

CIPD

Championing better
work and working lives



APPLIED RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2023

Submissions



In partnership with



ISSN 2633-7223

ARC 2023

The CIPD Applied Research Conference (ARC) is an annual meeting place for academic researchers and practitioners working in people management, employment policy and related fields. It holds a unique place in bringing together these two communities to hear about cutting-edge research in HR and discuss how it can be applied in practice. ARC is an interdisciplinary conference that covers a wide range of aspects of people management, employment, learning and development, and organisational development. In all research papers presented, we set out to discuss the practical application of insights to organisational life and labour markets. These conference proceedings contain the accepted submissions for the ARC 2023 research papers. The papers are grouped into 10 thematic streams and are presented in the order in which they appear in the programme. ARC 2023 will take place on 25–26 January 2023 at the Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester. For more information on ARC, visit cipd.co.uk/arc

Contents

1B: Job quality and workload	3
Exploring employees’ lived experiences at NHS England during the COVID-19 pandemic: The role of meaningful work	3
Work and life: The comparative importance of job quality for general wellbeing	5
Overworked during COVID: Who were more likely to suffer burnout during the pandemic?8	
All work intensity is not created equal: Effort motives, job satisfaction, and quit intentions at a grocery chain	10
2A: Skills and professions	12
Riding the rollercoaster: How socialisation practices support the transition from veterinary student to practitioner	12
How does skill impact on service quality? The case of English care homes	14
2B: Work technology	16
Technology use during COVID-19: For better or for worse?	16
Up in the air: The impact of virtual socialisation on newcomers’ workplace commitment and belonging	19
How does work-orientated social media impact the employment relationship?	22
2C: Abuse, bullying and employee relations.....	24
What influences the relationship between workplace bullying and wellbeing? A systematic review of moderating factors.....	24
Managing employee relations in the NHS in the ‘new normal’	26
Customer misbehaviour in the UK hospitality industry is a big deal: Changing workplace norms, cultures and priorities.....	29
3A: Attracting workers and shaping good jobs	32
HRM challenges, migrant workers and the regulation of migration post-Brexit/post-COVID- 19: Evidence from four sectors	32

ARC 2023 Submissions

Universal Credit and employers: Exploring the demand side of active labour market policy	34
How do I-deals emerge? Exploring the role of the temporal context and actors in I-deals timing and creation	36
3B: Performance and wellbeing interventions	40
To what extent do workplace wellbeing interventions actually work? An analysis of existing systematic reviews	40
Performance-related pay contracts and stress: Does worker selection of the payment contract matter?	43
3C: Equality, diversity and inclusion	46
Who makes a successful surgeon? A longitudinal study of relational inequalities, closure mechanisms, intersectional disadvantage and the HR role in NHS surgery	46
The double-edged sword of authentic leadership for LGBT managers and leaders	49
Re-crafting engineering? Exploring how neurodiverse engineers engage in job crafting..	51
4A: Fertility and maternity leave	55
Understanding the invisible toll and psychological challenge of maternity leave on female academics	55
Complex fertility journeys and employment	57
4B: Organisational culture and climate	59
Breaking the spell – an anthropological approach to culture change	59
Transforming business through culture at Fujitsu: An organisational maturity matrix approach to measuring and tracking culture change.....	61
4C: Skills and performance	64
Navigating choppy water: Flexibility ripple effects in the COVID-19 pandemic and the future of remote and hybrid working	64
‘When the going gets tough...’: Should mental toughness feature in executive coaching?	64
Poster presentations	68
Attitudes and values towards the introduction of digitalised wellbeing platforms in large organisations: A design-fiction study	68
Underrepresentation of black and Asian minorities in the UK transport industry	70
Let’s break the mould, let’s shake the world: Why women cannot advance in professional roles in finance	73
Daughters of a lesser God: The impact of COVID-19 on female early-career academics’ experiences of precarity with regard to working and life routines	76
Work-based learning in the hospitality industry: Addressing labour challenges through academia and industry collaboration	83
Employee engagement in context: Implications and practical recommendations for a post-pandemic world of hybrid working.....	86

1B: Job quality and workload

Exploring employees' lived experiences at NHS England during the COVID-19 pandemic: The role of meaningful work

Sarah Pass, Nottingham Business School, NTU

Nadia Kougiannou, Nottingham Trent University

Maranda Ridgway, Nottingham Trent University

Yu-Ling Smith, Nottingham Trent University

Overview

The pandemic had an unprecedented impact on working lives; experiences were complex and varied. Following a human-centred approach and responding to the call for qualitative research, this paper discusses findings from interviews conducted at NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) during the pandemic and UK's vaccination programme. The findings emphasise the importance of meaningful work, highlighting its ability to break down internal barriers to collaboration and cultivating a cultural shift in power dynamics. Importantly, the research calls attention to the issue of 'too much' meaningful work. The study provides guidance for managing future crises and enables insight into addressing organisational tensions.

Research focus, rationale and questions

The pandemic emphasised organisational purpose with workers considering their options; workers started questioning the meaning of their work and their employing organisations. There was an emphasis on the 'subjective experience of the existential significance or purpose of life' (Lips-Wiersma and Morris, 2009: 492). Consequently, there has been a renewed focus on meaningful work and organisational purpose. Meaningful work is described by Bailey et al (2017) as having four main sources:

- the context of the work tasks themselves
- the roles that people perform
- interactions either within the organisation or with other stakeholders that foster a sense of belonging, and
- the identification with organisational values and mission.

COVID-19 placed unprecedented pressure on health services across the globe. In the UK, the NHS was under acute pressure from rising numbers of COVID-19 patients. This abstract reports on initial findings from case study research examining the impact of the pandemic on NHSEI. The project aimed to respond to the need to 'grasp the learning' (Bailey and West, 2020) before it is lost under the pressure of crisis management and responds to calls for research to explore the 'lived experiences of the pandemic' (Collings et al, 2021: 10).

Research methods

Responding to the call for in-depth qualitative research to explore the impact of the pandemic (Collings et al, 2021; Cooke et al, 2022), the project utilised a case study approach with NHSEI. Employing a pragmatic approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with staff across the organisation. Participants included senior leaders responsible for changes to workforce policies and practices in response to COVID-19, union

representatives, staff redeployed in response to the pandemic, and special interest networks. A total of 16 in-depth interviews were conducted alongside analysis of secondary data and observations. The project was undertaken in collaboration with the Involvement and Participation Association (IPA).

Research findings or argument

NHSEI supports patient care delivery by providing national direction on service improvement, governance, practice standards, and quality data. Historically, participants felt distanced from the NHS front line and patient care, consequently struggling to see how their work contributed. However, during the pandemic, there was a focus on task importance, especially data quality about COVID-19 infections, deaths and vaccination rates. The pandemic triggered NHSEI launching the biggest vaccination programme in NHS history (DHSC, 2021). The programme had political and social impact; delivery resulted in participants feeling their roles were seen externally as important, and consequently more meaningful (see Bailey et al, 2017).

Participants reported feeling disconnected from organisational values and, due to internal politics, disempowerment. However, during the initial national lockdown (and subsequent waves), these feelings were replaced with a reconnection to organisation's values. The focus was on keeping patients alive and staff safe. Participants discussed collaborating to 'get the job done' requiring a cultural and mindset change. This change was significant for NHSEI, typically characterised as bureaucratic and rigid, as previous changes had met strong resistance. Organisational trust was low; however, the focus on meaningful work eroded these barriers and fostered supportive relationships.

During acute times of pressure and increased levels of infection, the sense of meaningful work and organisational purpose enabled dramatic and uncharacteristic ways of working. However, meaningful work is considered 'episodic' (Bailey et al, 2017), yet the pandemic extended these periods. Consequently, participants were exhausted and feared the organisation would return to old ways of working.

Practical importance and implications of research

Meaningful work enables the breaking down of internal barriers to improve collaboration; however, to do so requires direction. A key driver in propelling cultural and mindset changes in the organisation was HR senior leaders. HR holds a vital role by working across departments, developing key relationships and retaining knowledge on all elements of the organisation and its people, and, consequently, holding the information to develop multi-disciplinary teams and the ability to bring people together.

Too much meaningful work can have adverse consequences. By exploring 'lived experiences' of the pandemic, findings highlighted a different angle on the contextual nature of working from home (Cooke et al, 2022). A sense of guilt among those able to work from home was evident, especially while colleagues were at risk working in hospitals and vaccination centres. Participants felt they therefore could not 'complain about the long hours' as others had it worse. This guilt increased the emotional pressure and negatively impacted their wellbeing.

There was a growing fear that the organisation would return to old ways of working when 'we returned to normal'. The feeling that bureaucracy, mistrust, and presenteeism would return fuelled disengagement. Consequently, it is important to 'grasp the learning' (Bailey and West, 2020) before it is lost under the pressure of crisis management.

To explore how managing meaningfulness can lead to successful outcomes for individuals and organisations requires qualitative research that focuses on the lived experience of employees at all levels within the organisation and requires a human-centred focus.

References

- Bailey, C., Madden, A., Alfes, K. Shantz, A. and Soane, E. (2017) The mismanaged soul: Existential labor and the erosion of meaningful work. *Human Resource Management Review*. Vol 27, No 3, pp416–430.
- Bailey, S. and West, M. (2020) [Learning from staff experiences of Covid-19: let the light come streaming in](#). *The King's Fund*. 9 June.
- Bandura, A. (1977) *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Collings, D.G., Nyberg, A.J., Wright, P.M. and McMackin, J. (2021) [Leading through paradox in a COVID-19 world: Human resources comes of age](#). *Human Resource Management Journal*. Vol 31, No 4, pp819–833.
- Cooke, F.L., Dickmann, M. and Parry, E. (2022) [Building sustainable societies through human-centred human resource management: emerging issues and research opportunities](#). *International Journal of Human Resource Management*. Vol 33, No 1, pp1–15.
- DHSC. (2021) [UK Covid-19 vaccines delivery plan](#). Policy paper. Department of Health and Social Care.
- Grant, A.M. (2008) [The significance of task significance: Job performance effects, relational mechanisms, and boundary conditions](#). *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Vol 93, No 1, pp108–124.
- The King's Fund. (2020) [We explain how funding flows in the NHS and how providers are regulated and commissioned](#). 8 April.
- Lips-Wiersma, M. and Morris, L. (2009) Discriminating Between 'Meaningful Work' and the 'Management of Meaning'. *Journal of Business Ethics*. Vol 88, No 3, pp491–511.
- Rosso, B.D., Dekas, K.H. and Wrzesniewski, A. (2010) [On the meaning of work: a theoretical integration and review](#). *Research in Organizational Behavior*. Vol 30, pp91–127.

Work and life: The comparative importance of job quality for general wellbeing

Francis Green, UCL Institute of Education

Ying Zhou, University of Surrey

Sangwoo Lee, University College London

Overview

A large body of research has established the detrimental effects of unemployment on wellbeing, but we know little about how wellbeing is affected by the quality of one's job. Surveying our understanding of the importance of work quality as late as 2007, one study concluded that '[t]here is insufficient evidence to draw clear conclusions about the impact of

type of work on well-being' (Dolan et al, 2008). In this study we draw on large-scale labour market surveys from Britain, Germany, the US, Australia and the EU to investigate the extent to which job quality affects life satisfaction and mental health.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Previous research has produced inconsistent estimates of the impact of job quality on subjective wellbeing. For example, research based on large-scale UK and European datasets shows that the proportion of variance in life satisfaction explained by job quality variables ranges from 14% (Wallace et al, 2007), 18% (Drobnič et al, 2010) to 27% (Clark et al, 2018). A potential reason for this inconsistency lies with varying coverage of job quality indicators in different datasets. Studies rarely use full sets of job quality indicators and estimates are often hidden by the selected control variables. Moreover, comparisons of job quality with other conventional determinants of wellbeing, such as family and health, are rare, and there is little research on the potential diminishing marginal returns to job quality, which is important because the presence of such effects would support the need for policies focused on low-quality jobs.

This paper will address these gaps in the literature. Specifically, our research questions are:

- To what extent is the overall variation among individuals in their wellbeing associated with variation in job quality?
- Does the effect of job quality on wellbeing hold in longitudinal analysis that controls for fixed individual effects?
- How do the marginal effects of shifts in job quality on wellbeing compare with the marginal effects of changes in other domains of life?
- Is the effect of good and bad job quality asymmetric (that is, are there diminishing marginal effects?) within each domain and overall?

Research methods

This study draws on the UK Skills and Employment Survey (SES), the UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS), the US RAND Measures of Quality of Life Survey, the German Socio-Economic Panel (GSEOP), the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey (HILDA), and the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS). SES, RAND and EWCS provide large-scale cross-sectional data on job quality and employee wellbeing. UKHLS, GSEOP and HILDA provide longitudinal data which tracked individuals' working lives for decades. We will use cross-sectional data to explore the general impact of job quality on life satisfaction and mental health by comparing R^2 from multivariate linear regression models, and then cross-validate these results against longitudinal analysis that controls for individual fixed effects. We will compare the marginal effects of job quality with those of other life domains such as family and health. In all the above, we allow where appropriate for possible non-linear effects through quadratic specifications.

Research findings or argument

Our initial analysis of the EWCS (which covers all EU member states) shows that 15% of variance in mental health in Europe can be accounted for by multiple job quality indices. The percentage is slightly lower (13%) when we substituted separate job quality indices by a composite job quality index. Adding demographic controls increased the percentage to 17%. Comparing standardised regression coefficients across a range of determinants of mental health, we found that job quality had a greater impact on mental health than age, level of education, industry, occupation, country of residence, whether one lives in a town or the countryside, or if one has low family income. In addition, our analysis of the HILDA survey

shows that job quality accounts for 13% of variance in life satisfaction for male workers and 12% for female workers in Australia. The magnitude of the impact of job quality on life satisfaction is comparable with that of employment status (that is, employed/unemployed). The analysis of the other country datasets is in progress. Our initial results point to relatively large associations between job quality and wellbeing outcomes, as we had anticipated. The impact of job quality on life satisfaction and mental health is ubiquitous across countries with different historical, cultural and institutional environments.

Practical importance and implications of research

While a large body of research has established the detrimental effects of unemployment for life satisfaction and mental health, there is a dearth of evidence on how wellbeing is affected by the quality of work. Some studies found that certain elements of job quality (for example, job security) have comparable effects on wellbeing as job loss (Green, 2011). However, judging by the disposition of scholarly research effort, wellbeing analysts have not in general considered work quality to be at or near the top of the list of determinants of wellbeing.

The lack of evidence on the relative importance of work quality for wellbeing is problematic because it has a direct impact on the amount of resources devoted to measuring job quality in the main workhorse social surveys serving the needs of national statistics offices and social science scholars. For instance, in response to the Taylor Review, the UK government tasked the Carnegie Trust/RSA to measure quality of work through agreed metrics. Of the 32 new questions suggested by the group, only two were added to the Labour Force Survey (Irvine et al, 2018; Taylor, 2017). This provides an inadequate response to the scale of the challenge and makes it difficult to paint a picture of the quality of working life in Britain today. This study highlights the need for a reconsideration of general social science surveys' neglect of job quality. Collecting robust and timely data on job quality is essential for effective policies aimed at improving societal wellbeing.

References

- Clark, A.E., Flèche, S., Layard, R., Powdthavee, N. and Ward, G. (2018) [*The origins of happiness*](#). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Dolan, P., Peasgood, T. and White, M. (2008) [*Do we really know what makes us happy? A review of the economic literature on the factors associated with subjective well-being*](#). *Journal of Economic Psychology*. Vol 29, No 1, pp94–122.
- Drobnič, S., Beham, B. and Präg, P. (2010) [*Good job, good life? Working conditions and quality of life in Europe*](#). *Social Indicators Research*. Vol 99, No 2, pp205–225.
- Green, F. (2011) [*Unpacking the misery multiplier: How employability modifies the impacts of unemployment and job insecurity on life satisfaction and mental health*](#). *Journal of Health Economics*. Vol 30, No 2, pp265–276.
- Irvine, G., White, D. and Diffley, M. (2018) [*Measuring good work: The final report of the Measuring Job Quality Working Group*](#). Dunfermline: Carnegie Trust.
- Taylor, M. (2017) [*Good Work: The Taylor review of modern working practices*](#). London: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.
- Wallace, C., Pichler, F. and Hayes, B.C. (2007) [*First European Quality of Life Survey: Quality of work and life satisfaction*](#). Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Overworked during COVID: Who were more likely to suffer burnout during the pandemic?

Ioulia Bessa, University of Leeds

Daiga Kamerade, University of Salford

Melanie Green, formerly CIPD

Jonny Gifford, CIPD

Senhu Wang, National University of Singapore

Brendan Burcell, University of Cambridge

Jill Rubery, University of Manchester

Overview

COVID-19 had a detrimental effect on individuals' health not only physically, but also emotionally and mentally. Burnout is a psychological syndrome with three dimensions: *exhaustion, cynicism and ineffectiveness*. Building on this definition and drawing on CIPD data before, during and after COVID, we examine which groups were mostly affected by burnout. Results indicate that – contrary to expectations – individuals in single households have been hit harder, whereas parents and those with dependent members indicated lower levels of burnout. We also find that burnout entails more emotional aspects of exhaustion rather than physical ones, contrary to previous definitions.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Burnout is a psychological syndrome emerging as a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job, including three dimensions: exhaustion, feelings of cynicism/detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness (lack of accomplishment). Building on this definition of burnout and drawing on CIPD data before, during and after the pandemic, we examine which groups were mostly affected by burnout and we aim to identify the reasons behind this.

Different strands of research, as well as public discourse and especially the media have been emphasising that a large percentage of the population went through at least one period of high burnout levels during and/or after the pandemic. With this in mind, organisations prioritised support to employees with caring responsibilities. Although initial reports and media articles highlighted that it was mainly women with childcare responsibilities and in general households with dependent members, with heavy childcare and eldercare responsibilities that were affected chiefly by low wellbeing and high burnout levels during the pandemic, the study sheds light on different aspects and angles. Using the CIPD COVID data at an initial stage, and CIPD data pre- and post-COVID, evidence here shows that it is in fact participants without responsibilities outside work who were affected. Looking deeper into these results, issues of loneliness and isolation emerge. The study calls for a reconceptualisation of burnout and what it entails, illustrating that the pandemic came to surface the argument that burnout is not only a reaction to work, but blurs with life.

Research methods

At an initial stage we used the CIPD COVID-19 data collected between April and September 2020, where the different waves were connected. More than 1,000 participants were

included in the sample from each wave, with the July sample having more than 2,000 individuals. So far, in total the sample includes 7,444 individuals.

We are now focusing and replicating the analysis drawing on CIPD data prior to COVID (January–April 2020) and post-COVID, that is, September 2020 onward. This is important for two reasons. First, as evidence so far suggests, burnout experiences have been different prior to the pandemic and over the different lock-downs. We are therefore aiming at examining and identifying such potential differences and exploring whether burnout has changed over time. Second, and emerging from the first point, we want to examine potential differences with regard to conceptualisation of burnout before and after the pandemic and compare those groups mostly affected.

We use factor analysis to create the different dimensions of burnout, that is, exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy, consistent with the literature and using the CIPD COVID-19 data. We then conduct logistic regression for each one of the dimensions of burnout as dependent variables and a number of independent variables, including work attributes variables, work–life balance (WLB) related factors, life and health variables, COVID-19-related aspects and control variables.

Research findings or argument

Some outstanding results are reported here, whereas others are more expected.

Intriguingly, for a number of participants, even if there were more responsibilities related to caring or to commitments outside work, burnout was still lower. This was further confirmed by the fact that changes in caring responsibilities did not necessarily imply higher burnout; by contrast, individuals who did experience changes in their childcare responsibilities exhibited lower burnout, reporting a negative relationship with all three dimensions of burnout. In general, participants with many responsibilities outside work reported lower burnout, which implies that participants with dependants were less affected by burnout, whereas individuals in single households reported higher burnout. Looking at COVID-19 factors, in the cases where individuals were self-isolating with symptoms or a diagnosis of COVID-19 for themselves, a positive association with all burnout dimensions was demonstrated. Once again, here the issue of being in a single household is raised, calling for further scrutiny on what triggers burnout, as an association between loneliness and higher burnout is implied.

Too little workload is positively and significantly associated to cynicism, whereas – and equally intriguingly – results indicated that owners/partners, board-level managers and other managers – thus participants in higher managerial levels – are associated to lower burnout. Also, those who find it easy to work – despite non-work life-related commitments – had lower burnout. Control variables are also examined and will be reported in the presentation.

Practical importance and implications of research

The paper includes a number of practical implications that are of interest both to practitioners and academics:

First, the paper reopens the debate around the way we think about and conceptualise burnout. With most people – including managers – seeking physical symptoms, rather than emotional or mental ones, burnout tended to be ignored or neglected.

Another issue neglected was also the relation of burnout to WLB or at least it was looked at from a different angle prior to the pandemic. Employees and employers were associating burnout to employees with caring responsibilities and dependent members. The study calls for a reconsideration of the way burnout is conceptualised.

Most importantly, both academia, but predominantly managers, need to rethink who is affected by burnout. The pandemic surfaced issues that have to do with balance within organisations that have been neglected in the past. Managers and scholars need to think about employees in single households without dependants, who may have been overly burdened with work before and during the pandemic, being asked to cover for colleagues with dependants. This implies issues of organisational fairness and the right to equal work, as well as how organisations heavily depend on certain employees more, with the excuse of lack of childcare responsibilities.

We need to rethink who has the right to WLB and with what criteria.

All work intensity is not created equal: Effort motives, job satisfaction, and quit intentions at a grocery chain

Argyro Avgoustaki, ESCP Business School

Hans Frankort, Bayes Business School

Overview

Introducing self-determination theory to the domain of work intensity, we predict that intensive work driven by explicit or implicit incentives is more positively associated with job satisfaction, and more negatively with quit intentions, than intensive work driven by job demands. We also predict that intensive work driven by intrinsic motives is more positively associated with job satisfaction, and more negatively with quit intentions, than that driven by explicit or implicit incentives. Data from a grocery chain provides corroborative evidence. The findings contribute to a more complete understanding of why differences in wellbeing exist among employees performing intensive work.

Research focus, rationale and questions

There is continuing interest in understanding how the nature of work effort relates to work-related wellbeing. To date, much research has focused on *work duration* as a key dimension of work effort (Pfeffer, 2018), suggesting that wellbeing is lower on average where long hours and overtime are prevalent (Sparks et al, 1997). Yet work effort also encompasses *work intensity* – the amount of effort per unit of working time (Green, 2001).

The purpose of this paper is to examine the motives that drive employees to work intensively, and how these predict job satisfaction and quit intentions. We introduce to the domain of work intensity the theory of self-determination, which distinguishes between an individual's extrinsic motivation, a type of motivation that can vary in the degree to which it is controlled, versus autonomous, and intrinsic motivation (Gagné and Deci, 2005; Ryan and Deci, 2000, 2017). We propose that employees may work intensively driven by external job demands (a controlled form of extrinsic motivation), explicit or implicit incentives (a more autonomous form of extrinsic motivation), and by intrinsic motives. Based on these distinctions, we predict that intensive work driven by explicit or implicit incentives is more positively associated with an employee's job satisfaction, and more negatively with quit intentions, than intensive work driven by job demands. We also predict that intensive work driven by intrinsic motives is more positively associated with job satisfaction, and more negatively with quit intentions, than that driven by explicit or implicit incentives.

Research methods

Our data comes from a cross-section of employees at a major grocery chain in Greece – a setting in which work intensity is high. Following precedent (for example, Avgoustaki and Frankort, 2019; Green and McIntosh, 2001), work intensity here is the average of the frequency of having to work at high speeds and the frequency of having to work to tight deadlines. The firm serves an entire Greek region and has around 1,200 employees. We were given access to survey all 655 individuals working across 15 of the chain's branches in and around the capital of the region, and in the chain's headquarters located in the capital. The survey was completed in 2019.

Research findings or argument

Drawing from self-determination theory, we distinguished three motives for working intensively, and predicted, first, that intensive work driven by explicit or implicit incentives is more positively associated with job satisfaction, and more negatively with quit intentions, than intensive work driven by job demands. Second, we predicted that intensive work driven by intrinsic motives is more positively associated with job satisfaction, and more negatively with quit intentions, than that driven by explicit or implicit incentives. Our results reveal that employee motives for working intensively predict employee job satisfaction and quit intentions according to a pattern consistent with our hypotheses.

Our findings foreshadow some possible implications for workers and employers. When considering a high-intensity job, workers could benefit from developing some notion of their anticipated motives for intensive work. From the standpoint of subjective wellbeing, jobs in which an employee believes they would be intrinsically motivated to work hard seem preferable to jobs in which the employee feels they could only be motivated to do so by incentives or job demands. Also, while the issue of work intensity *per se* should be on the agenda of employers, the negative implications of controlled extrinsic motivation relative to other types of motivation mean that employers should be mindful of the motivational states of their employees, and the motivational aspects of work more broadly. For example, because intrinsically driven work intensity appears to have positive implications, employers could design jobs and tasks so they are inherently enjoyable and interesting, which can stimulate intrinsic motivation. And during the selection process, employers can focus on identifying candidates who are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to work hard, perhaps because the job matches their interests particularly well.

References

- Avgoustaki, A. and Frankort, H.T.W. (2019) [Implications of Work Effort and Discretion for Employee Well-Being and Career-Related Outcomes: An Integrative Assessment](#). *ILR Review*. Vol 72, No 3, pp636–661.
- Gagné, M. and Deci, E.L. (2005) [Self-Determination Theory and Work Motivation](#). *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. Vol 26, No 4, pp 331–62.
- Green, F. (2001) It's been a hard day's night: The concentration and intensification of work in late 20th century Britain. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*. Vol 39, No 1, pp53–80.
- Green, F. and McIntosh, S. (2001) [The Intensification of Work in Europe](#). *Labour Economics*. Vol 8, No 2, pp291–308.
- Pfeffer, J. (2018) Work hours and health: A comment on 'beyond nine to five'. *Academy of Management Discoveries*. Vol 4, No 1, pp94–96.

Ryan, R.M. and Deci, E.L. (2000) [Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions](#). *Contemporary Educational Psychology*. Vol 25, No 1, pp54–67.

Ryan, R.M. and Deci, E.L. (2017) [Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness](#). New York: Guilford.

Sparks, K., Cooper, C., Fried, Y. and Shirom, A. (1997) [The effects of hours of work on health: A meta-analytic review](#). *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*. Vol 70, No 4, pp391–408.

2A: Skills and professions

Riding the rollercoaster: How socialisation practices support the transition from veterinary student to practitioner

Rachel Williams, Cardiff University

Overview

This longitudinal study examines the experiences of 25 newly qualified vets as they transition from student to practitioner. Vets were interviewed at three points over a 16-month period. The vets were employed in small independent practices through to large corporate practices, with this organisational context shaping their socialisation experience. When formal induction processes were adopted, vets slowly learned to perform at a high standard, whereas informal practices tended to result in vets quickly acquiring the adequate skills necessary to survive, with mistakes not always being corrected. Individual characteristics influenced how well vets coped with the support they received.

Research focus, rationale and questions

This paper focuses on the first year of practice for veterinary surgeons. It analyses the challenges involved where newcomers work independently, and is set against a context of other professions where the step-change from student to practitioner is difficult. Whereas much has been written about, for example, the socialisation of healthcare workers (Teoh et al, 2013), far less attention has been afforded to the veterinary profession. Specifically, some quantitative studies have examined the experiences of newly qualified vets (Hagen et al, 2020) but there have been few qualitative studies. This is concerning, as retention within the profession is relatively poor.

