web-based and traditional paper-based survey methods for the US National Survey of Student Engagement have shown that effect sizes associated with mode of data collection in student surveys are generally small (Carini, Hayek, Kuh, Kennedy, & Ouimet, 2003). For the present data, independent samples t-tests comparing data collection medium (paper vs. Internet) on the job seeking difficulty variables for some ethnicity / gender combinations were significant. However, these differences can be attributed to demographic differences in the samples obtained by the two methods rather than to methodological differences in data collection. For example, when attendance at a pre-1992 university vs. post-1992 university was used as a covariate in an ANCOVA where paper / web administration was the independent variable and perception of job acquisition difficulty was the dependent variable, the effect of data collection medium disappeared, $F(5,791) = 0.59$, $p = .709$. Therefore paper and Internet data were combined.
The final number of participants was 800. The demographic breakdown of the sample is shown in Table 1 from which it can be seen that two thirds of the sample were women (which represents a bias towards women given the current roughly equal gender split in UK higher education participation), and 13.25% were ethnic minority participants, which is representative of the proportion of ethnic minority students participating in UK higher education (HESA statistics for 2004-05 show that students from ethnic minorities comprise 14% of the population of higher education students; Tolley & Rundle, 2006).

Participants’ socio-economic background was categorised according to the three-way classification of the Office for National Statistics (2005) based upon parental occupation if the participant was 21 years or below on entry to higher education, or the occupation of the highest household earner if the participant was above 21 on entry. On this classification, 63% of participants were identified as managerial / professional, 23% as intermediate and 15% as routine and manual socio-economic status.

Table 1 here

Materials

Three questionnaires were presented together, in either paper or Internet versions. Introductory text explained the purpose of the questionnaires and assured participants of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. The first questionnaire asked for demographic details including gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, age on commencement of course, course details and, on the Internet version, university attended.

The second questionnaire was a new scale that directly measured perceived job acquisition difficulty using the structure of Turner and Turner’s (1975) Black Discrimination Scale and Women Discrimination Scale. The scale took account of the contemporary UK situation and participants’ educational (and impending job targeting) level. The scale
presented ten graduate occupations and asked both male and female participants to rate how
difficult they felt it was in the present-day UK, for a suitably qualified man (part 1) and
woman (part 2), of their ethnic group to obtain each of ten graduate jobs. These ratings were
on a 5-point scale: 1 = not at all difficult; 2 = not very difficult; 3 = moderately difficult; 4
= very difficult; 5 = extremely difficult. The jobs were selected from the 2001 National
Statistics Socio-economic Classification Analytic 8-classes version (see e.g. Office for
National Statistics, 2005). Six of the jobs were drawn from Analytic Class 1, subdivision 1.2
(Higher professional occupations; Accountant, Architect, Doctor, Psychologist, Solicitor,
University Lecturer) and four from Analytic Class 2 (Lower managerial and professional
occupations; Air Traffic Controller, Newspaper Journalist, Physiotherapist, Social Worker).
To ensure content validity, they were selected because they were a mix of reasonably familiar
public and private sector occupations that suitably qualified graduates of either sex might
reasonably aspire to. Also, they represent a range of occupational gender stereotypes
(Heilman, 2001) and our analysis is based on participants’ mean responses. The occupations
from the two analytic classes were combined and presented in alphabetical order. Initial
analyses of responses to the ten questionnaire items showed that Cronbach's alpha
coefficients were acceptable, ranging from .80 to .97 across four subgroups formed by
splitting participants across gender (male / female) and ethnicity (ethnic majority / ethnic
minority).

Participants also completed the third questionnaire asking about the importance that
they attached to certain job characteristics. However details of this questionnaire are not
included since we do not consider these data in this report.

Procedure
Participation was voluntary, all participants being recruited over a two year period. In year 1 (2004) two UK higher education institutions (one in the North of England, the other in London) collaborated with the researching institution in recruitment of their recent graduates. Details about participation and a participation request form were mailed to graduates by their former universities. The completed request form was returned directly to the researching institution. Paper questionnaires were sent out by, and returned completed to, the researchers.

