

## Graduate Entry into the UK Labour Market: Demographic Differences in Perceptions of Disadvantage<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This study examined the extent to which graduating university students perceived the existence of ethnic minority and gender disadvantage in the UK graduate labour market. The study sought to test two conflicting hypotheses. In the present context, the Double Jeopardy Hypothesis, which has additive and multiplicative variants, posits that females from ethnic minority backgrounds will perceive themselves as doubly disadvantaged when job-seeking, while the Ethnic Prominence Hypothesis proposes that ethnic minority women consider their ethnicity salient in vocational disadvantage. Eight hundred graduating or recently graduated participants of Black, White, Indian and Pakistani / Bangladeshi ethnic origin, and from three socio-economic backgrounds, were asked to rate how difficult they perceived it to be currently in the UK, for both a suitably qualified male job-seeker and a suitably qualified female job-seeker from their own ethnic background, to obtain each of ten graduate jobs. Among other things, results showed that, apart from Black females, both males and females perceived females as experiencing greater job acquisition difficulty than males. Black and Pakistani / Bangladeshi participants, but not Indian participants, perceived significantly greater difficulties than White participants. It is concluded that in general the data lends support to the additive version of the Double Jeopardy Hypothesis. The findings are discussed in terms of their implications for ethnic minority job-seeking behaviour and employment outcomes.

### Introduction

With the expansion of British higher education into a mass education system in the last two decades, many students are likely, when they approach the stage of leaving, to view their forthcoming attempts to enter the graduate job market with foreboding (see e.g. Buckham, 1998). This is likely to be particularly true of students from ethnic minority backgrounds since, despite equal opportunities legislation, UK first destination statistics published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) show more unemployment among ethnic minorities. For example, statistics for 2000/2001 showed 11.4% of ethnic minority graduates as still seeking work six months after graduation compared with 6.5% of White graduates (HESA, 2002). Higher ethnic minority unemployment among graduates mirrors the situation for those of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean backgrounds more generally, these groups experiencing '...significantly higher unemployment and lower earnings than Whites' (Cabinet Office Strategy Unit, 2003). There is also evidence that members of some ethnic minority groups may be less likely to obtain employment at a level that is commensurate with their education, and that members of the White ethnic majority are more likely than members of other ethnic groups to be in jobs that they are under-qualified for

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(Battu & Sloane, 2004). Consistent with this, ethnic minority graduates have more difficulty accessing graduate level jobs than do White graduates (Connor, La Valle, Tackey & Perryman, 1996). Research by the UK's Centre for Higher Education Research and Information (CHERI) reveals that a portion of the labour market disadvantage experienced by some people is due to educational factors such as institution, subject studied, entry qualifications and degree level. However, even controlling for such factors, socio-economic background, age and ethnicity affect employment prospects (CHERI, 2002).

Although the above problems might be a partial result of employer discrimination, ethnic minority perceptions of discrimination may contribute to disadvantage by influencing job-seeking behaviour. For example, while one reason members of ethnic minorities tend to be more likely to be over-qualified for the jobs they hold may be that they settle for such jobs because it is more difficult for them to find a job of any description owing to discrimination (Battu & Sloane, 2004), another reason may be that they *perceive* they will be discriminated against when applying for certain more desirable jobs. The work presented below was part of a project examining ethnic differences between graduating UK students entering the job market. It is particularly important to study the transition between higher education and work because a person's choice of career made at the start of their working life is likely to be the most important occupational decision they will ever make, and choosing a job with few prospects or a job that constitutes a poor fit with one's personal characteristics, expectations or needs is likely to culminate in job dissatisfaction (Melamed, 1996), and may have detrimental effects far into the future. In this paper we consider ethnic differences in perceived difficulties in obtaining jobs, whether these differences interact with gender, and whether socio-economic background plays a role in any differences. In addition to performing analysis on a simple White ethnic majority versus non-White ethnic minority basis, we also, perform a more detailed analysis for different ethnic groups to take into account the possibility that homogeneous figures may conceal differences between minority ethnic groups.

A dominant group's views of the place of non-dominant groups' roles in society (in most Western societies either the White ethnic majority's view of the roles of ethnic minorities, or males views of the roles of females) can lead members of non-dominant groups to constrain their career choices to fit in with the dominant group's perceptions of their roles in society (Fouad & Bingham, 1995). Perhaps most importantly, although we do not consider racism, either explicit or implicit, of employers or society more generally in the present paper, the experiencing of racism to a greater or lesser extent by any particular member of an ethnic minority group is likely to have an impact upon the extent to which they perceive discrimination in the job market. So, for example, in a meta-analytic review of work focusing upon high school and college students Fouad and Byars-Winston (2005), summarise a group of four studies as showing little difference between the White ethnic majority and members of ethnic minorities with respect to career aspirations and planned career choice. However, a group of six studies was said to show that career opportunities were perceived to be fewer, and career barriers to be greater, among ethnic minorities. The authors concluded that the literature supported the contention that while ethnic minorities may be equipped to compete in the job market in terms of their skills and abilities, they perceive that there are barriers to them doing so. This supports US work from the 1970s showing that Black US university students perceived greater job market discrimination than White students (Turner & Turner, 1975). In the present paper we asked whether the US findings that ethnic minorities are likely to perceive themselves to be at a disadvantage in the job-market apply to students graduating from UK higher education institutions.

