APPLIED RESEARCH
CONFERENCE 2022

Submissions

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ARC 2022

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 2022 research papers. The papers are grouped into 11 thematic streams and are presented in the order in which they appear in the programme.

ARC 2022 is hosted online 26-27 January. For more information on ARC, visit www.cipd.co.uk/arc.

2A: Mixed stream

Understanding the experiences of Black female academics in English Universities through the lens of a Critical Race Theory framework

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Overview

This paper explores the lived experiences of Black female academics in English universities and seeks explanations to their perceptions of position, progression and under-representation. The participants indicate race and racism is more salient than gender in their reflections, thus the use of a Critical Race Theory (CRT) framework provides a robust way of exploring their experiences as incidences and situations of racism can be better: identified, analysed and understood. The findings reveal the layered ways in which the frequency and depth of racism is experienced and routinely perpetuated. The paper contributes to empirical knowledge about Black female academics in English universities.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Black (African, Caribbean and other Black background) women remain the most marginalised and socially disadvantaged group within English universities. For example, only 25 Black women are employed as professors (UCU 2019). Furthermore, there are significant gaps in research on the experiences of Black female academics as much of the literature on gender in academia focuses on White women, as they are disproportionately overrepresented compared to Black women. Research on race in universities also tends to ignore the experiences of Black women as there are more Black academic males. Previous research has also referred to the struggles of black and minority ethnic (BME) staff as a whole in universities (Bhopal and Jackson 2013; Bhopal 2016; UCU 2016) but not specifically to Black female academics.

CRT first emerged in the mid-1970s as an American perspective, its fundamental notion being that racism is an everyday occurrence and endemic in American society (Delgado 1995; Ladson-Billings 1998). However, according to Bell (2008:624), "racism mutates and multiplies creating a range of racisms". CRT therefore, shifts the focus away from a deficit view of colour and race as a disadvantage (Yosso 2005) and provides a framework for theorising, examining and challenging the ways in which race and racism can affect practice. CRT uses a framework of six tenets:

permanence of racism; Whiteness as property; counter-story telling; interest convergence; critiques of liberalism and intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991; Delgado and Stefancic 2000; DeCuir and Dixson 2004). We develop an argument informed by CRT suggesting that racism is endemic in English universities.

Research methods

A snow-ball sampling method was used to identify and access potential participants in English universities. Seventeen African or Caribbean female academics (principal, senior and lecturer grades) on permanent open-ended contracts across five universities participated.

Data was collected via semi-structured, recorded interviews over two years to capture the richness and depth of their storytelling. Initial data analysis was through a process of in-depth reading and re-reading of transcripts; thematic coding using Nvivo to create first order codes to reflect the CRT tenets and second order codes as additional areas emerged, refining the data further. The CRT framework was used to place the discussion within a race discourse and to utilise its tenets, especially that of story-telling as a fundamental tool in bringing to life their experiences. Sense-making and understanding was achieved through the use of each of the CRT filters to illustrate, interpret, analyse, narrate and present their experiences.

Research findings or argument

The research revealed that the participants' deliberations were mostly about race and racism (tenet one, permanence of racism) as well as their feelings of being considered as outsiders and being made invisible in the academy (tenet two, Whiteness as property). Tenet three (story-telling and counter-story telling) was used in capturing and interpreting the women's experiences. This paper is focused on the findings related to these three CRT tenets.

Black women had endured experiences that White academics could not have undergone by virtue of their colour. The application of CRT added an extra and unrecognised dimension to the exploration of their experiences identifying both overt and subtle layers of racism and hidden operations of power, disadvantaging Black women. For example: monkey drawings were placed on their office doors; academics in Health faculties were told they would amount to nothing more than, "British bum cleaners"; questions were raised about their intelligence levels in studying for a Phd; participants were asked to, "move-on", out of staff corridor space by a White academic, even though they had a right to be there. The frequency and depth of racism experienced implied that racism was endemic and routinely perpetuated and positioned at different levels within universities with little evidence of action taken to address complaints. This raised additional questions about the participants' depth of voice and managerial responsibility for action. Strategic and operational changes within universities was seemingly compounding discrimination and creating additional challenges to the participants' prevailing double jeopardy of being Black and being female.

Practical importance and implications of research

This research provides in-depth understanding of the experiences of a specific group of under-researched individuals, moving the emphasis away from the general categorisation of BME people. New knowledge is created around the layered ways in which racism is experienced by Black female academics.

Implications include:

Universities and managers must think more about how story-telling can be used to share sensitive conversations about racism in safe spaces, developing a critical standpoint to examine racism and the ways in which universities' equality, diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policies have contributed to White people being the main beneficiaries.

HR support staff must consider whether they are appropriately informed, qualified and competent to: write, critically review, collect, interpret and present data and feedback on EDI issues. They must be honest in determining the extent to which they place a greater emphasis on creating more EDI policies rather than evaluating the effectiveness of the current policies; additionally they must evaluate whether EDI policies are created as stand-alone policies (serving charters and kite-marks) or fully integrated and evidenced in all HR areas.

Academic Educators must examine the extent to which they are embedding EDI into all aspects of their curriculum design and teaching and learning areas. Relevant training and development for staff in these areas must be introduced so affected and effective teaching of EDI across all curriculum areas is evident.

EDI policies must incorporate a community diversity mind-set, influenced by relevant minority groups and knowledge-sharing with other universities, thereby creating definitive benchmarks for improved practice.

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Board-level Employee Voice and the UK Corporate Governance Code: An Analysis of FTSE 350 Firms

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Overview

The 2018 UK Corporate Governance Code included a new requirement for companies to adopt one of three mechanisms for strengthening employee voice in the boardroom: (i) a designated non-executive director, (ii) an employee advisory council, or (iii) a director from the workforce. Through analysis of company reports, a survey of FTSE 350 firms, and a series of interviews with directors, executives and workforce representatives, the paper examines responses across FTSE 350 firms. It assesses the implications for corporate practice and also for the further development of board-level employee voice, considering debates around ESG disclosures and broader regulatory reform.

Research focus, rationale and questions

The paper reports and discusses the findings of a research project funded by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC), conducted jointly by Royal Holloway, University of London (RHUL) and the Involvement and Participation Association (IPA). The FRC is the regulator in the UK monitoring standards in auditing and accounting, and is responsible for setting the corporate governance and stewardship codes.

Following a Green Paper consultation and Select Committee enquiry, in August 2017 the government invited the FRC to revise the Corporate Governance Code to include a new requirement for companies to adopt, on the Code's 'comply or explain' basis, one of three mechanisms for strengthening employee voice in the boardroom: (i) a designated existing non-executive director, (ii) a formal employee advisory council, or (iii) a director from the workforce.

Through analysis of company reports, a survey of FTSE 350 firms, and a series of interviews with directors, executives and workforce representatives, the paper examines three questions:

1. Why did companies choose their particular approach(es)?

2. How have the chosen approaches been operationalised by different companies?

3. To what extent, after a year or more of operation, have effective outcomes been achieved both for the company and its employees?

The paper aims to provide a deeper understanding of the current intersection of corporate governance with employee voice, in the light of the requirements in the revised Code, and reflects on the implications of the findings for several emerging debates (around ESG, corporate purpose, and the wider democratisation of firms).

Research methods

The research used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, progressing through three stages of enquiry.

Stage A was an examination of all FTSE 350 annual reports, accessed during August and September 2020. Stage B was a survey of FTSE 350 firms. Responses were received during September and October 2020. In total 70 firms participated and answered at least half the questions, a response rate of 20%. Stage C involved a series of 'deep dives' to consider arrangements at 17 selected firms in more detail. This entailed 41 semi-structured online interviews, over a five month period from October 2020 to February 2021, with those closely related to the workforce engagement process (e.g. HR directors, NEDs, company secretaries and workforce representatives). The 17 cases come from a range of sectors: including insurance, mining, IT Services, beverages, hotels & entertainment, passenger transportation, multiline utilities, water utilities, healthcare equipment, and food retailing.

Research findings or argument

Of the three options in the revised Code, 68% of the 280 firms in our sample adopted one or more of these (40% appointed a designated NED, 12% established an advisory panel, 16% combined an advisory panel with a designated NED). Only one company appointed a worker director following the revised Code, adding to the four FTSE 350 firms with worker directors that pre-date the Code. The remaining 32% of firms have not adopted any of the three options, instead either choosing to adopt 'alternative arrangements' – permitted by the Code – or claiming that their existing engagement mechanisms are adequate to satisfy the Code's requirements. While

some of this group have longstanding and effective structures for workforce engagement developed over several years, others rely heavily on staff surveys combined with ad hoc forms of informal engagement such as site visits.

Advisory panels, many of which are newly created bodies, provide some examples of innovation. These take a range of forms, have a variety of names, are sometimes elected by workers, but are more often appointed by managers. For firms relying solely on designated NEDs, there is often significant ambiguity regarding the role of these NEDs and how they should interface with existing engagement structures. The few examples of worker directors offer valuable lessons that confirm this approach is not incompatible with the UK corporate governance framework. Worker directors played a valuable role in the firms we looked at, engaging fully in board deliberations and discharging their legal duties without issue.

Practical importance and implications of research

Most responses to the revised Code have proved to be less a revolution than an evolution of existing workforce engagement arrangements, often reflecting the size and structure of firms, different strategic priorities, and historical patterns of employee consultation and employment relations. Perhaps these are not the radical changes that some had hoped for, with only a tiny fraction of firms opting to appoint worker directors to their board. The changes have prompted, however, a large number of firms to take a serious look at board-level workforce engagement, and we can see the first seeds of a widespread shift in attitudes in this area. The paper will highlight a number of principles that we might describe as 'good corporate practice' (e.g. around representativeness and breadth of coverage, involving the workforce in the choice of mechanism, establishing a meaningful dialogue and an effective feedback loop).

The paper will also consider the implications of the findings for a number of current policy-related debates, and so consider how board-level workforce engagement might be further developed. These relate to three specific areas: (i) the concept of ESG and the role of finance and asset management in corporate stewardship, (ii) corporate purpose and sustainability, and (iii) the democratisation of work and the need for broader corporate governance reform. The paper will argue that the soft law approach of voluntarist codes of practice is largely ineffective and there is a strong case for a more coherent and extensive regulatory regime, backed up with clear enforcement mechanisms.

References

The report on which the paper is based, which contains a series of references, is available here:

https://www.frc.org.uk/getattachment/56bdd5ed-3b2d-4a6f-a62b-979910a90a10/FRC-Workforce-Engagement-Report_May-2021.pdf

2B: Covid-19 impact on work and employment

'I see more of the person than the work colleague': reflection on workplace relationships from a year of working at home

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Overview

This paper reports on early findings from research extending the role of workplace friendships in engagement, to reflect on relationships that become remote abruptly post Covid19. Initial results provide insights into the experience and impact on engagement of changing levels of support from relationships moving from physical to virtual. It provides a brief review of related thinking following the pandemic, the methodology followed by initial results, discussion and conclusions in relation to the previous study. Absence of workplace relationships during pandemic provide a unique opportunity to understand this supportive context in difficult times and implications for workplaces and hybrid working.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Covid-19 has resulted in an massive experiment in remote working where all those who could suddenly left their workplaces to work from home without their everyday contacts and relationships with colleagues. This research questions how workplace relationships supported engagement and wellbeing during this difficult time.

The engagement literature has followed two main directions Kahn's (1990) personal engagement with its focus on meaningfulness, psychological safety and personal and psychological availability of the individual as conditions for engagement and Schaufeli et al's, 2002) focus on the task element building on job burnout and exhaustion as the opposite side in work engagement. Personal engagement has been underpinned by the relational context and systems (Kahn, 1998; Kahn and Heaphy, 2014) that build on role of attachment and anchoring relationships in uncertainty and isolation where people may feel disengaged or abandoned to provide psychological safety.