The general literature on organisational socialisation focuses on three key areas of influence: first, organisational tactics; second, the characteristics and behaviour of the newcomer; and third, the role of other parties such as co-workers (Wanberg and Choi, 2012). However, socialisation is rarely regarded as ‘one thing’, demonstrated by Van Maanen (1976) and Jones (1986), who suggest a continuum, with ‘institutionalized socialization’ at one end and ‘individualized socialization’ at the other. Newcomer characteristics may influence the effectiveness of socialisation tactics on this continuum (Peltokorpi et al, 2022).

In this context, this study examines *how* socialisation occurs for veterinary graduates, both to inform our theoretical understanding and to guide practice. The overall research question is: ‘To what extent is it possible to identify factors associated with the successful or failed

socialisation of veterinary graduates?' This presentation will focus on the components of 'successful socialisation' and the effectiveness of formal and informal approaches.

Research methods

Semi-structured interviews were held with 25 veterinary graduates from 2021, sampled from every UK vet school. Interviews took place via Zoom. Participants were recruited via the closed Facebook group Vet Voices UK. Twenty-two of the vets were female and three were male. Thirteen of the vets worked in small animal practices, with the remaining working in farm and mixed practices. Eighteen worked for practices owned by corporate organisations and seven were employed in independent practices. The study is longitudinal, with data being collected on three occasions over a 16-month period. Vets were interviewed between June and September 2021 before they started work and again after they had been working for six to eight months; all vets took part in both interviews. Final interviews will take place between August and October 2022, after the vets have been in post for 12 months.

Research findings or argument

Findings thus far suggest that most vets felt well prepared for practice, despite the impact of COVID lockdowns. Their induction experiences reflected the continuum of socialisation practices (Jones, 1986), from formal institutionalised practices containing skills boot camps to individualised processes with vets performing unsupervised surgery in their first week.

Individual characteristics influenced the vets' responses to these approaches. Several vets spoke about their 'baptism of fire', with four resigning, whereas others coped with little supervision and learned from their mistakes. These vets felt that they acquired skills faster than their counterparts, although suspected they may have adopted poor practices which were not corrected. Vets who experienced more formal induction processes expressed greater satisfaction and believed they were taught to perform at a high standard.

Even in practices with formal induction processes, vets still sought out informal support. WhatsApp groups were widely used to obtain advice quickly and several vets carried out surgical procedures for the first time after Googling the process or with guidance being provided through a phone call.

In addition to the personal stress and harm experienced by the new entrant, the wider question is, who suffers from a lack of professional induction? Is it the 'cavalier' vet who survives, or do animals also suffer harm from lack of effective supervision? Are owners happy with a new surgeon making a WhatsApp call from an operating theatre for guidance about their next cut? There are many questions that emanate from the culture around effective supervision, socialisation and induction.

Practical importance and implications of research

This study adds to the literature on effective socialisation processes for newly qualified professionals. Many vet practices are independently owned and the experiences of vets working in these small businesses differs from those supported by large corporations. Corporate practices tend to provide formal induction and mentoring support, and the results of this study suggest that this facilitates a high level of skill in newly qualified vets. However, when formal, institutionalised processes are adopted, these skills are learned more slowly than when individualised socialisation takes place.

Independent practices, particularly those experiencing staff shortages, often adopt informal socialisation processes. Vets learn with minimal supervision and quickly develop adequate skills to handle most cases. However, these skills may be of a low standard, as mistakes

and poor practices are not identified and corrected. This informal, individualised process is stressful, leading to wider safety risks and poor retention. The findings demonstrate that the organisational context may influence socialisation tactics and that these in turn need to be aligned with the individual characteristics of the new professional.

The study also highlighted the increasingly important role of social media and informal communities of practice. Formal socialisation processes were accompanied by informal processes as vets urgently sought out the information they needed to diagnose and treat cases. Although this was expected for farm vets working alone off site, it was interesting to note how informal practices were adopted more widely. Practices may support this process by facilitating social media groups and signposting new staff to existing sites.

References

Hagen, J.R., Weller, R., Mair, T.S. and Kinnison, T. (2020) [Investigation of factors affecting recruitment and retention in the UK veterinary profession](#). *VetRecord*. Vol 187, No 9, p354.

Jones, G.R. (1986) [Socialisation tactics, self-efficacy, and newcomers' adjustments to organizations](#). *Academy of Management Journal*. Vol 29, No 2, pp262–279.

Peltpkorpi, V., Allen, D., Feng, J., Pustovit, S. and Rubenstein, A. (2022) [The interactive effects of socialization tactics and work locus of control on newcomer work adjustment, job embeddedness, and voluntary turnover](#). *Human Relations*. Vol 75, No 1, pp177–202.

Teoh, Y.T., Chan, M.-F. and Pua L-H. (2013) [Lost in transition – A review of qualitative literature of newly qualified registered nurses' experiences in their transition to practice journey](#). *Nurse Education Today*. Vol 33, No 2, pp143–147.

Van Maanen, J. (1976) [Breaking in: socialization to work](#). In Dubin, R. (ed.) *Handbook of work, organization, and society*, pp67–130. Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Co.

Wanberg, C.R. and Choi, Y. (2012) Moving Forward: Next steps for advancing the research and practice of employee socialization. In Wanberg, C. (ed.) *The Oxford handbook of Organizational socialization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

How does skill impact on service quality? The case of English care homes

Andy Charlwood, Leeds University

Danat Valizade, University of Leeds

Louise Winton Schreuders

Karen Spilsbury, University of Leeds

Overview

We investigate relationships between workforce skill levels and care quality in 186 English care homes over a four-year period, drawing on administrative data from the care home provider. Using novel machine learning and causal inference methods, we find that quality outcomes are optimised when around one-quarter of care is provided by registered nurses, and that substituting nurses for less skilled nursing assistants appears to lead to a small

increase in risk of some adverse events. We argue results have wider implications for how academics investigate relationships between HRM and outcomes.

Research focus, rationale and questions

For care home providers, caught between shortages of key staff, particularly registered nurses, resource constraints, and high levels of accountability for service quality, decisions over the appropriate levels and quantities of workforce skill as embodied in different job roles are central to strategic human resource management in their sector. The weight of existing evidence on these issues suggests linear relationships between workforce skill measured by the proportion of care provided by registered nurses, and nurse-sensitive indicators of care quality. Simply put, the more care provided by registered nurses, the lower the risks to care home residents. Further, attempts to move simpler nursing tasks to less skilled staff (nursing assistants, nursing associates) are also associated with poorer care quality outcomes (Clemens et al, 2021).

Yet these empirical findings fly in the face of expert judgements that there is likely to be a point at which the skill/care quality relationship is optimised, and increasing skill inputs beyond this point is unlikely to meaningfully improve quality (Donebedian, 2003). They also contradict the experiences of the last 50 years of job design in healthcare, whereby ‘skills escalators’ have seen tasks previously carried out by doctors passed to registered nurses, with simpler nursing tasks passed from registered nurses to associate and assistant nursing roles. We hypothesise that this science–practice gap is an artefact of the quantitative methods used in previous studies and that machine learning and causal inference methods will tell a different story.

Research methods

Drawing on data from 186 care homes that provide nursing care to older people over a 182-week period (from autumn 2016 to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic), we test relationships between weekly staffing levels, the proportion of weekly care provided by nurses (skill mix), nurse shortages and nurse-sensitive indicators of care quality. To test these relationships, we employ linear regression (growth mixture models) and novel machine learning methods (random forest analysis). Then, to investigate the causal impact of skill levels on nurse-sensitive indicators of care quality, we exploit the introduction of a new nursing assistant role, where nurse assistants took on some simpler nursing tasks to allow a sub-set of larger homes to reduce their nursing establishments. We conduct a quasi-experimental analysis (difference-in-difference analysis for multiple time periods (Callaway and Sant’Anna, 2021)).

Research findings or argument

We find that linear regression methods (growth mixture models) suggest linear relationships between increasing nursing inputs and reductions in nurse-sensitive indicators of care quality. By contrast, random forest models suggest non-linear relationships, where quality is optimised when around one-quarter of care is provided by registered nurses. Results of difference-in-difference analysis suggest that the change caused increased rates of some care quality-related incidents, but with much smaller effect sizes than suggested by previous purely observational studies.

Practical importance and implications of research

Our results suggest that care homes need more nursing inputs than they currently have, and that substituting less skilled nursing assistants for nurses carries risks, but the scale of

additional nursing resource needed is much less than suggested by previous regression-based studies. We also argue that results have broader implications for how we understand and model relationships between human resource policies, inputs and performance outcomes in strategic HRM research. We argue that the study offers a microcosmic example of problems and issues in strategic HRM research more broadly. Structural models, operationalised through versions of linear regression, generate results that appear academically rigorous but lack external validity in the eyes of practitioners. While existing accounts of science–practice gaps in the field of HRM suggest managerial ignorance as a key source of the gap (for example, Tenhiälä et al, 2016), we perhaps need to think about whether our own research practices generate credible results. If we want to close science–practice gaps, strategic HRM researchers need to embrace methodological innovations. If we want to operationalise structural models of data-generating processes, ML methods will likely generate more accurate and credible models than traditional linear regression-based methods because they are better able to identify relationships that are non-linear and non-monotonic (Brieman, 2001). Similarly, if we want to identify causal relationships, we need to adopt causal inference methods. Unless we collectively embrace a credibility revolution, existing science–practice gaps will endure.

References

- Brieman, L. (2001) [Statistical modelling: The two cultures](#). *Statistical Science*. Vol 16, No 3, pp199–231.
- Callaway, B. and Sant’Anna, P. (2021) [Difference-in-differences with multiple time periods](#). *Journal of Econometrics*. Vol 225, No 2, pp200–230.
- Clemens, S., Wodchis, W., McGilton, K., McGrail, K. and McMahon, M. (2021) [The relationship between quality and staffing in long-term care: A systematic review of the literature 2008–2020](#). *International Journal of Nursing Studies*. Vol 122, p104036.
- Donabedian, A. (2003) *An introduction to quality assurance in healthcare*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tenhiälä, A., Giluk, T.L., Kepes, S., Simón, C., Oh, I.-S. and Kim, S. (2016) [The research-practice gap in human resource management: A cross-cultural study](#). *Human Resource Management*. Vol 55, No 2, pp179–200.

2B: Work technology

Technology use during COVID-19: For better or for worse?

Karen Feery, TU Dublin

Edel Conway, Dublin City University

Overview

This study explored the experiences of academics in relation to whether and how work-related use of information communication technology (ICT) affected their work–life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data was collected from 14 academics through semi-structured interviews. Findings indicated divergent outcomes associated with work-related ICT use contributing to both work–family conflict (WFC) and work–family enrichment (WFE).

Managing boundaries was found to be complex and depended on preferences, behaviours and resources to enact these preferences. This raises questions about the increasing complexity of work and technology in academics' work and the need for leaders to plan for effective, sustainable flexible work models.

Research focus, rationale and questions

The ubiquitous nature of technology in modern life is hard to avoid and the sudden implementation of global remote working triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 brought this issue into sharp focus. Since then, the prevalence of remote working has mutated somewhat, in some cases reverting to the 'old normal' and in others being transformed into a 'next normalised' state (Vyas, 2022). With the focus remaining on remote and flexible work practices (Volini et al, 2020), now more than ever, research is needed to examine experiences of working during COVID-19: (1) to better understand how flexible work practices can be improved; (2) to help develop sustainable and effective work models for the future; and (3) to inform decisions around infrastructural needs and services with an emphasis on maintaining employee wellbeing when working from home (WFH).

This study focuses on a single organisational context, specifically a university, and aims to explore the experiences of academics in an Irish university in relation to whether and how work-related use of ICTs positively or negatively affected their work–life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Academics have extensively integrated technology into their roles since the 1990s (Heijstra and Rafnsdottir, 2010) and further technological integration and impact is imminent in Ireland as outlined in the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (Department of Education and Skills, 2011). However, there is a paucity of research pertaining to academia and the influence of ICTs on the work–life interface, a contribution this study intends to make.

Research methods

The context for this study was based on academics working in an Irish university. Academics are reported to be facing increased challenges and demands regarding new modes of teaching delivery and increased pressures to publish (Bean et al, 2014). These changes, together with established flexible work practices, make this setting particularly appropriate in addressing the research questions in the study. The study draws on data from 14 online semi-structured interviews carried out between March and May 2021. Participants were recruited based on them being a parent, with their child/children ranging in age from newborn to 18 years old. Gender balance was sought and achieved, with seven female and seven male participants. The selection criteria were chosen to achieve relative homogeneity in the demands being made on participants' time from a care and a professional perspective. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis (TA) methodology was used to analyse the data.

Research findings or argument

The findings suggest that work-related ICT use resulted in differential consequences contributing to both WFC and WFE. Regarding WFC, the shift to mostly ICT-enabled work during COVID-19 triggered a series of negative outcomes that are consistent with prior research. Specifically, email volume increased dramatically during COVID-19, confirming research linking increased engagement with email to a greater sense of overload (Barley et al, 2011). This finding extends the literature on the negative effects of email, which is still emergent (Steffensen et al, 2021) to the context of academia, where the increased salience of email has become a source of time pressure (Jones et al, 2008).

With regard to WFE, the findings substantiated prior research which suggests that ICTs enable participants to WFH at a time convenient to both domains, confirming the instrumental mechanism in Greenhaus and Powell's (2006) model which enables a resource to be transferred directly from one role to enhance the performance in the other role. The study therefore extends the literature on positive consequences of ICT-enabled flexibility among academics (Currie and Eveline, 2011; Heijstra and Rafnsdottir, 2010).

Furthermore, the findings also suggest that the role of work-related ICTs in managing work–life boundaries is an important, complex process that is dependent on multiple factors, including behaviours, preferences and resources to enact these preferences. The study also showed evidence of both segmentation and integration behaviours as identified in the literature (Adisa et al, 2017; Ashforth et al, 2000; Currie and Eveline, 2011; Kossek and Lautsch, 2012).

Practical importance and implications of research

The implications of the findings of the study are two-fold. First, in the context of academia, the findings underscore the relentless demands facing academics to perform effectively and the complex ways that these demands influence academics' lives. Second, engaging with ICTs in the way some have during COVID-19 has potentially shifted organisational norms and redefined appropriate communication practices around expectations of availability or of blended learning provision, suggesting broader implications for what it means to be an effective academic. Stakeholders need to thoroughly investigate future work preferences and needs across all three academic areas of research, teaching and administration/service. Practical changes arising from WFH during COVID-19 are already apparent with recent infrastructural investment to support WFH in Ireland, such as the National Remote Work Strategy in January 2021. Such changes have the potential to have far-reaching consequences for employees and organisations alike.

A limitation of the study is that the findings are context-specific and lack generalisability to a wider population or workforce. Future research should consider the issues explored in the study across a wider range of contexts and should focus on investigating employees' and organisations' experiences of working during COVID-19 to understand how flexible work practices can be improved, how sustainable effective work models can be developed, and to inform decisions around infrastructural needs and services, with an emphasis on maintaining employee wellbeing and providing guidance on self-care when WFH.

References

- Adisa, T.A., Gbadamosi, G. and Osabutey, E.L. (2017) [What happened to the border? The role of mobile information technology devices on employees' work-life balance](#). *Personnel Review*. Vol 46, No 8, pp1651–1671.
- Ashforth, B.E., Kreiner, G.E. and Fugate, M. (2000) [All in a day's work: Boundaries and micro role transitions](#). *Academy of Management Review*. Vol 25, No 3, pp472–491.
- Barley, S.R., Meyerson, D.E. and Grodal, S. (2011) [E-mail as a source and symbol of stress](#). *Organization Science*. Vol 22, No 4, pp887–906.
- Bean, N.M., Lucas, L. and Hyers, L.L. (2014) [Mentoring in higher education should be the norm to assure success: Lessons learned from the faculty mentoring program, West Chester University, 2008–2011](#). *Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*. Vol 22, No 1, pp56–73.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) [Using thematic analysis in psychology](#). *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. Vol 3, No 2, pp77–101.

Currie, J. and Eveline, J. (2011) [E-technology and work/life balance for academics with young children](#). *Higher Education*. Vol 62, No 4, pp533–550.

Department for Education and Skills. (2011) [National strategy for higher education to 2030](#). [Accessed 2 June 2022].

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. (2021) [Making remote work: National remote work strategy](#). [Accessed 2 June 2021].

Greenhaus, J.H. and Powell, G.N. (2006) [When work and family are allies: A theory of work-family enrichment](#). *Academy of Management Review*. Vol 31, No 1, pp72–92.

Heijstra, T.M. and Rafnsdottir, G.L. (2010) [The internet and academics' workload and work-family balance](#). *The Internet and Higher Education*. Vol 13, No 3, pp158–163.

Jones, S., Johnson-Yale, C., Millermaier, S. and Pérez, F.S. (2008) [Academic work, the internet and US college students](#). *The Internet and Higher Education*. Vol 11, No 3–4, pp165–177.

Kossek, E.E. and Lautsch, B.A. (2012) [Work-family boundary management styles in organizations: A cross-level model](#). *Organizational Psychology Review*. Vol 2, No 2, pp152–171.

Steffensen, D.S., McAllister, C.P., Perrewé, P.L., Wang, G. and Brooks, C.D. (2021) ['You've got mail': A daily investigation of email demands on job tension and work-family conflict](#). *Journal of Business and Psychology*. Vol 37, No 2, pp325–338.

Volini, E., Schwartz, J., Eaton, K., Mallon, D., Van Durme, Y., Hauptmann, M., Scott, R. and Poynton, S. (2020) [The social enterprise in a world disrupted: Leading the shift from survive to thrive](#). *Deloitte Global Human Capitals Trends 2021*. Deloitte.

Vyas, L. (2022) ['New normal' at work in a post-COVID world: work-life balance and labour markets](#). *Policy and Society*. Vol 41, No 1, pp155–167.

Up in the air: The impact of virtual socialisation on newcomers' workplace commitment and belonging

Nima Ali, Heriot-Watt University

Andriana Rapti, University of Nicosia

Juani Swart, University of Bath

Overview

Working remotely is the most evident during COVID-19, which has had an impact on individuals' behaviour (commitment). Many organisations are shifting to flexible workspaces after their successful experiences with remote work. With this new era of embracing the virtual workspace, we need to understand how this influences individuals' communication, relationship, and commitment. This study investigates the impact of virtual socialisation on

newcomers' commitment, by exploring their experience of the richness of media. This has a direct impact, now and in the future, on employees' workplace commitment. To understand how new employees connect to their organisations, in a state of dis-colocation, we conducted a qualitative longitudinal study with a total number of 67 interviews.

Research focus, rationale and questions

With the rapid evolution of digital technologies, more businesses are moving to a digital working environment. Lately, the global pandemic accelerated this digital transformation; indeed, many companies are shifting to a hybrid work environment after their experiences with remote work. With this major shift, traditional opportunities for socialisation-related communication, such as frequent face-to-face meetings or extended contact, have become limited. This can have significant implications on employees' behaviour (commitment), especially the newcomers who are joining the organisation for the first time through this virtual workspace, with no significant contact with their colleagues or their physical organisational environment.

With the imperative era of embracing the virtual workspace (Lund et al, 2021), we need to understand how this influences individuals' communication, relationship, and commitment. Therefore, this research explores the influence of virtual socialisation on newcomers' workplace commitment. It investigates the impact of the richness of multiple media channels that have been used within the remote working and blended work contexts on the quality of individuals' interactions and relationships (Daft and Lengel, 1986; Ishii et al, 2019). The research offers significant practical implications for businesses in developing their employees' workplace commitment in this new era of hybrid working.

Research methods

A qualitative longitudinal study was conducted to provide a deeper understanding of commitment development through the virtual workspace (Menard, 2002). The data was gathered using semi-structured interviews that took place on two occasions, with a total number of 67 interviews. A group of (38) newcomers was interviewed at the beginning of their employment, and then, after approximately six months, a follow-up interview was conducted. The participants included academic and professional service employees. They all joined their organisations virtually; however, some of them were able to visit the workplace or socialise in person. They were using different channels to communicate with their co-workers and managers. In the interview, they were asked about their channels of communication, socialisation practices, and their current commitment. For data analysis, a thematic analysis was conducted (Braun and Clarke, 2006) to explore any key issues and patterns across cases.

Research findings or argument

In this study, the media varied from exclusively online working to a hybrid context. The main online media channel was video calls. Employees had frequent meetings with organisational members. Sometimes their camera was off, which restricted them to verbal communication. With the absence of facial expressions, they were receiving limited information about each other. Mostly, meetings were work focused, which reduced the social aspects that allow them to develop personal connections. It was difficult to build relationships outside the professional context. Hence, they felt isolated and lonely. With hybrid working, employees met their colleagues physically and experienced the work environment. This allowed them to socialise and develop friendly relationships, although this was limited to direct teams.

With the absence of interactions at the organisational level, there was a lack of feelings of belonging and commitment to the organisation. Even for some of them, the organisation did not exist. The constraint of media, especially in virtual settings, enormously influenced their commitment, as most of them were committed to their jobs and career. Obviously, there was a lack in their commitment to organisations and teams; still, in some cases, they experienced commitment due to the shared values, along with the perceived support from their colleagues. This means, to improve employees' commitment within the virtual workspace, and overcome the limitation of the media, we need to embrace shared values and goals and offer consistent support to employees – likewise, offering effective communication through using multiple media such as face-to-face, video calls, and live chat.

Practical importance and implications of research

The paper offers significant implications for HR practitioners. First, we found that virtual socialisation calls for a reconsideration of commitment, belonging, and emotional connections with teams and organisations. Importantly, now and in the future, we need to take into consideration how media play a role in commitment to the organisation. Interestingly, our data shows that regardless of the type of media that has been used, the shared values and mission of the organisation are what hold them together. Even if they cannot see each other in person, or socialise properly, still believing in the same thing has a major impact on their commitment. This means the alignment between personal and organisational values should be a major factor in the recruitment and selection process. Second, with a lack of interactions at the organisational level, individuals struggle to develop their organisational commitment. Since their main interactions are with their teams, they are therefore the main channel to connect with newcomers and develop their commitment. This puts pressure on managers and co-workers as they become the ambassadors of the organisation. Third, team social and instrumental support has a massive impact on individuals' workplace commitment, especially in this virtual setting. Finally, the limitation of communication (online) makes it difficult to develop deeper connections. This could be improved using combinations of media channels such as face-to-face, video calls, and instant messaging, which can enhance their interactions and develop their relationship.

References

- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) [Using thematic analysis in psychology](#). *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. Vol 3, No 2, pp77–101.
- Daft, R.L. and Lengel, R.H. (1986) [Organizational information requirements, media richness and structural design](#). *Management Science*. Vol 32, No 5, pp554–571.
- Ishii, K., Lyons, M.M. and Carr, S.A. (2019) [Revisiting media richness theory for today and future](#). *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*. Vol 1, No 2, pp124–131.
- Lund, S., Madgavkar, A., Manyika, J., Smit, S., Ellingrud, K., Meaney, M. and Robinson, O. (2021) [The future of work after COVID-19](#). McKinsey Global Institute.
- Menard, S. (2002) *Longitudinal research*. Vol 76. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

How does work-orientated social media impact the employment relationship?

Emma Hughes, University of Liverpool

Severina Cartwright, University of Liverpool

Iain Davies, University of Strathclyde

Lloyd Harris, University of Liverpool

Overview

This research contributes to research, policy and practice around work-orientated social media and its management. Despite the pervasiveness of work-orientated social media (SM), there is a lack of empirical research exploring the workplace tensions it triggers. We respond to this gap by drawing upon rich qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with 67 managers at different seniority levels. Our study highlights how SM is managed by organisations through HR practices and policies; and by individual organisational members through their behaviours and strategies. The findings have implications for various groups, including HR practitioners, managers, workers, their representatives, professional bodies and policy-makers.

Research focus, rationale and questions

SM includes a range of internal and external engagement platforms such as professional social networks (for example, LinkedIn, Twitter, Microsoft Yammer, Facebook/Facebook's Workforce) and digital communication platforms (for example, WhatsApp, WeChat). We use 'work-orientated SM' to refer to SM platforms used in a work context.

Researchers have argued that work-orientated SM augments firm performance by building connections with various stakeholders (Kumar and Pansari, 2016). However, the ubiquity of work-orientated SM has been characterised as potentially problematic for workers (for example, McDonald and Thompson, 2016; Rasmussen, 2021). These potential problems have, to date, been largely neglected by researchers. Furthermore, manager perspectives on these issues are lacking. Overall, we know little about how SM is managed by organisations through practices and policies, on the one hand, and individual organisational members through their behaviours and strategies on the other. Our aim is to address these gaps by applying a paradox lens (Keegan et al, 2019; Fairhurst et al, 2016). Paradoxes can be defined as 'persistent contradictions between interdependent elements' (Schad et al, 2016: 10). They are important to study because HR practitioners, managers and employees continually navigate different types of paradoxes.

We examine the following research questions:

- How does work-orientated SM trigger paradoxical tensions?
- How do managers experience these tensions?

Research methods

Sixty-seven (67) in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted lasting between 47 and 88 minutes. The participants were recruited from personal connections and networks such as LinkedIn. The participants were managers from HR, marketing and operations at three key hierarchical levels:

- 1 directors
- 2 senior managers, and
- 3 middle/first-line managers.

The interview transcripts were analysed using template analysis (King, 2012). Two researchers analysed recurrent patterns in the interviews independently and thereafter discussed the results, enabling investigator triangulation (Denzin, 1978). Codes and themes were then developed from the data relating to the research questions.

Research findings or argument

We identify three main SM tensions in the interview data that are relevant for HR practitioners, managers and workers: 'personal versus work-orientated SM'; 'in-work versus outside-work SM engagement'; and 'protecting reputation versus controlling SM use'. The data also highlights SM paradoxes that organisations and their members navigate.

The findings expand insights into how responding to SM tensions and paradoxes may involve organisations and their members navigating boundaries. Specifically, we show how SM encroaches upon traditional boundaries, such as between home–work, colleagues–friends and public–private. For example, the managers engaging with social media usually did so outside their working hours, therefore curtailing their work–life boundaries. The pervasiveness of these blurred boundaries is subtle and becomes normalised, but also generates resistance and contention, even among managers at different hierarchical levels or in different departments.

Practical importance and implications of research

The study has implications for a range of groups, including HR practitioners, managers, workers, their representatives, professional bodies and policy-makers. Employers must acknowledge the privacy implications of SM, which may prevent engagement. However, if employees and managers are willing to engage in SM to support the organisation, employers need to implement fair reward and work allocation practices, and provide clear SM guidance. Other practical solutions may involve carefully evaluating how instant digital communication platforms are used in organisations; and providing work phones to all staff. Ideally, workplace initiatives would be strengthened by policy interventions.

References

- Denzin, N.K. (1978) Triangulation. In Denzin, N.K. (ed.) (2009) [*The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*](#). New York: Routledge.
- Fairhurst, G.T., Smith, W.K., Banghart, S.G., Lewis, M.W., Putnam, L.L., Raisch, S. and Schad, J. (2016) [*Diverging and Converging: Integrative Insights on a Paradox Meta-perspective*](#). *Academy of Management Annals*. Vol 10, No 1, pp173–182.
- Keegan, A., Brandl, J. and Aust, I. (2019) [*Handling tensions in human resource management: Insights from paradox theory*](#). *German Journal of Human Resource Management*. Vol 33, No 2, pp79–85.
- King, N. (2012) [*Doing template analysis*](#). In Symon, G. and Cassell, C. (eds) *Qualitative Organizational research: Core methods and current challenges*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Kumar, V. and Pansari, A. (2016) [*Competitive advantage through engagement*](#). *Journal of Marketing Research*. Vol 53, No 4, pp497–514.

McDonald, P. and Thompson, P. (2016) [Social media\(tion\) and the reshaping of public/private boundaries in employment relations](#). *International Journal of Management Reviews*. Vol 18, No 1, pp69–84.