Gender has also been highlighted as a variable salient in disadvantage. From birth males and females are subjected to a large number of differences in the way they are treated

by others, this obviously leading to differences in development (Fouad & Bingham, 1995). With respect to careers, people learn that different occupations are considered to be more or less appropriate for one sex or the other and for many people this is likely to restrict the range of occupations they will consider when entering the job market. For example, the health, social and education sectors are largely supported by a female workforce, women are disproportionately represented in personal service, administration and customer service occupations, and men tend to be over-represented in management and skilled trades. Gender patterns also exist in subjects studied in higher education, males predominating in physical and computer sciences, and engineering and technology, and females in education, biological sciences, law and subjects related to the health service (HESA 2004). Differences continue after higher education, with male employment being more concentrated in the private sector, and females showing greater concentrations in the public sector (Prospects, 2003). Job gendering may well incur disadvantage if women avoid applying for certain (possibly more lucrative) job areas either because they themselves perceive these occupations as a male domain, or because they anticipate lack of success due to employer gender prejudice with regard to certain occupational areas.

While gender and ethnicity factors may both expose some job-seekers to more disadvantage than others, it is useful to ask whether one of these variables supersedes the other, and whether these effects may be mitigated or amplified by socio-economic background. Reacting to both radical feminism in the early women's liberation movement and Black nationalism, mid-twentieth century American Black feminists criticised the former's blanket emphasis on the domination of females by males (Browne & Misra, 2003) and the latter's emphasis upon the importance of the achievement of Black males (Vieregge, 2003). One such feminist, Beale (1970), emphasised that gender and ethnic background incurred a double disadvantage, and there is evidence suggesting that this is perceived by members of affected groups. For example, McWhirter (1997) cites 1992 work by Burlew and Johnson as showing that Black American women see themselves as disadvantaged on the grounds of both their ethnicity and their gender. In addition, these women also considered lack of political influence, a shortage of mentors, financial problems, and chance-related factors to be barriers. McWhirter noted a lack of studies examining gender – ethnicity interactions, and the present study sought to address this.

The position taken by Beale (1970), whereby racism and sexism work together to produce disadvantage and poverty, has been termed Double Jeopardy. However, later Black feminists also emphasised both a person's socio-economic status and sexuality, which, they claimed, creates multiple levels of disadvantage: Multiple Jeopardy. In both instances, the disadvantage created has been variously argued to be either additive or multiplicative. The additive position suggests that disadvantages experienced because (for example) one is female, are experienced in addition to those experienced because one has a minority ethnic background. The multiplicative or interactive position implies that membership of more than one disadvantaged group results in amplification of effects rather than a simple summation (Rothman, 1999; Sidanius & Veniegas 2000; Vieregge, 2003).

A differing perspective on the intersection of gender and ethnicity has been offered by Levin, Sinclair, Veniegas and Taylor (2002). In their Ethnic Prominence Hypothesis Levin et al. suggest that high profiling of one variable of disadvantage may increase its weighting, resulting in greater disadvantage attributed to this variable, even when a person is a member of more than one disadvantaged social group. Their study revealed that, whilst White female participants were sensitive to general gender discrimination, the perceptions of ethnic minority women in the study (Latinas and Black Americans) were aligned to those of their male counterparts in that they predominantly perceived discrimination against their ethnic group.

There are two arguments upon which Levin et al. (2002) base their hypothesis. First, they cite 1988 work by McGuire and McGuire as suggesting that the smaller the numerical size of a social group is, the greater is the likelihood that membership of the group will be a salient aspect of its members' self-perceptions. Therefore Levin et al. reason that ethnic minority group membership should loom larger in the self-perceptions of a member of such a group, and therefore be a factor weighing more heavily in perceptions of discrimination, than should being a female, since the total membership of any ethnic minority group is smaller than the total membership of the female gender group (around 50% of the population in most Western societies) in any particular country. Second, Levin et al. present Jackman's (1994) argument that gender discrimination is based upon the necessity for males to control, but to temper that control so that intimate relationships are possible, unlike ethnic discrimination where the absence of such an agenda results in greater inter-group conflict.. Levin et al. believe that these factors result in the greater prominence of ethnicity in perceptions of discrimination by ethnic minority women.