The literature of this first year of pandemic has reflected themes of burnout and stress (Ojo et al, 2021; Hadi et al, 2021; Gabriel et al 2021); relational support linking to personal engagement brings out wider issues of friendship and interpersonal relationships from different angles including psychological safety and wellbeing (Brunetto et al, 2021), attachment security in leader-follower relationships in a context of disruption (Hinojosa et al, 2020), communal and social exchange

relationships based on trust impacting performance and leadership (Chen et al, 2020), work family conflict and enrichment (Powell, 2020) and human connection evolving during the process of meaningfulness deepening while working virtually (Kaye-Tzadok, 2021) reflecting those of engagement.

Research methods

This stage of an ongoing study takes an interpretive approach to add deeper reflection and comparison on the experience of relationships.   The design built on the experiencing reflecting and believing self (Connor and Barratt's, 2012) by using two different methods to collect data. The happy app-based (Frampton et al, 2017) diary entries provide the experience element where participants comment on interactions at work based on emotional reactions (positive, neutral, negative), relationship type (co-worker, colleague, close colleague) building on Kram and Isabella's peer relationships (1985) and outcomes for engagement as aspects of meaningfulness, safety and availability (Kahn and Heaphy; 2014). The second phase 'reflecting and believing self' (Connor and Barratt's, 2012) stage used semi-structured interviews to explore the same concepts in depth which were analysed using Atlas-ti, this second phase includes previous participants from one of the phase one organisations allowing comparison between pre and post-covid experiences. The interviews are ongoing.

Research findings or argument

The research, sponsored by the Henley Forum, involved three government and utility organisations contributing over 460 diary entries and 30 interviews over the two phases and stages. Early findings from the second stage add to stage one but here highlight the different experiences after working remotely.

Earlier Kahn's (1990) three conditions for engagement psychological safety seemed to be the most important for relationships. Now the connected and belonging aspects of meaningfulness were more apparent especially with close colleagues bringing out the importance of checking in and chatting before starting the task, which reflects the relational work preceding task work reported in the previous stage. Communication became especially important in making people feel thought of and connected. Psychological safety was more about feeling safe and supported by friends with non work conversations checking up on each other, as well as feeling a new level of trust while working remotely. The motivation aspects of availability were particularly apparent with reports of needing the interactions with people to energise and 'recharge batteries' or to hear different perspectives, more difficult in more formal virtual meetings.

The downsides reported included missing the impromptu conversations that sparked ideas, the shrinking networks and talking to a narrow group, missing the feedback and validation and frustration of missing cues from facial expressions in virtual meetings. However these have been partly balanced by seeing the more human side of colleagues in home settings, new teams established regardless of geography and sense of hierarchy disappearing when pets and children appear.

Practical importance and implications of research

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The initial findings of Covid19 working highlights the role of colleagues in supporting individuals to feeling engaged through connection and feeling valued for meaningfulness, needing interactions with others to energise and feel motivated as part of availability. Safety was less of an issue as home was as safe for this sample and did not include those who reported a difficult home situation or those with needs to feel included who may feel physically threatened or excluded while working remotely. It was a different experience depending on circumstances, many with family enjoyed being able to balance work and family life whereas someone living alone missed human contact and would not work without regular workplace contact.

The implications are relevant for remote or hybrid but also for former working models. While at home many have reflected on their new lifestyle and wish to retain it which may or may not be in the same organisation. Individual tolerance for working remotely seems to depend more on quality of connections in and outside workplaces irrespective of type of work.

The study demonstrates the importance of interaction with colleagues for energising and motivation and suggests that organisations need to find alternative means for impromptu connections for working remotely. Those joining organisations during the pandemic need opportunities to build social capital that normally comes through informal encounters outside formal meetings. It also demonstrates the importance of human interaction, especially with leadership, amid the technology involved in the seismic shifts in working patterns taking place.

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Transitioning out of furlough: What factors explain engagement, wellbeing, and career behaviours of furloughed workers?

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Overview

As a result of Covid, the UK Government implemented a furlough programme of unprecedented scale, affecting one-third of the entire workforce. Yet we know little about how furlough affected employees or their reintegration back into work. Our presentation will be based on a survey of 500 furloughed employees. We examine the impact of furlough on employees' personal/professional life, along with factors associated with successful transitioning out of furlough, with a particular focus on employees' personal resources, employability, engagement, work-family conflict and

burnout. We identify distinctions within the massive furlough group category to reveal how furlough affected different demographic, occupational and workplace groups.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Gaining a better understanding of furloughed workers is critical because of: a) the large amount of people affected; b) theoretical arguments and anecdotal evidence of loss of confidence and skill atrophy; c) the uncertainty associated with returning to the labor market; d) the problems associated with reintegration back into work, and e) longer-term consequences for workers' career.

Furloughed workers have been subject to simplistic and pejorative assumptions such as lacking motivation to return to work (e.g., Conservative MP and former business secretary Andrea Leadsom, The Guardian, 19 June 2021). There is, however, remarkably little systematic understanding as to how furlough may affect workers, households, and employers. Taking the perspective of furloughed employees, this study is part of a wider project which examines challenges that furloughed workers faced during their absence from work as well as in the process of reintegrating back to work. Our study's specific aims are to examine:

- the effects of furlough on outcomes spanning personal and work domains (e.g., employee engagement, burnout, life satisfaction, work-life conflict, counterproductive work behaviours)

- the role of personal resources (optimism; career confidence; career curiosity) and social capital as protective factors

- factors related to to building resilience and adaptability into one's career

- important distinctions within the furlough workgroup and how the distinctions shape attitudes and behaviours.

Research methods

(Note our data will be collected in September 2021. We have secured funding for our data collection and had assurances of its feasibility from our sample surveying provider.) Through a crowdsourcing platform (Prolific), we will survey 500 furloughed UK workers. Our study participants will be representative of industries affected by furlough, as well as by gender and career stage (i.e. early, mid, late career). Distinctions within the furlough group will be captured such as the type of furlough (full vs. part time) and the duration of the furlough they had. Participants will complete measures including (among other concepts): personal and social resources/capital, perceived organizational support, career adaptabilities and resilience, and outcomes such as overall life satisfaction, job engagement, perceived productivity.

Research findings or argument

We develop and test a theoretical framework that seeks to explain what kinds of people were furloughed (in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics), what are the consequences of furlough, and what constructs may explain why furlough

resulted in these consequences. Furthermore, we will also identify important distinctions within the furloughed group.

More specifically, the theoretical model will include:

- The outcomes of furlough which will cover a range of positive and negative affective states, attitudes and behaviours that include employee engagement, burnout, life satisfaction, work-life conflict, and counterproductive work behaviours.

- The constructs that may explain why furlough results in these outcomes, covering a range of personal personal resources and social capital that include optimism, career confidence, resilience, social network features, features of supportive organizational environments. A particular interest will be to identify factors that explain successful transition back into work and successful career resumption.

- The socio-demographic characteristics include age, gender, heritage, occupation and work-context factors. Important distinctions within the furloughed group that are likely to shape their attitudes and behaviour, such as the mode of furlough (full vs. part time) and the duration of the furlough they had.

Practical importance and implications of research

In order to better understand the challenges that different demographic groups face in the context of the furloughed employment scheme, it is important to know more about their expectations and goals they are trying to achieve. Furthermore, our research will identify factors organizations can take to support furloughed workers' successful transition back to work.

Given the likelihood of the use of wage subsidy/job retention schemes in the future, the study findings will assist organisational intervention efforts (both before and after furlough). For example, support for HR/line managers to devise strategies to help workers transitioning back to work after an anticipated career setback.

In addition, given the unique situation of furloughed workers, our study will provide insights into possible realignment of practice required by vocational professionals working with different types of furloughed workers. Example challenges here include how can vocational professionals support the needs of employees who experience skill atrophy during furlough, whose jobs have radically altered during furlough, and whose career motivations have changed during furlough.

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2C: Learning and development

Developing a collective agile mindset whilst developing line managers to manage agile teams: Experiencing good work during a pandemic

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Overview

The ESRC-funded Good Employment Learning Lab tests the most effective way of supporting line managers to manage people, a key contributor to good work. Whilst the online learning programme developed line managers to manage agile work, the remote learning lab team themselves developed a 'collective agile mindset'. Agile work practices emerged as design and delivery was adapted due to the pandemic. Our contribution is to highlight the practices teams can adopt to foster a 'collective agile mindset' when facing uncertainty/challenges, and experience good work. This

is novel because the agile mindset is usually conceptualised as individual rather than team characteristics.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Developing line managers to become better people managers is a key contributor to good work (CIPD, 2020; Dodd et al., 2019), and the ESRC-funded Good Employment Learning Lab aims to discover how line managers best learn in different contexts. Our project addressed key management challenges to support organisations facing unprecedented pressure under Covid 19, including 'recruiting and managing secure and agile teams'. Whilst training line managers to develop agile teams and practices online, we unintentionally found ourselves needing to be agile whilst training agile, to meet operational challenges arising from project delivery in uncertain times. Our observational data highlighted characteristics of an agile mindset amongst the team: trust; adaptability; willingness to reflect, learn and be curious; and collective problem-solving responsibility (Mordi and Schoop, 2020).

We use cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) as a theoretical framework which is valuable when studying collective work practices and how members of communities learn together as they enact a common object of activity (Blackler and Regan, 2009; Engeström, 2016). When people are driven to work through tensions and challenges, new creative and more harmonious modes of practicing may emerge. As members of an online learning 'community', having a shared object of activity provided a source of motivation and collective intentionality enabling us to overcome challenges, especially an agile mindset (Engeström, 2001). Our research questions asked:

- What challenges do remote learning teams face when developing line managers online to manage agile teams and why?

- What tools do learning teams use to collectively overcome these challenges?

Research methods

Our project utilised the broad method of a learning laboratory. Learning labs are spaces where researchers, policy makers and practitioners collaborate to understand shared problems. Learning labs support long-term, trusting and creative relationships and use learning from experiments to think about how to address 'tricky' problems. Our research takes a mixed methods qualitative approach. By the end of the project, the learning lab will have offered 36 masterclasses, 18 peer learning groups and 108 coaching opportunities for line managers of varying seniority and sector in the North West of England. In this paper, we utilise observational data collected during peer learning sessions, masterclasses and coaching sessions (over 100 hours) with managers, facilitator reflective notes, learning lab meeting notes and project team focus groups. The data was thematically analysed by the paper's authors and broad generic themes identified relating to the research questions outlined above and the theoretical framework of CHAT.

Research findings or argument

At each stage the team faced unanticipated challenges and structural tensions including:

Recruiting and retaining diverse eligible participants

Inexperienced but enthusiastic participants enrolling on 'free' training which is not relevant to their needs

Learner-led peer learning and coaching sessions losing focus on agile work as participants were preoccupied with other management issues

The ongoing uncertainty of Covid-19 restrictions requiring incremental adaptation to online delivery.

These challenges necessitated agility and incremental change, which was achieved through reflection, discussions and collective problem solving. External partner relationships were advanced, and marketing strategies adapted. Facilitators established introduction meetings with learners before peer learning and coaching to clarify aims/expectations. Peer learning sessions were adapted for online delivery, with shorter, focused 'flash peer learning sessions', maximising technological benefits. Facilitators recapped content to keep participants 'on topic' but remained adaptable to 'topic-creep'. A cycle of piloting, learning, and adapting enabled incremental change. The team were transparent about issues, despite being a newly formed remote team. Facilitators and observers held informal evaluation and reflection discussions in psychologically safe spaces.

Through our analysis we identified these practices as characteristic of a 'collective agile mindset'. Agile practices were spontaneously developed in the flow of everyday practice, rather than the converse, where agile work practices shape the behaviours of teams and individuals (Junker et al., 2021). Our study, therefore, shows how a collective agile mindset emerged in response to our challenges. In other words, the challenges themselves afford the opportunity for a collective agile mindset to develop.