Rasmussen, J. (2021) [Share a little of that human touch: The marketable ordinariness of security and emergency agencies' social media efforts](#). *Human Relations*. Vol 74, No 9, pp1–26.

Schad, J., Lewis, M.W., Raisch, S. and Smith, W.K. (2016) [Paradox research in management science: Looking back to move forward](#). *Academy of Management Annals*. Vol 10, No 1, pp5–64.

2C: Abuse, bullying and employee relations

What influences the relationship between workplace bullying and wellbeing? A systematic review of moderating factors

Samuel Farley, University of Sheffield Management School

Daniella Mokhtar, The National University of Malaysia

Kara Ng, University of Manchester

Karen Niven, University of Sheffield

Overview

Our systematic review aimed to understand the impact of workplace bullying on employee wellbeing by reviewing which factors best protect bullying targets. We reviewed 56 papers, which reported on 180 statistical tests, finding that social support and a psychosocial safety climate were the two factors which most consistently limited the impact of bullying on employee wellbeing. Interestingly, our review found that personality factors, leadership, and different coping strategies were inconsistent and ineffective moderators of bullying. Overall, our research suggests that to protect bullying targets, organisations should seek to develop a psychosocial safety climate and establish supportive relationships among employees.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Recently, there has been a significant increase in the number of studies examining factors that influence the relationship between workplace bullying and employee wellbeing. These studies are useful because they demonstrate which factors are effective and ineffective at supporting bullying targets. However, given the volume of papers addressing distinct moderators, a review is needed to provide an evidence-based overview on effective and ineffective moderating factors. Such a review is necessary so that organisations can develop evidence-informed measures to support targets. Our research therefore systematically reviewed studies that have examined moderators of the relationship between workplace bullying and employee wellbeing, using the Job Demands Resources Model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007) as an organising framework. This framework outlines five main categories of moderator (Lee et al, 2020):

- 1 Home-based resources refer to factors from the home domain that support individuals' development and wellbeing.
- 2 Personal resources are characteristics of the individual that contribute to optimal functioning.
- 3 Job resources are aspects of a job that are functional in achieving work goals.
- 4 Social resources are the supportive interactions and relationships that one has with one's colleagues.
- 5 Organisational resources are elements of the organisational environment that help the achievement of work goals and stimulate personal growth, learning, and development.

We sought to use this organising framework to identify the factors that best protect bullying targets and to provide directions for future research.

Research methods

Searches of the literature were carried out in the PsycINFO, Web of Science and Scopus databases. To be included in the review, papers had to include a moderator of the relationship between workplace bullying and wellbeing, focus on a sample of the working population, be published in a peer-reviewed journal, and be written in English. Fifty-six studies met the inclusion criteria, which collectively reported on 180 tests of moderation, of which 81 (45%) were significant at the $p < .05$ level. Two moderators were categorised as home demands/resources, 105 as personal demands/resources, four as job demands/resources, 24 as social demands/resources, and 41 as organisational demands/resources.

Research findings or argument

Analysis revealed that eight moderators showed relatively consistent buffering effects: resilience, job autonomy, co-worker support, general workplace social support, workplace friendship, psychosocial safety climate, perceived organisational support, and high-involvement work practices. However, of these eight moderators, social support and a psychosocial safety climate were the most effective factors at buffering the impact of bullying.

Our review also found that social and organisational resources were more consistent moderators of bullying than personal factors. This suggests that organisations should focus to a greater extent on developing a supportive climate and developing supportive relations among employees, rather than seeking to develop interventions that seek to change the individual (for example, assertiveness training, communication training).

Interestingly, although leadership has been suggested to play a critical role in the bullying process (Woodrow and Guest, 2017), we found that leadership styles were ineffective or inconsistent moderators of the bullying-to-wellbeing relationship. Therefore, future research should seek to establish how and when leaders act to prevent their followers experiencing harm as a result of bullying.

Practical importance and implications of research

We found that psychosocial safety climates consistently buffered the impact of bullying, yet prior research has reported that such climates can also prevent bullying (for example, Dollard et al, 2017). Therefore, to prevent and address bullying, organisations should seek to design psychosocial safety climates that: (1) make clear that bullying will be punished, rather than rewarded or tolerated; (2) involve jobs that are designed to minimise characteristics

related to bullying, such as role conflict, role ambiguity, job insecurity, and cognitive demands; and (3) involve clear and fair procedures for resolving conflicts before they escalate into bullying.

In addition, our finding that social support can protect employees from some of the harmful effects of bullying also has implications for organisations – not least because friendships at work have a range of other beneficial effects, including socialisation and positive identity development (Pillemer and Rothbard, 2018). Therefore, organisations should consider how best to build friendships among their employees. This is especially important to consider during a time when remote working has become more common, as this may restrict the opportunity for informal friendships to emerge. Team-building activities and away days have traditionally been used to build social support; however, these may not be appropriate in every organisation and so managers may benefit from consulting staff on how they can build a more supportive working environment.

References

- Bakker, A. and Demerouti, E. (2007) [The Job Demands-Resources model: State of the art](#). *Journal of Managerial Psychology*. Vol 22, No 3, pp309–328.
- Dollard, M.F., Dormann, C., Tuckey, M.R. and Escartín, J. (2017) [Psychosocial safety climate \(PSC\) and enacted PSC for workplace bullying and psychological health problem reduction](#). *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*. Vol 26, No 6, pp844–857.
- Lee, J.Y., Rocco, T.S. and Shuck, B. (2020) [What is a Resource: Toward a Taxonomy of Resources for Employee Engagement](#). *Human Resource Development Review*. Vol 19, No 1, pp5–38.
- Pillemer, J. and Rothbard, N.P. (2018) [Friends without benefits: Understanding the dark sides of workplace friendship](#). *Academy of Management Review*. Vol 43, No 4, pp635–660.
- Woodrow, C. and Guest, D.E. (2017) [Leadership and approaches to the management of workplace bullying](#). *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*. Vol 26, No 2, pp221–233.

Managing employee relations in the NHS in the ‘new normal’

Anthony Bennett, University of Central Lancashire

Adrian Wright, University of Central Lancashire

Gemma Wibberley, University of Central Lancashire

Mary Lawler, University of Central Lancashire

Overview

The paper presents a detailed analysis of employment relations in the NHS, as the Service emerges from the pandemic and into a ‘new normal’. Working with the Healthcare People Management Association and CMP Solutions, the study is based on 229 survey responses and 22 in-depth interviews with HR leaders, senior practitioners and union representatives.

In assessing the potential efficacy of a culture change, key findings include concern over: the capability and capacity of line managers; the key role of HR; staff wellbeing; ways of more effectively managing conflict, where relationship and personal issues figure high as significant reasons for workplace disputes.

Research focus, rationale and questions

The paper provides a detailed analysis of the state of employment relations in the NHS across the UK, as the Service emerged from the height of the pandemic and into a 'new normal' for people management. It critically reviews key elements of the management of the employment relationship to better understand the longer-term implications of the pandemic for employment relations and assesses how NHS organisations can better meet the resultant people management and staff wellbeing challenges. The rationale was to critically assess the efficacy of strategies for changing the culture of employee relations. Models, such as the 'just and learning culture' and also 'the civility and respect toolkit', figured regularly in discussions with respondents and appear valuable parts of an overall framework for driving change in people management approaches in the Service. Results reveal, for instance, that key concepts of 'restorative justice' and a 'compassionate leadership' approach were well understood by most respondents in terms of their application to the Service. The survey explored five main areas: the current state of employee relations coming out of the height of the pandemic; the nature of conflict and its resolution currently in the Service; what issues respondents felt would be most pressing as they move into the new normal; what the impact of COVID has been on people management as the Service moves into the next 12 months; and what overall strategies are needed to address the resultant employee relations challenges going forward.

Research methods

The research was carried out between November 2021 and March 2022. The project had three main elements. The first was a review of research and literature from practitioners and academics, reflecting on the challenges coming out of the pandemic. This review aided the development of the second element, an online survey that was distributed to HR practitioners, union representatives and managers across the NHS; it was completed by 229 respondents. Key themes that needed more in-depth investigation were then integrated into the interview plan, for the third element. Twenty-two (22) respondents participated in semi-structured interviews, covering senior HR managers and HR practitioners, managers and trade union representatives. Interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and were conducted through Microsoft Teams. All interviews were transcribed and then thematically analysed. The final research findings are based on the reported views and experiences of staff from the survey and interviews.

Research findings or argument

The key findings from the research are that the prime barrier to good employee relations is the capability and capacity of line managers to deliver increasingly devolved HR tasks. Further investigation revealed that the causes for this were more nuanced, particularly in terms of the operational pressures on those managers and the type and degree of support they expected from HR colleagues. Given the impact of the pandemic, staff wellbeing and its management is also a key theme of the report. The effective management of conflict was also a major focus of the research, where there appeared strong support for, where possible, informal procedures such as workplace mediation in resolving disputes. Home and hybrid working were both seen as possible sources of dispute if not managed effectively. To this end, pre-emptive changes to policy and practices in terms of managing requests for flexible

work featured highly in the discussions and survey outcomes. In resonance with Saundry and Urwin (2021), the research has similarly identified opportunities to address the causes of conflict that will have real cost benefits for the NHS. In terms of current HR initiatives, satisfaction with the effectiveness of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policy and practice was consistently reported, with the caveat of the increasing need to address issues for ethnic minority staff within the Service. Crucially, regarding evidence for support of culture change, two out of the top three employee relations priorities identified by survey respondents were 'promoting justice and fairness' and 'promoting civility and respect'.

Practical importance and implications of research

It is apparent from the research that, while overall many positive measures of employee relations exist, for example for EDI and union–management relationships, several other key issues warrant action by organisations within the NHS. These include: addressing key reasons for potential conflict, such as requests for flexible working and managing hybrid and remote working staff; increasing the use of mediation as a practical vehicle for managing relationships and personal disputes among staff; the central role of the line manager in achieving effective management of employee relations was the most pressing issue raised by all respondents; and, crucially, in terms of their capacity to do those tasks, the training, development and ongoing support from HR they require. Furthermore, the paper seeks to offer further practical evidence for operationalising effectively people management objectives for the NHS. In terms of effecting real change in employee relations culture, one, quite typical, union representative candidly remarked that, 'Immense time, effort and resources is being put into effective culture and wellbeing programmes but no material support is being offered.' Importantly, the findings reveal that addressing the causes of conflict, such as line manager ability and capacity, issues of employee wellbeing and managing flexible working, all resonate with Saundry and Urwin's (2021) costs of conflict research. Therefore, it demonstrates real cost benefits for the NHS in addressing these issues. The objective is to get 'buy-in' from stakeholders at all levels of the NHS to make the necessary cultural changes consistently articulated in this research.

References

- Bevan, S. and Cooper, C. (2022) *The Healthy Workforce: Enhancing Wellbeing and Productivity in the Workers of the Future*. Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Boxall, P. and Purcell, J. (2011) *Strategy and human resource management*. 3rd ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- CIPD. (2021a) [A guide to dealing with conflict at work: Guidance for line managers](#). London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
- CIPD. (2021b) [Flexible working: Lessons from the pandemic](#). London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
- Hesketh, I. and Cooper, C. (2019) [Wellbeing at work: How to design, implement and evaluate an effective strategy](#). London: Kogan Page.
- Hutchinson, S. and Purcell, J. (2010) [Managing ward managers for roles in HRM in the NHS: Overworked and under-resourced](#). *Human Resource Management Journal*. Vol 20, No 4, pp357–374.
- Issar, P. (2021) [The future of NHS human resources and organisational development](#). London: NHS England and NHS Improvement.

- Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust. (2016) [*Restorative just and learning culture*](#).
- NHS. (2021) [*Supporting our staff: A toolkit for promoting cultures of civility and respect*](#). London: NHS England and NHS Improvement Civility and Programme.
- NHS. (2021) [*NHS England and NHS Improvement*](#).
- NHS. (2021) [*We are the NHS: People Plan for 2020/2021 – action for us all*](#).
- NHS. (2021) [*People Promise*](#).
- Renwick, D. (2003) [*Line manager involvement in HRM: An inside view*](#). *Employee Relations*. Vol 25, No 3, pp262–280.
- Saundry, R., Fisher, V. and Kinsey, S. (2020) [*Disconnected human resource? Proximity and the \(mis\)management of workplace conflict*](#). *Human Resource Management Journal*. Vol 31, No 2, pp476–492.
- Saundry, R. and Urwin, P. (2021) [*Estimating the costs of workplace conflict*](#). London: Acas.

Customer misbehaviour in the UK hospitality industry is a big deal: Changing workplace norms, cultures and priorities

Anastasios Hadjisolomou, University of Strathclyde

Dennis Nickson, University of Strathclyde

Irma Booyens, University of Strathclyde

Taylor Cunningham, University of Strathclyde

Tom Baum, University of Strathclyde

Overview

This paper discusses the increasing, and worsening, customer misbehaviour in the hospitality sector during the COVID-19 pandemic, putting employees' physical and mental health at risk. Worryingly, the data shows a lack of support by management, expecting workers to accept and tolerate the abuse and harassment that they face from customers. This paper raises important implications for HR practice, proposing the development of organisational cultures that foster physical and psychological safety to discourage deviant workplace behaviours and protect front-line workers from customer abuse. Additionally, it calls for new legislation and regulation to protect service workers from third party abuse and harassment.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Customer misbehaviour is, undeniably, endemic in the hospitality sector and it is driven by business models dominated by the ideology that the customer 'is always right' (Korczynski and Evans, 2013). Worryingly, this approach seems to imply that customers may abuse and even sexually harass workers with impunity and without evident penalties for their (mis)behaviour, while workers have to tolerate it and remain silent (Ram, 2018), or even accept it as 'part of the job' (Poulston, 2008).

The current socio-economic crisis raises important questions that need to be further investigated in relation to customer misbehaviour, how workers experience it and the role of HR, management, and policy-makers in protecting workers. Existing evidence shows that customer misbehaviour has not only continued but has worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic, putting employees' physical and mental health at risk. Alarming, a lack of support by management has been reported, with management tending to side with the customer, expecting workers to accept and tolerate the abuse and harassment that they face from customers (Booyens et al, 2022). This paper provides an in-depth empirical analysis of customer abuse on the hospitality front line in a period of socio-economic crisis, addressing the following research questions:

- to understand whether customer misbehaviour is embedded within the industry and how employees experience it
- to assess what support, if any, management offers to workers experiencing abuse and sexual harassment in this context
- to consider appropriate HR/management practices and policy responses to protect workers and employee wellbeing.

Research methods

The paper draws on a cross-sectional survey allowing for data collection from a range of participants. Self-report surveys are used to examine prevailing themes and collect data on multiple variables over a relatively short period but focused on a specific point in time (Cherry, 2019). Specifically, the survey was rolled out during the first phase of the pandemic (in June–October 2021), distributed via social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn), our alumni and relevant industry/third sector contacts. Respondents were asked to self-identify as persons who have worked in hospitality in Scotland. The survey had 322 responses overall, across a range of hospitality organisations.

Research findings or argument

The findings show that abusive behaviours from customers are frequent, with the most pronounced types of misbehaviour experienced, as per our survey, being verbal abuse and sexual harassment. Over 80% of respondents reported that they experienced verbal abuse, and 64% reported sexual harassment. Furthermore, half of the participants had witnessed physical abuse towards other employees and 77% reported having witnessed sexual harassment towards their colleagues. The evidence of this study underscores that customer misbehaviour has not only continued but worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly 80% of the respondents said the introduction of social distancing and other protective measures had further triggered customer misbehaviour.

Alarming, 59% of the respondents stated they did not report incidents of abuse and/or harassment. This was driven by the perceptions of abuse and harassment being part of the job by both management and workers. For example, respondents said that they were told by management that the misbehaviour they had witnessed or experienced 'wasn't a big deal' and were told to 'not bother' with officially reporting it. Participants who did not report their abuse for fear of repercussions were typically concerned about their job security, felt vulnerable, suggested that abuse was not taken seriously by management, and/or management remain dismissive towards such (mis)behaviours by customers. Indeed, the data reveals that despite the existence of policies and discourses of zero tolerance towards abuse, hospitality workers experience high levels of abuse and harassment by customers. This is a phenomenon that this paper calls 'social washing'.

Practical importance and implications of research

The continuing prevalence of abuse and harassment toward front-line service employees has increasingly led trade unions and policy-makers to argue for the need to introduce measures to address customer abuse. This paper shows that both HR and line management has an important role to play in protecting front-line workers and reversing existing approaches in dealing with these issues. Organisations are socially responsible to prioritise employee wellbeing and take on a duty of care for their staff. This requires managers and human resource professionals to create organisational cultures that foster physical and psychological safety to discourage deviant workplace behaviours (Madera et al, 2018; Tan et al, 2020). Protocols or policies for dealing with difficult or uncivil customers need to be developed for the use of managers. It is important, however, that these policies are applied on the front line in order to be effective. Therefore, organisations need to develop management training programmes regarding customer abuse and harassment and ensure that front-line managers implement such policies. Furthermore, greater support is required for victims of abuse and/or harassment. This support should include HR professionals ensuring that the incidents are recognised and not ignored, and then that individuals get the mental health, trauma counselling or other psychological interventions they might need. It is argued that front-line managers and/or human resource professionals should draw on available expertise, either internally or externally to the organisation, to ensure that they can proactively deal with such situations with the appropriate duty of care and sensitivity it deserves. Finally, this paper supports and considers the call for new legislation and regulations to protect service workers from third party abuse and harassment by assessing the potential impact of legislation currently being developed in this area.

References

- Booyens, I., Hadjisolomou, A., Nickson, D., Cunningham, T. and Baum, T. (2022) [‘It’s not a big deal’: Customer misbehaviour and social washing in hospitality](#). *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. Vol 34, No 11, pp4123–4141.
- Cherry, K. (2019) [How do cross-sectional studies work?](#) Verywell Mind.
- Hadjisolomou, A. and Simone, S. (2021) [Profit over people? Evaluating morality on the front line during the COVID-19 crisis: a front-line service manager’s confession and regrets](#). *Work, Employment and Society*. Vol 35, No 2, pp396–405
- Korczyński, M. and Evans, C. (2013) [Customer abuse to service workers: an analysis of its social creation within the service economy](#). *Work Employment and Society*. Vol 27, No 5, pp768–784.
- Madera, J.M., Guchait, P. and Dawson, M. (2018) Managers’ reactions to customer vs coworker sexual harassment. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. Vol 30, No 2, pp1211–1227.
- Poulston, J. (2008) [Metamorphosis in hospitality: a tradition of sexual harassment](#). *International Journal of Hospitality Management*. Vol 27, No 2, pp232–240.
- Ram, Y. (2018) [Hostility or hospitality? A review on violence, bullying and sexual harassment in the tourism and hospitality industry](#). *Current Issues in Tourism*. Vol 21, No 7, pp760–774.
- Tan, M.P.C., Kwan, S.S.M., Yahaya, A., Maakip, I. and Voo, P. (2020) [The importance of organizational climate for psychosocial safety in the prevention of sexual harassment at work](#). *Journal of Occupational Health*. Vol 62, No 1, e12192.

3A: Attracting workers and shaping good jobs

HRM challenges, migrant workers and the regulation of migration post-Brexit/post-COVID-19: Evidence from four sectors

Zinovijus Ciupijus, University of Leeds

Chris Forde, University of Leeds

Gabriella Alberti, University of Leeds

Overview

This research paper analyses policy implications of the changing migration regulation regime in the UK for four sectors: hospitality, warehousing, food manufacture and care work. These sectors have tended to be highly dependent on migrant workers. Outflows of migrant workers as a result of Brexit and COVID-19 and the introduction of a new migration system have affected the abilities of firms operating within these sectors to retain and attract labour. This paper explores common patterns across sectors and examines emerging differences. It considers how HRM practices and employee work orientations are changing in response to shifting socio-economic and regulatory contexts.

Research focus, rationale and questions

This presentation represents a theoretical framework and findings from a research project funded by the ESRC, looking at migration, employer strategies and dialogue, which commenced in autumn 2021. The ending of freedom of movement of labour as a result of the UK's exit from the EU and the COVID-19 pandemic constitute an unprecedented case of re-regulation of labour mobility, with wide implications for HRM in Britain. The research project and the presentation explore the following questions:

- How are employers in key low-paid sectors (social care, hospitality, food and drink processing and warehousing) responding to the changes of the post-Brexit and post-pandemic settlement?
- How are migrant workers faring in the UK labour market after the introduction of the new migration system and how are labour intermediaries and transnational networks ('migration infrastructures') shaping their socio-economic experiences in the transition?
- What are the ways in which different stakeholders manage the end of free movement from the EU and the pandemic crisis in terms of recruitment, retention, (re)training, or substitution strategies?

Research methods

To understand the emergence of new practices in the uncertainty of the current socio-economic situation, a mixed-method approach is employed by this study. The first qualitative element includes interviews with sector-based stakeholders: trade bodies, skills councils and union groups. We also draw on secondary data analysis from the Labour Force Survey and the ONS Vacancy Survey.

We also report findings from an original survey of 1,600 employers in the four sectors of hospitality, food manufacturing, social care and warehousing. This survey examines employers' workforce strategies, responses to labour shortages and the changing migration regime, recruitment and selection, pay, and training practices. The survey is in the field from July to November 2022, and the presentation will provide first insight into findings from this significant new survey.

Research findings or argument

The findings are results of an ongoing research project. Initial primary findings from exploratory interviews with stakeholders and secondary data analysis point to a common trend of increased labour shortages; as a result of it, employers experience difficulties in hiring and recruiting new workers. There is also evidence of labour mobility between sectors – workers moving to a sector (the warehousing) with a more rapidly growing level of pay. Hospitality continues to experience difficulties around recruitment linked to long-term effects of COVID-19. There is evidence that closures and lockdowns in 2020–21 created doubts among workers over job security and pay in this sector, contributing to labour shortages. The new points-based system increases difficulties in recruitment in all sectors. Employers are also under pressure to meet workers' expectations around pay and conditions in response to rising inflation.

The national survey results (to be available in late 2022) will provide an accurate picture on how employers adapted their HR practices in response to structural labour market changes and new migration regulations.

Practical importance and implications of research

This study has a strong stakeholder focus, which is reflected in the co-production approach adapted methodologically: survey and interview questions are developed through dialogue with the research project's board members, including employer association representatives, unions and local government policy-makers. This allows taking into account 'real life' perspectives of stakeholders and insights into factual issues and challenges around migration, but also potential solutions. The case study interviews will seek to identify advanced HR practices developed by employers across four sectors; it will also bring an employee perspective, enabling managers to better understand the needs and expectations of the workforce.

This study will engage with insights from research conducted by the CIPD over skills and labour shortages (CIPD, 2021) and the CIPD Good Work index (CIPD, 2022). This paper will be of interest to academic researchers focused on wide-ranging topics from skills to labour migrant integration. The research findings overall will help employers to understand responses to the changing migration regime, and to develop more efficient and equitable recruitment and staffing policies. It will also provide policy-makers with an objective view of post-Brexit/post-COVID-19 realities of paid employment in four key sectors the UK economy. This research project has already attracted interest: *People Management* (2022) interviewed the principal investigator and the board member (a head of warehousing association body) over the impact of Brexit and new migration regulations on HRM.

Universal Credit and employers: Exploring the demand side of active labour market policy

Katy Jones, Manchester Metropolitan University

Calum Carson, Manchester Metropolitan University

Overview

This paper presents findings from ESRC-funded research focused on employers' views and experiences of Universal Credit and the active labour market policies (ALMP) that underpin it. As the main source of support for people who are unemployed or on a low income, understanding employer perspectives on policies designed to support people to move into and progress in work can help to inform more effective policy and practice. This paper will explore how ALMP impacts UK businesses, including how they recruit, retain and progress their staff, and identifies scope for policy-makers in this field to better support broader 'decent work' agendas.

Research focus, rationale and questions

HRM scholars have identified the importance of employers for active labour market policy (ALMP) outcomes as those actors ultimately in control of the employment opportunities that participants are seeking to access (Sissons and Green, 2017; Van Berkel et al, 2017). In the UK, where Universal Credit (UC) (the main vehicle for ALMP) may involve new requirements for working UC claimants (formerly in receipt of tax credits) to engage with and meet the requirements of the UK's public employment service (Jobcentre Plus), UK ALMP is increasingly a more explicit part of the world of work (Etherington, 2020; Jones, 2022). However, employer perspectives on support for people who are unemployed or on a low income to move into and progress in work are rarely heard (Ingold, 2020). Furthermore, how social security payments conditional on work search and other work-related activities shape the 'demand side' (that is, employment practices and the quality of work) is often overlooked in both research and policy. Against a backdrop of low pay, insecure work and rising in-work poverty, and as ALMPs adapt in response to economic change, understanding employer perspectives is critical to ensure that policy is developed to support rather than frustrate broader policy commitments to 'decent work'.

This paper will address two key questions:

- How does UK active labour market policy shape the way employers recruit, retain and progress their staff?
- How should the public employment service (Jobcentres) engage with employers, leading to better outcomes for individuals, businesses and the wider economy?

Research methods

The paper is based on 124 semi-structured qualitative interviews with employers and wider practice stakeholders. More specifically:

- 84 interviews with employers drawn predominantly from the social care, hospitality and retail sectors
- 20 interviews with national policy and practice stakeholders
- 20 interviews with local policy and practice stakeholders (drawn from West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester).

Employers and local policy stakeholders and practitioners are drawn from across West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester. Employers are broadly defined as anyone with influence/power over recruitment and line management (owner-managers, HR managers, line managers). The employer sample includes a mix of micro/SME/large businesses operating in a range of economic geographies including city centres and towns.

The support of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is gratefully acknowledged (Grant Ref: ES/V004093/1).

Research findings or argument

Key findings will centre on:

- identifying how (and if) UK active labour market policies shape the way employers recruit, retain and progress their staff
- identifying scope for ALMP to promote the good work agenda and improve rather than undermine job quality.

Analysis is currently under way, with a final report to be published in January/February 2023.

Practical importance and implications of research

This research has been designed to have clear benefits for multiple stakeholders: policy-makers in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will benefit through the insight it will provide into employer interactions with ALMP; employers will benefit as it will enable their voices to be heard on policy that impacts them and their staff; employer representative organisations will benefit through greater awareness of how UC impacts on the businesses they represent; employment and skills agencies, unions and other organisations supporting UC claimants will benefit from a greater awareness of how UC interacts with employment practices, which can help to shape their advice and support; Universal Credit claimants will benefit through more informed public debate and policy development that better reflects the realities of work, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of support for claimants; and academics will benefit through new insights and the creation of a new dataset.

References

Etherington, D. (2020) *Austerity, welfare and work: Exploring politics, geographies and inequalities*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Ingold, J. (2020) [Employers' perspectives on benefit conditionality in the UK and Denmark](#). *Social Policy and Administration*. Vol 54, No 2, pp236–249.

Jones, K. (2022) [Heads in the Sand: the Absence of Employers in New Developments in UK Active Labour Market Policy](#). *The Political Quarterly*. Vol 93, No 2, pp253–260.

Sissons, P. and Green, A. (2017) [More than a match? Assessing the HRM challenge of engaging employers to support retention and progression](#). *Human Resource Management Journal*. Vol 27, No 4, pp565–580.

Van Berkel, R., Ingold, J., McGurk, P., Boselie, P. and Bredgaard, T. (2017) [An introduction to employer engagement in the field of HRM: Blending social policy and HRM research in promoting vulnerable groups' labour market participation](#). *Human Resource Management Journal*. Vol 27, No 4, pp503–513.