### *The present study*

Above we have briefly reviewed issues explaining why females and members of ethnic minority groups may be disadvantaged, and perceive themselves to be disadvantaged, in the labour market. It was suggested that those having membership of more than one disadvantaged social group may experience and perceive increased levels of inequality either additively or multiplicatively (interactively). These are two variants of the Double (or Multiple) Jeopardy Hypothesis. But this hypothesis has been contested, for example by Levin et al. (2002) whose research has led to the development of the Ethnic Prominence Hypothesis (that females from ethnic minority backgrounds will perceive their ethnic group membership as the salient factor in their experiences of disadvantage and discrimination). The study sought to assess the evidence for the two variants of the Double Jeopardy Hypothesis and for the conflicting Ethnic Prominence Hypothesis by ascertaining newly graduating or recently graduated males' and females' perceptions of the level of difficulty in obtaining jobs experienced by people of both genders from their own ethnic background. Additionally the research examined if differences in perceptions were moderated by socio-economic background, since this has been suggested as a possible influence in job-market disadvantage (e.g. Modood, 1998a).

## Method

### *Design*

The study adopted a fundamentally correlational approach (alternatively referred to as a relational design by Robson, 2002), but data was analysed within an ANOVA framework. There were three between participants factors: ethnicity (on either two levels: White ethnic majority and combined ethnic minorities, or four levels: Black, White, Indian, and Pakistani / Bangladeshi), participant gender (two levels: male and female) and socio-economic background based upon previous occupation or family occupation (three levels: managerial / professional, intermediate, and routine / semi-routine (UK Office for National Statistics, 2004, p 10). A fourth, within participants, factor was target gender (i.e. gender of the job-seeker, with two levels: target gender male and target gender female). The dependent variable was perceived job acquisition difficulty rating scores for target job-seekers.

In terms of the ANOVAs performed a number of possible effects were hypothesised, some of these being features of competing hypotheses. First it was expected that there would be either a main effect for target gender with greater difficulty of obtaining a job being perceived for female job-seekers, or possibly a target gender by participant gender interaction whereby although male participants might not see it as harder for females to obtain a job, female participants would. Either of these two results would support a female job-seeker perceived disadvantage effect. Second, it was hypothesised that there would be a main effect for ethnicity, with both male and female ethnic minority participants perceiving it harder to acquire a job. Third, it was hypothesised that support for the multiplicative variant of the Double Jeopardy Hypothesis would consist of a two-way target gender by ethnicity interaction, whereby in addition to the above main effects for ethnicity and target gender, it would be perceived as disproportionately more difficult for an ethnic minority female to obtain a job than it is for an ethnic minority male to obtain a job. Note that this hypothesis does not necessitate the existence of a three-way target gender by ethnicity by participant gender interaction (because the presence of the aforementioned two-way interaction in the absence of the latter mentioned three-way interaction would show that the pattern described by the two-way interaction was true for both male and female participants). However, were a three-way interaction involving participant gender to occur, it was reasoned that, for support of the multiplicative variant of the Double Jeopardy Hypothesis to exist, this would have to show that the three-way interaction occurred because a two-way interaction existed for female participants but not male participants. A fourth hypothesis revolved around the additive variant of the Double Jeopardy Hypothesis. In contrast to what would be expected for the multiplicative variant, here main effects for target gender and ethnicity would be expected without any interaction involving target gender. Also, any two-way interaction involving participant gender would have to show that the difference in perceived difficulty was greater for female respondents than for male respondents. Finally, a fifth hypothesis concerned the Ethnic Prominence Hypothesis. As with the multiplicative variant of the Double Jeopardy Hypothesis, the Ethnic Prominence Hypothesis predicts a two-way target gender and ethnicity interaction. In this case, however, a smaller gender difference in perceived difficulty is predicted for ethnic minority participants compared to that for the ethnic majority.

### *Participants*

Data was collected for cohorts of students graduating in both 2004 and 2005. Requirements for participation were that people had to be graduating (or recently graduated) full-time, final year students, and had to be seeking or intending to seek employment in the UK. For participants 21 or below on entry to higher education the highest earner in the household's occupation was used as the basis for socio-economic background coding.

The 2004 cohort was recruited from three English universities (see the Procedure section for details of the recruitment of both cohorts). Because low numbers of ethnic minority participants were recruited using paper data collection methods for the first cohort, it was necessary to recruit a second cohort in 2005. Here, paper questionnaires were again collected from three English universities, one of which differed from 2004. The universities sampled included the host institution on both occasions. In 2005 in addition to paper questionnaires an internet-based questionnaire was used to collect data from students about to graduate from a total of 21 English and Welsh universities. Using these methods a total of 800 participants provided usable data for the ethnic groupings listed in the Design section above. See Tables 1 and 2 in the Results section for demographic breakdowns of the sample.