Practical importance and implications of research

In the 2020s, the world was turned upside down by the coronavirus pandemic. Organisations and employees turned to professions like HR and academia for evidence-based expertise to develop fast-paced, impactful strategies to advance line manager competence in navigating this new territory. This paper recognises that these professions have, themselves, had to adapt quickly and learn on the job, whilst providing expertise to others on agile working.

We describe our journey as a remote-working project team, needing to adapt rapidly to challenges and enduring uncertainty. We position agile behaviours, the concept of having an agile mindset at a collective rather than an individual level (Avery, 2004; Mordi and Shoop, 2020) and illustrate the practices teams can adopt to foster a 'collective agile mindset' when facing uncertainty/challenges and in doing so individually experience good work.

We highlight four practical implications for management development practitioners:

- Be open, curious and honest about what is working, what is not, and why

- Create space for informal interactions, debriefs and in-the-moment reflection, despite the structural formality of online/remote working

- To not underestimate the impact of incremental change, iterative developments as feedback is gathered en route

- The importance of feeling trusted, an enabler of the agile mindset.

These techniques are relevant to HR and L&D professionals, research teams, and those responsible for line manager development. Our practical approach means busy professionals can digest, interpret, modify and apply our techniques. Additionally, our conscious reflection will help those evaluating their own experience of agile working and of delivering online learning.

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"It's a two-way street": examining coaching in talent management through the lens of social exchange theory

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Overview

This paper is based on a qualitative case study exploring coaching as a talent management (TM) practice in a global bank. Using social exchange theory as a theoretical lens, it focuses on individual coaching practices embedded in TM programmes targeting talented employees at junior, middle management, and executive levels. Based on 30 semi-structured interviews, it examines the contrasting views of multiple stakeholders, namely talented employees receiving coaching, internal and external coaches, and HR managers. In doing so, the study extends our understanding of the various roles that talent coaching may play at individual and organisational levels.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Talent management and leadership development are both a perennial issue and a priority for organisations in the post covid-19 pandemic era (Deloitte, 2015; Caligiuri *et al.*, 2020; Collings *et al.*, 2021). Despite a steady interest from HR practitioners and scholars in the past 10 years (Sparrow, 2019), the effectiveness of TM activities is often questioned. A global survey of HR practitioners and managers revealed that only 5% of participants consider TM practices as effective (Andrianova, Maor and Schaninger, 2018).

Amongst the TM practices taking place in large organisations, coaching has continuously been identified as one of the most effective TM activities by HR practitioners (CIPD, 2015). Coaching is a developmental intervention widely used in large organisations for performance and leadership development purposes. It represented a sector worth $2.849 billion U.S. dollars in 2019, a 21% increase over the 2015 estimate (ICF, 2020). Surprisingly, whilst coaching is widely used in organisations, there are few empirical studies exploring its effect at individual and organisational levels. To address this omission, this study explores the following questions, whereby the term "talent coaching" refers to the one-to-one developmental interventions received by talented employees as part of a TM programme:

1. How do multiple stakeholders (talented employees, HR managers and coaches) perceive the contribution of talent coaching in a multinational company?

2. What is the perceived role of talent coaching for talented employees at different seniority levels in the organisation – from junior to senior managers?

3. How is coaching characterised in the context of TM?

Research methods

Adopting a social constructivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology, the study research design is a qualitative single case study. The case organisation "GlobalFinCorp" is a global bank operating in more than 160 countries, with an extensive experience in TM and coaching. This investigation focuses on four TM programmes delivered by the company in the Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) region, which accounts for 56 countries. Each TM programme targets talented employees according to their seniority level, and one programme focuses on senior women leaders.

The primary data includes 30 semi-structured interviews of talented employees, HR managers, internal and external coaches participating in at least one of the TM programmes deployed in the EMEA region as part of the global TM strategy of the company.

The data set is analysed using a thematic approach and the Gioia methodology (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton, 2013), suitable for qualitative inquiry (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Research findings or argument

The findings reveal that talent coaching holds multiple roles. First, the deployment of talent coaching does not intend to address performance issues, but rather provides an individualised platform for the development of leadership capabilities based on mutual exchange gains and long-term relationships. This is not surprising considering that talent designation at GlobalFinCorp is based on high-performance and high-potential criteria.

Second, talent coaching can be used as a relational intervention for the development of leadership capabilities and as a social reward mechanism. As such, it supports the development of human and social capital, which are seen as critical for career growth in the company. Based on long-term relationships and on the mutual exchange of implicit knowledge and professional networks, talent coaching may result in the development of strong ties between the talented employee and their coach- typically a senior manager or HR manager. Besides, when perceived as effective, talent coaching may generate increased reciprocal obligations between the coachee-coach-organisation. Indeed, talented employees may feel induced to "give back" to the organisation by broadening their leadership portfolio, developing their coaching skills, coaching others, in addition to increasing their performance and commitment to the organisational success.

Third, the study provides evidence that coaching may be instrumentalised in the context of TM. Surprisingly, it can be used as an unspoken mechanism for the selection of a talent elite within the leadership pipeline, an alternative for employee

relations management and a strategic approach to assert the role of HR as business partner in the organisation.

Practical importance and implications of research

Drawing on the social exchange theory, the study argues that coaching may be perceived as a social reward and a social exchange in the context of TM. Specifically, talent coaching may induce a perceived obligation from the coachee, coach and organisation to reciprocate high-quality relationships, that are developed overtime though a series of exchanges (Blau, 1986).

Departing from evaluating the effectiveness of coaching and its numerous existing tools and approaches, the study shifts our understanding of coaching from a one-to-one, technical, and structured intervention to focus on the relational, social, mutual, and political dimension of coaching in organisations (Louis and Fatien-Diochon, 2018; Shoukry and Cox, 2018).

There are practical implications for HR managers, internal and external coaches. First, talent coaching is often seen as expensive and complex to operationalise in a global organisation. Indeed, it relies on internal coaching capabilities and capacities deployed in a geographically dispersed workforce. Besides, the additional workload associated with talent coaching remains largely underestimated. This could be alleviated by formal recognition and reward mechanisms.

Second, the practice of talent coaching involves ethical dilemmas and power dynamics, especially when senior leaders act as coaches. Therefore, adequate coaching training and supervision are critical to support internal coaches.

Third, from an organisational perspective, talent coaching aims to facilitate leadership change, and shift the organisation from a command-and-control style to a coaching style. To this end, a transparent communication strategy regarding TM and the role of coaching for the career progression of talented employees is essential.

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3A: Changing ways of working

Make or break? How structural features and emergent states influence the functioning of multiteam systems

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Overview

Over the past decade, teams research has shifted from investigating individuals and teams to networks of teams also known as multiteam systems or 'team of teams'. Fraught with tensions and trade-offs, they are difficult to study and manage, and they present the following interesting paradox: how can strong teams that simultaneously work well as a system be built? Findings from a systematic literature review and an empirical field study will be presented. We examine how and when structural features and emergent states influence system functioning. Findings suggest that what builds a strong team can in fact hinder system success.

Research focus, rationale and questions

The present paper brings together findings from two studies to advance the science and practice of multiteam systems. First, a systematic literature review that addresses the following questions *'what interventions facilitate Multiteam System functioning and by which mechanisms?'* . Second, the empirical study tests a new and native theory in the domain (i.e., Luciano et al., 2018). Theoretical propositions were examined pertaining to how structural features of a system may divide or disrupt teams in that system with implications for system outcomes. Specifically, we examined three questions:

1) Do systems with higher levels of differentiation and dynamism have lower levels of between-team collaboration?

2) In systems with higher levels of differentiation and dynamism, do members direct their needs and motives more toward the team level than the system? (i.e., belonging needs, affective and cognitive motives, aligned with Fiske's social motivation theory, 2004;2009)

3) When members direct their needs and motives more to the team, than system do the corresponding emergent states also manifest at the team rather than the system? (i.e., social identity, psychological safety and collective efficacy).

Research methods

The systematic review followed the process recommended by Briner and Denyer (2012); the PRISMA approach (Moher et al., 2015); and a quality assurance was conducted (Snape et al, 2017).

The empirical study adopted a cross-sectional design to survey 148 participants from 14 systems in nine organizations based in the Middle East, North Africa, United Kingdom, and Australia. A preliminary interview was conducted with a point of contact from each system to provide data pertaining to the nature of work and other system attributes of interest to the study. This was followed by an online survey disseminated to participants working in the systems and measured 11 constructs. Multiple linear regression analyses were performed to test the hypotheses.

Research findings or argument

The literature review highlighted i) a lack of multiteam system (MTS) intervention studies and ii) that training teams together yields positive system outcomes with

more specific insights pertaining to coordination skills and the role of leader teams in the system.

The empirical study drew on a meso-theory (Luciano et al., 2018) to examine how the structural features and emergent states of an MTS influenced functioning. The main findings revealed that the combined effect of structural features of an MTS undermined between-team collaboration, as predicted. However, the same structural features taken individually exerted a positive influence on system collaboration, implying a tipping point at which the effects shift from positive to negative when combined. Other findings contribute to the debate surrounding the optimal level for emergent states in a system, specifically the benefit of system identity and system psychological safety and the disbenefit of team psychological safety and team efficacy on system outcomes.

Taken together these findings answer calls from scholars to; sample a broad range of real-world MTSs (Mathieu et al., 2018); report on MTS attributes in a consistent manner (Zaccaro et al., 2020); pay greater attention to emergent states and combine the study of emergent states with MTS attributes to explore interrelationships (Shuffler et al., 2015). The study advances the science and practice of MTSs and offers promising avenues for future research and theory building.

Practical importance and implications of research

This research offers unique and valuable insights into many elements of an MTS that cuts across individual, team, and system levels of analysis with clear practical applications.

Leaders play an important integration role in systems, spanning boundaries between teams, they are perfectly positioned to compensate for divisive and disruptive forces and lead their teams and system to success. Findings point to the importance of developing functional leadership capabilities, such as coordination and planning skills as well as enhancing leadership capacity by incorporating leader teams in the multiteam system structure. Leader teams can be developed together to form a cohesive leadership unit and trained to balance the tensions between teams and the system.

Embedding system protocols or ways of working could counteract the divisive and disruptive forces inherent in these complex systems. Protocols should define system governance processes in terms of how work gets done, how teams communicate and share information, the cadence and type of meetings between teams in the system and general expectations among members and leaders. Defining these up-front and early-on leveraging collective wisdom of the teams as opposed to coming top down from the leaders is likely to foster greater commitment to the protocols.

Training teams together rather than separately is likely to nurture system-level emergent states while also helping teams to gain a better understanding of the role and scope of other teams in the system. Next generation learning technologies offer exciting opportunities to connect teams across space and time while fostering collective learning.

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The future of part-time working: the impact of flexible furlough?

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Overview

Although one in every four workers in the UK works part-time, there is evidence that more people would like to work part-time, but are unable to access it, with potential implications for labour market participation and social inclusion, as well as skills and productivity. The UK government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) created a natural experiment in which staff could work part-time, while also being part-furloughed. This paper reports findings from research examining whether and how the experience of using this scheme has altered employers' perceptions about the feasibility of part-time working and their openness to respond to employee demand.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Although there are significant variations in the prevalence of part-time working across sectors and occupations, employers' perspectives have been relatively under researched, with greater attention having been paid to those who want to work part-time (Booth and van Ours, 2013; Bridges and Owens, 2017; Gash, 2008; McDonald et al., 2005) . The employer perspective is important in understanding the provision of part-time working and needs to be distinguished from other types of flexible working, where the cost-benefit equation may be different.

