PhD project title
Workplace relationships: How can leaders and co-workers fulfil our needs for meaningful work and social interaction?

Supervisors
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Research centre
IWP

Project description
Relationships, at work and outside, have a strong influence on our development, wellbeing, life satisfaction and the way we view ourselves, our identity. Close relationships outside the workplace, such as friendships and romantic relationships, have been studied extensively and their central role and importance in people’s lives is widely recognised (e.g. Marroquin & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2015; Masi, Chen, Hawkley, & Cacioppo, 2010). Workplace relationships however have received less attention and the focus of research has been mainly on leader-follower, or manager-subordinate relationships (e.g. Thomas, Martin, Epitropaki, Guillaume, Lee, 2015).

Drawing on the premise that fulfilling relationships at work are of comparable importance to those outside of work, this project will investigate the extent to which workplace relationships have an influence on the work-related wellbeing, job satisfaction and performance, and whether this influence is contingent on the traits, needs and individual circumstances of each employee. The project will draw on Self-Determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1991) to investigate whether the quality and intensity of workplace relationships affect outcomes through the fulfilment of need for relatedness, and whether leader and co-worker relationships have an additive or substitutive effect on the outcomes. It will further explore the extent to which employees’ attachment styles (Bowlby, 1969) influence the association between relationship quality and intensity, and outcomes.

Drawing on theory and research evidence a theoretical model of the causal relationships of interest will be developed and tested by the student. This project will adopt a quantitative methodology, involving a longitudinal design in order to allow for causal inferences. The data will be collected from multiple sources (employee, leader, co-workers) in order to allow an investigation of dyadic (e.g. leader-follower attachment style combinations) and network (e.g. level of needs for relatedness among members of the same work-group) influences.

Applications of good quality and demonstrating skills in methodology and data analysis will be considered for nomination for the WRDTP ESRC Advanced Quantitative Methods (AQM) scholarship.

PhD candidate profile
The PhD candidate should meet the following requirements:

- Be enthusiastic, well-organised and have good inter-personal skills.
- High motivation and a keen interest in the research area.
- A first degree that is equivalent to a UK classification of upper second class honours or above. In addition, a good masters level qualification of merit or above, with a minimum of 60 per cent in the dissertation, research project element or equivalent experience. We also accept an MBA from an accredited school where the candidate can demonstrate that a significant research
Duration and start dates
Full or part time study for 3 or 6 years is available, and remote location study is also possible. We have two start dates a year for PhD students. Our preferred start date is 1 October, however we do recognise that not everyone will be able to commence studies at that time, so we also offer a second start date of 1 February. If you are unable to start in October or February, it may be also possible to start your PhD at a different time of the year.

Closing date for applications
Applications will be considered until a suitable candidate has been identified. For the 1 October start date, a full application must have been received by 15 July. For 1 February start date, a full application must have been received by 15 November.

How to apply
See http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/management/study/researchdegrees/howtoapply for full details of how to apply

For an informal discussion about this opportunity, please contact Anna Topakas at a.topakas@sheffield.ac.uk, or Chris Stride at c.b.stride@sheffield.ac.uk.