## *Materials*

The research reported here was part of a larger project in which a large number of instruments were used. To conserve space only those materials relevant to the present paper will be considered here. For the 2004 cohort, paper materials were used. For the 2005 cohort, participants were given the choice of completing either a paper questionnaire or an internet-based questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of six sections. The first section elicited demographic information: gender, nationality, socio-economic background (parental occupation if 21 years or below on entry; highest household earner occupation if above 21 on entry to higher education), age on commencement of course, higher education course details, and self-reported ethnic background. The second section consisted of two subsections. One subsection asked people to rate ten occupations according to how difficult people thought it currently was in the UK for suitably qualified *men* of their ethnic group to obtain each job. The second subsection asked exactly the same questions but this time for suitably qualified *women*. The ten occupations were selected from the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification Analytic 8 Classes Version (Office for National Statistics, 2004, pp 63 - 68). Six of the occupations (accountant, architect, doctor, psychologist, solicitor, and university lecturer) were drawn from Analytic Class 1, subdivision 1.2 (higher professional occupations) and four (air traffic controller, newspaper journalist, physiotherapist, and social worker) from Analytic Class 2 (lower managerial and professional occupations). These jobs were chosen because it was considered that participants would be familiar with them, would understand what they entail, and because suitably qualified graduates of either sex could reasonably aspire to them. The occupations from the two analytic classes were combined and presented in alphabetical order. Responses were on a 5-point rating scale (1 = Not at all difficult; 2 = Not very difficult; 3 = Moderately difficult; 4 = Very difficult; 5 = Extremely difficult). Summation of responses resulted in minimum and maximum possible job acquisition difficulty ratings of 10 and 50 respectively.

## *Procedure*

As previously mentioned, participants were recruited over a two year period. In 2004 two other universities agreed to collaborate with the researching institution in recruitment of their own recent graduates. New graduates received details about participation mailed by their universities, together with a request form for participation to be returned to the researching institution. The paper questionnaires were sent out by, and returned completed to, the researchers.

In 2005, for the two universities agreeing to collaborate with paper questionnaire data collection, questionnaires were distributed and collected by two paid data collectors per institution. The arrangements in the host institution were the same and in addition participant recruitment was done on a face-to-face basis by researchers involved in the project either inside or outside lectures during the final few months of courses, with participants taking questionnaires away and returning them when completed. The questionnaire was also placed on the Internet to enable participants to complete and submit electronically. Universities and their careers centres across the UK were supplied with a flyer containing the URL to pass to their final year students. The web page also offered the option of completing a paper questionnaire, which was mailed out by, and sent back to, the researchers.

In both years, information presented with the questionnaires gave brief details of the purpose of the research, and assurances of confidentiality and anonymity were offered. Various cash incentives were offered as an inducement to participate.

## Results

The first analysis employed was a four-way 2 x 2 x 3 x (2) mixed ANOVA with participant gender (male versus female), ethnicity (ethnic majority versus combined ethnic minority) and socio-economic background (managerial / professional, intermediate and routine / semi-routine) as between groups factors and target gender (i.e. gender of job-seeker: male versus female) as a within groups factor, and perceived difficulty of obtaining job score as the dependent variable. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for this analysis. Since, as will be seen, there were no effects involving socio-economic background, Figure 1 depicts the pattern of means collapsed across categories for this variable.