For the second year of data collection (2005) two different UK universities, located in London and the English Midlands, agreed to collaborate. Final year students about to graduate and enter the labour market were also included here. Paper questionnaires were distributed and collected by two paid data collectors per institution. Additionally in 2005, letters were sent to vice-chancellors of 114 universities across the UK and their careers centres mentioning the aims of the study and giving details of an Internet version of the questionnaire, together with a request to publicize the study to their graduating students via flyers giving a broad description of the study’s aims, what participation would involve, and giving the questionnaire’s Internet location (a server at the University of Bolton). However, it is unknown how many universities subsequently publicized the study to their students, therefore response rates are unknown. In both years data were also collected from the university hosting the research. Here, in the second year, in addition to using paid data collectors to collect data from pre-graduate students, researchers also entered classes at the beginning of lectures to distribute and collect questionnaires. Care was taken to ensure that these students understood that their participation was voluntary. To aid recruitment, all prospective 2005 participants were offered the option of entry into a simple competition for three cash prizes totalling £300 should they participate.

Results
The main analysis was an ANOVA combining all ethnic minorities. This was useful in examining which of the previously discussed hypotheses might best summarize patterns of data at a general ethnic level. Two post hoc ANOVAs were then carried out, for male and female participant data separately. This was mainly in order to interpret the three-way interaction that was found in the main analysis. The perceptions of women were the most important in this study, because their perceptions of disadvantage in two categories may directly affect their job-seeking behaviour. Consequently, the post hoc analysis of their data examined each ethnic minority group in more detail.

**Ethnic majority (White) versus all ethnic minorities combined**

The main analysis was a three factor 2x2x(2) mixed ANOVA. The two between-groups factors were participant ethnic background (ethnic majority, ethnic minority) and participant gender (male, female). The within-groups factor was target gender (male, female) and the dependent variable was perceived job acquisition difficulty rating. Descriptive statistics for perceived job acquisition difficulty for male and female job-seekers (target gender) for the different groups are given in Table 1, with each ethnic minority group presented. Mean ratings by participant gender and ethnic background are depicted in Figure 4, with ethnic minority groups combined.

Levene’s test of equality of error variances was significant for perceived difficulty for both males and females ($p \leq .001$). This situation persisted despite variable transformations. Therefore, conclusions from the ANOVA results are likely to be conservative since when, as was the case with data for both target gender variables, a group with a smaller sample size is lower in variance compared to a group with a larger sample size, the probability of a Type II error is enhanced (Field, 2005). However, any tendency towards drawing incorrect
conclusions should be largely mitigated by considering the results of the subsequent post hoc tests.

Table 2 here

Table 2 shows that the ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for target gender, with male job-seekers ($M = 21.80, SD = 8.73$) being perceived as likely to encounter significantly less difficulty than females ($M = 24.01, SD = 7.94$) in acquiring jobs. This supported the hypothesis (H2) that overall (across both male and female participants) female job-seekers would be perceived to be more disadvantaged than male job-seekers. There was also a main effect for ethnicity: perceived difficulty of job acquisition was greater for ethnic minority participants ($M = 27.55, SD = 7.10$) than for White participants ($M = 22.20, SD = 7.93$). This supported the hypothesis (H1) that members of ethnic minority groups would perceive more disadvantage than members of the ethnic majority. As Table 2 shows, there was no significant main effect for participant gender.

The only significant interaction was the three-way interaction between target gender, participant gender and ethnicity depicted in Figure 4. Figure 4b shows that ethnic majority female participants perceived a greater difference in difficulty between men and women of their ethnic background than did ethnic minority female participants. However, Figure 4a shows this to be slightly reversed for male participants, with the greater gender difference perceived by the ethnic minority group. To clarify the significance of the three-way interaction, separate post hoc analyses for each participant gender were carried out.

Figure 4 here

Men’s perceptions of job acquisition difficulty
For male participant data, ethnic minority groups were combined to increase cell sizes, resulting in a 2 (x2) mixed ANOVA. As expected from Figure 4a, the main effect for ethnic background was significant, $F(1, 264) = 4.35, p = .038$, partial $\eta^2 = .016$, as was the main effect for target gender, $F(1, 264) = 17.40, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .062$. However, the interaction was not significant, $F(1, 264) = 0.66, p = .418$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$. This pattern of two significant main effects and a non-significant interaction confirms support for the additive variant of the double jeopardy hypothesis for male participants (although it should be noted that had a more conservative significance level been adopted to control for Type I error, the main effect of ethnicity would not have attained significance).