How do I-deals emerge? Exploring the role of the temporal context and actors in I-deals timing and creation

Dotun Ayeni, University of Edinburgh Business School

Sara Chaudhry, Birkbeck School of Business, London

Maryam Aldossari, Aston Business School, Birmingham

Overview

Given the impact of increased talent flights, a global pandemic, and other uncertainties on employee attraction, engagement and retention, scholarly and anecdotal evidence suggest that employees today are well positioned to negotiate I-deals (non-standard, individualised employment arrangements). However, we know little about how the temporal context (the time-based forces shaping organisational behaviours) impact the timing and creation of I-deals or how actors (employees and their employers) respond to temporal enablers and constraints when negotiating I-deals. Based on findings gleaned from 62 semi-structured interviews, meeting notes, and organisational documents, our qualitative multi-case study reveals that I-deals emerge when the temporal context (that is, a pandemic, industry peculiarities, organisational culture) and employees' social positions (that is, being recognised as talent) intersect. Furthermore, we uncover distinct tactics that employees and their employers adopt to preserve or alter existing organisational practices during I-deals negotiations.

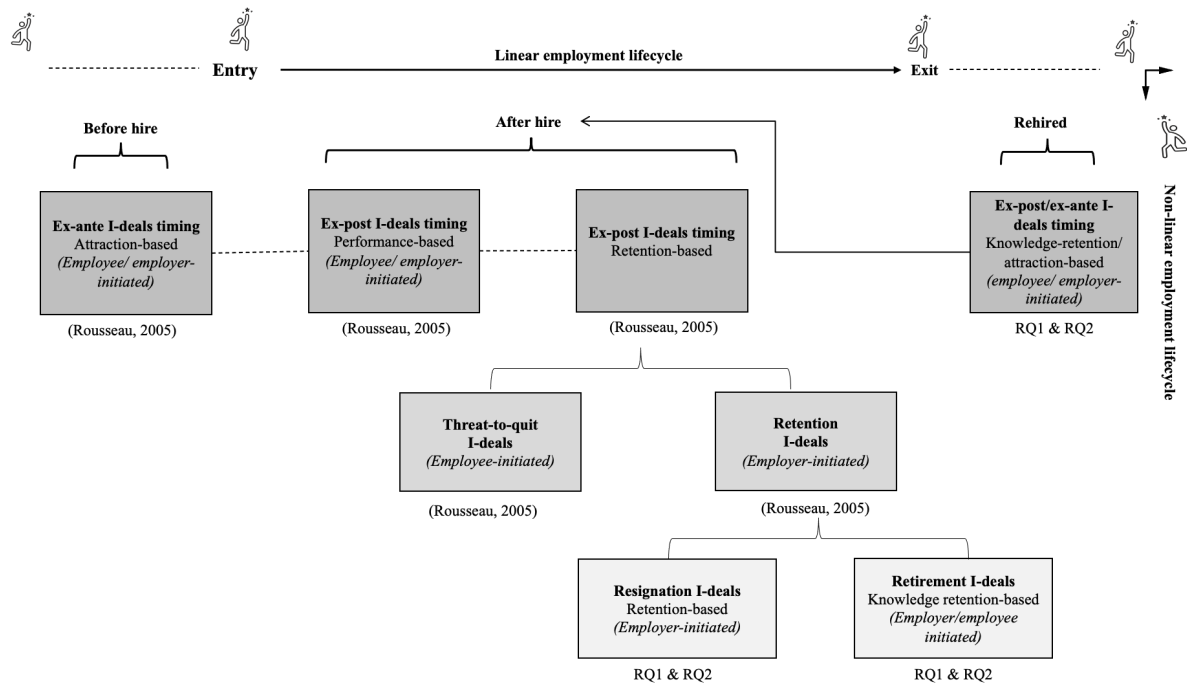
Research focus, rationale and questions

I-deals are 'voluntary personalized agreements of a nonstandard nature negotiated between employees and their employers' (Rousseau et al, 2006: 977). I-deals may include negotiations for time and location flexibility, special training or assignment, preferred task allocations or improved pay and benefits (Guerrero et al, 2016; Las Heras et al, 2017). Extant literature suggests that I-deals are primarily negotiated at two time points in the employment relationship: ex-ante (during hire) and ex-post (after hire) (Rousseau et al, 2006; Rosen et al, 2013). However, I-deals scholarship predominantly focuses on ex-post timing. In Figure 1, we propose other time points when I-deals are likely to be negotiated and propose the party in the relationship most likely to initiate the I-deal. Understanding when I-deals emerge is important because it can help employers struggling to attract, engage and retain hard-to-find employees to manage I-deals negotiations better, and empower employees looking to negotiate to handle such discussions more strategically.

Given our expanded framework, we argue that the temporal forces shaping I-deals creation at different time points in the employment lifecycle are underexplored. Furthermore, we know little about how employees and employers respond when they perceive temporal enablers or constraints during I-deals negotiations. To explore these gaps, we draw on the institutional entrepreneurship (IE) theory (DiMaggio, 1988; Holm, 1995). Specifically, we consider key IE concepts such as 'field-level conditions' and 'actors' social positions' (Seo and Creed, 2002; Battilana, 2016) to examine the following research aims:

- to understand how the temporal context impacts how I-deals are created at specific time points in the employment lifecycle
- to explain how employees and their employers respond to temporal enablers and constraints during I-deals negotiations.

Figure 1: A conceptual expansion of I-deals' timing through the employment lifecycle



Research methods

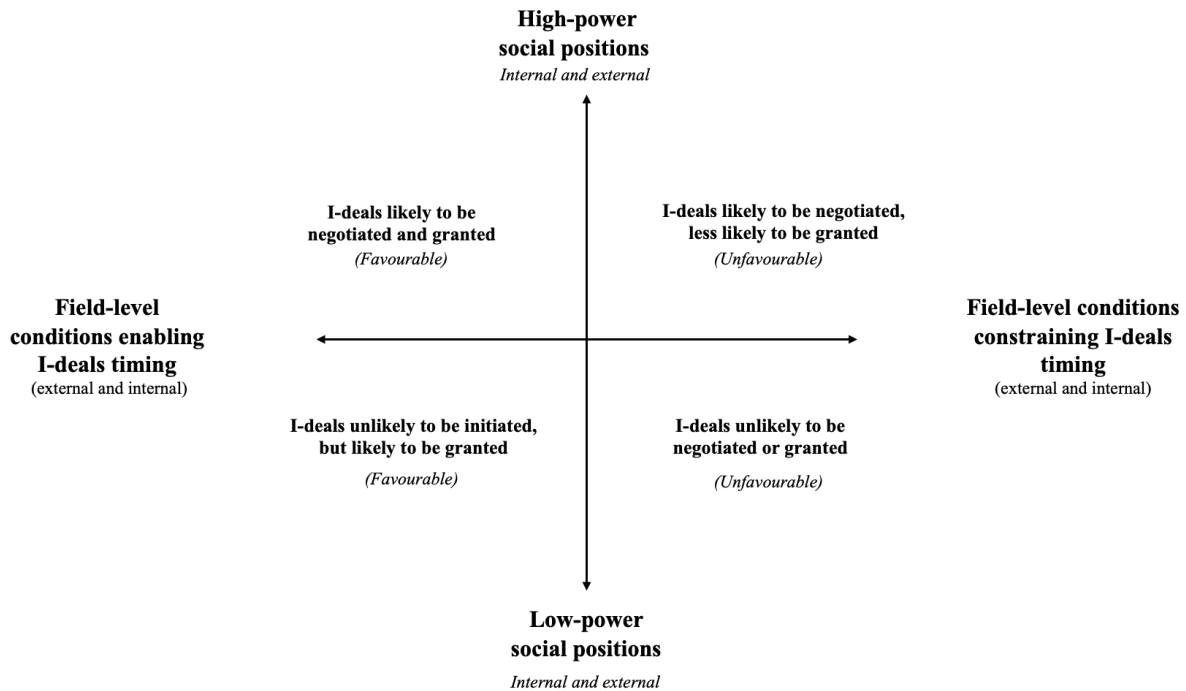
We draw on empirical evidence from three organisations operating in Lagos, Nigeria. Participating firms include a capital market firm (Oscon), an advertng agency (Credo), and a dental clinic (Feyin). All three case firms were identified using a maximum variation sampling strategy to increase the likelihood of employees/employers having previously initiated or granted I-deals (Rousseau, 2001). Interview guides were created for three participant categories – individual employees, supervisors and HR managers – to generate rich and nuanced evidence from key organisational members. Interviews typically lasted for an average of 45–60 minutes. Sixty-two (62) participants were interviewed: 14 at Feyin, 17 at Credo, and 31 at Oscon. We adopt a phronetic iterative approach to data analysis by drawing loosely on extant literature as sensitising devices while examining emergent findings from our data (Tracy, 2018). All research data transcripts, field notes and company documents were analysed using NVivo.

Research findings or argument

Our findings reveal four specific temporal contexts impacting I-deals creation: (1) enabling field-level conditions and high-power social positions; (2) enabling field-level conditions and low-power social positions; (3) constraining field-level conditions and high-power social positions; and (4) constraining field-level conditions and low-power social positions. These temporal contexts impacted the success of I-deals negotiations per time and employee and employer responses during I-deals negotiations.

Enabling field-level conditions and high-power social positions offered the most favourable temporal context for I-deals because it made employers more open to I-deals and emboldened employees seeking I-deals to request. However, constraining field-level conditions (such as industry-wide intolerance for idiosyncrasy in employment arrangements) and low-power social positions (that is, back-end staff) created the least favourable temporal context for I-deals by limiting employer motivations to grant I-deals and employee propensity to negotiate.

Figure 2: A typology of temporal contexts impacting I-deals' creation

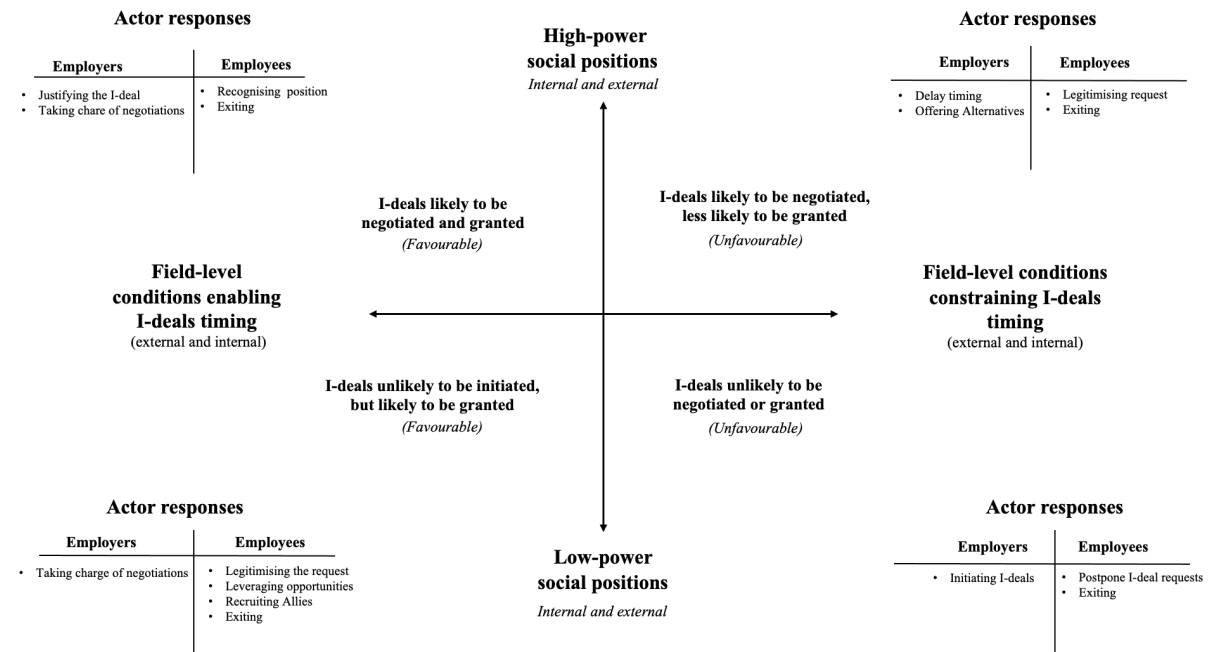


Regarding how employees/employers respond to enabling and constraining temporal conditions, our findings identified five key tactics deployed by individual employees. For example, some tactics used by employees involved recognising their positions in the employment relationship, leveraging opportunities that make I-deals likely to be granted, and legitimating I-deals requests to the employer by referring to I-deals given to colleagues. On the other hand, employers deployed four key tactics. Some employer tactics involved delaying requested I-deals by promising future I-deals or taking charge of negotiations for employees in low social positions or those lacking the zeal to see I-deals discussions through. Based on our findings, we offer a framework (see Figure 2) to illustrate the interactions between field-level conditions and actors' social positions on I-deals creation and employee/employer responses to different temporal context types (see Figure 3).

Practical importance and implications of research

Our findings highlight that organisations experiencing considerable environmental flux should anticipate increased requests for I-deals, particularly when temporal conditions (that is, COVID-19 constraints, industry tolerance for individualised arrangements, organisational culture) and employees' positions in the employment relationship open up avenues for I-deals negotiations. As shown in Figure 3, employers may adopt a range of responses to conditions that enable or constrain I-deals. If an option of preservation (such as delaying timing) is chosen, employers should consider negative implications, such as reduced engagement and higher turnover intentions – especially when promises of future I-deals go unfulfilled, or the alternatives suggested are less than optimal for the employee. However, managers who choose to subvert temporal constraints by taking up negotiations must also consider negative implications, such as co-workers' perception of equity and justice (Marescaux et al, 2019) as well as positive implications, such as remedying inequities in the system, particularly for less-advantaged employee segments (such as disabled workers, older workers and back-end/support staff) (Lepak et al, 2007; Bal, 2015).

Figure 3: Actors' responses to typologies of temporal contexts



This study also has critical implications for employees. For example, during hire, employees can capitalise on vantage positions when engaging in ex-ante I-deals negotiations. While employers may adopt delay tactics, employees should not view all delays negatively because employers must reconcile temporal conditions with attempting to accommodate a divergent I-deal request that may be difficult to implement. Nevertheless, employees must be aware that future promises of I-deals may be unmet/broken. After hire, employees can adopt a temporal subversion tactic (such as leveraging opportunities, legitimising the request, recruiting allies, or exiting) that offers the most benefit. Finally, since the employment relationship is not always linear, rehired employees in high-power social positions may leverage previous organisational knowledge and powerful social positions to negotiate favourably.

References

- Bal, P.M. (2015) [Sustainable careers: Enabling older workers to continue working through individualized work arrangements](#). In De Vos, A. and Van der Heijden, B. (eds) *Handbook of research on sustainable careers*, pp304–318. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Battilana, J. (2016) [Agency and Institutions: The Enabling Role of Individuals' Social Position](#). *Organization*. Vol 13, No 5, pp653–676.
- Dalton, D.W., Garrett, J., Harp, N. and McPhee, G.P. (2021) Antecedents and consequences of Organizational support for alternative work in the accounting profession. *SSRN Electronic Journal*.
- DiMaggio, P.J. (1988) [Interest and agency in institutional theory](#). In Zucker, L.G. (ed.) *Research on institutional patterns: Environment and culture*. Cambridge: Ballinger Publishing Co.
- Guerrero, S., Jeablanc, H. and Vielleux, M. (2016) [Development idiosyncratic deals and career success](#). *Career Development International*. Vol 21, No 1, pp19–30.
- Holm, P. (1995) [The Dynamics of Institutionalization: Transformation Processes in Norwegian Fisheries](#). *Administrative Science Quarterly*. Vol 40, No 3, pp398–422.

Katou, A.A., Budhwar, P.S. and Patel, C. (2020) [Idiosyncratic deals in less competitive labor markets: Testing career i-deals in the Greek context of high uncertainties](#). *International Journal of Human Resource Management*. Vol 32, No 17, pp1–28.

Las Heras, M., Rofcanin, Y., Bal, M.P. and Stollberger, J. (2017) [How do flexibility i-deals relate to work performance? Exploring the roles of family performance and organizational context](#). *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. Vol 38, No 8, pp1280–1294.

Lepak, D.P., Taylor, S.M., Tekleab, A.G., Marrone, J.A. and Cohen, D.J. (2007) [An examination of the use of high-investment human resource systems for core and support employees](#). *Human Resource Management*. Vol 46, No 2, pp223–246.

Marescaux, E., De Winne, S. and Sels, L. (2019) [Idiosyncratic deals from a distributive justice perspective: Examining co-workers' voice behavior](#). *Journal of Business Ethics*. Vol 154, No 1, pp263–281.

Rosen, C.C., Slater, D.J., Chang, C.H.D. and Johnson, R.E. (2013) [Let's make a deal: Development and validation of the ex post I-deals scale](#). *Journal of Management*. Vol 39, No 3, pp709–742.

Rousseau, D.M. (2001) [The idiosyncratic deal: flexibility versus fairness?](#) *Organizational Dynamics*. Vol 29, No 4, pp260–273.

Rousseau, D.M., Ho, V.T. and Greenberg, J. (2006) [I-deals: Idiosyncratic terms in employment relationships](#). *Academy of Management Review*. Vol 31, No 4, pp977–994.

Seo, M.-G. and Creed, W.E.D. (2002) [Institutional contradictions, praxis, and institutional change: A dialectical perspective](#). *The Academy of Management Review*. Vol 27, No 2, pp222–247.

Tracy, S.J. (2018) [A phronetic iterative approach to data analysis in qualitative research](#). *Journal of Qualitative Research*. Vol 19, No 2, pp61–76.

3B: Performance and wellbeing interventions

To what extent do workplace wellbeing interventions actually work? An analysis of existing systematic reviews

Laura Byrne, Aston University

Luke Fletcher, University of Bath

Jonathan Crawshaw, Aston University

Judy Scully, Aston University

Pawan Budhwar, Aston University

Overview

Organisations are increasingly adopting wellbeing interventions and strategies in a bid to improve wellbeing and performance. Numerous studies have sought to evaluate the efficacy of interventions. In turn, various systematic literature reviews (SLRs) have sought to collate

the evidence. Despite this, there is a limited understanding of the contextual issues and causal processes that can lead to lower- versus higher-quality outcomes for employees and organisations. In this meta-review of existing systematic reviews, we provide a deeper and broader evaluation of employee wellbeing intervention research, and highlight how alternative approaches to research could contribute to wellbeing practice.

Research focus, rationale and questions

The CIPD *Health and Wellbeing at Work 2022* survey notes that employee wellbeing is on the agenda of 70% of senior leaders. Thus, many senior leaders, including leaders within people professions, may be looking to academia for support and specifically to findings from SLRs (Briner and Denyer, 2012). SLRs are the 'gold standard' method for collating and reporting on existing evidence (Booth et al, 2016). They report on the efficacy of many primary studies at once. Considering a significant number of senior leaders are seeking to adopt wellbeing interventions for their workforce (CIPD, 2022), this meta-review reports on the current state of our gold standard evidence and suggests where gaps might be filled and advancements made. It also explores alternative paradigms and perspectives to strengthen the quality, as well as practical relevance of wellbeing intervention research.

Meta-review questions:

- 1 To what extent do systematic reviews report on context and causation?
- 2 How has wellbeing been defined and operationalised within reviews?
- 3 What methodologies/methods are included in systematic reviews?
- 4 What approaches do systematic reviews take themselves, for example meta-analysis?
- 5 To what extent do systematic reviews report on the theoretical lenses utilised within studies?
- 6 To what extent do systematic reviews deem the primary evidence to be good, tentative, or inconclusive?

The meta-review reports on the extent to which context and causal processes are reported in SLRs. Moreover, the meta-review reports on the overall patterns and messages that emerge from collectively analysing the reviews on this important topic.

Research methods

This review is a meta-review, in that it is a systematic review of systematic reviews (Hennessy et al, 2019). Therefore, the overall approach is to systematically review what the current gold standard evidence says about employee wellbeing initiatives. This review was conducted and is reported according to PRISMA guidelines (Page et al, 2021). Thus, the meta-review largely replicates the process of conducting an SLR of primary studies. A detailed inclusion and exclusion criteria was produced and papers were selected based on this criteria. All eligible reviews were imported into NVivo and classified. All reviews were then coded using a codebook produced in advance of data analysis. Codes were then critically analysed and examined within NVivo through queries and thematic analysis (Miles et al, 2014). These theory-building queries allow one to explore relationships between items in the project (Jackson and Bazeley, 2019).

Research findings or argument

After duplication checks, a total of 3,450 citations were screened, of which 48 met our criteria for inclusion in the data analysis process. In summary, the evidence contained in these SLRs is predominantly quantitative and tentative – meaning that some associations

have been evidenced, but large variations in findings means that results must be interpreted and reported with caution. Many scholars have suggested that the reason why results from quantitative studies remain tentative is because context and individual circumstances make a real difference to practical phenomena such as wellbeing initiatives (Brannan et al, 2017). For senior managers making decisions about employee wellbeing initiatives in the present, it may be difficult to hear the phrase 'more research is required'. Thus, this paper discusses how organisations and senior leaders can partner with researchers to take a proactive case study approach to understanding wellbeing within their unique context.

While the findings from SLRs are insightful, and practitioners may still wish to bear these in mind, this paper argues that the SLR findings represent a broad and general understanding of employee wellbeing, which should be combined with an intensive understanding of one's company and the specific voice and needs of one's employees (Ackroyd and Karlsson, 2014). This understanding can be achieved through more mixed and qualitative research (such as interviews and focus groups) that seek to understand perspectives regarding needs and current offerings. This approach may also highlight the important role of context and what is really causing issues regarding the experience of wellbeing.

Practical importance and implications of research

Senior leaders and HR professionals understandably wish to embed a wellbeing strategy that matches the needs and requirements of the organisation, the workforce and the issues faced by both at any one time (such as coronavirus, or the cost-of-living crisis) (CIPD, 2022). While SLRs offer insightful broad results regarding specific interventions, this meta-review argues that findings are often tentative, a-contextual (Johns, 2006) and situated within the macro trends and circumstances of the time in which they were produced.

Organisations can take an evidence-based approach to their wellbeing strategy by taking note of the broad findings that exist externally, yet they should also attempt to pay attention to what data and evidence exists internally. This could be achieved through conducting a rigorous internal case study that tests assumptions and recommendations from external evidence, and can provide insight based on context-specific investigations. This may be used to justify or adapt one's strategy and explain why it might be resonating or not with employees/managers and what could be done to improve it.

Therefore, we contribute to wellbeing practice by providing a summary of the gold standard broad evidence that exists while also explaining what is tentatively known and what is currently unknown, and discussing how organisations can partner with researchers to conduct internal case studies that take present-day needs and circumstances into account.

References

- Ackroyd, S. and Karlsson, J.C. (2014) [Critical realism, research techniques and research designs](#). In Edwards, P.K., O'Mahoney, J. and Vincent, S. (eds) *Studying Organizations using critical realism: A practical guide*, pp21–45. Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online.
- Booth, A., Sutton, A. and Papaioannou, D. (2016) [Systematic approaches to a successful literature review](#). 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Brannan, M.J., Fleetwood, S., O'Mahoney, J. and Vincent, S. (2017) [Critical essay: Meta-analysis: A critical realist critique and alternative](#). *Human Relations*. Vol 70, No 1, pp11–39.
- Briner, R.B. and Denyer, D. (2012) [Systematic review and evidence synthesis as a practice and scholarship tool](#). In Rousseau, D. (ed.) *The Oxford handbook of evidence-based*

management: Companies, classrooms, and research, pp112–129. New York: Oxford University Press.

CIPD. (2022) [Health and wellbeing at work 2022](#). London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

Hennessy, E.A., Johnson, B.T. and Keenan, C. (2019) [Best practice guidelines and essential methodological steps to conduct rigorous and systematic meta-reviews](#). *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*. Vol 11, No 3, pp353–381.

Jackson, K. and Bazeley, P. (2019) *Qualitative data analysis with Nvivo*. 3rd ed. London: Sage.

Johns, G. (2006) [The essential impact of context on Organizational behavior](#). *The Academy of Management Review*. Vol 31, No 2, pp386–408.

Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M. and Saldana, J. (2014) *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Page, M.J., McKenzie, J.E., Bossuyt, P.M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T.C., Mulrow C.D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J.M., Akl, E.A., Brennan, S.E., Chou, R., Glanville, J., Grimshaw, J.M., Hróbjartsson, A., Lalu, M.M., Li, T., Loder, E.W., Mayo-Wilson, E., McDonald, S. and Moher, D. (2021) [The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews](#). *British Medical Journal*. Vol 372, No 71.

Performance-related pay contracts and stress: Does worker selection of the payment contract matter?

Keith Bender, University of Aberdeen

Nicole Andelic, University of Aberdeen

Julia Allan, University of Aberdeen

Daniel Powell, University of Aberdeen

Ioannis Theodossiou, University of Aberdeen

Overview

While performance-related pay (PRP) has a number of positive qualities in rewarding and incentivising productivity, recent research suggests a downside to PRP contracts – namely their potential effects on stress and health. This paper reports on an interdisciplinary approach to examining the PRP–stress relationship that utilises an experimental framework to examine whether worker choice over having a PRP contract causes a change in the level of cortisol, the body’s so-called ‘stress hormone’. Results suggest that those choosing a PRP contract experience both an increase in self-reported stress as well as cortisol, suggesting a physiological response to PRP.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Although there is a large body of research in economics and HRM on the benefits of PRP to rewarding productive work and in highly productive workers self-selecting into PRP contracts, research has suggested that some of these positive benefits may be blunted due

to PRP being linked to poor health. As early as the 18th century, Adam Smith (1776) mentions a link between piece rates and poor health. More recently, research based on surveys of workers has confirmed this link (Bender et al, 2012; Bender and Theodossiou, 2014; Artz and Heywood, 2015; Dahl and Pierce, 2020).

While there are a number of mechanisms for the relationship, a key one is stress, as PRP can generate uncertainty in work and income streams and reinforce the drive to produce. However, survey data often has poor proxies for stress – typically only asking self-reported measures. This paper is part of a larger interdisciplinary ESRC-funded project (www.abdn.ac.uk/business/research/PRPH.php) that experimentally examines the link by measuring cortisol, the body's physiological response to stress. While early work in the project (Allan et al, 2021) shows that cortisol does increase for PRP participants, those participants were randomly allocated to PRP contracts. In the labour market, however, workers chose jobs with PRP. It may be that workers choosing PRP can handle stress better and thus mitigate the effects of PRP-generated stress. As explained below, this experiment tests whether the positive association between PRP and stress found in earlier studies remains when participants can choose their payment contract.

Research methods

The experiment consisted of a morning and afternoon session in the experimental lab. In the morning, participants completed two practice 'work tasks', consisting of answering up to 50 maths questions in 10 minutes. They were explicitly informed of how much they could have earned under different payment contracts: 20p per correct answer (PRP) or a fixed sum of £5 for 10 correct answers (non-PRP).

In the afternoon, participants were asked to complete the same work task after choosing between PRP or non-PRP. In addition to self-reported stress measures before and after the task, participants provided salivary cortisol samples to measure physiological stress. The afternoon experiment consisted of four phases: a relaxation phase (with optional colouring-in), the work task, and two more relaxation phases. Cortisol samples were collected after each phase. After data collection, we compared self-reported and physiological stress between participants in the PRP and non-PRP groups.

Research findings or argument

A total of 155 students participated in the experiment. After removing cortisol outliers as recommended in the literature (Nicolson, 2007) and incomplete survey submissions, 146 participants remained in the analysis. Out of those, 65 participants chose non-PRP and 81 chose the PRP contract. Interestingly, as seen in the labour market (Lazear, 2000), there was a significant sorting effect; those who chose PRP achieved higher practice scores (highest mean performance = 26.99) than those in non-PRP (18.48, $p < 0.001$).