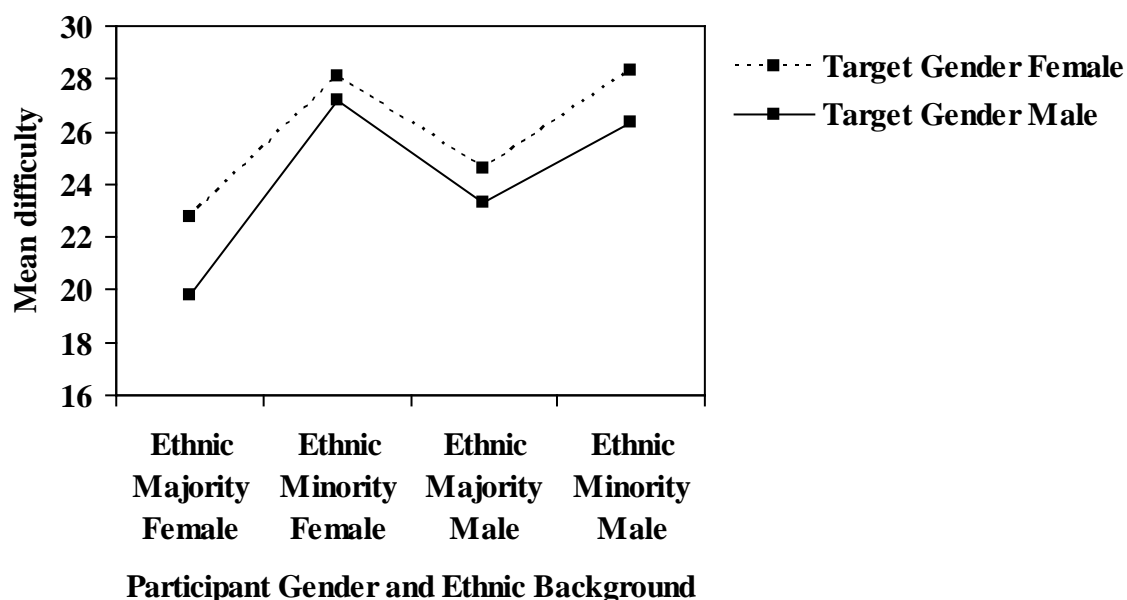
The analysis revealed a significant main effect for target gender (male versus female),  $F(1,788) = 39.89$ ;  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .048$ , indicating a moderate effect size. From Table 1 and Figure 1 it can be seen that this main effect was attributable to both male and female participants considering it more difficult for female job-seekers (target gender female) to get jobs. There was also a significant main effect for ethnicity,  $F(1,788) = 20.26$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .025$  representing a medium effect size. Here, Table 1 and Figure 1 show that members of the combined ethnic minorities considered it harder for same ethnicity people to obtain jobs than members of the ethnic majority did irrespective of the gender of the job-seeker (target gender). There were no significant main effects for participant gender,  $F(1,788) = 2.01$ ,  $p = .16$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .003$  and socio-economic background,  $F(2,788) = 0.19$ ;  $p = .83$ , partial  $\eta^2 < .001$ . Also, although one result was marginal, there were no significant two-way interactions. In the interests of brevity, since they were of little theoretical interest, the statistics for two-way interactions involving socio-economic background are omitted. Otherwise, statistics were as follows: target gender by participant gender,  $F(1,788) = 0.25$ ,  $p = .62$ , partial  $\eta^2 < .001$ ; target gender by ethnicity,  $F(1,788) = 0.41$ ,  $p = .52$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .001$ ; participant gender by ethnicity,  $F(1,788) = 3.72$ ,  $p = .05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .005$ . Finally, the only significant three-way interaction that occurred was between target gender, participant gender and ethnic background,  $F(1,788) = 7.36$ ,  $p = .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .009$ , indicating a very small effect size. Examination of Figure 1 reveals that this can be interpreted as showing that for White participants there was a greater difference for female participants in their perceptions of the extent to which (target) male and female job-seekers find it difficult to get jobs, than there was for ethnic minority females. But this pattern was reversed for male participants: there was a (slightly) larger difference for ethnic minority males in their perceptions of the extent to which (target) male and female job-seekers find it difficult to get jobs, than there was for White males. Also, embedded in this result was an interaction whereby prospects for White (target) males were perceived as worse by White male participants than they were by White female participants, but prospects for ethnic minority (target) males were perceived as marginally better by ethnic minority male participants than they were by ethnic minority female participants.

With respect to the hypotheses under consideration, the pattern of results whereby there were significant main effects for target gender and ethnicity, but no significant two-way interaction for these factors, supports the additive variant of the double jeopardy hypothesis over the multiplicative variant, with the effect size for target gender (partial  $\eta^2 = .048$ ) being greater than that for ethnicity (partial  $\eta^2 = .025$ ).

Table 1.  
Mean job acquisition difficulty rating scores perceived for male and female job-seekers - by participant gender, ethnic category and socio-economic background

Socio-economic background	Male Participants' Perceived Difficulty					Female Participants' Perceived Difficulty					<i>Total Mean</i>
	<i>n</i>	Male Target <i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	Female Target <i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	Male Target <i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	Female Target <i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	
<i>Ethnic majority (White)</i>											
Managerial / professional	154	22.27	9.06	23.94	8.44	303	19.61	7.95	22.63	7.41	21.79
Intermediate	50	25.66	9.28	26.34	8.04	92	19.39	7.46	22.27	7.44	22.65
Routine / semi-routine	32	24.63	9.08	25.31	9.34	63	21.56	8.51	23.90	7.89	23.48
Total	236	23.31	9.19	24.63	8.50	458	19.84	7.95	22.74	7.48	22.17
<i>Combined ethnic minorities</i>											
Managerial / professional	10	24.50	4.43	27.40	3.95	28	29.61	7.89	28.89	7.24	28.38
Intermediate	13	28.31	5.60	29.23	6.22	26	25.31	9.74	27.19	8.61	27.09
Routine / semi-routine	7	25.29	5.96	27.86	3.98	22	26.41	9.32	28.08	7.40	27.08
Total	30	26.33	5.44	28.30	4.98	76	27.21	9.05	28.07	7.71	27.55