Women’s perceptions of job acquisition difficulty compared across four ethnic backgrounds

As stated earlier, Figure 4b shows that on average the White female participants perceived a greater difference in difficulty between men and women of their ethnic background than did ethnic minority female participants. The post hoc analysis of female participant data investigated this apparent interaction further, with a 4x(2) mixed ANOVA. The between-participants factor was participant ethnic background (White British, Black, Indian, Pakistani / Bangladeshi) and the within-participants factor was target gender (male, female). Again, the dependent variable was perceived job acquisition difficulty rating. The ANOVA showed a significant main effect for target gender, $F(1, 530) = 12.13, p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .022$, with greater difficulty being perceived for female job-seekers as hypothesized (H2). Again as hypothesized (H1), there was also a significant main effect for ethnicity, $F(3, 530) = 17.92, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .092$. Finally, a significant target gender by ethnicity interaction existed, $F(3, 530) = 8.67, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .047$. The nature of this interaction can be clearly seen in Figure 5 which illustrates the pattern of means. It can be
seen that the mean ratings of participants from the Black female group ran counter to the other groups.

Figure 5 here

To explore the above interaction further, albeit that the analyses were non-independent since the White ethnic group was involved in all analyses\(^1\), three 2 x (2) mixed ANOVAs were performed comparing the White female group with each of the three ethnic minority groups in turn, with target gender (male vs. female) as a within groups factor and ethnicity (White vs. other ethnic group) as the between groups factor. The outcomes of these post hoc analyses are summarized in Table 3. As the table shows (top panel), the analysis involving the Black and White groups revealed a significant main effect for ethnicity and a significant target gender by ethnicity interaction. Referring to Table 1 and Figure 5, it is clear that Black female participants perceived greater job acquisition difficulty, and that there was an interaction whereby the White female group saw people such as themselves as having greater difficulty than White men, but the Black female group did not. The aforementioned interaction explained the non-significant main effect for target gender (see Table 3). Overall, the main effect for ethnicity and the interaction whereby, in contrast to White female participants, those from the Black group did not see women of their ethnic group as having greater job acquisition difficulty than men, supported the ethnic prominence hypothesis (H3b).

The second and third analyses compared the White and Indian groups, and the White and Bangladeshi / Pakistani groups, respectively (see Table 3, middle and bottom panels). As the table shows, in both cases the same pattern as that for male participants was found, i.e. two significant main effects and a non-significant interaction, confirming support for the

\(^1\) Contemporary thought is that non-orthogonality should not be a bar to running analyses where such analyses can provide important information (Howell, 2007).
additive variant of the double jeopardy hypothesis for the Asian women. This pattern for these two groups can be seen in Table 1 and Figure 5. It should be noted, however, that the main effect of ethnic background in the analysis of White and Indian women would have been non-significant had a more conservative significance level been used to control Type I errors.

Table 3 here

Discussion

This study sought to identify the extent to which recent UK graduates and pre-graduates from different demographic groups differed in their perceptions of the difficulty that men and women of their own ethnic group would encounter in attempting to acquire graduate jobs. There were three main aims: first, to test the hypothesis that ethnic minority job-seekers would perceive greater difficulty than ethnic majority job-seekers (H1); and second, to test the hypothesis that women would be perceived as having greater difficulty than men (H2). The third, and main theoretical aim, was to assess participants’ perceptions of difficulty against three conflicting hypotheses concerning multiple group membership: the additive variant of the double jeopardy hypothesis; the interactive variant (H3a); and the ethnic prominence hypothesis (H3b). The motivation for the third aim was to discover whether, despite UK equal opportunities legislation, being female and from an ethnic minority background was perceived as incurring a double disadvantage at the job acquisition stage of the graduate labour market process.

As hypothesized (H1), ethnic minority job-seekers’ perceptions of difficulty were significantly greater than those of the majority group. This finding reflects UK survey data showing that ethnic minority graduates overall are less likely to be in work six months after graduation than graduates from a White ethnic background (HESA, 2004). Also as
hypothesized (H2), across both male and female participants, female job-seekers were perceived as being likely to encounter more difficulty in acquiring a selection of graduate-level jobs than male job-seekers. This is consistent with the 2001-2002 UK Labour Force Survey which, although showing a greater percentage of female graduates to be in employment than males, found that the status of the jobs occupied by women tended to be lower (EOC, 2005).