Despite the difference in ability, this does not seem to mitigate the effect of PRP on stress: the PRP group rated themselves as significantly more stressed after the task (2.48) in comparison with the non-PRP group (2.11, $p < .008$) on a five-point scale. To measure cortisol change relative to individual baselines, three cortisol change variables were computed: AUCi (area under the curve with respect to increase), peak change (peak value – baseline sample) and overall change (final sample – baseline sample). Statistical comparisons found that PRP participants had significantly higher levels of AUCi (-0.87), peak change (2.34) and overall change (-0.28) in contrast to non-PRP (-15.52, 2.28 and -0.97, p between 0.015 and 0.029), indicating higher levels of physiological stress even after a brief work task.

Finally, cortisol can be affected by a range of other characteristics. Consequently, OLS regressions were estimated controlling for sociodemographic factors and known cortisol confounders. These inclusions reduced the effect of PRP on cortisol, but PRP remained significant at a 10% level, though PRP still generated statistically significant self-rated stress differences.

Practical importance and implications of research

On a scientific level, this paper contributes to the increasing research on how employment contracts impact physiological stress. Prolonged low-grade chronic stress that is present in the constant pressure to perform in PRP jobs can generate consistently high levels of cortisol, leading to an increased allostatic load, which is detrimental to health (McEwen, 1998).

On a more practical level, understanding the intended and unintended consequences of payment contracts is important for firms to understand the productivity of workers, for workers to balance the trade-offs of pay and health, and for health systems which devise policy over public health. Given that more than 15% of workers have some form of PRP in the UK (Andelic et al, 2022), if PRP does unintentionally impact health, all stakeholders need to, at least, learn about ways of mitigating this issue, as stress-induced illness is not only bad directly for workers but also to firms in terms of lost productivity and to public health systems as these illnesses need to be treated. Central to this paper in the light of the earlier research on randomly assigning workers to a PRP contract is that worker selection does not alleviate the effects of PRP on stress. This suggests that firms should consider carefully all of the benefits *and* costs of implementing PRP payment contracts, and even if they are implemented, mitigations should be put in place to help workers reduce the stress, and potential ill health, brought about due to PRP payment contracts.

References

- Allan, J., Andelic, N., Bender, K.A., Powell, D., Stoffel, S. and Theodossiou, I. (2021) [Employment contracts and stress: Experimental evidence](#). *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*. Vol 187(C), pp360–373.
- Andelic, N., Allan, J., Bender, K.A., Powell, D. and Theodossiou, I. (2022) [Performance-related pay and objective measures of health after correcting for sample selection](#). *IZA Working Paper*. DP, No 15000.
- Artz, B. and Heywood, J.S. (2015) [Performance pay and workplace injury: panel evidence](#). *Economica*. Vol 82, pp1241–1260.
- Bender, K.A., Green, C.P. and Heywood, J.S.(2012) [Piece rates and workplace injury: Does survey evidence support Adam Smith?](#) *Journal of Population Economics*. Vol 25, No 2, pp569–590.
- Bender, K.A. and Theodossiou, I. (2014) [The unintended consequences of the rat race: the detrimental effects of performance pay on health](#). *Oxford Economic Papers*. Vol 66, No 3, pp824–847.
- Dahl, M.S. and Pierce, L. (2020) [Pay-for-performance and employee mental health: Large sample evidence using employee prescription drug usage](#). *Academy of Management Discoveries*. Vol 6, No 1, pp12–38.
- Lazear, E.P. (2000) [Performance pay and productivity](#). *American Economic Review*. Vol 90, No 5, pp1346–1361.

McEwen, B.S. (1998) [Stress, adaptation, and disease: Allostasis and allostatic load](#). *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. Vol 840, No 1, pp33–44.

Nicolson, N. (2008) Measurement of cortisol. In Luecken, L.J. and Gallo, L.G. (eds) *Handbook of physiological research methods in health psychology*, pp37–62. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Smith, A. (1776) *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations*. As reprinted in 1909, edited by Bullock, C.J. New York: Collier.

3C: Equality, diversity and inclusion

Who makes a successful surgeon? A longitudinal study of relational inequalities, closure mechanisms, intersectional disadvantage and the HR role in NHS surgery

Carol Woodhams, Surrey Business School, University of Surrey

Overview

Surgeons are resistant to the incorporation of women and ethnic minorities into their profession. Using a longitudinal analysis of gender and ethnic career inequalities for a complete cohort of UK NHS surgeons, we examine factors that condition gendered/racialised promotions and exits from surgical training. Referencing relational organisational inequality frameworks, we explore contexts that generate inequalities. We find inequalities rise in workplaces and surgical sub-specialties with higher white male density, pointing toward gendered and racialised cultural explanations of closure. Effects, however, are moderated in hospitals with robust HR overview. We conclude with insights for organisational inequality process theories and HRM practice.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Inequality on the basis of gender and ethnicity has been studied in medicine, but rarely intersectionally, nor with a focus on closure mechanisms. Conventional explanations within economic traditions deploy connections between human capital (HC) and career success. But the explanatory power of HC frameworks has long since plateaued (Blau and Kahn, 2017; Leicht, 2008) and are ill-suited to explain inequalities within a cohort of professionals with equivalent credentials and training. HC explanations also fail to capture subtle, organisation-level barriers (Blau and Kahn, 2017; England, 1982).

Recently there is a reinvigorated focus on organisational explanations that situate the reproduction of economic inequality within organisational contexts (Bapuji et al, 2020; Cobb, 2016). Relational inequality theory (Tomaskovic-Devey and Avent-Holt, 2019) critiques individual 'merit assumptions' by embedding individuals in the organisational contexts where inequality processes – hiring, occupational assignment, training, and earnings – happen (Baron and Bielby, 1980; Reskin and Bielby, 2005). From this point of view, merit is an interactional accomplishment in which the relative power of organisational actors, including human resources, to claim and assign merit drives opportunities and rewards.

Prior research has relied on heterogeneous samples of organisations and binary employee categorical comparisons (Abendroth et al, 2017; Tomaskovic-Devey et al, 2015). So, focusing on intersectional variation across organisational contexts in the NHS, we offer advances in both research design and intersectional comparisons to ask:

How does (a) white male density at work and (b) organisation type, size and HR influence, condition gendered/racialised promotions and exits from surgical training?

Research methods

We follow the career progression of a cohort of doctors through the first 10 years of their surgical careers from September 2009 to March 2020. We use data from the electronic staff record (ESR) for all surgeons in England provided by NHS Digital. The ESR contains a rich set of information on hospital doctors' job and personal characteristics, including their job grade, specialty, type of training programme, total hours worked, full- or part-time contract, maternity/paternity leave, age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, type and size of hospital trust, trust and sub-specialty composition. We analyse data from a cohort of 3,402 junior surgeons. We directly observe when people leave the surgical speciality to create our first dependent variable. Promotion to surgical consultant is the second dependent variable. Organisation type, indicative of HR formalisation and HR rigour, creates a moderator. Hierarchical logistic regression models with random effects are used to test hypotheses.

Research findings or argument

We find that after controlling for human capital factors, white male junior surgeons receive higher returns to their career investments in surgical training than all other groups. We find that during the 10 years of career tracking, they are much less likely to exit surgical specialities and much more likely to be promoted to senior consulting roles. Even with all career patterns equalised between groups, career advantages to white men are strong and stable.

We also find intersectional patterns of inequalities on the grounds of gender and race, with white men disproportionately progressing comparatively faster and smoothly through surgical training programmes, followed by white women and Indian men, with all others having comparatively higher rates of exit and lower rates of promotion. All inequalities are higher in workplaces and sub-specialties with higher proportions of white men, pointing toward gendered and racialised cultural explanations of closure from surgical specialities.

Finally, in relation to inequality processes, we find that promotion advantages shrink in larger, more formalised hospitals which are subject to greater scrutiny of their decision-making by better resourced HR departments, Royal College accountability and greater public visibility. However, disproportionate rates of exit for intersectional groups are not moderated by trust type/size. We argue that this indicates the pervasiveness of homosocial cultural norms overcoming the influence of good HR equality practice on the day-to-day experience of junior surgeons in trusts in England.

Practical importance and implications of research

The NHS currently has a medical workforce crisis – a general labour shortage exacerbated by female and non-white attrition. It is clear from this study that exits and promotion discrimination are not a function of different investments in training time, but rather reflect lower recognition of investments that are made within this white male-dominated profession. That these patterns worsen when specialties and workplaces have more white men is strong evidence that this is not only the culture of surgery, but also relational inequality produced

when white male surgeons have enhanced control over work. That large teaching trusts supported by greater overview by HR and mechanisms of transparency can mitigate these negative outcomes suggests that increased formalisation of promotion elsewhere may be efficacious.

The NHS should therefore address training exits and promotion discrimination. A set of policy and practice adjustments should help. First, management needs to recognise the organisation context of inequalities and monitor race and gender differences in attrition and promotion. Visibility of these metrics is important to empower managers committed to change and support the claims of female and minority surgeons to better treatment.

This research has implications for the general effort to develop organisational approaches to inequality. Past practice has focused on human capital explanations, focusing on individual traits rather than organisational processes. What we see here is the power of asking organisational-level questions about closure processes and context. Even in the face of expanding diversity at hire, closure processes can lead to turnover and career discrimination.

References

- Abendroth, A.-K., Melzer, S., Kalev, A. and Tomaskovic-Devey, D. (2017) [Women at work: Women's access to power and the gender earnings gap](#). *ILR Review*. Vol 70, No 1, pp190–222.
- Bapuji, H., Ertug, G. and Shaw, J.D. (2020) [Organizations and societal economic inequality: A review and way forward](#). *Academy of Management Annals*. Vol 14, No 1, pp60–91.
- Baron, J.N. and Bielby, W.T. (1980) [Bringing the firms back in: Stratification, segmentation, and the organization of work](#). *American Sociological Review*. Vol 45, pp737–765.
- Blau, F.D. and Kahn, L.M. (2017) [The gender wage gap: Extent, trends, and explanations](#). *Journal of Economic Literature*. Vol 55, No 3, pp789–865.
- Cobb, J.A. (2016) [How firms shape income inequality: Stakeholder power, executive decision-making, and the structuring of employment relationships](#). *Academy of Management Review*. Vol 41, No 2, pp324–348.
- England, P. (1982) [The failure of human capital theory to explain occupational sex segregation](#). *Journal of Human Resources*. Vol 17, No 3, pp358–370.
- Leicht, K.T. (2008) [Broken Down by Race and Gender? Sociological Explanations of New Sources of Income Inequality](#). *Annual Review of Sociology*. Vol 34, No 1, pp237–255.
- Reskin, B.F. and Bielby, D.D. (2005) [A sociological perspective on gender and career outcomes](#). *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. Vol 19, No 1, pp71–86.
- Tomaskovic-Devey, D., Hällsten, M. and Avent-Holt, D. (2015) [Where do immigrants fare worse? Modeling workplace wage gap variation with longitudinal employer-employee data](#). *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol 120, No 4, pp1095–1143.
- Tomaskovic-Devey, D. and Avent-Holt, D. (2019) [Relational inequalities: An Organizational approach](#). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The double-edged sword of authentic leadership for LGBT managers and leaders

Luke Fletcher, University of Bath

Shaun Pichler, California State University, Fullerton

Lakshmi Chandrasekaran, University of Kent

Overview

Authentic leadership (AL) has become popular within leadership development, yet it may be problematic for LGBT individuals. Therefore, we shed light on how AL can be applied to LGBT individuals. First, interviews with LGBT individuals reveals both opportunities/benefits and challenges/tensions for LGBT managers who try to enact AL. Informed by this analysis, a survey of LGBT and non-LGBT managers find that AL adds psychological and developmental value for LGBT managers but not for non-LGBT managers. We highlight how AL practice should consider the wider context of the person's LGBT identity and how that is (un)supported and (in)validated at work.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Authentic leadership (AL) is an increasingly popular concept, having emerged to develop ethical, responsible, and self-aware leaders (Gardner et al, 2011). Despite much research showing positive outcomes related to AL, it has also received a lot of criticism (Gardner et al, 2021), which centres on AL being too idealistic and performative in practice, and theoretically acontextual and uncritical (Iszatt-White et al, 2021). Importantly, there is a concern that AL could be problematic when applied to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals because, in enacting AL, they are positioning themselves within a vulnerable space where their LGBT identity could be invalidated or discriminated against (Fine, 2017; Ladkin, 2021). Yet there are also positive stories about how AL and associated training can enable LGBT leaders to thrive (for example, Siegmund, 2021; Stonewall, 2021), as well as evidence that being authentic within one's work environment is important for LGBT people (Fletcher and Everly, 2021; Fletcher and Marvell, 2022). LGBT people in management positions are important to study as they represent a unique social identity group that challenges dominant gendered and heteronormative views of leadership (Chang and Bowring, 2017; Muhr and Sullivan, 2013). However, there is a lack of empirical exploration into whether AL is a useful, positive concept that can enable LGBT managers to thrive or an inherently problematic one that erodes their inclusion and career development. Therefore, there is a need to understand how LGBT managers navigate their LGBT identity, their desire to be authentic, and their leadership role.

Research methods

A mixed-methods research design was adopted. First, qualitative interviews with 23 LGBT managers were conducted to better understand the subjective experiences of being an LGBT leader. We utilised a semi-structured interview guide, where we provided interviewees with an operational definition of authentic leadership and asked about their interpretation and experiences of authentic leadership, as well as how they felt their LGBT identity may or may not be related to these experiences. Second, a quantitative time-lagged survey of 198 LGBT and 220 heterosexual, cisgender managers tested whether authentic leadership would be related to psychological and developmental outcomes (role engagement and career satisfaction measured one month later) and explain additional variance in these outcomes

beyond transformational leadership, as an indication of a dominant leadership behavioural framework. We also controlled relevant individual differences, such as age and core self-evaluations, which may be related to self-perceptions of one's leadership abilities.

Research findings or argument

In our qualitative interview study, we find that AL provides opportunities and benefits for LGBT managers, for example it can help affirm one's LGBT identity, and can enable transformative personal and organisational change. However, AL can lead to specific challenges and tensions, for example it can position LGBT managers within organisational political agendas and can bring up challenging personal struggles about their identity and how to manage it. Thus, the experience of AL is complex and nuanced for LGBT managers, underscoring AL as a 'double-edged' sword. Yet, AL can have important added psychological and developmental value for LGBT managers even when navigating through tensions and challenges. This added value is primarily viewed as augmenting a more transformational style of leadership. Therefore, the opportunities for psychological and developmental growth should merit LGBT managers getting more benefit from AL vis-à-vis transformational leadership (TL). Moreover, this benefit is likely to be weaker for non-LGBT managers who do not contend with the identity stress associated with invisible stigma and may not need their identity affirmed as strongly. We further examine this potential added value in our time-lagged survey study, which finds that self-reported AL was positively related to one's career satisfaction and the engagement with one's managerial role, and adds incremental validity beyond transformational leadership, for LGBT managers but not for heterosexual/cisgender managers. In sum, AL is potentially a double-edged sword for LGBT managers, yet it does seem to psychologically enrich their leadership experiences.

Practical importance and implications of research

Leadership development programmes, particularly those oriented towards LGBT individuals, could include activities that highlight and strengthen one's identity and the positive aspects of diversity within the organisation. These programmes could focus more on AL and how to balance the need for authenticity with the need to enact a role performance, which could be particularly important for LGBT individuals early on in their managerial careers, who may struggle with managing their identity at work. Role plays, active self/group reflection, and coaching could build key competencies needed for AL, such as self-awareness, decision-making skills, and interpersonal communication. Second, our findings point to the need for allyship and inclusion training that can build psychological safety. Moreover, creating awareness among non-LGBT managers/leaders about specific challenges that their LGBT counterparts face and the support they can offer to facilitate the AL of their LGBT peers may be useful. This will help create and sustain a strong diversity and inclusion climate across the organisation, which could enable LGBT managers to navigate their desire for authenticity and the expectations of their managerial role in ways that foster opportunities to express and show their leadership potential via AL behaviours. Finally, LGBT leaders can create positive organisational change through championing inclusion and social justice. However, it is critical that they are not sole representatives of an organisation's inclusion agenda, or of LGBT people. Therefore, an inclusion strategy designed to empower, rather than exploit, managers from minoritised groups would be critical for AL to add value to the organisation.

References

Chang, J. and Bowring, M.A. (2017) [The perceived impact of sexual orientation on the ability of queer leaders to relate to followers](#). *Leadership*. Vol 13, No 3, pp285–300.

- Fine, L.E. (2017) [Gender and sexual minorities' practice and embodiment of authentic leadership: Challenges and opportunities](#). *Advances in Developing Human Resources*. Vol 19, No 4, pp378–392.
- Fletcher, L. and Everly, B.A. (2021) [Perceived lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender \(LGBT\) supportive practices and the life satisfaction of LGBT employees: The roles of disclosure, authenticity at work, and identity centrality](#). *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*. Vol 94, No 3, pp485–508.
- Fletcher, L. and Marvell, R. (2022) [Furthering transgender inclusion in the workplace: advancing a new model of allyship intentions and perceptions](#). *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*. Online first publication.
- Gardner, W.L., Coglisier, C.C., Davis, K.M. and Dickens, M.P. (2011) [Authentic leadership: A review of the literature and research agenda](#). *The Leadership Quarterly*. Vol 22, No 6, pp1120–1145.
- Gardner, W.L., Karam, E.P., Alvesson, M. and Einola, K. (2021) [Authentic leadership theory: The case for and against](#). *The Leadership Quarterly*. Vol 32, No 6, Article No 101495.
- Iszatt-White, M., Carroll, B., Gardiner, R.A. and Kempster, S. (2021) [Leadership Special Issue: Do we need authentic leadership? Interrogating authenticity in a new world order](#). *Leadership*. Vol 17, No 4, pp389–394.
- Ladkin, D. (2021) [Problematizing authentic leadership: How the experience of minoritized people highlights the impossibility of leading from one's 'true self'](#). *Leadership*. Vol 17, No 4, pp395–400.
- Muhr, S.L. and Sullivan, K.R. (2013) ['None so queer as folk': Gendered expectations and transgressive bodies in leadership](#). *Leadership*. Vol 9, No 3, pp416–435.
- Siegmund, J. (2021) [Why great leadership begins with authenticity](#). *Forbes*. [Accessed April 2022].
- Stonewall. (2021) [LGBTQ+ Leadership Programme](#). [Accessed April 2022].

Re-crafting engineering? Exploring how neurodiverse engineers engage in job crafting

Vanda Papafilippou, University of the West of England

Lucy Downes, University of the West of England

Overview

This ongoing study (currently 17 interviews) seeks to address a significant literature gap through gaining an understanding of how neurodiverse (for example, autism, dyslexia, ADHD, etc) engineers engage in job crafting. In order to do so, we draw upon Lazazzara et al's (2020) job-crafting process model, which considers the job-crafting motives, the impact of context, the forms of job crafting, personal factors and the job-crafting consequences. Our findings can provide a set of practical implications for engineering as a sector and HR policies and practices.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) noted that the need for control over work, establishing a positive self-image and connections with others motivate to engage in job crafting, which, in its turn, is argued to enhance the person–career fit (De Vos et al, 2020) and stimulate employees' career growth (Hall and Las Heras, 2010). Employees may be proactively and/or reactively motivated to craft their jobs and the form of job crafting depends also on contextual factors, such as organisational climate and job design components (for example, resources, workload, demands) (Lazazzara et al, 2020).

However, to date there are no studies on how neurodiverse (for example, autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia) employees might engage in job crafting. This is an important gap, considering that neurodiverse employees are often excluded and marginalised in the workplace due to negative stereotyping (Den Houting, 2019; Patton, 2019; Priscott and Allen, 2021) and negative organisational cultures (Kapp et al, 2019; Saleh et al, 2022), and this might impact their self-confidence, relationships with colleagues and control over work (Booth, 2016; Sheppard et al, 2016). Taking into consideration that there is little research on neurodiversity and employment (Doyle and McDowall, 2021), this gap becomes even more pertinent.

This paper focuses on neurodiverse engineers – since anecdotally the sector attracts more neurodiverse talent (Baron-Cohen et al, 1997; Costello et al, 2021) – and asks:

- What processes can be identified that illustrate when and how neurodiverse engineers engage in job crafting?
- How do contextual factors (that is, organisational climate and job design) influence neurodiverse engineers to engage in job crafting?

Research methods

This paper draws upon qualitative data from in-depth semi-structured interviews.

The study is still ongoing: we have currently interviewed 17 engineers (civil, mechanical, oil and gas, software, robotics), both male (nine so far) and female (eight so far), mostly of white British background, but one white Australian and two from ethnic minority backgrounds (British Asian, British black). Participants were mainly employed, apart from two who were self-employed/contractors. In addition, participants worked in both large multinational corporations and SMEs. The participants have been/are being recruited using purposive sampling and access was sought via personal contacts, social media (Facebook groups, Twitter, LinkedIn), support from large engineering organisations (HR and employee resource groups), the Engineering Council, and snowballing.

The interview schedule was developed following guidance from Norris et al (2020) to acknowledge the challenges that autistic participants in particular might encounter. Towards this end we have also included semantic prompting (that is, a general prompt before asking for a specific instance) and visual prompting.

Research findings or argument

To analyse our findings, we will be drawing upon Lazazzara et al's (2020) job-crafting process model, which considers the job-crafting motives, the impact of context (supportive versus constraining), the forms of job crafting (that is, approach job crafting, avoidance crafting, and crafting in other domains), personal factors (supportive versus constraining) and the job-crafting consequences.

The engineers in our sample so far seem to engage in job crafting mostly reactively (for example, because of pressure to behave as ‘engineers’ and work following a specific pattern) but also proactively (for example, shape their careers/roles according to their strengths, use some strategies in order to improve their performance), depending on how supportive their context is. However, most of them, and especially those in larger organisations, appeared to be experiencing constraints not only due to the organisational context (for example, negative stereotyping, lack of support from HR and especially their line managers) but also professional standards (for example, they struggled to ‘fit the box’ of being a chartered engineer). In some cases, line managers ruled out progression opportunities based on the stereotypical assumption that neurodiverse individuals lack the social skills needed to manage a team. The forms of job crafting that are emerging so far are: approach crafting (for example, adding tasks they enjoyed doing more of, establishing different ways of managing their teams), avoidance crafting (for example, avoiding networking or socialising, avoiding going for certain promotions), but also crafting in other domains (for example, adjusting their working hours when working remotely, changing their physical environment, etc).

Practical importance and implications of research

Our findings can provide a set of practical implications for engineering as a sector and organisations. Given the current skills shortage of engineers (Armitage et al, 2020), it is of crucial importance that the sector adapts its practices to ensure that it attracts, recruits, and retains neurodiverse engineers through building a genuinely inclusive professional culture that is also reflected in the criteria for chartership (that is, being less prescriptive). The key learnings for HR are:

Commitment to an inclusive workplace culture

Organisations need to move away from deficit thinking around neurodiversity and work towards a more positive and inclusive culture, which, in its turn, will provide a supportive context for job crafting and, most importantly, enhance the sense of organisational and professional belonging.

Retention of talent: revisiting job descriptions career progression criteria

Organisations need to carefully reconsider job design (for example, do all engineers need to approach the problem in the same way? What skills and experience are essential?) and ensure that they offer autonomy in carrying out job activities (but also support when neurodiverse employees might struggle with their work–life balance).

Performance management

All line managers should be trained in how to manage, support, and review the progress of neurodiverse employees. HR could also evaluate performance management, using a neurodiversity lens, and identify which encouraged behaviours (for example, being ‘diplomatic’) or practices (for example, networking) might impede career progression and/or influence what is considered ‘good performance’.

References

Armitage, L., Bourne, M., Di Simone, J., Jones, A. and Neave, S. (2020) [Engineering UK 2020: Educational pathways into engineering](#). *Engineering UK*.

Baron-Cohen, S., Wheelwright, S., Stott, C., Bolton, P. and Goodyer, I. (1997) [Is there a link between engineering and autism?](#) *Autism*. Vol 1, No 1, pp101–109.

- Booth, J. (2016) *Autism equality in the workplace: Removing barriers and challenging discrimination*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Costello, E., Kilbride, S., Milne, Z., Clarke, P., Yilmaz, M. and MacMahon, S.T. (2021) [A professional career with autism: Findings from a literature review in the software engineering domain](#). *European Conference on Software Process Improvement*. Springer International Publishing.
- Den Houting, J. (2019) [Neurodiversity: An insider's perspective](#). *Autism*. Vol 23, No 2, pp271–273.
- De Vos, A., Van der Heijden, B.I.J.M. and Akkermans, J. (2020) [Sustainable careers: Towards a conceptual model](#). *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. Vol 117, Article No 103196.
- Doyle, N. and McDowall, A. (2021) [Diamond in the rough? An 'empty review' of research into 'neurodiversity' and a road map for developing the inclusion agenda](#). *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*. Vol 41, No 3.
- Hall, D.T. and Las Heras, M. (2010) [Reintegrating job design and career theory: Creating not just good jobs but smart jobs](#). *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. Vol 31, No 2–3, pp448–462.
- Kapp, S.K., Steward, R., Crane, L., Elliott, D., Elphick, C., Pellicano, E. and Russell, G. (2019) [People should be allowed to do what they like: Autistic adults' views and experiences of stimming](#). *Autism*. Vol 23, No 7, pp1782–1792.
- Lazazzara, A., Tims, M. and de Gennara, D. (2020) [The process of reinventing a job: A meta-synthesis of qualitative job crafting research](#). *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. Vol 116 (Part B), Article No 103267.
- Norris, J.E., Crane, L. and Maras, K. (2020) [Interviewing autistic adults: Adaptations to support recall in police, employment, and healthcare interviews](#). *Autism*. Vol 24, No 6, pp1506–1520.
- Patton, E. (2019) [Autism, attributions and accommodations: Overcoming barriers and integrating a neurodiverse workforce](#). *Personnel Review*. Vol 48, No 4, pp915–934.
- Priscott, T. and Allen, R.A. (2021) [Human capital neurodiversity: an examination of stereotype threat anticipation](#). *Employee Relations: The International Journal*. Vol 43, No 5, pp1067–1082.
- Saleh, M.C., Chang, H.Y., Bruyère, S.M. and Vogus, T.J. (2022) Employment selection methods and individuals with autism spectrum disorder. In Bruyère, S.M. and Colella, A. (eds) *Neurodiversity in the Workplace: Interests, issues, and opportunities*. London: Routledge.
- Sheppard, E., Pillai, D., Wong, G.T.L., Ropar, D. and Mitchell, P. (2016) [How easy is it to read the minds of people with autism spectrum disorder?](#) *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. Vol 46, No 4, pp1247–1254.
- Wrzesniewski, A. and Dutton, J.E. (2001) [Crafting a job: Revisioning employees as active crafters of their work](#). *The Academy of Management Review*. Vol 26, No 2, pp179–201.