**Figure 1. Mean difficulty ratings by target gender and ethnicity, ethnic majority (White) vs. ethnic minorities (combined) for the first analysis**



In the analysis above possible effects of socio-economic background were considered. Because of this, the need to maintain reasonable cell sizes necessitated having a simple ethnic majority / ethnic minority dichotomy for the ethnicity variable. However, since the analysis did not detect any socio-economic background effects a second analysis was conducted in which socio-economic groups were combined, allowing finer exploration of ethnicity issues. This second analysis consisted of a three-way 2 x 4 x (2) mixed ANOVA, with participant gender (male versus female) and ethnicity (Black, White, Indian, and Pakistani / Bangladeshi) as between groups factors, gender of job-seeker (male versus female) as a within groups factor, and perceived job acquisition difficulty as the dependent variable.

Reflecting the same effect as in the first analysis, this ANOVA again showed a highly significant main effect for target gender,  $F(1, 792) = 18.58, p < .01$ ; partial  $\eta^2 = .023$ , indicating a moderate effect size, and Table 2 and Figures 2 and 3 again show that (apart from Black females – see below) both genders held the belief that female job-seekers find it more difficult to get jobs. There was also a significant main effect for ethnicity,  $F(3, 792) = 10.67, p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .039$ , indicating a medium effect size. Post hoc Scheffé tests revealed that perceptions of difficulties among White participants were significantly lower than among those from both Black and Pakistani / Bangladeshi backgrounds,  $p < .01$ . The scores of Indian participants were not significantly different from any of the other ethnic groups; Indian and White,  $p = .17$ ; Indian and Black,  $p = .24$ ; Indian and Pakistani / Bangladeshi,  $p = .27$ ; Black and Pakistani / Bangladeshi score differences were negligible,  $p = 1.00$ . There was no significant main effect for participant gender  $F(1, 792) = 0.10, p = .75$ , partial  $\eta^2 < .001$ .

Apart from a two-way interaction between target gender and ethnicity (see below), none of the other two-way interactions were significant: target gender by participant gender,  $F(1,792) = 0.24, p = .63$ , partial  $\eta^2 < .001$ ; participant gender by ethnicity,  $F(3,792) = 1.13, p$

= .34, partial  $\eta^2 = .004$ . As with the first analysis, there was a significant three-way interaction between target gender, participant gender and ethnic background,  $F(3, 792) = 2.96, p = .03$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .011$ , representing a small effect size. Figures 2 and 3 show that one aspect of this interaction was that Black female participants were an exception to the pattern reflected in the main effect for target gender. Whereas male and female participants from the other ethnic groups perceived greater job acquisition difficulty for female job-seekers, Black female participants perceived it to be more difficult for Black males to get jobs than it was for Black females. This aspect of the three-way interaction explains the significant two-way interaction between target gender and ethnicity,  $F(3, 792) = 2.74, p = .04$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .010$ , which represents a small effect size. Overall group means (not tabulated) showed the Black group perceived it as marginally harder for males to obtain jobs whereas the other groups perceived it as harder for females.

Since the second analyses differed from the first only by using four categories of ethnicity instead of two, the conclusions that can be drawn from it are similar. Again there was support for the additive rather than the multiplicative variant of the Double Jeopardy Hypothesis: there were significant main effects for target gender and ethnicity, and although for this analysis there was a two-way interaction between these factors, and there was also a three-way participant gender by target gender by ethnicity interaction, neither of these showed that it was perceived as disproportionately more difficult for ethnic minority females to obtain a job than it was for ethnic minority males. However, the observation that Black female participants saw it as harder for Black males to get jobs than it was for their own group, suggests that the Double Jeopardy Hypothesis does not apply to Black females.