Our analysis of the third aim was complicated by the finding of a three-way interaction between participant gender, participant ethnic background and gender of the job-seeker rated. This was not predicted, and necessitated further analysis of each participant gender separately. The analysis for male participants showed that their perceptions corresponded to the additive variant of the double jeopardy hypothesis. That is, men of all ethnic backgrounds perceived women to have greater difficulty than men in the UK graduate job market, and men from ethnic minority backgrounds perceived greater difficulty than did those from the ethnic majority. In contrast, the analysis of female participant data confirmed an interaction between participant ethnic background and target gender consistent with the ethnic prominence hypothesis (H3b; Levin, Sinclair, Veniegas, & Taylor, 2002) – although, as discussed below, other interpretations are possible. However, further analysis of each ethnic minority group separately showed that this was only the case for Black women’s perceptions: the pattern for the two Asian groups was, like male participants, consistent with the additive variant of the double jeopardy hypothesis (e.g., Beale, 1970).

From the results summarised above, it can be concluded that it is important not to group ethnic minority groups together in conducting work into job market perceptions, neither ethnic prominence nor double jeopardy applying universally across all ethnic minority groups. The fact that the ethnic prominence hypothesis (H3b) was supported only for Black women is surprising given that the main rationale for the ethnic prominence hypothesis of
Levin et al. (2002) was that ethnicity is the salient factor in perceptions of disadvantage because of the smaller numerical ethnic group size compared to gender group size, and because there is a greater level of conflict inherent in relationships between ethnic groups compared to gender relationships (Jackman, 1994). If this were the case, the ethnic prominence hypothesis would be expected to apply to all ethnic minority groups, rather than only one of them. Thus, the results were not what would be expected from Jackman’s reasoning, and instead it is concluded that overall the findings support the additive double jeopardy hypothesis, but that different culture-specific factors influence Black female perceptions.

There are at least two alternative explanations for the different pattern of perceptions observed for Black female graduate job-seekers. First, this group may have more accurate perceptions of the employment situation experienced by Black men in the UK. In contrast to the general situation for members of the White and Asian populace (where female unemployment tends to be higher), UK statistics show that unemployment among Black males in the general population is substantially higher than that for their female counterparts (Office for National Statistics, 2010). Second, it is possible that they hold more negative stereotypes of Black men with respect to employment. Wood, Kurtz-Costes, Rowley and Okeke-Adeyanju (2010) found that African American mothers’ perceptions of their offspring’s educational abilities were more negatively stereotyped for boys compared to girls. Similar stereotypes of Black British male graduate job acquisition abilities may underlie the above findings. Further research into these alternatives to the ethnic prominence explanation would be useful.

One limitation of the present study was that participants rated job acquisition difficulty for both genders but did not provide ratings for different ethnic groups. This might have made gender more salient in respondents’ minds when performing ratings, leading to a
larger effect size for gender. While this is not a major problem since hypotheses hinged upon the nature of gender by ethnicity interactions, it does result in ambiguity as to whether the present ethnicity effects are attributable to target ethnicity or respondent ethnicity and further research considering this issue would be useful. Also, social identities other than those presently investigated are likely to play a role in labour market perceptions and are worthy of future research, religion, for example, having been found to have the greatest impact on Muslim South Asian women’s everyday and working lives (Ahmad, Modood & Lissenburgh, 2003).

In conclusion, the present data showed that, in the face of reasonably well publicized equality legislation, female new graduates and pre-graduates across both ethnic majority and some ethnic minority groups still tend to perceive that, in one way or another (and sometimes possibly more than one) comparative difficulty still exists at the job acquisition stage of the labour market process. While both gender and ethnicity loom large in graduate job-seekers’ perceptions, they do so cumulatively rather than interactively; female ethnic minority graduate job-seekers did not perceive themselves to be disadvantaged disproportionately by virtue of their membership of two disadvantaged groups as would be predicted by the interactive / multiplicative variant of the double jeopardy hypothesis.

Though graduate job entry was perceived by female participants to be more difficult for their group members, it is unclear whether, as up-and-coming job-seekers themselves, they would apply this level of difficulty to their own chances. Whilst ‘personal / group discrimination discrepancy’ research (for example Fuegen & Biernat, 2000; Operario & Fiske, 2001) might suggest self-perceptions to be attenuated, Tyrer and Ahmad’s (2006) study related how some Muslim women participants were “...sensitive to the ways in which gendered and racialised stereotypes of Muslims were likely to impact on their labour market employability” (p. 31). The issue of whether the job acquisition difficulty differences
currently found were likely to result from perceived discrimination, or whether responses were governed more by the influence of stereotypes and prevailing ideologies, is a complex one worthy of further research. Such research should include the issue of occupational gender stereotyping in perceptions of difficulties in obtaining graduate-level employment (Evans & Diekman, 2009; Oswald, 2008).