4A: Fertility and maternity leave

Understanding the invisible toll and psychological challenge of maternity leave on female academics

Yi-Ling Lai, Birkbeck College, University of London

Andy Thorpe, University of Portsmouth

Overview

This study explores the influential factors that enhance female academics' psychological wellbeing in the full course of their maternity leave. A total of 21 critical incident interviews were conducted with academics who took maternity leave recently in the UK. The results indicated participants suffered from anxiety due to research identity threat, financial worries, workload negotiation and complicated maternity leave packages before, and during, their maternity leave. We recommend more people-centred support from both the line manager and HR is essential to strengthen their psychological safety. We also found that a tailor-made post-maternity working scheme for research staff offers them a psychological space for identity transition.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Whereas a longer period of paid maternity leave leads to greater mental wellbeing among women taking maternity leave (Aitken et al, 2015), research also indicates that taking the full entitlement to paid maternity leave could have negative impacts on women's careers, as well as on their perceived identity, emotional transition to motherhood, and self-efficacy when they returned to the workplace (Ladge et al, 2018). Indeed, the longer the maternity leave, the more profound the impact on a female academic's career due to some 'hidden tolls', principally as a consequence of a competitive research environment and promotion policy (Maxwell et al, 2019). While much current research utilises macro-level economic and gender gap perspectives (for example, Epifanio and Troeger, 2021), our approach is distinctive as we employ a micro-level research design grounded in social exchange theory (SET) (Blau, 1964). SET emphasises the employee–employer relationship as an exchange of valued resources. Researchers have identified that recognition and rewards (Lee et al, 2014), fair treatment of employees (Ko and Hur, 2014), and proper supervisory support (Bagger and Li, 2014) are perceived by employees as valued resources offered by organisations to their employees. Nevertheless, current research has scarcely focused on the relational aspect of maternal support provided by the organisation. Hence, we apply SET in this study and ask the following questions:

- 1 What are factors that influence whether female academics take full maternity leave?
- 2 In what way might higher education institutions (HEIs) in the UK better facilitate female academics' identity transitions into working mothers?

Research methods

The critical incident technique (CIT) was used to interview 21 female academics who took their maternity leave in the past five years (2017–21) in the UK. We asked them to share their most recent maternity leave experience. Interview questions focused on revealing the influential factors that impacted upon their decision to take maternity leave, including support from the management team, peers and university level (for example, HR). The participants

were recruited using purposive sampling and access was sought via personal contacts, social media (for example, LinkedIn) and snowballing. All interviews were transcribed verbatim by a professional third party and the thematic analysis was conducted by both authors.

Research findings or argument

This study indicates that female academics often suffered from psychological strains, such as anxiety and stress, prior to their maternity leave. The reasons causing their psychological stress included worries about their research career (that is, identity threat), financial situation (when the paid maternity leave offer was not satisfactory), workload negotiation and navigating complicated maternity leave policies. Most of the participants were concerned about their research career and promotion if they took a longer leave of absence. Hence, all of them decided to carry on their research projects while on leave. Meanwhile, the complicated maternity leave policies and packages aggravated their level of anxiety. Therefore, a more people-centred support from their line managers and HR is advocated. For instance, all the line managers should be acquainted with maternity policies, and HR should be active in helping to identify the best combination of 'leave package'. Moreover, inconsistent maternity cover schemes created a divide within participants' department, whereby some leave-seekers were obliged to find their own substitutes internally and negotiate the corresponding workload. Whereas a few participants appreciated the generosity of their institutions' maternity leave financial support, most participants indicated that a more holistic and tailor-made maternity leave scheme for research staff is needed. Their suggestions included a guaranteed paid sabbatical or no-teaching responsibilities following the period of maternity leave. In general, this study proposes a comprehensive maternity leave strategy for research academics should incorporate detailed financial packages and bespoke support schemes enabling maternity leave takers to resume their research progress and gradually facilitate their working mother identity.

Practical importance and implications of research

This study makes a contribution to theories and practices in HR and organisational psychology areas. This study extends the existing academic maternity leave literature by employing a people-centred approach to investigate issues relating to an academic's maternity entitlement. The study results indicated that expectant mothers perceived organisational support (including the line manager, HR and peers) had positive impacts on their psychological safety and self-efficacy. This result indeed aligns with extant postnatal wellbeing research (for example, Leahy-Warren et al, 2012), which confirmed structural and informal social support enhanced mothers' parental self-efficacy.

Our study offers new insights in the contemporary HRM literature by suggesting a holistic maternity leave strategy for academics should comprise both macro-level monetary provisions and workload-covering policies as well as individual-level interpersonal support and tailored research progress résumé schemes. Accordingly, several practical implications have been identified. First, themes identified in this study can be used for HR professionals in HEIs as guidelines to review their current maternity leave strategies. Second, an appropriate training programme should be provided to line managers, as several interview participants indicated their line managers exhibited a lack of understanding/knowledge of maternity provisions. Third, HR professionals who are responsible for maternity leave applications should demonstrate empathy and employ interpersonal skills to help expectant mothers to identify their personal needs so as to recommend the best combinations of leave. Furthermore, all decision-making processes, like maternity cover and workload

arrangements, should be transparent. Finally, post-maternity research support or informal networks are essential to career identity and resumption.

References

- Aitken, Z., Garrett, C.C., Hewitt, B., Keogh, L., Hocking, J.S. and Kavanagh, A.M. (2015) [The maternal health outcomes of paid maternity leave: A systematic review](#). *Social Science & Medicine*. Article No 130(C), pp32–41.
- Bagger, J. and Li, A. (2014) [How does supervisory family support influence employees' attitudes and behaviors? A social exchange perspective](#). *Journal of Management*. Vol 40, No 4, pp1123–1150.
- Blau, P.M. (1964) *Exchange and power in social life*. New York: Wiley.
- Epifanio, M. and Troeger, V.E. (2020) [Bargaining over maternity pay: evidence from UK universities](#). *Journal of Public Policy*. Vol 40, No 3, pp349–374.
- Ko, J. and Hur, S. (2014) [The impacts of employee benefits, procedural justice, and managerial trustworthiness on work attitudes: Integrated understanding based on social exchange theory](#). *Public Administration Review*. Vol 74, No 2, pp176–187.
- Ladge, J.J., Humberd, B.K. and Eddleston, K.A. (2018) [Retaining professionally employed new mothers: The importance of maternal confidence and workplace support to their intent to stay](#). *Human Resource Management*. Vol 57, No 4, pp883–900.
- Leahy-Warren, P., McCarthy, G. and Corcoran, P. (2012) [First-time mothers: social support, maternal parental self-efficacy and postnatal depression](#). *Journal of Clinical Nursing*. Vol 21, No 3–4, pp388–397.
- Lee, J.J., Capella, M.L., Taylor, C.R. and Gabler, C.B. (2014) [The financial impact of loyalty programs in the hotel industry: A social exchange theory perspective](#). *Journal of Business Research*. Vol 67, No 10, pp2139–2146.
- Maxwell, N., Connolly, L. and Ní Laoire, C. (2019) [Informality, emotion and gendered career paths: The hidden toll of maternity leave on female academics and researchers](#). *Gender, Work & Organization*. Vol 26, No 2, pp140–157.

Complex fertility journeys and employment

Krystal Wilkinson, Manchester Metropolitan University

Clare Mumford, Lancaster University

Michael Carroll, Manchester Metropolitan University

Overview

We present on the findings of a two-year Leverhulme Trust funded research project on 'Complex Fertility Journeys and Employment', which explores the two-way relationships between self-identified 'complex fertility journeys' (which included things like fertility tests, fertility treatment, pregnancy loss and, for some, coming to terms with involuntary childlessness) and employment. The project included interviews with 80 men and women with lived experience of these journeys (from a range of occupational contexts), interviews

with line managers and fertility counsellors, an online review, and the development of a novel 'ethnodrama' resource for dissemination of findings and awareness-raising.

Research focus, rationale and questions

While extensive research and practitioner attention has been paid to the intersection between maternity/parenthood and employment, much less attention has been paid to the stages before conception (fertility and fertility struggles) and some of the other challenges posed by 'complex fertility journeys'. Research on these issues is urgently needed, as there is rising industry and government awareness of the challenges associated with fertility, pregnancy loss, and women's health more broadly in the workplace. As HR professionals start to develop policies and training provisions, and seek buy-in from other organisation stakeholders, it is important that robust evidence is available.

The research project had two main aims:

- 1 To explore how men and women in different workplaces and roles, and from varying social backgrounds, experience diverse fertility journeys, and to explain the effect of work on pre-conception/infertility experience, and vice versa.
- 2 To raise understanding and debate across a number of stakeholder groups, including HR practitioners, managers, workers, medics and fertility specialists, of the workplace challenges faced by men and women on fertility journeys and of how workplaces and pre-conception/infertility affect one another.

Research methods

The central research method was 80 biographical narrative (after Wengraf, 2011) interviews with individuals who self-identified as having experience of navigating a complex fertility journey alongside employment. This included diversity in gender, sexual orientation, fertility journey (experiences, stage and outcome) and employment (industry, job role, contract type, seniority). These were supplemented with 10 interviews with line managers, 10 interviews with fertility counsellors, and an online review.

The project makes use of another unique methodology – aimed at research dissemination. This is 'ethnodrama' (Saldaña, 2011). We employed a creative consultant to work with us to convert key themes from our research, and participant words, into a set of short vignette scripts for use in workplace training interventions, as well as broader awareness-raising.

Research findings or argument

Our findings centre on two issues. The first is the difficulty of navigating a highly individualised and unpredictable complex fertility journey. Experience differed hugely in our sample in terms of the origins of fertility issues, the experiences/challenges faced, the duration of the journey, and the outcome. The commonality in our dataset centred around the additional 'work' required to navigate this journey alongside paid employment, and the general lack of knowledge about this individual complexity in an employment context. We surfaced a range of logistical, physical, emotional, social and financial challenges, which intersected in different ways with employee demographic features and different work contexts. While not the whole story, the extent to which someone feels able to disclose (tell people about) their experience at work, and the way their manager and colleagues respond, often makes a significant (negative or positive) difference to their experience.

The second finding concerns organisational context. While many organisations recognise the need to take active steps to accommodate employee pregnancy, maternity and parenting needs, there is evidence that traditional inequalities are being perpetuated in terms of wider

fertility concerns. Moreover, where organisations have started to engage with fertility treatment, organisational policy and HR responses are often not sufficiently nuanced to be helpful. Particular gaps appear in terms of support for line managers and for those who are unsuccessful in their fertility journeys.

Practical importance and implications of research

Complex fertility journeys are incredibly common, and are a working-age population issue. One in seven couples experience infertility (WHO, no date); and many turn to fertility treatment. Fertility treatment is often needed when same-sex couples or those without partners want to have a biological child. One in four pregnancies end in miscarriage (Tommys, no date). One in five women are childless at mid-life, and for 90% of these, this is not by choice (Archetti, 2019). These issues are currently largely silenced in the workplace, although the tide is turning. Organisations/HR should be aware of these issues and provide appropriate support for employees affected – not only from a wellbeing perspective, but also due to the impact on employee attendance, performance, engagement and retention. We offer a number of recommendations for how organisations can become more ‘fertility friendly’, in terms of awareness-raising, policy development, line manager training, and other interventions.

References

Archetti, C. (2019) [No life without family: Film representations of involuntary childlessness, silence and exclusion](#). *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*. Vol 15, No 2, pp175–196.

Saldaña, J. (2011) *Ethnotheatre: Research from page to stage*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Tommys. (no date) [Pregnancy loss statistics](#).

Wengraf, T. (2011) Interviewing for life-histories, lived periods and situations, and ongoing personal experiencing using the Biographic-Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM): the BNIM Short Guide bound with The BNIM Detailed Manual, version 11.07. Available from: tom@tomwengraf.com

World Health Organization. (no date) [Infertility](#).

4B: Organisational culture and climate

Breaking the spell – an anthropological approach to culture change

Richard Cotter, Allianz Ireland

Robert Power, Allianz Ireland

Overview

Functionalist approaches to culture dominate the organisational scene. Culture is primarily conceived and practised as though ‘in the mind’. Thus, culture is mysterious, hard to locate and, worst of all, seemingly intractable. Armed with this psychologistic idea of culture,

change methods are perhaps inevitably relegated to workshops on 'values' and 'mindsets', which invariably recur because such a focus, while necessary to some extent, is never sufficient to drive effective cultural change. Our paper outlines a different, anthropological approach which breaks the functionalist spell by anthropologising culture, simultaneously making it more tangible and open to concrete adaptation.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Our overarching research focus was on exploring how a novel, anthropological approach to culture change might work in a real-world setting. Our starting point was less a hypothesis than a felt sense of intellectual and professional frustration with extant approaches, coupled with a practical need to actually advance culture change in the organisation we work in. Our research rationale was twofold: first, we wanted to understand whether an anthropological approach could be more successful than more traditional efforts at culture change seemed to be – efforts we had seen and been involved in ourselves. And second, we had been tasked with architecting culture change in our own organisation and, moreover, had a relatively well-defined target culture to establish. Stemming from this were a range of interconnecting sub-questions. The four key ones are listed next:

- What does an anthropological approach to culture change mean and look like, and how do you conceive of and design it?
- How will managers and employees respond to such an approach, which will be unfamiliar to them?
- How would we compare progress and success (or failure) against the traditional approaches we were abandoning and challenging?
- Would it work, in terms of the target culture the approach was aimed at creating?

Research methods

Our approach was anthropological, our research methods ethnographic. We conducted participant observation, ethnographic interviews, and action research workshops. Ethnographic research methods specialise in the generation and analysis of rich, qualitative data which add colour and texture to the representation and interpretation of a research setting. In contrast with other methods, the focus is on 'colouring in' rather than counting, *per se*. Ethnographic methods focus less on questions of what, diving deeper into 'how' questions involving meaning and context. The methods we used also amplified the voice of organisational members and treated them less as research subjects, *per se*, but more like research colleagues with shared 'skin in the game'. For example, research participants were encouraged to view and critique our emerging concepts and experimental cultural practices, and as the programme advanced, we incorporated such feedback. Ethnographic methods are less convenient and more messy than others, but they hold the promise of being far more inclusive and participatory. This was necessary in a situation where for us the research findings were inseparable from the need to produce practical research outputs which would impact on all organisational members, including, of course, ourselves.

Research findings or argument

Two overarching findings emerged from our research which support and allow us to make our critical but also constructive argument that popular, mainstream approaches to thinking about and changing culture, that is, functionalist paradigms and methodologies, are flawed and misdirected and therefore do not deserve their dominance. Further, we believe they should be abandoned in favour of more anthropological approaches which will serve the needs of all culture stakeholders better, providing richer insight and more inclusive and actionable outcomes from culture change activity. These two master findings can be briefly

summarised as follows. First, culture is about and located in interactions rather than individuals, meaning over-determining the role of values and mindsets is misguided, and training and communication (the methods most favoured for working on the aforementioned aspects) is of extremely limited value. Second, the design and provision of collaborative spaces with appropriate 'interactions scripts' changes culture through the operation of such mechanisms. In other words, culture change is achieved when people perform work differently together and these performances can be designed and encouraged. As they iterate and eventually embed, they take hold and culture moves. But this takes careful steering and minding, and backsliding may occur.

Practical importance and implications of research

The practical importance of our research is that it demonstrates it is possible to achieve real culture change by avoiding the pitfalls of functionalism. This is especially important in a time of hybrid working, when concerns exist over what culture means nowadays, where it is located, and how to adapt and shape it effectively. Real culture change is highly desirable in organisational settings, and its lack and difficulty is frequently lamented. Perhaps this is why we hear so much about culture change – it's not that existing methods are not being attempted, it's that they never really work, so the failure loop continues. But to whose benefit? Arguably, consultants selling functionalist culture change products. We suggest that one reason non-functional approaches like ours are not more widespread is a lack of awareness and capability, which can be remedied. Indeed, it is our mission to help with this by the dissemination of our research project and findings. We wish to help 'break the spell' functionalism has cast on culture change.

References

(Our work speaks to the relevant body of literature; a comprehensive list of references exists and will be provided upon acceptance as part of a final and full research paper presentation.)

Transforming business through culture at Fujitsu: An organisational maturity matrix approach to measuring and tracking culture change

Zara Whysall, Nottingham Trent University

Jacqueline Joyce, Nottingham Trent University/Fujitsu Ltd

Overview

This paper outlines the development and implementation of an organisational culture maturity matrix methodology within Fujitsu Ltd, to provide a means of defining, measuring and tracking change in organisational culture towards one that will promote inclusion, enhance innovation, and strengthen organisational learning.

It describes development of the matrix tool via an abridged Delphi approach and internal (Fujitsu) focus groups, plus the development of an online platform to host the tool. The authors share feedback and lessons learned over the staggered rollout across around 2,900 employees, plus initial findings from the matrix tool, and implications for proposed interventions.

Research focus, rationale and questions

To remain competitive in the changing world of work, Fujitsu identified a need to fundamentally shift its culture and ways of working. It needed a culture that promotes three areas identified as of strategic importance to future growth and organisational performance: greater inclusion, enhanced innovation, and improved organisational learning. Fujitsu also recognised that this could not be a one-off. Acknowledging organisational agility as a critical, ongoing capability, Fujitsu wanted to ensure that the approach was embedded. Consequently, the research aims to develop an internal capability to transform and retransform culture within Fujitsu, ensuring that these changes are sustainable.

As a result, the research questions we set out to address were:

- What type of organisational culture should Fujitsu aspire to develop, to enhance inclusion, innovation, and organisational learning?
- How can Fujitsu gain a means of measuring culture and tracking culture change towards this desired culture, over time?
- How can Fujitsu help to evolve its organisational culture, towards one that promotes greater inclusion, innovation, and organisational learning?
- What systems, processes, resources or other adaptations must be in place to ensure that these changes are embedded and sustained?

Research methods

Literature reviews were conducted using academic databases (for example, Business Source Complete, Emerald, Ingentaconnect and the grey literature) to identify the cultural characteristics that drive or inhibit inclusion, innovation, and organisational learning.

These factors were used to design Cultural Maturity Matrices for inclusion, innovation and organisational learning, outlining the normative behaviours and ways of working for each key driver, against four levels of maturity.

The matrices were refined using an abridged Delphi approach involving 16 academic and practitioner experts. Following this, feedback was gathered from three internal Fujitsu focus groups comprising a further 16 experts in innovation, inclusion or organisational learning. The matrices were further refined and then integrated into a single matrix through a mapping exercise. This tool was piloted with over 60 participants who provided in-depth feedback. Following further refinements, all employees within divisions of Fujitsu's UK business were invited to complete the tool (between July and October 2022).

Research findings or argument

The literature and subsequent mapping identified that:

- Of the 19 enabling factors identified as critical to an inclusive organisational culture, six were also key enablers of learning and innovative organisations (for example, embracing differences, openness to diversity, inclusive discussions, constructive conflict, feedback).
- Of the 22 cultural enablers of a learning organisation, 18 were also enabling factors for innovation (for example, autonomy, failure/experimentation, collaboration, reflection).
- Psychological safety emerged as a fundamental enabler of all three factors, with 22 key cultural enablers of learning, innovation and inclusion also being central to psychological safety.

Key insights/adaptations from the Delphi process and focus group feedback:

- adjustments to reflect Fujitsu's existing terminology and context, to align the matrices with Fujitsu's strategy and ensure messages are consistent
- importance of ensuring each level of maturity is clearly distinct, to help people identify which was closest to their day-to-day experience
- clarity on who participants should be thinking about when answering, to enable people to feel more certain in their judgements, and identification of potential sub-cultures
- the levels of maturity outlined within the matrices not only constitute a potential means of assessing current culture and monitoring change against this, but also act as a learning and development tool, illuminating the pathway towards the desired culture.

At the time of abstract submission, data collection using the cultural maturity matrix tool was in progress. Findings from the analysis of these data will be presented in the full paper delivered at the conference, along with an outline of the proposed interventions informed by this.

Practical importance and implications of research

This research aims to address several common challenges affecting culture change initiatives in practice:

1 A poorly defined cultural 'destination'

Many initiatives aim to change culture without a clear picture of the type of culture towards which they are trying to move, and why. They may wish to create a culture of inclusion, innovation or collaboration, but what does this look like, specifically? This research developed a detailed picture of the cultural characteristics likely to enable inclusion, innovation and organisational learning, based on review of the literature. These characteristics were then mapped onto an organisational maturity matrix, developing indicators to clarify what each characteristic looks like at different levels of cultural maturity.

2 Lack of clarity around current culture (the starting point)

3 No means of monitoring or tracking progress

In addition, it is often the case that organisations set off to change organisational culture without an accurate picture of the current culture, or any means of monitoring or tracking progress in the evolution of culture.

4 A top-down focus ('mandating culture change')

5 Piecemeal approach, overlooking systemic influences

The approach outlined emphasises the importance of creating change from the bottom-up, through social learning, while also aligning more formal, top-down elements and systems. It emphasises the importance of an integrated, systemic approach aimed at achieving alignment between levels of culture, culture as espoused (for example, strategy, espoused values, policies), culture as practice (how people actually operate or behave), and deep-rooted values, attitudes and beliefs (what individuals truly value, think and believe).

4C: Skills and performance

Navigating choppy water: Flexibility ripple effects in the COVID-19 pandemic and the future of remote and hybrid working

Daniel Wheatley, Birmingham Business School

Overview

This paper investigates the challenges of navigating adoption of remote and hybrid working for large organisations with diverse functions. Focus groups with employees of the UK business of a multinational identify conceptual contributions and empirical findings in the context of the coronavirus pandemic that inform future policy and practice. Location-based flexible working has a potential unintended 'ripple' effect created by flexibility experienced by an individual having wider-reaching consequences at team level and beyond. Findings emphasise that organisations need to recognise and respond to new realities of location-based flexibility, and management must account for potential 'ripple' in the development of flexible working policies and practice.

'When the going gets tough...': Should mental toughness feature in executive coaching?

Michael Bannwolf, University of Portsmouth

Valerie Anderson, University of Portsmouth

Yvonne Rueckert, University of Portsmouth

Overview

Mental toughness is an important concept in the sports coaching literature, but its value and utility as a feature of executive coaching is underresearched. This presentation reports on qualitative research carried out in Germany involving both elite triathlon and senior executive coaches. In addition to revealing important conceptual nuances associated with mental toughness, the analysis indicates how mental toughness coaching may contribute to goal pursuit processes so far underrepresented in executive coaching models and frameworks. The paper contributes to coaching theory and practice by integrating mental toughness, as distinct from resilience, into executive coaching models.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Workplace coaching has become pervasive worldwide. Coaching is carried out by specialist executive coaches, line managers and others (Passmore and Lai, 2020; Whitmore, 2002). There are predictions in the practitioner literature that coaching may overtake consultancy as a workplace learning and development (L&D) activity of choice (Bazelmans, 2021).

Research into the effectiveness of executive coaching identifies resilience as important for executive leadership performance (Sarkar and Fletcher, 2016; Smith, 2017). However,

although this concept is associated with 'cognitive hardiness' and self-efficacy (Grant et al, 2009), its relevance to goal pursuit effectiveness in executive contexts is not established (Greif and Benning-Rohnke, 2015; Lai and Palmer, 2019; Müller and Kotte, 2020). The sports coaching literature, by contrast, focuses on the concept of mental toughness, as a driver of goal pursuit persistence energy (Gucciardi et al, 2015; Liew et al, 2019).

Practitioner interest in the concept of mental toughness in leadership and management (for example, Selk, 2012) has not thus far been validated by empirical research. This paper builds on and integrates research literature from the elite sports and executive coaching fields. It draws on the conceptual framework of mental toughness developed by Gucciardi et al (2015) and reports research carried out with executive coaches in Germany to examine if, in what ways, mental toughness has value as a feature of executive coaching. The principal research question is: How do executive coaches describe the concept of mental toughness and its relevance for coaching to support executive goal pursuit persistence?

Research methods

A qualitative research design was used, suitable for analysis of concepts, opinions, and experiences. The research is grounded in a constructivist and interpretivist approach (Silverman, 2017), recognising how executive coaches construct their coaching practice and its constituent elements. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 elite triathlon coaches and 12 executive coaches. A purposive sampling approach was adopted, with the final sample size guided by principles of data saturation (Saunders and Townsend, 2016). Interviews lasted between 40 and 105 minutes and were conducted in either German or English and then translated and transcribed. This paper focuses on the responses of the executive coaches to explore and evaluate whether and how the concept of mental toughness has utility for goal pursuit persistence as a feature of business executive coaching. A thematic analysis process was used (Braun and Clarke, 2022) utilising Nvivo qualitative data analysis software.

Research findings or argument

This research, carried out in Germany, adds to the coaching literature, which is currently dominated by English-speaking perspectives. The data indicates that executive coaches understand the concept of mental toughness differently from the sports-derived framework of Gucciardi et al (2015). Findings show the importance of coaching contexts, for example, levels of complexity, workload, pressure, and high demands, which are differently experienced in sports performance and executive leadership contexts. Goal achievement focus and performance development processes over extended time periods feature in both contexts.

The nature and complexity of goals and factors affecting their achievement are different in elite sports and executive leadership contexts.

In relation to the research question, executive coaches interpret the concept of mental toughness in a holistic way, comprising three components: (1) motivational energy, (2) goal pursuit process enablers, (3) socio-relational competencies. Motivational energy and goal pursuit persistence feature in the descriptions of mental toughness in both contexts, but the findings indicate the role that mental toughness coaching could play in the development of sustainable socio-relational competencies necessary for executive leadership effectiveness.

Second, the analysis indicates that the concept of mental toughness described by executive coaches extends beyond concepts of resilience in the business coaching literature. Whereas resilience concerns overall adaption and recovery from stress, adversity and significant

challenges (Liu et al, 2017), mental toughness is understood as a basis for maintaining and sustaining socio-relational capabilities, motivational energy and goal pursuit ad hoc in any situation and over lengthy time periods.

Practical importance and implications of research

The research suggests the value of mental toughness coaching as a feature of executive development but challenges the assumptions in practitioner literature that mental toughness involves 'no excuses', excessive optimism, and a single focus on execution and performance (Selk, 2012). Rather, it suggests that mental toughness coaching can support executives to clarify and integrate motivational qualities of balance and conscious decision-making based on recognition of context as well as individual goal ambition. Further research is needed to further examine the underlying mechanisms of goal pursuit (Heckhausen and Gollwitzer, 1987; Kruglanski et al, 2002).

However, this study has important implications for practice. First, it identifies the potential of mental toughness coaching to support and develop clarification and integration of motivational factors in different executive client contexts. This analysis, therefore, departs from, and challenges, the assumptions about mental toughness that are prevalent in practitioner literature in the management and leadership fields (for example, Selk, 2012). Second, mental toughness as a feature of executive coaching can enhance goal pursuit processes, specifically on translating goals into action (Gollwitzer and Sheeran, 2006). Specifically, it can extend 'specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-related' (SMART) goal-focused coaching (Clutterbuck and Spence, 2017) and the established 'goals reality, options, will' (GROW) model of coaching practice (Whitmore, 2010).

References

- Bazelmans, G. (2021) [7 trends that will change the future of executive coaching](#). LinkedIn. 30 June.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2022) *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Clutterbuck, D. and Spence, G. (2017) [Working with goals in coaching](#). In Bachkirova, T., Spence, G. and Drake, D. (eds) *The SAGE handbook of coaching*, pp218–237. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Gollwitzer, P.M. and Sheeran, P. (2006) [Implementation intentions and goal achievement: A meta-analysis of effects and processes](#). *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*. Vol 38, No 6, pp69–119.
- Grant, A.M., Curtayne, L. and Burton, G. (2009) [Executive coaching enhances goal attainment, resilience and workplace well-being: A randomised controlled study](#). *The Journal of Positive Psychology*. Vol 4, No 5, pp396–407.
- Greif, S. and Benning-Rohnke, E. (2015) [Konsequente umsetzung von zielen durch coaching /Rigorous implementation of goals through coaching](#). *Coaching – Theorie & Praxis*. Vol 1, No 1, pp25–35.
- Gucciardi, D., Hanton, S., Gordon, S., Mallett, C.J. and Temby, P. (2015) [The concept of mental toughness: Tests of dimensionality, nomological network, and traitness](#). *Journal of Personality*. Vol 83, No 1, pp26–44.