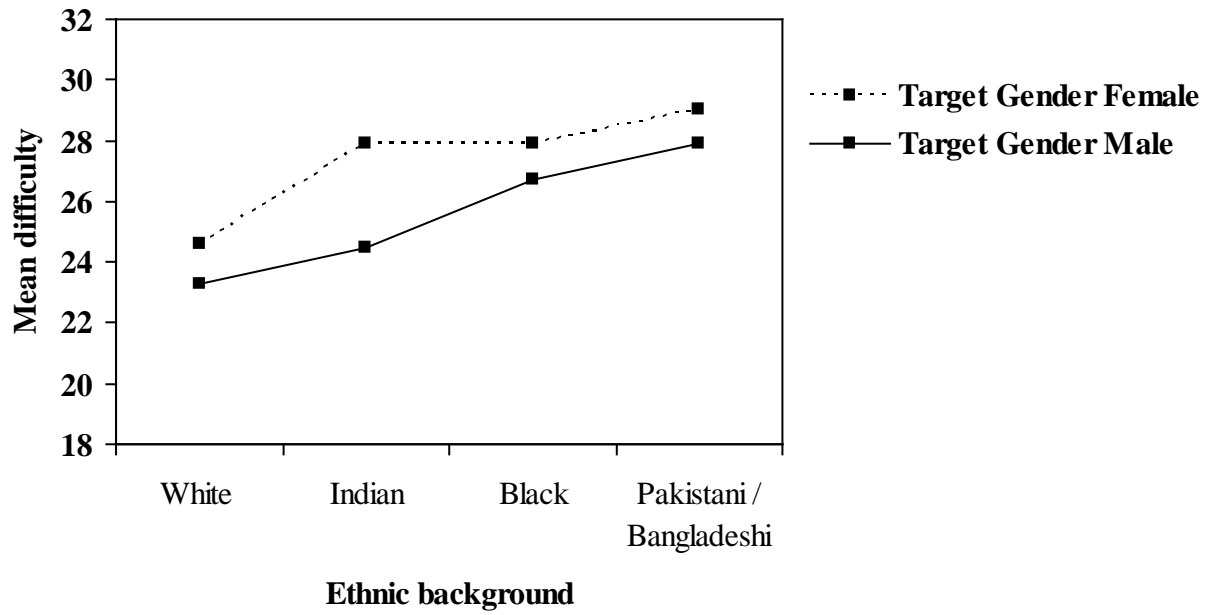
## Discussion

The study's results revealed ethnic group membership and gender of job-seeker to be salient variables in accounting for graduates' and final year students' perceptions of job acquisition difficulty. Overall, it was perceived as more difficult for females than males to acquire jobs, and ethnic minority participants perceived significantly greater difficulty than the White ethnic majority. Socio-economic background appeared to have little effect. When specific ethnic differences were examined, compared to White participants, Pakistani / Bangladeshi and Black participants perceived significantly greater difficulty, but Indian participants did not. The second analysis identified a three-way interaction between ethnicity, participant gender and target gender whereby Black females perceived it to be more difficult for males of that ethnicity to get jobs than it was for females, whereas Black males and the other ethnic groups perceived job acquisition difficulty to be greater for female job-seekers.

The results for Black females ran contrary to the Double Jeopardy Hypothesis, since they perceived it as easier for Black females than for Black males to obtain jobs. This aside, the results provided support for the additive variant of the Double Jeopardy Hypothesis over the multiplicative variant: it was perceived as more difficult for females and more difficult for ethnic minorities to obtain jobs and these effects were additive. With respect to the Ethnic Prominence Hypothesis, which asserts the primacy of perceptions of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity over perceptions of discrimination on the basis of gender, our findings did not support it.

From an applied perspective, the present results suggest that the perceptions of graduating members of ethnic minorities reflect the reality whereby members of some groups are likely to find obtaining suitable jobs more difficult than the White group. In addition to