A recent evidence review (Gascoigne and Kelliher, 2021) points to a range of factors contributing to employer provision of part-time working, including the national (institutional and social) context, the nature of the work, the workforce skills and gender balance in different sectors or occupations, and the business circumstances. Employers may offer part-time working to cover peak or extended operating hours, or to assist with attraction and retention and support employees achieving a better work life balance. However the quasi-fixed costs, including recruitment and training, the costs of adaptation of working practices such as team communication and the coordination of work, and administrative systems, are seen as barriers.

This paper reports findings on how the experience of using the 'flexible furlough' element of the CJRS has shaped employer perceptions of the feasibility of part-time working, and explores any actions taken or planned in response to this experience. Differences between sectors and occupations are presented and examined in the context of the prevalence of part-time working pre pandemic.

Research methods

This paper draws on findings from a mixed methods study, involving interviews and a largescale survey. Specifically, the paper will present findings from analysis of the interview data. Semi-structured interviews explore managers' experiences of using flexible furlough and their perceptions of the feasibility of part-time working pre and post pandemic, as well as how this has shaped future actions. Interviews include both HR practitioners and line managers to capture influences on both policy and the decisions made by line managers. Interviewees will be drawn from sectors with the

highest numbers of workers on part-time furlough (e.g. retail, hospitality, manufacturing, administrative and support services, and professional, scientific and technical). Part-time working was prevalent in retail and hospitality pre-pandemic, in contrast to manufacturing, which had low numbers of part-time workers. The professional, scientific and technical sector will enable exploration of factors affecting the design of part-time work, evident in the literature.

Research findings or argument

The findings presented draw on the evidence review, and the semi-structured interviews which will be completed and analysed in autumn 2021.

The flexible furlough scheme offered an opportunity for organisational experimentation and learning in relation to part-time working, with implications for both policy and practice. Responses to the 'natural experiment' presented by the scheme are likely to vary, with different outcomes at the level of the organisation and individual line managers. Analysis of the interview data will allow the identification of the factors taken into account by HR practitioners and line managers when making decisions about part-time working, including what they see as the potential costs and benefits, and how these relate to different contexts, for different types and levels of work. Findings from the evidence review suggest that both sector and occupation are important. Analysis of interview data will also allow assessment of the degree to which HR and line managers take the personal circumstances of the worker into account.

Decisions made about the use of furlough, particularly flexible furlough, took place in a different context from pre-pandemic, but may influence perceptions and understanding about the feasibility of part-time working in the longer term, as has been found to be the case with remote working during the pandemic (CIPD, 2021; Parry et al., 2021; TUC, 2021). Changes in perceptions may also stimulate a more proactive approach to employer provision of part-time working, rather than simply responding to individual requests.

Practical importance and implications of research

The research will help promote deeper understanding of the factors influencing employer approaches to the provision of part-time working. Analysis of patterns between different sectors and occupations will help inform both HR practitioners and line managers about the specifics of the business case for part-time working in different contexts. It will also shed light on how quality part-time work might be designed to suit the context, and how line managers in particular can manage it for greater effectiveness. The findings will have implications for how employers incorporate part-time working into their resourcing strategies.

The findings will also assist policymakers concerned with helping disadvantaged demographic groups to access employment through part-time, particularly quality part-time, jobs, and avoiding the downgrading or marginalisation often associated with a transition to part-time working. Research which shows how a greater range of work can be done on a part-time basis could provide greater choice for workers, and

improve job quality, with the potential for beneficial impacts on skills use and productivity, in turn contributing to longer term economic recovery.

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3B: Changing labour markets and demopgraphics

Career transition for older workers: exploration into decisions for recareering from occupation role to self-employment role for non-professional identities

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Overview

People now stay in the workforce for longer, due to a combination of longer life expectancy and financial necessity. This means people are working past traditional retirement age and many more change career late in life. This study explores why older workers recareer to help understand career longevity options. 15 workers aged over 50 who have recareered were interviewed to explore reasons for their transition. Thematic analysis was used to explore findings and core themes, discussed within an IGLOO framework, examining the individual, group, line manager and organisational antecedents driving recareer decisions and outcomes. Findings are discussed in relation to career support needs for older workers.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Evidence suggests that older workers who are well educated are engaging in activities known as 'recareering' (Rice, 2015). 'Recareering' means "a decision made in later life to embark on a new career in a new industry, after leaving a long-term primary career' (Johnson et al., 2009). With high numbers of the baby boomer generation already recareering, we are seeing a 'Silver Tsunami' of career transition with little research available to manage or understand this change (Rice, 2015). Research has found limited studies focused on recareering in later life (Rice, 2015). Studies looking at second contemporary careers following a move from a 'stable traditional system' are 'scarce' (Vigoda-Gadot et al., 2010). Further understanding will help older workers and organisations create better support for those who are beginning to consider their career options for later life (Rice, 2015).

The questions to be explored within this research are as follows:

- What are the individual factors that influence older individuals working in non-professional careers to recareer?

- What formal or informal learning do non-professional recareer undertake?

- What role does the individuals network play in the recareer decision?

- What was the intrinsic motivation that led to the decision to recareer to a contemporary career?

- How does work identity transition from an organisational identity to a personal identity among individuals in non-professional roles

Research methods

15 participants aged over 50 who have recareered from an occupational role to a contemporary career were interviewed to explore the reasons for their recareer decision. Participants were recruited using a random sampling method. Semi-structured interviews were used to allow exploration of shared patterns in the meanings of the experience of the recareerists (Moustakas, 1994). Questions were designed to be an open format to allow participants to use their own words and let their story emerge.

Reflexive Thematic Analysis was the methodology approach, with the researcher bringing an awareness of their role as a researcher in the production of knowledge that informs the analysis (Braun and Clarke 2019). Deductive and inductive analysis was used and the IGLOO framework of individual, group, leader, organisation and outside (Nielsen et al, 2018) was used as a guiding heuristic.

Research findings or argument

Individual antecedents included financial awareness, non-work hobbies, leap into decision and search for meaning. Group antecedents included peer support and influence. Leader relationship and organisational choices were further antecedents and Covid was an outside antecedent. Outcomes showed that there was a mix of worry about future work and satisfaction with work life balance.

Although elements of a protean career mindset and boundaryless orientation can be seen within the findings, there was little support or awareness with the participants of how they used insights or knowledge to support career decisions. One key outcome was that most had created a portfolio career for themselves without the knowledge of this career option. Most participants felt that their contemporary career choice gave them more freedom to chose how to work and to manage a better work life balance to support choice for future work plans instead of a traditional retirement career end.

Although there is modern career theory to support this cohort of workers, it is not being used in an effective way for older workers who recareer from an organisational role. This is a growing demographic of workers and there is room in HR and Organisational Psychology to provide a stronger support. As this group is difficult to reach due to their independent work status and lack of professional network, new and novel ways will need to be created to reach this group and provide the support needed.

Practical importance and implications of research

Individual antecedents included financial awareness, non-work hobbies, leap into decision and search for meaning. Group antecedents included peer support and influence. Leader relationship and organisational choices were further antecedents and Covid was an outside antecedent. Outcomes showed that there was a mix of worry about future work and satisfaction with work life balance.

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The two faces of Janus: exploring the organisational experiences and professional performances of self-initiated expatriate engineers in UK

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Overview

Janus, usually depicted with two faces, was the god of beginnings, transitions, dualities and endings. This paper, drawing upon 37 narrative interviews with

Spanish, Italian and Greek self-initiated expatriate (SIE) engineers in Bristol, UK, and adopting a Goffmanian framework of dramaturgical socialising (Goffman, 1959, 1967), parallels SEIs with Janus, as they often appear to have two 'faces': one on the 'frontstage', the 'office', and one on the 'backstage', other expatriates. The paper contributes to the neglected discussion of how expatriation is performed in relation to professional cultures and identities, the impact of context and offers insights for IHRM practice.

Research focus, rationale and questions

For at least 2 decades, UK government and industry have expressed concerns about the skills shortage in engineering (EngineeringUK, 2020). This shortage attracted to the UK many self-initiated expatriates, that is, professionals who have chosen to work and live in another country on a voluntary and self-initiated basis (Tharenou and Caulfield, 2010; Thomas et al., 2005). The majority of SIEs tended to come from EU.

SIEs, are an important element of the global workforce (Inkson *et al*. 1997) and have been argued to be valuable employees due to their international work experience (Jokinen *et al*., 2008). However, there are limited studies focusing on how they adjust (Froese, 2012) or on the impact of the organisational context on them (Doherty *et al*., 2013). What is more, how expatriation is performed in relation to professional cultures and identities has been also neglected, as under the label of 'expatriate', professional cultures became invisible. Taking into consideration the aforementioned gaps, as well as the negative impact of Brexit on EU employees, this paper aims at deepening our understanding of:

- how expatriate engineers, from Southern Europe (Spain, Italy, Greece) cope with foreignness and find familiarity beyond their work (Muhr and Lemmergaard, 2011) – paying particular attention at the role of 'expatriate bubbles' (Cohen, 1977)

- how the organisational context influences their adaptation and working experience, and

- the broader socio-cultural challenges SIEs might face in the workplace after Brexit (and during the pandemic) so that they can manage more effectively SIEs

Research methods

The paper draws upon 37 in-depth, narrative interviews with 10 Spanish (3 female, 7 male), 16 Italian (5 female, 11 male) and 11 Greek (4 female, 7 male) engineers who were immersed in an expatriate experience and have lived/are currently living in Bristol, UK. The participants were recruited using purposive sampling and access was sought via personal contacts, social media (Facebook groups, LinkedIn) and snowballing. Interviews were verbatim transcribed and thematically coded. The data analysis began with extensive data immersion (Witz and Bae, 2011). Following Pratt (2009), the coding evolved in two stages. First order codes were derived from participant responses to get a general overview of the data. Then we developed a

theoretical framework drawing upon Goffman's work on dramaturgical analysis (1957) and the performance of face-work (1967) from which second order codes were drawn.

Research findings or argument

Following Goffman, our findings can be structured as: frontstage and backstage performances. These performances depended on the number of other non-UK nationals, the EDI policies in place and the degree of inclusivity.

Frontstage

On the office 'stage', SIEs were controlling their 'face' in three ways: (1) by limiting the information they gave away in their interactions (e.g. through trying to appear 'professional' by prioritising their technical expertise and by avoiding making friendships at the workplace; by being 'one of the crowd' either (2) through attempting to "fit in and act as persons of [their] kind are expected to act" (Goffman, 1963: 35), in other words, by acting out the stereotype projected on them by their colleagues, or (3) by 'going native', through adopting 'rituals' (e.g. pints after work, sports) and being careful to remain within the accepted limits and stick to the 'script'.

Backstage

SIEs, in order to adapt to the local professional norms/ways of working and develop their membership at professional and organisational level, at least initially, relied on other co-nationals and expatriates. In their 'backstage' performances, by sharing rituals (e.g., coffee, late lunches), SIEs prepared their 'scripts' and did their 'dirty work' (Goffman, 1959), in the sense that they shared mistakes and problems in an attempt to master the 'information game' (Goffman, 1967) and cope with feelings of anxiety, foreignness and also offer advice and support for career progression. In other words, the expatriate community helped SIEs to navigate and manage the new organisational, cultural and professional context.

Practical importance and implications of research

The findings of this research have got clear implications for practice as they will enable (I)HRM practitioners and people managers to:

- understand how SIEs socialise within the workplace and the challenges they might face

- adapt/introduce EDI policies and practices so that they address explicitly issues such as stereotyping and accentism

- enhance their understanding of SIEs' working experience so they can help them to effectively navigate and manage their careers in the professions

- incorporate appropriate strategies that can improve the attraction and most importantly retention of international talent, which is particularly crucial in engineering after Brexit.