- Heckhausen, H. and Gollwitzer, P. (1987) [Thought contents and cognitive functioning in motivational versus volitional states of mind](#). *Motivation and Emotion*. Vol 11, No 2, pp101–120.
- Kruglanski, A., Shah, J.Y., Fishbach, A., Friedman, R., Woo Young, C. and Sleeth-Keppler, D. (2002) [A theory of goal systems](#). *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*. Vol 34, pp331–378.
- Lai, Y.-L. and Palmer, S. (2019) [Psychology in executive coaching: an integrated literature review](#). *Journal of Work-Applied Management*. Vol 11, No 2.
- Liew, G.C., Kuan, G., Chin, N.S. and Hashim, H.A. (2019) [Mental toughness in sport](#). *German Journal of Exercise and Sport Research*. Vol 49, No 4, pp381–394.
- Liu, J., Reed, M. and Girard, T. (2017) [Advancing resilience: An integrative, multi-system model of resilience](#). *Personality and Individual Differences*. Vol 111, pp111–118.
- Müller, A.A. and Kotte, S. (2020) [Of SMART, GROW and goals gone wild: A systematic literature review on the relevance of goal activities in workplace coaching](#). *International Coaching Psychology Review*. Vol 15, No 2, pp69–97.
- Passmore, J. and Lai, Y.L. (2020) Coaching psychology: Exploring definitions and research contribution to practice. In Passmore, J. and Tee, D. (eds) *Coaching researched: A coaching psychology reader*, pp3–22. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Sarkar, M. and Fletcher, D. (2016) Developing resilience through coaching. In Thelwell, R., Harwood, C.G. and Greenlees, I. (eds) *The psychology of sports coaching*, pp235–248. London: Routledge.
- Saunders, M. and Townsend, K. (2016) [Reporting and justifying the number of interview participants in Organization and workplace research](#). *British Journal of Management*. Vol 27, No 4, pp836–852.
- Selk, J. (2012) *Executive toughness: The mental-training program to increase your leadership performance*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Silverman, D. (2017) *Doing qualitative research*, 5th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Limited.
- Smith, C.L. (2017) [Coaching for leadership resilience: An integrated approach](#). *International Coaching Psychology Review*. Vol 12, No 1, pp6–23.
- Whitmore, J. (2002) *Coaching for performance: GROWing people, performance and purpose*, p12. London: John Murray Press.
- Whitmore, J. (2010) *Coaching for performance: Growing human potential and purpose: the principles and practices of coaching and leadership*. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Poster presentations

Attitudes and values towards the introduction of digitalised wellbeing platforms in large organisations: A design-fiction study

Emma Gentry, Horizon Centre for Doctoral Training, University of Nottingham

Overview

This poster summarises a study in progress looking at attitudes and values towards the introduction of wellbeing platforms within the workplace. This study focuses specifically on personal data-sharing elements and the sociological, technological, and organisational context in which they sit. Overall, this research attempts to find a balance between managerial insight and employee privacy when considering the sharing of personal wellbeing data within large organisations. The poster presents initial results of my first study investigating attitudes and values towards the introduction of wellbeing platforms in the workplace, which will be concluded by summer 2023.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Workplace wellbeing has noticeably declined, with around one in four individuals having suffered from work-related stress, depression, or anxiety in the last two years (Clarke, 2022). Concerningly, only 29% of HR representatives feel confident in discerning early signs of mental ill health (CIPD, 2022). In response to these challenges, mobile and desktop wellbeing applications present the opportunity for employers to gain insight into teams' wellbeing statuses through anonymised, aggregated data. However, platform implementation is often a one-way decision made by those in power and with potential to exert control over employees, resulting in blurred lines between voluntary and enforced engagement (Lupton, 2014). Two metrics are typically used to transfer information from employees to management: engagement data and wellbeing reports. With the potential for such data to be misused as an indicator of employee performance, further research is needed into how employees perceive these platforms at work. This study compares values and attitudes of remote workers, hybrid workers, and office workers within the context of higher-education APM (administrative, professional, and managerial) employees. The novelty here stems from applying the Eudaimonic Activity Model (EAM; Martela and Sheldon, 2019) to understand how wellbeing platforms in the workplace influence employees' wellbeing from a holistic perspective. Accordingly, this research considers the following questions:

- 1 What are employees', managers', and trade union representatives' respective values and attitudes towards the collection of wellbeing data in the workplace?
- 2 How might variations in working styles (remote, hybrid, office) influence perceptions about the introduction of wellbeing platforms in the workplace?

Research methods

This research employs a design-fiction framework in combination with focus groups with the intention to gain deeper insight into preferences, attitudes, and values towards workplace wellbeing platforms. Three focus groups will be conducted: the first with employees, which will inform the structuring of questions for the next focus group with managers, which in turn will inform the design of the last focus group with trade union representatives. This way, the

research attempts to bring together key stakeholder viewpoints while ensuring the use of wellbeing platforms is predominantly informed by the views of employees. Thematic analysis will be used based on a framework provided by Braun and Clarke (2006) to analyse participants' responses. A top-down approach will be used to frame this study using the EAM (Martela and Sheldon, 2019) to focus on the relationship between technology, motivations and values, and wellbeing.

Research findings or argument

High levels of autonomy at work play a significant role in workers' wellbeing (for example, Manganelli et al, 2018; Martela et al, 2021; Slemp et al, 2021; Terry, 2022), yet there is potential for enforced engagement with wellbeing platforms to undermine this sense of autonomy. The Eudaimonic Activity Model (Martela and Sheldon, 2019) provides the most comprehensive representation of wellbeing at work, as it demonstrates how subjective wellbeing outcomes are directly related to components of self-determination theory (autonomy, relatedness, and competence) as well as eudaimonic motives and activities. The underlying argument here is that maximum benefit from wellbeing platforms can be achieved in the workplace if (a) they are engaged with appropriately and (b) managerial influence towards certain ways of responding/engaging does not undermine employees' autonomy. I further argue that more accurate representations of employee wellbeing not only have the potential to improve long-term resilience, but this work will also provide a valuable contribution to the normalisation of wellbeing issues within the workplace, in turn helping people to have a greater sense of self-acceptance. Preliminary findings will be presented surrounding all three stakeholders' perceptions towards the use of wellbeing platforms within the workplace, and data analysis will be informed by the EAM.

Practical importance and implications of research

This research attempts to ensure that wellbeing platform implementation is informed by employees' preferences and comfortability with employers' use(s) of personal wellbeing data. The study reported in this poster will contribute to recommendations to be produced at the end of the PhD: one for wellbeing platform developers to guide design-related uses of personal data, and one for workplaces to encourage a healthier culture and to ensure that personal data is used appropriately. Overall, this PhD will contribute to greater understanding of wellbeing through application of the EAM to ensure that workplace wellbeing platforms are as beneficial as possible to employees and organisations in the future.

References

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) [Using thematic analysis in psychology](#). *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. Vol 3, No 2, pp77–101.

CIPD. (2022) *Health and wellbeing at work*, p7. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

Lupton, D. (2014). [Self-tracking modes: Reflexive self-monitoring and data practices](#).

Manganelli, L., Thibault-Landry, A., Forest, J. and Carpentier, J. (2018) [Self-determination theory can help you generate performance and Well-Being in the workplace: A review of the literature](#). *Advances in Developing Human Resources*. Vol 20, No 2, pp227–240.

Martela, F., Gómez, M., Unanue, W., Araya, S., Bravo, D. and Espejo, A. (2021) [What makes work meaningful? Longitudinal evidence for the importance of autonomy and](#)

[beneficence for meaningful work](#). *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. Vol 131, Article No 103631.

Martela, F. and Sheldon, K.M. (2019) [Clarifying the Concept of Well-Being: Psychological Need Satisfaction as the Common Core Connecting Eudaimonic and Subjective Well-Being](#). *Review of General Psychology*. Vol 23, No 4, pp458–474.

Slemp, G.R., Lee, M.A. and Mossman, L.H. (2021) [Interventions to support autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs in organizations: A systematic review with recommendations for research and practice](#). *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*. Vol 94, No 2, pp427–457.

Terry, P.E. (2022) [Well-Being and evolving work autonomy: The locus of control construct revisited](#). *American Journal of Health Promotion*. Vol 36, No 4, pp593–596.

Underrepresentation of black and Asian minorities in the UK transport industry

Atina Ndindeng, Wirral Met College

Overview

Within the UK transport sector, underrepresentation of black and Asian minorities, just like the gap in racial inequality in the UK higher education system, continues to grow wider (Stevenson et al, 2019).

The present report seeks to underpin why, and looks at what issues are causing this underrepresentation to occur, what actions need to be taken to include more BAME in the transport industry, and makes some key recommendations.

It is argued that lack of confidence, inadequate communication skills and low level of education in BAME (Walker, 2016) have contributed to making this underrepresentation more probable. However, BAME opportunities remain restricted in the transport industry, despite government policy outlined in the Equality Act (2010) that protects minorities. Conversely, this is not adhered to by employers due to a historically male-dominated workforce and gender stereotypes about race and ethnicity (Hicks, 2012). But, positive changes are afoot with the British Transport Police being accused of discrimination with a 'positive action' taken to bar white men from their recruitment workshops to enhance the chances of minority officers getting into the force (Greenwood, 2017), which they consider as 'legal.' Also, more BAME are being integrated into apprenticeships, with more black women in engineering training positions.

Research focus, rationale and questions

In the transport sector, bridging the gap with other ethnic groups is slow but commendable. It must be borne in mind that this lacklustre progress hinges on gender bias (Triana, 2017), difficult working conditions which are not very flexible, safety issues with unsociable working hours, and reconciling work and private life.

Looking forward to the future, one must submit that it is a business advantage to have a very diverse workforce. Employers could create job adverts that challenge gender and race stereotypes (Brown and Ghani, 2019) and a diverse-friendly recruitment page. This sums

up Violeta Bulc's (2018) argument that underrepresentation of BAME could be minimised by the inclusion of digitalisation and automation in the workforce to facilitate the entry of minorities.

This report attempts to find answers to why underrepresentation continues to occur, with particular emphasis on what is causing it and why it is an issue of concern in terms of the benefits of diversity. Also, this study will attempt to make recommendations that can be used to minimise underrepresentation in UK transport.

Research methods

This research uses a desk-based review using key data collected by academics and professionals.

Research findings or argument

The UK is a demographically diverse society with a population of over 64,769,452 (July 2017); 87.2% are white and the rest are minority groups. Therefore, the demographic situation of the UK causes underrepresentation to occur. Even so, BAME who managed to get into work do not feel satisfied with the treatment and opportunities open to them for career progression. The McGregor-Smith Review (2019) underpins this issue.

It is a quite difficult task to classify black and Asian minorities on a UK scale generally because the UK is a migration country and has extremely isolated national travel industries. More than 119,700 people are working in the transport industry of the UK, which includes both black and Asian people, with around 10,900 transport operators established within the country. In addition, 1% of transport operators employ more than 50 people, 24% employ 11–49 people, and 75% employ 1–10 people. However, the female workforce estimated in the transport industry is around 60–62%; 10% of the employees are from black minority groups and 90% of the employees are from white minority groups (Chessum, 2017).

Practical importance and implications of research

Underrepresentation – business and social justice case

The benefits of a diverse workforce are becoming increasingly clear. Diversity is used as a business strategy for branding of products, talent retention and profit-making. This explains why the BBC decided to boost diversity by saying that all middle and senior posts must include a candidate from BAME, and by 2020 its executive leadership teams will have at least two people from ethnic minority backgrounds. This has been followed by compulsory cultural awareness and unconscious bias training for all managers.

A survey by LinkedIn (2019) on global recruitment trends posits that 'diversity is the biggest game changer and most embraced trend' in recruitment. The report established that 78% of companies prioritise diversity to improve organisational culture and 62% to improve financial performance. Therefore, organisations can improve underrepresentation by building awareness of the benefits of diversity, run effective meetings, design a diverse reward system and acknowledge holidays of all cultures and religions (Issa, 2019).

Recommendations

- The UK Government recommended that the corporate sector should introduce some training and development programmes for the enhancement of minority people (Joy et al, 2017). It will increase the confidence level and reduce the communication barrier in minority people.

- The Equality Act 2010 should be rigorously enforced, and tougher sanctions should be given to employers who fail to employ at least 25% of BAME in their organisations.
- More diverse-friendly job adverts should be posted to attract minority applicants.
- Inclusion of digitalisation and automation in the workforce (Bulc, 2019) to give a fairer chance to BAME.

Companies should share their diversity data for it to be scrutinised by the government, and those not following the rules should be named and shamed.

References

- Bulc, V. (2018) [Working in transport, is \(not\) for women](#). European Commission for Transport.
- Brown, M. and Ghani, N. (2019) [Report shows strong progress on diversity in transport apprenticeship](#). *Intelligent Transport*. 11 July.
- Catherine, F.C. (2015) [The empowerment of rural women in Southern Africa: a case study of Driefontein, Kwazulu-Natal](#). Doctoral dissertation. University of the Free State.
- Chessum, L. (2017) *From immigrants to an ethnic minority: Making black community in Britain*. London: Routledge.
- Golebiowska, K., Valenta, M. and Carter, T. (2016) International immigration trends and data. In Rasmussen, R.O., Carson, D., Ensign, P. and Huskey, L. (eds) *Demography at the Edge*, pp79–110. Routledge.
- Gram-Skjoldager, K., Ikonomou, H.A. and Kahlert, T. (2019) Scandinavians and the League of Nations Secretariat, 1919–1946. *Scandinavian Journal of History*. pp1–30.
- Greenwood, C. (2017) [British Transport Police accused of discrimination in the UK](#). *Daily Mail*.
- Issa, L. (2019) [Supporting diversity and inclusion in the workplace](#). *Cornerstone London*.
- Joy, J., Lane, J., Custer, N., Stark-Miller, E., Dickinson, D., Mathis, C., Fahoum, S., Westfall, A., Lan, Y., Mundlay, S. and Costa, C. (2017) [Babe Lincoln](#). Vol 2 (Spring 2017).
- Madison, J.D. (2017) *Diversity in STEM: Measures means and a path forward* (No SAND2017–10988C). Sandia National Lab. (SNL-NM). Albuquerque, NM, US.
- Malden, A. (2017) [A safer bet? Evaluating the effects of the extractive industries transparency initiative on mineral investment climate attractiveness](#). *The Extractive Industries and Society*. Vol 4, No 4, pp788–794.
- Nguyen, T. and Bace, E. (2019) [Canadian commercial banks and corporate governance, 2006–2018](#). Applied Research International Conferences.
- Niessen-Ruenzi, A., Parwada, J.T., Ruenzi, S. and Tan, E.K. (2016) [Does mandatory risk information disclosure affect bank debt design? Cross-country evidence from Yankee Bond Covenants](#). CIFR Paper, No 107.
- Osman, M.O. (2015) *The economic and political impact of 'Socialism' on Somali Republic (1969–1991)*. Doctoral dissertation. İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi.
- Pressler, E.M. (2019) [Hispanic stereotypes in contemporary film](#). *Honors College Theses*. 425.

Ross, J.E. (2016) [The emergence of foreign intelligence investigations as alternatives to the criminal process: a view of American counterterrorism surveillance through German lenses](#), p475. In Ross, J.E. and Thaman, S.C. (eds) *Comparative criminal procedure*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Spence, D.B. (2019) [The new politics of \(energy\) market entry](#). *Notre Dame Law Review*.

Stevenson, J., O'Mahony, J., Khan, O., Ghaffar, F. and Stiell, B. (2019) [Understanding and overcoming the challenges of targeting students from under-represented and disadvantaged ethnic backgrounds](#). Report to the Office for Students.

Triana, M. (2017) [Managing diversity in Organizations: A global perspective](#). London: Routledge.

Villosio, C., Di Tommaso, M., Grinza, E., Rossi, M.C., Piazzalunga, D., Mantouvalou, K. and Caisl, J. (2017) [Economic benefits of gender equality in the European Union: Report on the empirical application of the model](#). Luxembourg: European Institute for Gender Equality.

Walker, J.N. (2016) *Design journeys: Strategies for increasing diversity in design disciplines*. Doctoral dissertation. Ohio State University.

Wall, R. (2017) [A jawn by any other name: A sociolinguistic analysis of the Philadelphia dialect](#). HON499 projects. 12.

Let's break the mould, let's shake the world: Why women cannot advance in professional roles in finance

Eleni Meletiadou, London Metropolitan University

Overview

Finance is an area still dominated by men despite figures indicating the opposite. This study wishes to investigate why women would work in investment banking (IB), but not progress into professional roles. Eighteen female employees in three banks in London were interviewed, to explore how gender diversity could be tackled within the sector. The research revealed that senior management teams (SMTs) avoid hiring women as managers because they have to 'interrupt' their career due to maternity and are often unable to reconcile their family commitments with the long working hours required. The paper offers recommendations for HR managers and SMTs in finance.

Research focus, rationale and questions

The literature on women in finance reveals that women are an endangered species, as male investment bankers tend to maintain the status quo (CFA, 2016). In Europe, women represent less than 50% of all CFA members. Research indicates that women are risk-averse and avoid entering competitive professions ('self-selection', see Niederle and Vesterlund, 2007). Taking into consideration the focus on EDI, which has been further supported by the gender pay gap legislation in the UK, investors avoid companies with large gender pay gaps urging them to take positive action as these also want to attract talent (CIPD, 2019). The FCA (2019) reports only 17% of positions are held by women. The attempts to understand the underrepresentation of females in these roles are in their infancy,

and the current study wishes to explore female employees' experiences in IB and identify the barriers which prevent them from entry/progression within investment management (IM).

Despite considerable research exploring the inequalities women in finance face, very few studies use qualitative methods to explore the experiences of women working within the sector (Neck, 2015; Pryce and Sealy, 2013; Hall, 2013). Moreover, although SMTs within the industry have hired young female graduates and invested in their development into senior executive positions, there are still obstacles (real and perceived) challenging women nowadays (Hewlett, 2002). The current study therefore aimed to address the following research questions:

- Why do women face barriers in terms of their career advancement in IB in the UK?
- Which are the barriers female investment managers face in terms of their career advancement in IB in the UK?

Research methods

Using the theories of gender performativity (Sheerin and Linehan, 2018), social closure theory (Weber, 1922) and hegemonic masculinity (Hearn and Morgan, 2014), the researcher depicted female employees' challenges in their career progression to professional roles in IB. This study utilised an exploratory multiple case study design to explore a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Saunders et al, 2016). The main aim of this case study was to build theory to answer its 'why' question (Yin, 2011), as theory-building requires rich description, 'richness that comes from anecdote' (Shah and Corley, 2006: 89). For this study, the interviews were conducted via video call due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study utilised opportunity and snowball sampling processes and the participants signed an informed consent form that promised their anonymity. All data was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2012).

Research findings or argument

Drawing upon feminist theory and the social closure theory (Weber, 1922), this paper reveals professional women's challenges in terms of their career advancement in IB. Women are still perceived as inferior, as customers still have a male investor in a suit in mind when thinking about finance (Tatlow, 2018). The participants indicated that gender stereotyping still affects progression into IB (von Hippel et al, 2015) and believed that promoting more women as managers may change the perception of women as not viable investment professionals. Female professionals indicated that they had to avoid talking about their families and even hide their femininity to increase their prestige in IB (Sheerin and Linehan, 2018). They also referred to the so-called 'boys' club' as one of the barriers to advancement in the IM profession, as men have more direct access to key positions (Cooper et al, 2021). All participants indicated that being a caregiver was the most significant barrier for female investment managers' retention in professional roles. Not being able to take any kind of leave is a significant challenge for women who want to become mothers (Lee and Slater, 2007). Flexible working was also a prohibited word in this industry up to the COVID-19 pandemic, which arguably changed things in this industry. Participants highlighted the societal expectation that regards women as primarily responsible for caregiving, characterising them as unfit mothers if they need to prioritise their careers at some point. The interviewees also reported increasing pressure for outsourcing their family responsibilities to increase their availability at work, as the sector does not consider their family responsibilities and personal wellbeing (Neck, 2015).

Practical importance and implications of research

Research implications

Although the current study provided significant insights into female investment employees' challenges in terms of their career advancement, further research is necessary to explore how race affects female and possibly male investment managers' career progression. Consequently, researchers may offer more suggestions to SMTs who wish to foster inclusion and reap the benefits that it may offer. Inability to deal with this lack of female perspectives in the banking sector may affect the performance of specific companies who tend to disregard these issues. The overall aim is to increase support provided to female employees, that is, via mentoring, to facilitate their progression as investment managers.

Implications for practice

To support aspiring female investment managers, a number of measures should be implemented, reviewed and measured for their effectiveness on a periodic basis. Participants suggested adapting flexible working policies to increase remote working across the business and facilitate retention of females after maternity leave. COVID-19 has allowed employees to be productive while being physically absent, eliminating the stigma around remote working and encouraging a better work–life balance and personal wellbeing. Hopefully this will make investment management positions more attractive to female managers who have family responsibilities. The presence of a diversity and inclusion coordinator may also facilitate the creation of formal channels for EDI initiatives and ensure the effectiveness of the measures taken by considering the feedback provided. Finally, there is a need for an EDI strategy that will surely align with the overall business objectives and will be communicated effectively throughout the business, with metrics to measure success and ensure sustainability.

References

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2012) Thematic analysis. In Cooper, H., Camic, P.M., Long, D.L., Panter, A.T., Rindskopf, D. and Sher K.J. (eds) *APA handbook of research methods in psychology. Vol 2. Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological*, pp57–71. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA). (2015) [Gender diversity in investment management: New research for practitioners on how to close the gender gap](#). [Accessed 27 June 2022].

CIPD. (2019) [Not just a number: lessons from the first year of gender pay gap reporting](#). London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

Cooper, R., Baird, M., Foley, M. and Oxenbridge, S. (2021) Normative collusion in the industry ecosystem: Explaining women's career pathways and outcomes in investment management. *Human Relations*. Vol 74, No 11, pp1916–1941.

FCA. (2019) [Research note](#). [Accessed 23 June 2022].

Hall, S. (2013) Business education and the (re)production of gendered cultures of work in the City of London. *Social Politics*. Vol 20, No 2, pp222–241.

Hearn, J. and Morgan, D.H.J. (2014) [Men, masculinities and social theory](#). London: Routledge.

- Hewlett, S.A. (2002) [Executive women and the myth of having it all](#). *Harvard Business Review*. Vol 80, No 4, pp5–11.
- Lee, J. and Slater, J. (2007) [Dynamic capabilities, entrepreneurial rent-seeking and the investment development path: The case of Samsung](#). *Journal of International Management*. Vol 13, No 3, pp241–257.
- Neck, C. (2015) [Disappearing women: Why do women leave senior roles in finance? Further evidence](#). *Australian Journal of Management*. Vol 40, No 3, pp511–537.
- Niederle, M. and Vesterlund, L. (2007) [Do women shy away from competition? Do men compete too much?](#) *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*. Vol 122, No 3, pp1067–1101.
- Pryce, P. and Sealy, R. (2013) [Promoting women to MD in investment banking: multi-level influences](#). *Gender in Management: An International Journal*. Vol 28, No 8, pp448–467.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2016) [Research methods for business students](#), 7th ed. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Shah, S. and Corley, K. (2006) [Building better theory by bridging the quantitative-qualitative divide](#). *Journal of Management Studies*. Vol 43, No 8, pp1822–1835.
- Sheerin, S. and Linehan, M. (2018) [Gender performativity and hegemonic masculinity in investment management](#). *Gender in Management: An International Journal*. Vol 33, No 7, pp561–576.
- Tatlow, G. (2018) [Where are all the female economists?](#) [Accessed 3 June 2022].
- Von Hippel, C. Sakaquaptewa, D. and McFarlane, M. (2015) [Stereotype threat among women in finance: Negative effects on identity, workplace well-being, and recruiting](#). *Psychology of Women Quarterly*. Vol 39, No 3, pp405–414.
- Weber, M. (1922) *Economy and society: An outline of interpretive sociology*. Roth, G. and Wittich, G. (eds). New York, NY: Bedminster.
- Yin, R.K. (2011) *Applications of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing Ltd.

Daughters of a lesser God: The impact of COVID-19 on female early-career academics' experiences of precarity with regard to working and life routines

Eleni Meletiadou, London Metropolitan University

Overview

Despite increased research on gender inequality in the academy, few papers report on how it manifests within precarious work in higher education (HE), especially amid the COVID-19 pandemic. This multiple case study explored 34 academics' experiences of precarity in three universities in London to unravel the challenges for these women using lengthy semi-structured interviews and opportunity and snowball sampling. It unravelled that it has intensified insecurities and discriminations – particularly for female academics – stemming from the neoliberal restructuring of the HE sector in Europe. The paper offers

recommendations for HR managers and senior leadership teams (SLTs) in educational institutions.

Research focus, rationale and questions

The literature on gender inequality in HE has been widely researched, but recommendations to tackle it usually refer to the higher ranks (O’Keefe and Courtois, 2019). Moreover, few studies have examined the additional problems that precarious female ‘outsiders’ encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK (Kınıkoğlu and Can, 2021). This paper argues that they were ostracised both formally and informally and exploited due to the ongoing neoliberalisation of the HE sector. Research indicates that HEIs usually conceal (or cannot record) data on precarious female academics and that official reports often ignore or underrate the phenomenon of precarious work in HEIs in the UK (UCU, 2016). Moreover, no reliable figures exist for the weakest workers, that is, hourly paid, zero-hour contracts, etc.

The current paper addresses a ‘gap’ in the literature on the challenges female precarious workers in HEIs in the UK have faced during the pandemic (Wright et al, 2021). As Advance HE (2019) reports that marginalisation and precarity have reigned in the academy amid the COVID-19 pandemic, it seems crucial to explore female early-career academics’ experiences and potential challenges since researchers report that university managers have often used inappropriate interventions to respond to the crisis (Docka-Filipek and Stone, 2021). The current study aims to address the following research questions:

- Which are the challenges that female precarious academics faced in HEIs amid the COVID-19 pandemic with regard to working routines?
- Which are the challenges that female precarious academics faced in HEIs amid the COVID-19 pandemic with regard to life routines?

Research methods

The researcher used the theories of gendered organisations (Acker, 1990), neoliberalism (Chen, 2013), labour process theory (Braverman, 1974) and feminist theory (Morley, 2014) to carefully examine the stories of 34 early-career academics involved in precarious work in public HEIs in London, who depicted the gender-specific challenges they faced with regard to working and life routines amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Previous research on this topic is either quantitative (Yildirim and Eslen-Ziya, 2021) or based on secondary data (McLaren et al, 2020). Utilising qualitative research based on an exploratory multiple case study approach and interpretivist philosophy (Ponelis, 2015), the study employed semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Using opportunity and snowball sampling processes, mainly due to lack of funding and access limitations, 34 female academics were interviewed after signing an informed consent form that guaranteed their anonymity. All interviews were recorded via MS Teams and data was analysed using thematic analysis (Gavin, 2008).

Research findings or argument

Drawing upon feminist theory and recent studies of the gendered effects of the crisis, this paper presents precarious female academics’ obstacles amid the pandemic, that is, their inability to fulfil their teaching, administrative and research responsibilities without childcare services. Some of them interrupted their career as they could not reconcile their work and family roles. Participants also expressed their concern about the increased gap in their relative competitiveness with male and childless colleagues and offered some preliminary reflections on the experience of the concurrent ‘double shift’ the lockdown engendered (Crook, 2020).

The study sheds light on different forms of precarity as, for example, researchers used the lockdown as a writing retreat and accelerated their career prospects while academics with teaching responsibilities felt trapped and saw their living conditions deteriorating. Therefore, women hit the 'care ceiling' (Ivancheva and O'Flynn, 2019) and their capacity to be creative and innovative vanished. They also had to take on the burden of the 'academic housework' as students turned to them rather than their male counterparts for support.

Participants confessed that they were also forced to deliver face-to-face seminars despite their health issues (for example, asthma) or those of their immediate family. This deeply affected both their physical and mental health. They complained about their inability to manage their caring responsibilities while being paid as this had a profound impact on their wellbeing. These women reflect on their labour, caring and affective insecurities as they faced the Janus-face of capitalist labour amid the pandemic (Bohrer, 2016), which has intensified precarity and instability of income, uncertainty, despair, and living in isolation. Finally, they vividly discuss the striking evidence of perceived institutional inflexibility, which has tempted many of them to start looking for the exit door.