Although the perceptions presently focused upon might be considered pervasive and resistant to change, the world which sustains them is dynamic. In the case of the labour market, perspectives change with the passage of time and needs (from both employers’ and employees’ sides). Its changing demands in relation to skill portfolios and employment of diverse talent, together with population distribution changes, constantly alter the individual’s position with respect to the labour market. At present, in theory, individuals of all social groups might have equal opportunities. However, despite equality legislation, alternative discourses and the diversity policies of many organizations, participants from disadvantaged groups still, on average, had perceptions with regard to social group membership and job accessibility that might adversely affect their chances in the graduate job market.

Various ways exist to counter the effects presently identified. For example, employer organisations and government agencies might fund advertising campaigns in which ethnic minority role models are depicted as being successful in non-stereotypical occupations, thereby countering any stereotypes held by members of both ethnic majority and ethnic minority communities. Also, employers might ensure that females and members of ethnic minority groups are reasonably well represented on stands at graduate job fairs, and university careers services should take care to counter any stereotypical perceptions of the suitability of various careers among their student / graduate clients.

References


Table 1. Sample sizes and mean perceived job acquisition difficulty ratings for each target gender by participant gender and ethnic background.

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<tr>
<th>Participant gender</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>458 19.84 7.95</td>
<td>22.74 7.48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>26 30.31 7.94</td>
<td>28.50 6.47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>26 23.65 7.65</td>
<td>25.77 8.19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani / Bangladeshi</td>
<td>24 27.71 10.49</td>
<td>30.08 8.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>534 20.89 8.51</td>
<td>23.49 7.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>n M SD</th>
<th>M SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>236 23.31 9.19</td>
<td>24.63 8.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>8 26.75 6.76</td>
<td>27.88 3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>11 24.45 4.48</td>
<td>27.91 4.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani / Bangladeshi</td>
<td>11 27.91 5.20</td>
<td>29.00 6.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>266 23.65 8.89</td>
<td>25.05 8.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Result for the three factor mixed ANOVA predicting perceived job acquisition
difficulty from Participant ethnic background (PE), Participant gender (PG) and
Target gender (TG).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of variation</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p (df = 1, 796)</th>
<th>Effect size, partial η²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>29.63</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>.186</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TG</td>
<td>46.89</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE x PG</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE x TG</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>.173</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG x TG</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>.654</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE x PG x TG</td>
<td>6.80</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. ANOVAs for female participant data, Participant ethnic background (PE) and Target gender (TG) predicting job acquisition difficulty: White compared to each ethnic minority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of variation</th>
<th>$F$-statistic</th>
<th>$df$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>Effect size, partial $\eta^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>29.83</td>
<td>1, 482</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TG</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>1, 482</td>
<td>.221</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE x GE</td>
<td>27.97</td>
<td>1, 482</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indian</strong> ($df = 1, 482$)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>1, 482</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TG</td>
<td>32.36</td>
<td>1, 482</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE x TG</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>1, 482</td>
<td>.374</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pakistani / Bangladeshi</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>23.78</td>
<td>1, 480</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TG</td>
<td>29.44</td>
<td>1, 480</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE x TG</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>1, 480</td>
<td>.590</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure Captions

Figure 1.
The pattern expected for female participants’ perceptions of job acquisition difficulty for male and female job-seekers under the additive variant of the double jeopardy hypothesis.

Figure 2.
The pattern expected for female participants’ perceptions of job acquisition difficulty for male and female job-seekers under the interactive variant of the double jeopardy hypothesis.

Figure 3.
The pattern expected for female participants’ perceptions of job acquisition difficulty for male and female job-seekers under the ethnic prominence hypothesis.

Figure 4.
Mean difficulty ratings by target gender and ethnic majority (White) vs. ethnic minority groups combined, for participants of differing gender.

Figure 5.
Female participants’ mean job acquisition difficulty ratings by target gender and ethnic background for the second ANOVA.
Figure 1.
Figure 2.
Figure 3.
Figure 4.

a) Male participants

b) Female participants
Figure 5.