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3C: Health and wellbeing at work

Social Stratification in Meaningful Work: Occupational Disparities in the United Kingdom

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Overview

Social scientists have long been interested in the meaning derived from work. The issue has garnered increasing academic and policy attention in recent years. This paper contributes a social stratification perspective by focusing on inequality in access to meaningfulness across the occupational structure using data from a representative sample of 14,000 working adults in the United Kingdom. It finds that in general those in routine and manual occupations report lower levels of meaningfulness than those in managerial and professional occupations, and this is largely due to poorer intrinsic job quality in these occupations.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Social scientists have long been interested in the sense of meaning derived from their work, at least as far back as Marx's notion of alienation. Later empirical contributions focused on alienation in subjective terms (Blauner 1964; Seeman 1959) and job attitudes more broadly, positive as well as negative (Goldthorpe et al. 1968; Kalleberg 1977). This has been rekindled in recent years with emergence of the interdisciplinary field of 'meaningful work' (Yeoman et al. 2019). While adopting some of the key theoretical underpinnings from pioneering industrial sociology research, methodologically, and in terms of focus, organisational psychology has been the more dominant influence (Bailey et al. 2019: 89), and the core sociological concern of social stratification in job attributes and job attitudes (Goldthorpe et al. 1968; Kalleberg and Griffin 1978; Kohn 1976) has been neglected. The early sociological literature went beyond arguing that work itself shaped meaning attitudes by crucially also noting that as the nature of work was highly stratified by occupation, so too therefore, was access to meaningful work.

This paper attempts to investigate whether this stratification angle is both relevant and useful in understanding patterns of meaningfulness in today's labour market by (i) charting meaningfulness across different occupations and (ii) exploring the extent to which an unusually rich set of job attributes may account for (i). The findings have implications for the extent to which certain occupations can achieve high levels of meaningfulness and the conditions under which this may or may not be possible.

Research methods

Data comes from the pooled 2018, 2019, and 2020 UK Working Lives Surveys (CIPD 2020). Although it is based on a quota rather than probability sample, the

pooled data affords the largest sample of work meaningful work in a single country (N ≈14,000. Occupations are coded to the ONS' Standard Occupation Classification 2010 derived from written job titles and job descriptions (ONS 2010a). Meaningful work was captured using three items (Cronbach's alpha = 0.79).

A combination of descriptive and regression methods are used to investigate social stratification in meaningful work with a rich set of controls. In particular, we are interested in the extent to which pay and benefits, contracts, job-demands-resources, skills, development, job complexity, work-life balance, relations, voice, and health and wellbeing account for disparities in meaningful work.

Research findings or argument

We found that those in routine and manual occupations find their work less meaningful than those in managerial and professional occupations on average. We also found that small employers and own account workers tend to report similar levels of meaningfulness to those in higher managerial and professional occupations, implying a more nuanced perspective than a generic class stratification one. These differentials remain when standard controls such as demographics and work characteristics are taken into account, but disappear once we control for ten job attributes, and even reverse. Of the unusually rich set of factors considered, job complexity (how monotonous and interesting the tasks are) stands out as most important. Next important is development opportunities. These sorts of non-material features of work related to the work itself tend to be referred to as 'intrinsic job quality' and explain the stratification in meaningfulness since intrinsic job quality itself is stratified by occupation.

A variety of robustness checks support these general overall findings. A noteworthy exception to this is when we considered perceived usefulness to society (one of the three measures of meaningfulness) on its own. In this case, differentials between a small cluster of occupations related to health, social care, and transport and other occupations cannot be completely explained away by the rich set of factors we observe. This means this element of meaningfulness is more related to objective usefulness and more invariant to intrinsic job quality.

Practical importance and implications of research

The paper concludes that meaningful work is highly stratified by occupation and this is largely explained by disparities in job complexity and development opportunities (i.e., intrinsic job quality). The extent to which intrinsic job quality, and so meaningfulness, in routine and manual occupations can be improved is an open, yet urgent, question.

A small cluster of occupations related to health, social care, and transport and other occupations cannot be completely explained away by the rich set of factors we observe. This implies organisational and policy interventions should try to focus on other aspects of meaningfulness.

While perceived usefulness to society may be outside of the scope of interventions, the key question for future research and organisational and policy interventions is

how routine and manual jobs can be made less monotonous and more interesting, with greater opportunities for development, if increasing meaningfulness is to be organisational and policy goals.

Another option revealed from this study is that mobility into small employers and own account occupations (mostly composed of routine and manual workers being self-employed or running their own business such as shopkeepers) may provide an option to make work more meaningful for those unable to access managerial and professional occupations. Even though it possibly entails greater economic insecurity, it entails much better scope for job complexity and self-development, and so greater scope for meaningfulness, than being an employee in such occupations.

Well-being of Health and Social Care workers during COVID19: The role of employer supports in managing the work-life border of carers and non-carers.

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Overview

Drawing from a multi-phase, cross-sectional survey of health and social care workers in the UK, this paper explores how those with and without caring responsibilities (at home) managed the boundaries between work and life and how this impacted wellbeing. The analysis reveals distinct differences in how the wellbeing of carers and non-carers was influenced by the way they segmented and integrated work and life throughout of the pandemic. The paper discusses the important role for line

management as 'work-life border keepers' and how they can encourage the optimal use of segmentation and integration strategies for addressing workforce wellbeing.

Research focus, rationale and questions

The experience of Covid19 has upended how individuals might normally navigate work-life borders (Clark, 2000). For many individuals the pandemic caused a 'boundary violation' (Delanoeije et al, 2019) where established boundaries were breached to accommodate the disturbances that manifested in both life and work situations, creating shifts in how individuals negotiated the integration-segmentation continuum of work-life balance (Bulger et al, 2007). Drawing from a multi-phase, cross-sectional survey of health and social care (HSC) workers in the UK (nurses, midwives, social workers, social care workers and Allied Health Professionals), this paper explores how those with and without caring responsibilities (at home) managed their work-life boundaries and how this impacted wellbeing. Given the frontline experiences of these workers, their well-being has been significantly impacted (McFadden et al., 2021). This paper specifically explores the role of work and life segmentation coping strategies in addressing wellbeing for carers and non-carers. The research questions are:

1. How did the adoption of work and life segmentation coping strategies differ for carers and non-carers throughout the pandemic?

2. What was the effect of using work and life segmentation coping strategies on the wellbeing of carers and non-carers throughout the pandemic?

3. What effect did the perceived support from employers have on the adoption of work and life segmentation coping strategies throughout the pandemic? How does this differ for carers and non-carers?

4. What employer supports are perceived to be effective in supporting carers and non-carers to manage work and life boundaries?

Research methods

Data were collected over two stages of the COVID 19 pandemic (May- July 2020 and Nov – Jan 2020/21) with over 3000 responses for each. The surveys included measures for wellbeing (SWEMWBS; NHS Health Scotland, 2008), quality of working life (WRQOL; Easton & van Laar, 2018) and strategies for coping (Carver, 1997, Clarke et al. 2014). The survey also included qualitative questions to explore HSC workers' perspectives on employers' supports. We interrogated specific data on the use of using family-work segmentation (not handling home related issues at work) and work-family segmentation (not handling work related issues at home) as coping strategies (Clarke et al., 2014) and how this impacted well-being (SWEMWBS; Stewart-Brown et al., 2009) for both carers and non-carers. Given recent critique about the terminology for work family segmentation, we adopt terms of work and life segmentation to account for the range of 'life' activities that go beyond family (Kelliher et al, 2018). We also analysed home-work interface (WRQOL), defined as 'extent to which the employer is perceived to support

employees' home life', as a moderator between coping and wellbeing (Easton and Van Laar, 2018, p.17).

Research findings or argument

As the pandemic continued from phase 1 to phase 2, both groups experienced significantly lower wellbeing but carers' wellbeing was significantly worse compared to non-carers. This suggests that carers and non-carers had different needs for addressing wellbeing throughout the pandemic. Our analysis shows there were differences as well as similarities between how carers and non-carers experienced the pandemic and how they adopted segmentation strategies.

Work-life Segmentation (not handling work issues at home): For all groups it was better for wellbeing to segment work from life however both carers and non-carers were less likely to adopt this strategy as the pandemic continued. Furthermore, when individuals perceived they had support from employers for their home-life circumstances (HWI), work-life segmentation strategies were more effective for the wellbeing of both carers and non-carers. This was found to be most prevalent for carers in phase 1, and non-carers in phase 2, indicating differences in the effective timing of supports for how circumstances developed. Overall this affirms the importance of employers signalling to employees that non-work activities should be uninterrupted by work in order to address wellbeing.

Life-Work Segmentation (not handling life issues at work): As the pandemic continued, the analysis reveals that not handling life issues at work predicted worse wellbeing for carers but when carers perceived better employer support for their home life, they were less likely to segment life from work which led to better wellbeing outcomes for carers. This suggests that employers need to offer appropriate supports to allow employees who are carers to handle life issues at work. On the other hand, in phase 1 it was better for non- carers' wellbeing to adopt life-work segmentation strategies, however in phase 2 this finding was reversed with analysis revealing it was better for non-carers' wellbeing to integrate life into work as the pandemic continued. This suggests that the effects of life-work segmentation strategies changed for non-carers and indicates that in prolonged times of crisis it is important not to assume that the effectiveness of coping strategies remains the same for individuals but that it might be better to adjust coping strategies to ensure continued well-being.

Practical importance and implications of research

The analysis revealed the challenges for the HSC workforce in managing work life boundaries with distinct differences in how the wellbeing of carers and non-carers was influenced by segmentation coping strategies throughout the pandemic. Responses revealed an integral role for line management as 'border keepers' in two ways: First, for enhancing the 'border strength' from work to life. This was important for carers at the outset, ensuring individual circumstances, particularly around care giving, could be accounted for when managing workloads and schedules ensuring carers could 'switch off' from work when needed. Employer support was also important for non-carers, and although they may not have had the immediate

challenges of dealing with changes to caring responsibilities, we found that line managers became more critical for enhancing work-life segmentation strategies and their wellbeing as the pandemic continued.

Second, we found line management was critical for weakening the life-work border ensuring life could be integrated into work, and that the effective timing of these supports differed for carers and non-carers. For carers, this included facilitating open conversations, giving emotional support and ensuring flexibility for individual circumstances that may disrupt work activities. The findings also revealed how the significance of life-work segmentation for non-carers reversed from phase 1 to phase 2, indicating that line managers must also be aware that individual circumstances and preferences for managing the work life border may change as a crisis continues. Therefore it is important for employers and line managers to keep an open door and offer more holistic support for the various individual challenges that non-carers may experience.

Overall, the research demonstrates the importance of cultures where individuals feel comfortable integrating life into work when it is required. It also re-iterates the importance of conceptualising work life balance beyond its traditional focus on working parents, and that employers must develop differentiated supports for carers and non-carers to achieve their desired work-life balance, particularly through times of crisis.

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4A: Gender equality across the employee lifecycle

Increasing applications from women to the Ministry of Defence through targeted referrals

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Overview

Occupational segregation plays an important role in the gender pay gap as 30% of women work in the lowest paid occupations compared to 17% of men, possibly because women have smaller networks and fewer role models in these occupations. We ran a randomised controlled trial (RCT) with the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to test if targeted referrals could boost informal referrals, applications and hires of women. We found that challenging hiring managers to encourage their team to share vacancies with five women increased the share of women referrals from 41% to 54%, and doubled the number of women applying and being offered the job.

Research focus, rationale and questions

The Government Equalities Office (GEO) established the Gender and Behavioural Insights (GABI) programme in partnership with the Behavioural Insights Team. The GABI programme aimed to build evidence for what works to improve gender equality in the workplace. We partnered with the MOD to help them reduce their gender pay gap (10.5% in 2019). Our exploratory data analysis revealed that in most grades, women were less than 40% of applicants and the share of women applying was lower than the share of women working in those grades at MOD. This was despite the fact that women in similar roles to men were promoted at 1.6 percentage points higher rates after a similar length of time and 7 percentage points more likely to receive the highest performance score.