Practical importance and implications of research

Research implications

Future research needs to explore various degrees of precarity in more universities and countries and compare findings, addressing issues of race as well. Therefore, researchers could offer more recommendations to HEIs to help them improve their response to future crises by supporting their staff. Failure to do so affects the student experience and the operational status of any university. The ultimate goal is to promote EDI in HE and challenge the increasingly hierarchical and inequitable structures of organisations and academia.

Implications for practice

HE globally is in a grim state. Female precarious workers have been incredibly affected by the pandemic as they had to carry an unbelievably heavy burden. Therefore, HR managers and SLTs should try to ensure that HEIs do not promote a competitive culture, lack of contractual security, and continuous mobility, which prevents female precarious workers from having a stable personal life and fulfilling their roles as mothers in supposedly privileged workplaces such as academia (Ivancheva and O'Flynn, 2016). The current study indicates that SLTs should reflect on and possibly withdraw all temporary COVID-19 measures which impose considerable pressure on precarious female academics, as these may hinder institutional regeneration in the post-COVID-19 era. HEIs should prioritise interventions that tackle structural inequalities and ensure that various factors, that is, race and gender, do not intersect in HEIs to produce negative outcomes for certain individuals, that is, women and ethnic minority academics. It would also be useful to reconsider promotion and tenure criteria, as the post-pandemic academia should reflect on the boundaries between care and academic work and include care-sensitive criteria in academic evaluations (Herschberg et al, 2018), recognising the invisible work female precarious 'outsiders' often undertake.

References

Acker, S. (1990) Teachers' culture in an English primary school: Continuity and change. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. Vol 11, No 3, pp257–273.

Advance HE. (2019) [Equality and higher education: Staff statistical report 2019](#).

- Bohrer, A.J. (2016) [The Janus-face of capitalist labor: gender, race, and work in early modernity](#). *College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences Theses and Dissertations*, 218.
- Braverman, H. (1974) [Labor and monopoly capital](#). New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Chen, E. (2013) [Neoliberalism and popular women's culture: Rethinking choice, freedom and agency](#). *European Journal of Cultural Studies*. Vol 16, No 4, pp440–452.
- Crook, S. (2020) Parenting during the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020: Academia, labour and care work. *Women's History Review*. Vol 29, No 7, pp1226–1238.
- Docka-Filipek, D. and Stone, L.B. (2021) Twice a 'housewife': On academic precarity, 'hysterical' women, faculty mental health, and service as gendered care work for the 'university family' in pandemic times. *Gender, Work & Organization*. Vol 28, No 6, pp2158–2179.
- Gavin, H. (2008) [Understanding research methods and statistics in psychology](#), pp271–282. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Herschberg, C., Benschop, Y. and Van den Brink, M. (2018) [Precarious postdocs: A comparative study on recruitment and selection of early-career researchers](#). *Scandinavian Journal of Management*. Vol 34, No 4, pp303–310.
- Ivancheva, M. and O'Flynn, M. (2016) Between career progression and career stagnation: casualisation, tenure, and the contract of indefinite duration in Ireland, pp167–184. In Gupta, S., Habjan, J. and Tutek, H. (eds) [Academic labour, unemployment and global higher education](#). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ivancheva, M., Lynch, K. and Keating, K. (2019) [Precarity, gender and care in the neoliberal academy](#). *Gender, Work & Organization*. Vol 26, No 4, pp448–462.
- Kınıkoğlu, C.N. and Can, A. (2021) [Negotiating the different degrees of precarity in the UK academia during the Covid-19 pandemic](#). *European Societies*. Vol 23 (Sup 1), ppS817–S830.
- McLaren, H.J., Wong, K.R., Nguyen, K.N. and Mahamadachchi, K.N.D. (2020) [Covid-19 and women's triple burden: Vignettes from Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Vietnam and Australia](#). *Social Sciences*. Vol 9, No 5, p 87.
- Morley, C. (2014) [Using critical reflection to research possibilities for change](#). *British Journal of Social Work*. Vol 44, No 6, pp1419–1435.
- O'Keefe, T. and Courtois, A. (2019) ['Not one of the family': Gender and precarious work in the neoliberal university](#). *Gender, Work & Organization*. Vol 26, No 4, pp463–479.
- Ponelis, S.R. (2015) [Using interpretive qualitative case studies for exploratory research in doctoral studies: A case of information systems research in small and medium enterprises](#). *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*. Vol 10, pp535–550.
- Wright, K.A., Haastrup, T. and Guerrina, R. (2021) [Equalities in freefall? Ontological insecurity and the long-term impact of COVID-19 in the academy](#). *Gender, Work & Organization*. Vol 28, No S1, pp163–167.
- UCU. (2016) [Precarious work in higher education: A snapshot of insecure contracts and institutional attitudes](#). London: University and College Union.

Yildirim, T.M. and Eslen-Ziya, H. (2021) [The differential impact of COVID-19 on the work conditions of women and men academics during the lockdown](#). *Gender, Work & Organization*. Vol 28, No S1, pp243–249.

Employee voice through trade unions: Key to successful employment relations (ER) and HRM. A pilot study of upcoming research on the banking sector in Nigeria

Gogo Anyanwu, University of Leeds

Overview

This paper presents initial findings of a pilot study of upcoming research into employee voice through trade unions. Employee voice plays a fundamental role in ensuring employee motivation, organisational growth and performance, and the campaign to allow employees to be part of business and wellbeing decisions in organisations is attracting attention globally (Wilkinson et al, 2018), especially in developing countries like Nigeria (Adewumi, 2021). This study explores comparative perspectives of workers and managers on the concept of employee voice through trade unions in the Nigerian banking sector using semi-structured interviews of participants from union and non-unionised banks for generation of data.

Research focus, rationale and questions

This research focused on highlighting the importance of employee voice, especially in a union setting, in facilitating and enhancing employee engagement towards the ultimate goal of organisational performance. Some employers, especially in Africa, view employees having collective voice through unionism as instituting employee antagonism in organisations, without considering the corresponding potential benefits of voice through trade unions.

The rationale for this study and the focus on Nigeria is that most of the Nigerian employees in workplaces, especially the banking sector, are not allowed to organise (Nwagbara et al, 2013), especially since the 2000s when the financial sector changed drastically – for example, outsourcing, electronic banking, ATMs, call centres, tele banking (Oluwatolani et al, 2011). Consequently, union density and activities declined, and employee voice became marginalised (Fajana, 2006). For example, against the Nigerian Labour Law, candidates for employment, especially in the banks, are compelled to denounce unionism as part of a condition for employment (Emelifeonwu and Valk, 2019). This propelled this pilot research on employee voice in the Nigerian banking sector.

The perspectives of employees of unionised and non-unionised banks were important and had to be obtained in order to answer the three main research questions (RQs):

- Research question 1: How do employees perceive unionism and its effects on employee voice and participation in organisational decision-making?
- Research question 2: Is employee voice more effective in unionised organisations, and, if it is, in what ways?
- Research question 3: How does employee voice enhance feedback channels and performance in organisations?

Research methods

A qualitative method (case study) was applied. A case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a phenomenon as the 'case' within its real-world context and also examines it in its natural setting, employing methods of data collection to gather information from one or few entities (Yin, 2014; Baskarada, 2014). This research, through semi-structured interviews, engaged participants from different units of the bank who are well informed, experienced and have been in the employment of the bank since the employees became organised, in order to contribute significantly to the research (Saunders et al, 2019). A total of 18 participants – employees of lower cadre, supervisors, managers and executives, from a unionised bank as well as those from two non-unionised banks – were interviewed for comparative and balanced views of the research data, and thematic analysis applied to analyse the data. The research participants were randomly selected from various regions of the bank.

Research findings or argument

The analysed data revealed the importance of unionism, the need for Nigerian organisations to allow employees to organise and participate in decision-making, stating that these create room for employee voice, organisational professionalism and growth. However, there were diverse opinions about the effectiveness of unions and their leaders/representatives. Also, the data revealed that employees of non-unionised organisations believe that union presence is important irrespective of how active they are, as they create an aura of checking on management activities and hope for employees. These have highlighted questions to be explored in my forthcoming research.

The data generated from the unionised bank revealed that in 2009, 20 years after the bank was established, the union – in line with the Nigeria extant labour law, international best practice and fair hearing standards – facilitated the implementation of a policy that authorised a union executive to be part of the bank's Disciplinary Committee representing the interest of employees at every hearing. The data also revealed executive management views which further express that unions have a vital role in HRM, business strategy, organisational growth and employment relations, especially in the area of grievance procedures. For example, one of the initiatives the bank adopted to ensure good employee relations was to invite the union president to every strategy session, to receive employees' perspective to business and ER proposals. The study confirms the effect of a pluralist/union form of voice on partnership and HRM systems, especially in the area of communication and employee relations (Cook et al, 2020; Vainker, 2021).

Practical importance and implications of research

This research highlights how employee voice via trade unions operates in a developing economy, with Africa as its focal point. Traditionally, employee voice is transmitted through the collective bargaining channel of union voice, and research reveals that one of the ways of delivering effective employee voice is through a representative/union form of voice (Freeman and Kleiner, 1994; Benson, 2000; Dundon et al, 2004; Pyman et al, 2006; Benson and Brown, 2010; Cook et al, 2020; Kaufman et al, 2021). This study is important because employers, especially in Africa, view the practice of unionism as antagonistic and non-beneficial to organisations (Adewumi, 2021). Unions' perspective on business and ER discussions or issues facilitates employees' commitment and performance as well as enhanced HRM communication systems (Cook et al, 2020).

The results and analysis of the interviews revealed that unionism is fundamental to the existence of voice and its effectiveness. Though the findings from practitioners' perspective revealed that unions should be more proactive than reactive, it further revealed that

employee voice through unionism encourages employee motivation and confidence, and also enhances partnership for sustained organisational performance (Adewumi, 2021; Kaufman et al, 2021). In addition to good partnership between the union and the management, this research also reveals the yearning of employees for union participation and activities in organisations. It also highlights employees' quest for better representation by union representatives or leaders. Findings from this pilot study pose further questions, which will be explored in my forthcoming PhD research.

References

- Adewumi, S.A. (2021) [Employment casualisation and trade union survival strategies in the beverage sector in Lagos, Nigeria](#). *Journal of Public Affairs*. Vol 21, No 3. e2256.
- Baskarada, S. (2014) [Qualitative case study guidelines](#). Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network. [Accessed 28 May 2022].
- Benson, J. (2000) [Employee voice in union and non-union Australian workplaces](#). *British Journal of Industrial Relations*. Vol 38, No 3, pp453–459.
- Benson, J. and Brown, M. (2010) [Employee voice: does union membership matter?](#) *Human Resource Management Journal*. Vol 20, No 1, pp80–99.
- Cook, H., MacKenzie, R. and Forde, C. (2020) [Union partnership as a facilitator to HRM: improving implementation through oppositional engagement](#). *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*. Vol 31, No 10, pp1262–1284.
- Dundon, T., Wilkinson, A., Marchington, M. and Ackers, P. (2004) [The meanings and purpose of employee voice](#). *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*. Vol 15, No 6, pp1149–1170.
- Emelifeonwu, J.C. and Valk, R. (2019) [Employee voice and silence in multinational corporations in the mobile telecommunications industry in Nigeria](#). *Employee Relations*. Vol 41, No 1, pp228–252.
- Freeman, R. and Kleiner, M. (1994) [Do unions make enterprises insolvent?](#) Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. [Accessed 8 May 2022].
- Kaufman, B.E., Barry, M., Wilkinson, A., Lomas, G. and Gomez, R. (2021) [Using unitarist, pluralist, and radical frames to map the cross-section distribution of employment relations across workplaces: A four-country empirical investigation of patterns and determinants](#). *Journal of Industrial Relations*. Vol 63, No 2, pp204–234.
- Oluwatolani, O., Joshua, A. and Philip, A. (2011) [The impact of information technology in Nigeria's banking industry](#). *Journal of Computer Science and Engineering*. Vol 7, No 2, pp63–67.
- Pyman, A., Cooper, B., Teicher, J. and Holland, P. (2006) [A comparison of the effectiveness of employee voice arrangements in Australia](#). *Industrial Relations Journal*. Vol 37, No 5, pp543–559.
- Saunders, M.N.K., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2019) [Research methods for business students. Ebook](#). [Accessed 19 May 2022].
- Vainker, S. (2021) [From employee voice to pupil voice: taking the 'high road' from the factory to the classroom](#). *Journal of Educational Administration and History*. Vol 53, No 1, pp21–34.

Wilkinson, A., Gollan, P.J., Kalfa, S. and Xu, Y. (2018) [Voices unheard: employee voice in the new century](#). *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*. Vol 29, No 5, pp711–724.

Yin, R. (2014) *Case study research, design and methods*, 5th ed. Los Angeles: Sage Publications Ltd.

Work-based learning in the hospitality industry: Addressing labour challenges through academia and industry collaboration

Patrice O'Reilly Duffy, Atlantic Technological University (ATU)

Madeleine Stevens, Liverpool John Moores University

Overview

This study investigates how to address the significant challenges the hospitality sector is facing post-pandemic. Our research highlights the labour challenges within the sector, which include difficulties in recruitment, retention and skills shortages. Qualitative data is collected and triangulated by gaining the perceptions of hospitality employees, managers and academics of a workplace-based education programme. We argue the social value of collaboration between industry and academia to support the hospitality industry in addressing the identified labour challenges. A novel contribution is offered through the development of a conceptual framework of strategic talent management for a sustainable hospitality industry.

Research focus, rationale and questions

The main components of talent management are explored:

- recruitment
- retention, and
- skills shortages

Hospitality organisations are dependent upon the availability of suitable employees to provide the required level of service to their customers, yet the industry is facing challenges in recruitment and retention due to prevalent perceptions of job insecurity. Skills shortages in the international hospitality industry, pre-pandemic, have been well documented (Jayawardena, 2017; McGinley et al, 2017; Thang Quyet and Hoa Thi Thu, 2020); however, post-pandemic the situation is now at a critical stage. A recent report by Fáilte Ireland, the national tourism authority, states that 98% of hotels are experiencing difficulties in recruiting staff (Fáilte Ireland, 2022). The issue is not unique to Ireland, with a DEHOGA survey reporting that skill shortage is a concern for 79.6% of establishments globally (Euler, 2021).

The talent management challenges the hospitality industry is facing require strategic, agile responses (Dannunzio-Green and Teare, 2018). Collaboration with academia to review, design and develop learning opportunities are found to be mutually beneficial to the hospitality organisation, the employee and the academic institute (Baum, 2019; Nachmias et al, 2017). We argue that collaboration is now critical as a means of addressing the current challenges to ensure the future sustainability of the industry.

The primary research questions are:

- to identify the key challenges the hospitality industry is facing post-pandemic
- to understand how the social value of industry and academic collaboration can impact the sector challenges
- to develop a conceptual framework of strategic talent management.

Research methods

The research data was collected via a qualitative study carried out in seven hotels within the west and northwest of Ireland, over two phases. Phase one comprised semi-structured interviews conducted with participants who were part of a pilot study in an industry-based education and training initiative, which included: seven hospitality human resource managers, eight academic staff, and 12 hospitality employees. Phase two involved semi-structured interviews with 11 managers to investigate their opinions and attitudes toward collaborating with academia to deliver industry-based training programmes.

The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) was used as the lens to identify factors influencing intention to participate in work-based learning initiatives and perceived barriers and enablers to participating in work-based education programmes.

The data were analysed through thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006) and triangulation (Saunders et al, 2019) to ensure validity and reliability.

Research findings or argument

Key challenges faced by the hospitality industry post-pandemic

- recruitment of supervisory staff is particularly difficult
- retention, competitive labour market
- the appeal of the industry as a career has been impacted by the pandemic
- time, cost, delivery method and support were identified as barriers to participating in work-based learning initiatives.

To understand how the social value of industry and academic collaboration can impact the sector challenges

- positive attitudes are held towards work-based learning programmes
- the majority would welcome the opportunity for collaboration with an education partner
- all managers said they would be interested in offering a work-based learning initiative
- respondents concurred that in the current climate, employee development opportunities are extremely important. Currently, there are many variations of employee development programmes.

To recommend a conceptual framework of strategic talent management for a sustainable hospitality industry

The following extracts from the findings are the basis upon which a conceptual framework will be designed:

- Work-based learning initiatives are a key tool for recruitment and retention of staff and an excellent opportunity for employee development.

- Effective talent management has the potential to benefit the organisation and the employee.
- Talent management is of strategic importance to hospitality organisations.
- Identifying potential in employees is pivotal.
- Employee development is utilised as a motivational tool and ensures a pipeline of suitably skilled staff for a sustainable hospitality industry.

Key dimensions of a talent management framework:

- workforce planning
- recruitment, succession planning
- retention, career path development
- appraisal
- recognition, autonomy/job design
- training and development opportunities
- support from manager/supervisor.

Practical importance and implications of research

This study supports the literature that there is a substantial gap which exists between the needs of the hospitality industry and the curricula offered by education institutions. This study demonstrates the urgency for a change in approach by both academia and industry, to drive social value collectively through active collaboration.

Our study evidences the benefits of collaboration, not only to ensure sustainability for the hospitality industry, but also for employees and hospitality patrons. The results of our three-year pilot study provide valuable insight and offer a robust practical solution to address the skills gap, recruitment, and retention challenges in the Irish hospitality industry. The development of our talent management framework also addresses key areas of concern for hospitality employees, such as job insecurity. Patrons frequent the hospitality industry for various important reasons, as evidenced in research: biological needs, health reasons, social wellbeing needs and psychological needs, as well as business needs (Fraikue, 2016).

Our research also offers valuable recommendations to educational institutions, which will provide them with a framework upon which to build relevant education and training programmes, addressing skills gaps. Based on our findings, HR practitioners can gain valuable insight on how to address the main challenges identified of overcoming recruitment, retention, intention to quit, job insecurity and skill shortages through adopting our conceptual framework of strategic talent management for a sustainable hospitality industry.

References

- Ajzen, I. (1991) [The theory of planned behavior](#). *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. Vol 50, No 2, pp179–211.
- Baum, T. (2019) [Does the hospitality industry need or deserve talent?](#) *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. Vol 31, No 10, pp3823–3837.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) [Using thematic analysis in psychology](#). *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. Vol 3, No 2, pp77–101.
- Dannunzio-Green, N. and Teare, R. (2018) [Reflections on the theme issue outcomes: Is talent management a strategic priority in the hospitality sector?](#) *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*. Vol 10, No 1, pp124–130.

- Euler, B.E. (2021) [Where have all the people gone? – Shortage of skilled workers in the hospitality industry](#). Ktchn Rebel.
- Fáilte Ireland. (2022) [Tourism barometer](#).
- Fraikue, F.B. (2016) [Reasons for eating out and socio-demographic characteristics of customers](#). Paper presented at the Proceedings of INCEDI 2016 Conference, August 29–31.
- Jayawardena, C. (2017) [The hospitality and tourism industry in Canada: innovative solutions for the future](#). *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*. Vol 9, No 4, pp471–485.
- McGinley, S.P., Hanks, L. and Line, N.D. (2017) [Constraints to attracting new hotel workers: A study on industrial recruitment](#). *International Journal of Hospitality Management*. Vol 60, pp114–122
- Nachmias, S., Walmsley, A. and Orphanidou, Y. (2017) [Students' perception towards hospitality education: An anglo-cypriot critical study](#). *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*. Vol 20, pp134–145.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2019) [Research methods for business students](#), 8th ed. New York: Pearson.
- Thang Quyet, N. and Hoa Thi Thu, N. (2020) [Factors affecting industry and university collaboration in education in the hospitality industry in Vietnam: A business perspective](#). *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*. Vol 7, No 2, pp291–300.

Employee engagement in context: Implications and practical recommendations for a post-pandemic world of hybrid working

Keeley Evans, First Direct

Sarah Pass, Nottingham Trent University

Maranda Ridgway, Nottingham Trent University

Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the future of work and organisations had to adapt to new methods of working that placed greater importance on employee engagement in the context of a remote working environment (Mehta, 2021). There is now, more than ever, a greater need for employers and leadership within organisations to develop better informed engagement strategies that foster meaningful work (Bailey, 2022). A contextual research continues to pose an issue in addressing employee engagement (Cooke, 2018; Fletcher et al, 2020; Purcell, 2014), and a new dynamic world of work creates a further gap in the existing literature on informing practical solutions to engagement in a remote work environment (Cooke et al, 2022; de Klerk et al, 2021).

Research focus, rationale and questions

Organisations aim to cater for employee needs through widespread initiatives, developed in response to employee feedback, collected through annual employee surveys (Demerouti et al, 2012; Saks, 2019). However, survey data will only supply a snapshot of time.

Furthermore, given the fluctuations in engagement experienced by employees, it would be difficult to ensure that the survey methods used by academics and professionals are giving the context required to solve the engagement problem (Bailey et al, 2017; Jenkins and Delbridge, 2013). The purpose of the qualitative research was to gain a deeper, context-rich understanding of the antecedents of employee engagement and the implications for practice, collecting data from a sample of multi-level employees in a large financial services organisation. The semi-structured interviews were conducted during the COVID-19 global pandemic and captured individuals' thoughts and reflections on their lived experiences and relationships in a remote and hybrid context.

- RQ1: In the context of the pandemic, how did a remote working environment impact an individual's ability to engage at work?
- RQ2: What are the practical recommendations for leaders and implications for HRM in post-pandemic work where remote and hybrid working are the new normal?

Research methods

The qualitative data collection was conducted during the move from 100% homeworking to a hybrid model of working – the 2021 COVID-19 pandemic – and was captured via 32 semi-structured interviews with customer-facing employees. The interviews were conducted and recorded in Microsoft Teams with 22 participants who identified as female and 10 who identified as male, with tenures between three and 36 years. Two departments of the organisation were invited to participate; all were volunteers and from a cross-section of career bands from clerical staff to senior managers. Individuals with leadership responsibilities and customer-facing individuals took part, including engagement champions. The questions served to address the research questions and were designed to give depth and context to the existing bodies of work and theory in the field. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the research findings.

Research findings or argument

Participants described a long-term state of positive engagement, a connection to the organisation, their colleagues, and their purpose in their job roles. This is disrupted periodically by interactions with others, colleagues, and customers; this has a positive and negative influence on an individual's state of engagement. Employee engagement is therefore transient; these fluctuations can occur momentarily as individuals go about their daily work tasks (Kahn, 1990; May et al, 2004). Participants describe employee engagement as a construct as communication; they want this to be clear, honest, and open, and in a remote world, often from their respective leadership teams (Chanana and Sangeeta, 2021). Individuals felt that during full remote working the constant communication, insight and accessibility to senior leadership increased engagement as the organisation became flatter, giving transparency, openness, and honesty to those senior roles. As the world opened, some felt that this positive experience was starting to be lost. Participants described an increased sense of individual purpose as they balanced better their caring responsibilities with work and the increased flexibility and lack of commute. Working from home impacted engagement positively and negatively; it increased collaboration and gave rise to more opportunities to take part in projects and activities outside of their job roles which geographically they would have previously been excluded from, people's networks grew, yet it created a blurred line between home and work, an always-on culture (Arora and Suri, 2020). Direct line management was a key driver of an individual's engagement and wellbeing at work. This relationship was felt to be the most important in terms of trust, compassion and support, and friendships and peers, reciprocal trust, compassion, and support was also prevalent in employee happiness.

Practical importance and implications of research

The findings provide much needed context for practical recommendations to address employee engagement quoted in the research (Fletcher et al, 2020) and positive implications for enhancing employee engagement in a remote and hybrid working environment. Only by seeing and hearing from the voice of others can we truly understand the lived experiences of individuals in work, and as leaders there is evermore a need to explore the lives of their team members. Leadership and organisations will be more challenged to deliver bespoke employee-centric solutions to addressing the engagement challenge, which will require contextual solutions borne from in-depth knowledge of organisational members.

There is clearly a demand on individual contributors in owning their own resilience and wellbeing in a remote environment and for leaders in enabling that wellbeing and engagement in a remote environment through continued collaboration of teams. Future organisational strategy should therefore be built on the foundation of individual employee wellbeing, and the execution of this should be delivered by empathetic and human-centred leadership that can flex consistently their connectivity with their teams in a new world of work. Consistent communication which is open and honest supports wellbeing and engagement in work. This needs to reach employees at every level, whatever their location. This was well delivered during the remote working of 2020/21 and needs to continue, and workspaces will need to provide the tools to support hybrid workstyles.

References

- Arora, P. and Suri, D. (2020) [Redefining, relooking, redesigning, and reincorporating HRD in the post Covid 19 context and thereafter](#). *Human Resource Development International*. Vol 23, No 4, pp438–451.
- Bailey, C. (2022) [Employee engagement: Do practitioners care what academics have to say – and should they?](#) *Human Resource Management Review*. Vol 32, No 1, Article No 100589.
- Bailey, C., Madden, A., Alfes, K. and Fletcher, L. (2017) [The meaning, antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement: A narrative synthesis](#). *International Journal of Management Reviews*. Vol 19, No 1, pp31–53.
- Chanana, N. and Sangeeta (2021) [Employee engagement practices during COVID-19 lockdown](#). *Journal of Public Affairs*. Vol 21, No 4, e2508.
- Cooke, F.L. (2018) [Concepts, contexts, and mindsets: Putting human resource management research in perspectives](#). *Human Resource Management Journal*. Vol 28, No 1, pp1–13.
- Cooke, F.L., Dickmann, M. and Parry, E. (2022) [Building sustainable societies through human-centred human resource management: emerging issues and research opportunities](#). *International Journal of Human Resource Management*. Vol 33, No 1, pp1–15.
- de Klerk, J.J., Joubert, M. and Mosca, H.F. (2021) [Is working from home the new workplace panacea? Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic for the future world of work](#). *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*. Vol 47, pp1–14.
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A.B. and Fried, Y. (2012) [Work orientations in the job demands-resources model](#). *Journal of Managerial Psychology*. Vol 27, No 6, pp557–575.
- Fletcher, L., Bailey, C., Alfes, K. and Madden, A. (2020) [Mind the context gap: a critical review of engagement within the public sector and an agenda for future research](#). *International Journal of Human Resource Management*. Vol 31, No 1, pp6–46.

Jenkins, S. and Delbridge, R. (2013) [Context matters: Examining 'soft' and 'hard' approaches to employee engagement in two workplaces](#). *International Journal of Human Resource Management*. Vol 24, No 14, pp2670–2691.

Kahn, W.A. (1990) [Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work](#). *The Academy of Management Journal*. Vol 33, No 4, pp692–724.

May, D.R., Gilson, R.L. and Harter, L.M. (2004) [The psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability and the engagement of the human spirit at work](#). *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*. Vol 77, No 1, pp11–37.

Mehta, P. (2021) [Work from home: Work engagement amid COVID-19 lockdown and employee happiness](#). *Journal of Public Affairs*. Vol 21, No 4, e2709.

Purcell, J. (2014) [Disengaging from engagement](#). *Human Resource Management Journal*. Vol 24, No 3, pp241–254.

Saks, A.M. (2019) [Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement revisited](#). *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness*. Vol 6, No 1, pp19–38.



CIPD

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
151 The Broadway London SW19 1JQ United Kingdom
T +44 (0)20 8612 6200 **F** +44 (0)20 8612 6201
E cipd@cipd.co.uk **W** cipd.co.uk

Incorporated by Royal Charter
Registered as a charity in England and Wales (1079797)
and Scotland (SC045154)

Issued: January 2023 Reference: 8094 © CIPD 2023