**Figure 2. Male participants' mean difficulty ratings by target gender and ethnic group for the second analysis**



**Figure 3. Female participants' mean difficulty ratings by target gender and ethnic group for the second analysis**

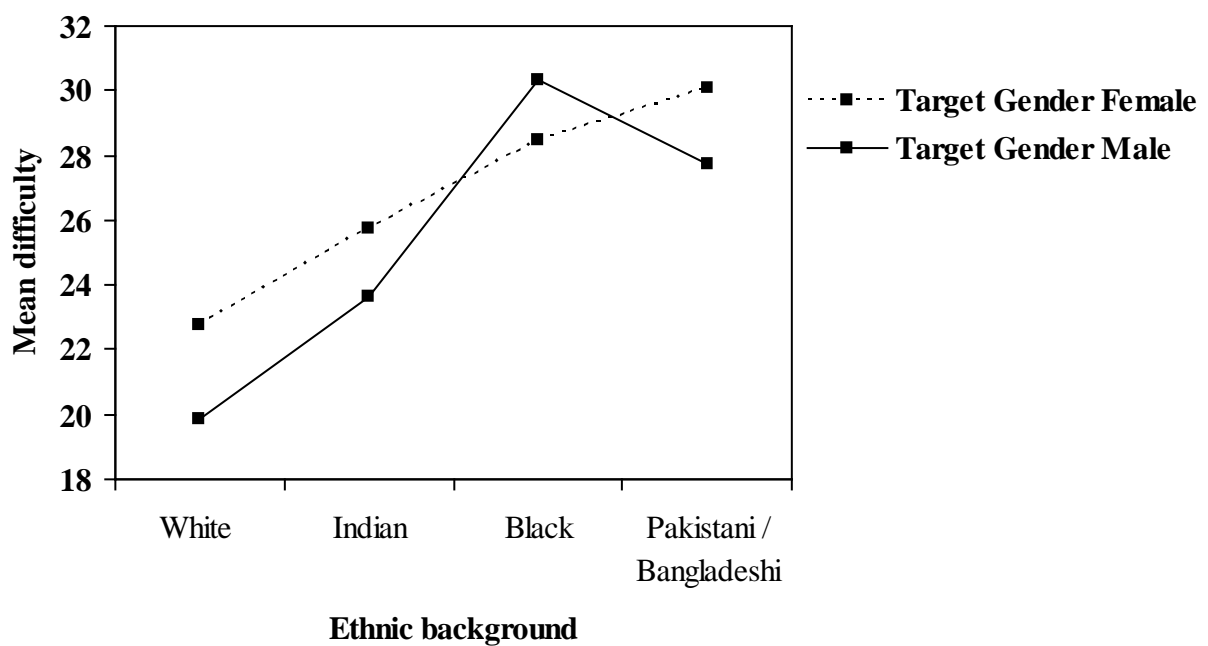


Table 2  
 Mean job acquisition difficulty rating scores perceived for male and female job-seekers - by participant gender and specific ethnic group

Ethnic background	Male Participants' Perceived Difficulty					Female Participants' Perceived Difficulty					<i>Total Mean</i>
	<i>n</i>	Male Target <i>Mean SD</i>		Female Target <i>Mean SD</i>		<i>n</i>	Male Target <i>Mean SD</i>		Female Target <i>Mean SD</i>		
White	236	23.31	9.19	24.63	8.51	458	19.84	7.95	22.74	7.48	22.20
Black	8	26.75	6.76	27.88	3.94	26	30.31	7.94	28.50	6.47	28.91
Indian	11	24.45	4.48	27.91	4.32	26	23.65	7.94	25.77	8.19	25.15
Pakistani / Bangladeshi	11	27.91	5.20	29.00	6.45	24	27.71	10.49	30.08	8.06	28.76
Total	266	23.65	8.89	25.05	8.26	534	20.89	8.51	23.49	7.74	22.91

having financial implications for the job-seekers involved, employers, and the national economy, perceptions that one is being discriminated against lead to greater health risks (Clark, Anderson, Clark & Williams, 1999), reduced levels of mastery (Broman, Mavaddat & Hsu, 2000) and reduced self esteem (Verkuyten, 1998). Also it is possible that some of the coping strategies used by people who perceive discrimination may have negative personal and societal implications. For example, the rejection identification model proposes that disadvantaged group members respond to discriminatory rejection by increasing identification with their group (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). Assuming this to be true, this may lead people to restrict their job-seeking to within their own ethnic community, thereby restricting the range of jobs targeted. This possibility is particularly important since, although towards the turn of the millennium there had been some alleviation of the situation encountered by first generation Caribbean and South Asian migrant workers, (who were largely employed in low status manual jobs), in general, members of these communities still occupy a disproportionate number of lower status jobs (Modood, 1998b). Therefore some of the job opportunities that ethnic minority job-seekers access via local social networks may also have a disproportionate tendency to be lower status. Job-seekers from these less advantaged backgrounds who make greater use of local social networks may thereby be locked into lower status jobs. Perceptions of discrimination may also lead to ‘sidestepping’: the avoidance by some minority ethnic group members of those careers and industries perceived as having historically stereotyped them, instead, aiming for newer industries or becoming self-employed (Carter 2003). Although some self-employment ventures have become very successful, many have tended to be short-term or unsuccessful (Cabinet Office Strategy Unit).

As implied by the additive variant of the Double Jeopardy Hypothesis, women from those ethnic backgrounds where labour-market disadvantage is experienced must also contend with disadvantage attributed to their gender. In addition to gender discrimination, more indirect forms of disadvantage may reduce opportunity, aspirations and choice, for example prevailing assumptions and stereotypes (Lane and Piercy 2003; Binning, Goldstien, Garcia and Scatteregia 1988), job gendering, and gendered duties outside the workplace.

In conclusion, the study results reveal that, for graduates from some social groups, perceptions of disadvantage endure despite Equal Opportunities legislation and policy. As part of the present project we are currently analysing data bearing upon all of these issues.

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