One of the reasons for this is that an important way for potential applicants to find out about a new vacancy is through word-of-mouth from existing employees. However, personal recommendations can limit diversity if employees only refer people who are similar to them.

We wanted to understand whether encouraging employees to make targeted referrals for new roles would increase applications from women to a male-dominated organisation. We tested this idea by running a two-armed RCT with hiring managers at MOD, inviting half of them to encourage their teams to share the role with five women they knew. We asked whether challenging hiring managers to share job vacancies with five women would increase:

- the number of referred women

- applications from women

- hires of women.

Research methods

As hiring managers advertised new vacancies, they were randomly allocated to the control or intervention group. We targeted vacancies in areas of MOD where women had been historically underrepresented. We compared referrals, applications, offers and hires between the two groups.

Managers in the intervention group received an email inviting them to challenge their team to share the role with five women shortly after they created a new vacancy (within the week after). The email included actionable steps that managers could take, and a leaderboard ranking business areas by the number of women applicants. This created a non-financial incentive for managers to participate, but also signalled that their participation was noticed. Managers in the control group did not receive an email.

We ran the trial for five months, and the sample consisted of 784 hiring managers for the 1,052 vacancies created in the trial period, which received 18,841 applications.

Research findings or argument

Our intervention doubled the number of women referred for a vacancy (0.84 on average) compared to the control group (0.39 on average). Importantly, without intervention, employees referred men nearly 60% of the time, which is close to the representation of men at MOD (57%). With intervention, the proportion of women (54%) among referrals was more balanced. This demonstrates the value of targeted action in the context of existing inequality.

The intervention also increased the number of applications from women, rising from 7.8 women applicants per vacancy in the control group to 10.7 in the intervention group. Twice as many women were also offered the job in the intervention group, with an average of 0.61 women per vacancy in the intervention group compared to 0.38 women in the control. However, the intervention also led to more men applying for and receiving offers. As a result, the intervention did not lead to significant changes in the share of applications from women and the share of offers made to women.

Inviting employees to refer women did not create any negative effects for applicants from minority ethnicities or sexualities, or people with a disability. Finally, the intervention had a positive impact on the quality of applicants as vacancies in the intervention group were significantly more likely to find a suitable candidate.

Practical importance and implications of research

Overall, our findings suggest that targeted referrals are promising. MOD does not have a formal or incentivised referrals scheme, so these findings are relevant to the majority of organisations that do not. With or without a formal referral scheme, employees naturally share vacancies with people they know. These organic referrals typically reflect the existing demographic make-up of the organisation, affecting the diversity of the applicant pool and ultimately of the company. Our results show that we can meaningfully rebalance these referrals with targeted action.

Further research should seek to understand whether targeted referrals could be successful at increasing the representation of other underrepresented groups and whether in the longer term it can have a significant impact on the share of women in senior positions.

Flexibility by default at the John Lewis Partnership: Increasing the availability of part-time and job-share managerial retail roles

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Overview

In 2020, the John Lewis Partnership (JLP) had a 10.4% gender pay gap (GPG). We partnered with JLP to analyse the drivers of their GPG and find ways to reduce it. A key factor contributing to their GPG was the lower representation of women in senior roles. This was due to lower promotion rates of part-time employees who were more likely to be women. In a randomised controlled trial (RCT), we found that advertising jobs with part-time or job-share options by default increased the share of female applicants by 13% and the number of applications per vacancy by 50%.

Research focus, rationale and questions

The Government Equalities Office (GEO) established the Gender and Behavioural Insights (GABI) programme in partnership with the Behavioural Insights Team. The GABI programme aimed to build evidence for what works to improve gender equality in the workplace. We partnered with JLP to better understand the underlying drivers of their GPG and find ways to reduce it. Our exploratory data analysis suggested that one of the key factors contributing to the GPG at JLP was the lower representation of women in senior roles. More than two thirds of the gender gap in promotions was explained by fewer promotions of part-time employees who were more likely to be women.

We designed a two-armed RCT to tackle the lack of progression among part-time employees by changing the default for advertising above entry-level vacancies to be available on a part-time or job-share basis in addition to full-time. In addition, we wanted to see if the intervention that we tested with Zurich Insurance (see separate entry) would replicate in this very different retail setting (lower pay and larger female workforce).

We asked whether changing the job advert default to include more flexible options would increase

- the share of female applicants per vacancy

- the number of applications per vacancy, and

- promotion rates for part-time workers.

Research methods

We ran a two-armed RCT where John Lewis department stores and Waitrose supermarkets were randomly assigned to either continue with their business-as-usual process (control group) or start advertising new managerial vacancies (n=722) part-time or open to job-sharing by default (part-time default group). While JLP already advertised selected jobs with a flexible working option, in this trial flexible working options were included by default and made salient to potential applicants.

The intervention included the following components:

1. changing the default for advertising above entry-level vacancies to be available on a part-time or job-share basis, including both in the job title;

2. adding the following line to the job advert: "This job is available part-time, as a job-share, or full-time. This is because we want the best people for our roles and we recognise that sometimes those people aren't available full-time.";

3. sending emails to the hiring managers about the new process.

Research findings or argument

The share of female applicants increased from 38% to 51%. In addition, the intervention resulted in a 50% increase in the number of applications per vacancy from an average of 11.1 to 16.7. Compliance with the intervention was 100%. We did not find a significant impact on the number of external part-time hires, and the proportion of women, ethnic minorities and part-time employees in above entry-level roles.

We found that promotion rates for part-time employees were slightly higher in the intervention group (0.088%) compared to the control (0.057%). However, we were not able to detect a significant difference, likely owing to the overall low promotion rates as the trial took place during Covid-19 lockdowns. We think it is likely that the intervention would have a larger and significant impact over a longer term period.

Practical importance and implications of research

This work suggests that changing the default in new job adverts from only full-time to include part-time or job-share options increases the availability of part-time roles, even in managerial positions. Setting a flexible default on job adverts is a light-touch, low-cost and scalable solution for removing some of the barriers that part-time employees (most of whom are women) face when trying to progress in the labour market. These are barriers both in terms of progressing into more senior roles within their own organisations and in applying for external promotions. As such, this is also an effective way for organisations to increase applications both overall and particularly from women into senior positions. We encourage organisations to make part-time working available by default in job adverts.

Supporting men in financial services to take longer parental leave and work flexibly

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Overview

Mothers and fathers both want to work flexibly (1), but men are less likely to do so (2). Men may privately want to take longer paternity leave and work flexibly, and

are supportive of others who do, but underestimate support among their co-workers - known as 'pluralistic ignorance'. To find out if pluralistic ignorance contributes

to the disparity in flexible working and parental leave uptake, we partnered with Santander to run a randomised controlled trial (RCT). Telling men that the majority

of their male colleagues support longer parental leave for fathers boosted the intention to take longer leave by 62%.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Men are less likely than women to take time out of work to care for children, and less likely to make use of flexible working options (3). Whilst there are a range of

barriers contributing to men's lower uptake of parental leave and flexible working, one explanation could be perceived social pressure from other men. While men

may privately want to take longer paternity leave and work flexibly, and are supportive of others who do, they may underestimate support for these behaviours

among their co-workers.

We sought to find out whether pluralistic ignorance occurred in relation to men's parental leave and flexible work uptake at Santander UK, and if so, whether

providing feedback on actual beliefs among peers would affect men's intentions to engage in these behaviours in the future. We subsequently ran a similar trial

with a second bank to test some slight adjustments to the intervention.

To find out if pluralistic ignorance was occurring, we first compared employees' own opinions about men who take long leave and work flexibly and the perceived

opinions of their colleagues and managers on these issues. We then conducted a randomised controlled trial (RCT), in which we tested whether simply telling men

that the majority of their male colleagues support parental leave for fathers would increase the intention to take longer leave and work flexibly in the future.

Research methods

We conducted a baseline survey to measure men's opinions about other men taking longer parental leave and working flexibly. We also asked what they thought

their colleagues' and managers' beliefs were. We compared the difference between men's opinions and their perceptions of others' opinions. Men were more

supportive than they thought other men were, demonstrating pluralistic ignorance.

We then conducted a two-armed RCT, in which the intervention group was told that the majority of their male peers supported men who take longer parental leave

and work flexibly, based on the data collected in the baseline survey. The control group did not receive feedback.

We ran a similar trial with a second large bank. Based on the first trial, we revised the wording of the feedback to avoid 'anchoring' men to the number of weeks of

parental leave mentioned in the feedback.

Research findings or argument

Providing feedback that made clear that the majority of male peers were supportive of parental leave significantly increased participants' intentions to take between

five and eight weeks of parental leave in comparison to the control group in both trials – at Santander by 62% and at the second bank by 50%.

However, the feedback also decreased participants' intentions to take more than 16 weeks of leave at Santander UK, although worth noting that this was a small

proportion of men. We think this may be because the feedback potentially anchored people to taking around 5 weeks of leave, rather than longer periods. We

managed to avoid a similar effect at the second bank because we instead referred to multiple lengths of longer leave. By doing this, the rate of men intending to

take parental leave between five and eight weeks increased by 50% and there was no significant reduction in the number of men who intended to take longer

leave.

The feedback was effective at increasing men's intentions to work flexibly in the future at Santander UK. The intervention group were 4% more likely to express

that they would work flexibly than the control group.

Practical importance and implications of research

Our findings highlight the importance of social factors in male caregiving and workplace roles and suggest that men are likely to underestimate their peers' support

for men who work flexibly and take long parental leave. Adjusting this misperception is an effective and low-cost intervention that could change parental leave and

flexible working behaviour among men.

This study also provides important insight into how to implement such an intervention in order to avoid unintended negative consequences. Specifically, employers

should avoid referring to one particular length of parental leave and include multiple different lengths.

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4B: Dealing with uncertainty and change

A netnographic study exploring the impact of consecutive redundancy programmes on employee exhaustion, cynicism and organisational detachment

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Overview

This netnographic study explores the impact on employees subjected to the implementation of four consecutive redundancy programmes over a period of 26 months within an engineering organisation in the private sector. Our research highlight the extent of the presence of the key components identified by the multidimensional theory of burnout (Maslach, 1998); exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and job detachment and feelings of organisational ineffectiveness and failure (Maslach and Leiter, 2006). The research draws on employee perceptions during and post consecutive implementation redundancy implementation.   Data from 2033 comments from an intranet based 'mood indicator' is analysed along with engagement survey results.

Research focus, rationale and questions

The negative impact of redundancies on the workforce is well researched (De Vries and Balazs, 1997, Cascio and Wynn, 2004, Tourish et al., 2004, LaMarsh, 2009), with the exception of no known studies that research the compounded implications on the workforce subject to multiple redundancy programmes in the same organisation. The implementation of COVID-19 restrictions has resulted in redundancies reaching a peak in 2021 with the highest rate of 14.2 redundancies in every 1000 people in the UK (ONS, 2021). The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2021) provide additional statics that suggests the labour market

were disrupted to an unprecedented scale during 2020 with working-hour losses equalling 255 million full time jobs globally. It is thus of utmost importance that Human Resource (HR) functions are aware of the sustained negative impact on the workforce of consecutive redundancy programmes which will help them address targeted areas of employee concern.

We applied the multidimensional theory which positions the understanding of burnout and engagement effectively, due to the recognition of the complexity of the phenomenon within the context of different organisational factors (Maslach, 1998).

The aim of the study is to understand to what extent employees who are subjected to multiple redundancy programmes in short succession experience burnout. Our research questions developed as follows:

* To investigate the extent of exhaustion experienced amongst the workforce

* To understand the workforce experience of cynicism and job detachment

* To explore feelings of organisational ineffectiveness and failure

Research methods

We employed the qualitative methodology of netnography, an interpretative method which represents a written description of fieldwork emerging from on-line or computer mediated data (Kozinets, 1998). Specifically, we apply humanist netnography which focusses on answering research questions connected with deep social values through the collection of data via social media with the aim to influence social change (Kozinets, 2015).The mood indicator was used to capture the perceptions of employees during the redundancy programmes, as well as post redundancy implementation for a period of two years. By using a digital platform, employees had the opportunity to provide anonymous, qualitative feedback on the impact of the redundancy programmes. To validate the data reliability, this data was ratified through the comments obtained from engagement surveys during and after the redundancy programmes. Data was analysed through thematic analysis which consists of various stages such as data familiarisation, code generation and identification and formation of themes (Östlund et al., 2011, Baran, 2016).

Research findings or argument

The research findings indicate that each element of the multidimensional theory of burnout is prevalent amongst the workforce:

The extent of exhaustion experienced amongst the workforce

 Exhaustion is evidenced through additional workload and the pressure of managing with less resources:

'Too much work, not enough time…'

'I feel like I am struggling towards the little light at the end of the tunnel…'

'Tired.'

'It's like being on the edge of a cliff'

The workforce experience of cynicism and job detachment

Evidence is prominent to indicate feelings of job detachment where employees are seeking alternative employment and feeling disenchanted with the organisation. Fear is also expressed about the future sustainability of the organisation:

'No annual pay rise, no trust, no morale… No it could not be any worse. Will resign as soon as another job is found.'

'Worried about the new year! How many more of our loyal clients will be let down by poor service in the future?'

'Am struggling to be motivated when I really do not know what the company is expecting of me.'

'I feel totally neglected by the company, even going as far to say pushed out. '

Evidence of feelings of organisational ineffectiveness and failure

Our data indicate that the perception of organisational effectiveness is very low, where participants indicate low levels of confidence and leadership:

'My confidence with the management is very poor.'

'No leadership, no organisation.'

'Managers that are of no use and cannot plan work or make a decision.'

Practical importance and implications of research

With the recent rise in redundancies and the unknown, immediate future due to COVID-19 restrictions and possible future mutations of the virus, it is possible that organisations may continue with the implementation of redundancy programmes as a strategy for organisational survival. The risk to employee well-being whilst experiencing the impact of multiple redundancy programmes in immediate or short succession is thus pivotal to not only understand, but to prevent and address proactively. Despite redundancy programmes on the increase, mitigating the negative impact of redundancies (Petzer, 2020) is still subject to limited research. When it comes to the compounded impact of multiple redundancy programmes on the workforce, research is non-existent. It is thus fundamental for HR departments to be aware of the significant risk of burnout to their employees and to fully understand what interventions are required to minimise the symptoms identified through this study.

Our research contributes to a deeper understanding of the employee experience and build on the development of targeted areas for HR departments to proactive address, such as addressing low morale, managing workload and pressure, management training and effective leadership.

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Uncertainty Experts: An experimental intervention in leadership, diversity and innovation transforming the impact of uncertainty from negative toward positive.

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Overview

In this paper, we present a novel scalable intervention aimed at increasing people's tolerance to uncertainty. The intervention consists of an innovative educational program delivered in an interactive online environment, which combines the presentation of case studies alongside individual introspective questionnaires. The intervention was validated in a field experiment (N=289) using a mixed experimental design. We compared pre and post intervention scores of people's reactions towards and tolerance to uncertainty, in a control and an intervention group. Finally, we will discuss the benefits of similarly designed interventions for application across people management, employment, learning and development, and organizational development.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Uncertainty is prevalent society today (Ahir et al. 2018). While the negative effects of uncertainty have been extensively documented (Ladoucer et al. 1997; Brorvec. 2002; Buhr & Dugas, 2009; Barlow et al. 2013), it can also be a driver for success (Clark. 2015, Mushtaq et al. 2011, Yoshida & Ishhi. 2006, Tiedens et al. 2001). Within the context of a firm, increasing employees' tolerance to uncertainty can have beneficial outcomes both to the employees themselves but also an aggregate benefit for the firm. Individual benefits include higher well-being and better resilience to changes. At the aggregate level this translates to more resilient teams which are able to work more effectively in a context of uncertainty.

The intervention was designed as a response to briefs and requests from UK employers seeking workshops around resilience, wellbeing, collaboration, and psychological safety. Through engaging participants with inspirational real-life examples of people who have managed to turn uncertainty into a positive driving force, we invite participants to introspect and set intentions for the future.

We hypothesised that using this interactive documentary-style intervention, we would be able increase people's tolerance to uncertainty.

More specifically we wanted to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Does our intervention increase people's positive affective reactions towards uncertainty? And conversely does it decrease negative affective reactions?

RQ2: Does our intervention result in an increase in self-efficacy?

RQ3: Does our intervention result in a reduction of participants' need for cognitive closure?

Research methods

We used a mixed subjects design: participants who signed up to take part in the field experiment were randomly assigned to a control group or an experimental group. The control group were directed to a workshop on storytelling, while the intervention group received three uncertainty-experts sessions, across three consecutive weeks. The first intervention session and the control workshop were scheduled at the same time.

Participants answered a number of questions before the first session, and the same ones after the last session. These included experiencing uncertainty through a modified BART task (Lejuez et al. 2002), a PANAS-SF score measuring reactions to experienced uncertainty and the NGSE (Chen et al. 2001) scale to measure self-efficacy. At the start of the first session, and at the end of the last session we also measured participants general affective reactions towards uncertainty (PANAS-SF) as well as their need for closure (Kruglanski et al., 1997).

Research findings or argument

Initial analysis of qualitative data collected during and after the intervention indicated a shift in people's habitual models of thinking and the development of personal strategies to deal with uncertainty.

The quantitative evaluation of the intervention proved that there was a measurable shift in attitudes as measured before and after the sessions. On most of these measures (PANAS-SF, NGSE, BART) the differences were smaller or not statistically significant in the control group. The one exception to these results is the NFC scale. Both the control and intervention groups showed a similar drop between the pre and post NFC scores. There is therefore no current evidence that the intervention has succeeded in reducing participants' need for cognitive closure.

Taken together, these results indicate that there is a real measurable benefit to the Uncertainty Experts intervention. Participants in the intervention group reported feeling more positively towards uncertainty, both in the general sense (as measured by the general PANAS-SF, $t(171) = -8.4952$, $p < .001$, n.s. for control group) and

also to a specific uncertain task (as measured by the post-BART PANAS-SF). They were also more likely to take risks in an uncertain scenario (as measured by the BART), indicating a change in behaviour rather than just a change in attitudes. A 6-week follow-up measure confirmed that these changes (measured by the PANAS-SF and NFC scales) are persistent for the intervention group, and not for the control.

Practical importance and implications of research

Heightened by the collision of Brexit, the climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, uncertainty is at an all-time high (Ahir et al. 2018). Both in and out of the workplace, people are faced with these high levels of uncertainty which impact them personally and professionally. Coping with such levels of uncertainty is not easy, and failing to do so can lead to cognitive fatigue and lower levels of wellbeing, leading to a less productive and resilient workforce.

The Uncertainty Experts intervention uses engaging storytelling to provide participants with the tools to be more resilient to uncertainty, not by shying away from it, but by embracing it. Such a positive association with uncertainty allows for a higher level of wellbeing and a greater capability of taking decisive action. Teams which embrace uncertainty in this way can work more productively in today's uncertain context while retaining a stronger resilience to unexpected changes.

The intervention itself is easily scalable and has been adapted both to the general public, and to large international organisations (e.g. Mercedes, …). The introspective part of the intervention allows measurements of efficacy to be collected before and after, thus quantifying its effect on a number of metrics. The results from these applied adaptations have replicated the patterns uncovered during the robust evaluation.

Finally, given the success of the Uncertainty Experts in creating resilience to uncertainty, we believe that this novel educational format combining storytelling and introspection can be successfully adapted to other areas of workplace learning or behavioural change.

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Intolerance of uncertainty (IU) is a characteristic predominantly associated with generalized anxiety disorder, GAD (Ladoucer et al. 1997; Brorvec 2002, involves the tendency to react negatively on an emotional, cognitive, and behavioral level to uncertain situations and events (Buhr & Dugas, 2009) Furthermore increasing emerging evidence indicates that IU may also be a shared element of a wide range of emotional disorders. (Barlow et al, 2013)

An estimated 275 million people (4%- 6% of the population) were suffering from an anxiety disorder by the start of the pandemic (WHO 2019), a figure seen to have risen dramatically with current events. In the UK alone there was a noted almost 50% increase in high anxiety across major demographics (ONS 2020). With Uncertainty also at an all time high (Ahir et al. 2018) there is an accelerated need for interventions that can decrease IU.

Furthermore, beyond alleviating anxiety and mitigating maladaptive behaviour and cognitive processes an increased tolerance to uncertainty can also be a driver of success (Clark. 2015), increasing creativity ability and decision making (Yoshida & Isshi. 2006, Tiedens et al. 2001), and positively impacting wellbeing (LaDoucer et al. 1997, Mushtaq et al. 2011).

4C: Learning for innovation and change

Developing employee creativity in the hospitality industry through action learning session

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Overview

The need for employee creativity has been communicated by the hospitality industry, now it is viewed as a source for industry revitalisation and recovery from the COVID-

19 pandemic (Alonso *et al.*, 2020). The research to date has done little to suggest how to facilitate and give rise to creative behaviours at work (Garavan *et al.*, 2019; Kulichyova *et al.*, 2021; Manucci, 2021). In this research, the idea of action learning is explored in relation to creative development and performance. The findings indicate a positive relationship between training and learning outcomes, at the level of individual and organisation performance. Creativity enabling forces in action learning are articulated and industry implications are provided.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Provision of employees with industry-relevant skills and competences has been an important agenda for contemporary organisations. The hospitality industry has traditionally been predisposed to high levels of risks and uncertainty, not to mention the urge for innovation and sustainable development (Hon and Lui, 2016; Bratton, 2018; Pillai *et al.*, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has added to the skills agenda, it is nothing new to add when appreciating industry performance falls and detrimental effects on industry stakeholders (Yan *et al.*, 2021). More creative approach including plans for creative skills promotion and development are now essential for the industry revitalisation and recovery (Giousmpasoglou *et al.*, 2021). Such views are underpinned with the World Economic Forum publication suggesting creativity and abilities for creative problem-solving among the top skills for success and future organisations (Ratcheva and Leopold, 2018). However, we know little about how hospitality sector organisations can become more creative in their approach as well as become an innovative and attractive place to work (Canhoto and Wei, 2021).

Practices of organisational learning including action learning sound promising to contribute to the skills agenda. Action learning as a part of Human Resource Development (HRD) function is known for its potential to supply with new and relevant knowledge and encourage knowledge application over time (Revans, 1982; Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2020). At the same time, little is known about how action learning relates to creativity and can be used to develop knowledge and practice of creative behaviours (Birdi, 2016; Collin *et al.*, 2020; Isaksen, 2020). Using evidence from training sessions in creativity which were delivered in four hospitality organisations, this paper seeks to explore the following research question:

How individual creative outputs can be encouraged with the use of action learning?

Research methods

Four hospitality sector organisations located in Northern Ireland participated in this research. The data collection and analysis plans included a delivery of action learning training session for middle- and senior management staff. The author of this paper delivered the training session, collected and analysed the data. A total number of 47 managers took part in the training session, they also completed stages of the mixed methods research approach designed for this study. The following stages were fulfilled by the research participants: (a) completion of creative self-assessment prior the training session, (b) participant observations during the training, (c) completion of creative self-assessment three weeks after the training, and (d) follow-up interviews three months after the training. The training session sought to

encourage action and was underpinned by the creative problem-solving (CPS) methodology (Birdi, 2016). It was structured as a process of resolving an organisational problem which was formulated by each organisation in advance of training. It also included movement and manipulation such as teamwork element, work with objects (artefacts) and idea implementation plans.

Research findings or argument

Three key takeaways are presented in this paper: (a) around perceptions of individual creativity, (b) individual and organisational performance, and (c) forces contributory to creative development.

First, the findings suggest that even one training session could increase awareness and attitudes to creativity. Research participants commented that they became more open to creativity, aware of out-of-box thinking styles and knew how to apply problem-solving techniques. However, changing perceptions to creativity was not easy and was associated with barriers including difficulties to initiate creative thinking, complexity of the training intervention, and limited time to embrace creativity.

With respect to influence on individual and organisational performance, the findings highlight that the results of learning can become embedded in individual work practices. The research participants commented that even one training session was able to increase their motivation in creativity, encourage initiative taking in attempts to resolve organisational problems, inspired to spread the knowledge about creativity and train their team members in creative thinking. Senior management staff evidenced influence of action learning on performance three weeks after training. For example, a new marketing campaign was introduced and resulted in an increase of local customers attending the hospitality venue.

Finally, teamwork element, artefacts and the leadership support emerged as key forces in action learning. The research participants noted that artefacts can integrate in individual work practices and become resources for creativity, rather than simple objects in the workplace. However, several barriers in action learning emerged from the data analysis including poor fit between some participants as members of a team, duration of the training session, and limited support of creativity in the post-training period.

Practical importance and implications of research

The findings of this research offer guidelines for practitioners and organisations that seek to develop creative skillset. First, employee creativity and its importance should become an agenda in organisation. Research participants commented that they were interested in creativity, but organisations did little to prioritise creative work behaviours. They thought that opportunities for creativity should be provided and staff – encouraged to attend these and raise their voices.

Second, effort should be taken to ensure simplicity of the training session and its continual delivery. The CPS methodology as used in this research was perceived complex and difficult by research participants when it sought to initiate types of

divergent and convergent thinking simultaneously. Furthermore, they thought that one training session was not sufficient to their long-term creativity therefore more training opportunities have been called for. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, organisations should be flexible in their approach to training, for example digital training programmes may be an alternative and target each type of thinking per session.

Third, the teamwork element and artefacts should be further exploited by practitioners in action learning about creativity. The research participants liked to exchange ideas with other members of a team, feel mutual responsibility for creative solutions and play with artefacts for problem-solving. Practitioners should be careful when allocating participants in teams and ensure team compatibility prior the training session. Use of Belbin Teams Role can prevent from team conflicts and non-engagement in CPS. Furthermore, with the use of digital training programmes artefacts should further be exploited and investigated in their potential to give rise to new ideas.

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Unlearning and Consent in the UK Fire and Rescue Service

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Overview

Much of the existing literature argues that unlearning can only be achieved if old knowledge is discarded: the clean slate approach. This is not an accurate description of a human system. This paper draws on a detailed qualitative study of learning in the UK Fire and Rescue Services to demonstrate that, not only did firefighters retain their old knowledge, they used it as a benchmark to assess new routines and practices. So trust in, and consent to, innovation was key to successful implementation. The people involved in unlearning are active agents, rather than passive recipients or discarders of knowledge.

Research focus, rationale and questions

The creation, capture and transfer of knowledge has long been a focus of the knowledge management literature. Conversely, unlearning, the ways firms unlearn old knowledge, routines and practices, has received much less attention. Conceptually unlearning has been somewhat a Procrustean bed. Existing theories have been reshaped and stretched to align with orthodox assumptions about the unlearning process (Klein, 1989). Most also ignore the inconvenient fact that it is the people, who work in organisations, to whom the task of learning or unlearning falls.

The dominant perspective in the literature on unlearning is the clean slate approach (Hedberg, 1981; Nystrom and Starbuck,1984; Huber,1991) in which old knowledge is discarded and replaced with new. As a process, this is conceptualised as being a necessary antecedent to the acquisition of new knowledge (Hedberg, 1981). This is a useful way of describing a supply chain where space needs to be created in warehouses before new stock can be introduced; but it has much less resonance in a human system where brains are rarely cleaned out. For the people who work in organisations unlearning is not necessarily a linear or sequential process, nor does it always result in the discarding of old knowledge (Klein, 1989; Howells and Scholderer, 2016; Tsang, 2008).

This paper focuses on the people who do the unlearning and argues that their consent is central. The firefighters in our study were not passive recipients of instructions and updates from on high, but active agents, questioning and testing innovations.

Research methods

The fieldwork used a combination of participant observation, focus groups and semi structured interviews. In phase one, focus groups and individual interviews were conducted in 12 fire stations together with observations. These covered a total of 44 firefighters, including 10 station managers and 4 group managers. In addition, 14 semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior management and key staff. In phase two, three years later, a further three focus groups and four interviews were conducted, increasing the number of informants to 62. A five-month ethnography was conducted at Red Watch and the first author participated in a 'live burn'. The incoming Deputy Chief Fire Officer was shadowed during the initial handover period, handover and operational meetings were recorded and the DCFO kept a handover diary.   All formal training materials and operational guidance was studied and access was given to individual firefighters' training and development records.

Research findings or argument

Why does so much literature on unlearning ignore the people who do the unlearning? What would we understand differently if we focused on those people? The creation, capture and transfer of knowledge has long been a focus of

the knowledge management literature. Unlearning has received less attention. Hedberg's (1981) study is strongly weighted towards learning and there are few empirical studies of unlearning (Easterby-Smith et al. 2004; Thompson; 2007; Tsang and Zara, 2008; De Holan and Phillips, 2011). Most accounts also ignore the inconvenient fact that it is the people, who work in organisations, to whom the task of learning or unlearning falls.

The dominant perspective in the literature is the clean slate approach (Hedberg, 1981; Nystrom and Starbuck,1984; Huber,1991) in which old knowledge is deliberately discarded and replaced with new knowledge. This is intentional, linear, and a necessary antecedent to new knowledge (Hedberg, 1981). This is a useful way of describing a distribution system where space needs to be created for new stock; but it has much less resonance in a human system. For the people who work in organisations, unlearning is not necessarily linear, nor does it require the discarding of old knowledge (Klein, 1989; Howells and Scholderer, 2016; Tsang, 2008).

This article focuses on the people who do the unlearning and argues that unlearning itself is dialectical and iterative, for which consent is central. It draws on research designed to discover how firefighters learned and unlearned their skills, and how knowledge was transferred both formally and informally.

Practical importance and implications of research

This paper contributes in three ways: (i) by challenging the idea of unlearning as a clean slate in which old knowledge is discarded. Klein (1989) and Howells and Scholderer (2016) have critiqued this theoretically (though see also Tsang, 2017). Here we provide evidence of unlearning in practice. The firefighters in this study did not forget old or obsolete knowledge; rather, old knowledge was retained as a source of interest and humour, or as a means of challenging and adapting new practices; (ii) by establishing the importance of consent. Trust in, and consent to, innovations influenced how and whether they were adopted; and (iii) by focussing on and theorising the people, rather than the organisations, involved in learning and unlearning. These three contributions are inter-related. Acknowledging that unlearning does not involve discarding old knowledge sharpens our observations of firefighters retaining an awareness of old practices. Firefighters who remembered the old practices were able to use them as benchmarks against which innovations could be approved, challenged or amended. Such challenges meant that implementation often required consent. These findings have important, practical implications for the people who manage knowledge acquisition. People are central to this process.

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5A: Equality, diversity and inclusion

Understanding the barriers of sector switching: The impact of Sector on Curriculum Vitae (CV) scores and the attitudes of those scoring

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Overview

Many people find it challenging to switch from public to private sector roles, and vice versa. In this vignette study we explored recruiter's decision making via CV scores and their implicit biases related to Sector (Public vs. Private) through a follow up Implicit Association Test (IAT) to understand whether there is a blockage in the recruitment process, diminishing individuals' ability to sector switch in the UK. Findings suggest that while some implicit bias exists, with preference for own sector, this does not impact the hiring decision (CV score). Practical suggestions for both implicit bias training and recruiting processes are discussed.

Research focus, rationale and questions

This work aims to explore the potential of the Sector being a source of bias in the selection process and whether recruiters are more likely to attach higher scores to

those candidates with experience from their current sector when evaluating candidate CVs.

There are many challenges in changing employment, from navigating new relationships to understanding communication channels through knowing when and how decisions are made in an organisation (Church & Conger, 2018). There is always the potential for a clash of values one may experience with new colleagues and employers (Newman, 2010), and even desired transitions can be upsetting (Schlossberg, 2011). However, there will be a need for movement between sectors if the workforce is to remain buoyant, unemployment is to remain low and for the economy to recover from the impact of COVID-19. Much of the sector switching research to date has focused on the global feelings of sector switching from the candidate's perspective and is often undertaken retrospectively. These studies feature less about the approaches people take to job searches and the recruitment process due to either moving or intending to move between sectors.

The first research question (RQ1) is whether the inclusion of employment history on CVs makes a difference to the scores given to that CV [candidate] during a CV sifting process (matching the CV to a job outline)? The second research question (RQ2) is: To what extent does the Sector act as a form of bias in the recruitment process? may give us greater insight into recruitment practices.

Research methods

An exploratory vignette study applying field intervention approaches this study took thirty recruiters (using a snowball method) working actively in the field and asked them to score CV's either with or without employment history included This is similar in many ways to other CV studies, such as Dietz et al. (2000), who used actual job seekers CVs. They scored on a 4-point scale whether to progress the candidate when compared to a role outline for a project manager. The researcher undertook a matching process between the role outline and the candidate's CV as submitted by them to ensure appropriateness for the role.

The recruiters were then asked to complete an IAT online approximately one week after the scoring exercise. The IAT used the Attribute-Trait pairings of Public – Bureaucratic / Private – Ambitious. Each of these pairings contained 16 items. These items were a product of a previous systematic literature review, where studies found statistically significant differences between sectors.

Research findings or argument

A significant difference was found between those CVs with and without employment history (difference in means of 0.59, in favour of Without Employment History), which supports academic and professional circles' work that 'blind' CVs produce better results and mitigate biases (CIPD, 2015; Derous & Ryan, 2017). Any bias in the selection process can aid inequality in the workforce, and these 'blind' recruitment and what we can do to address the shortfalls we find.

Results support the idea that employment history acts as a form of biographical information from which a recruiter could make generalisations about the candidate,

as there were better scores for those CVs without employment history (difference in means of 0.59) than with. These results could indicate that recruiters spend more time assessing the CV when there is less 'key word' information to search for, such as sector information found in employment history

Whilst there were an overall majority and significant preference for the public sector (vs Private sector Attribute-Traits) from the IAT data set, even for those recruiters in the private sector, findings show that recruiters did show an implicit bias towards their sector (public t (5) = 3.50, p<.02; private t (8) = 38.49, p<.001.)).

These results could be reflective of a similar to-me bias (Sekiguchi & Huber, 2011), the kind that we see in both formal and informal selection methods (Thornton et al., 2019) and which can be driven by stereotypical views (Pager & Shepherd, 2008; Koch, D'Mello & Sacket, 2015) of what a particular sector in this case, 'looks' like.

Practical importance and implications of research

Recruitment is a significant business (a reported £38.9bn Industry in the UK in 2019[1]), and even though 2020 and 2021 have been affected by the global COVID pandemic, the figures are still somewhat optimistic (there was a "softer expansion[s] in both permanent and temporary candidate numbers" according to KPMG). Practitioners, whether they are in-house recruiting / talent acquisition staff or providing this service through an Agency, have a clear role to play in acquiring the right person for the job, the first time; the UK Employment Law firm, Croner, estimate the costs of replacing a member of staff to be around £11,000 per person[2], making it an expensive mistake if not done well.

This research was exploratory, looking at the issue of bias related to the sector (Private or Public) and whether that bias impacts selection decisions. By extension, could this reduce movement in the labour market. Advice then, to recruiters would be to move towards assessments and processes which allow for predictive performance information to be generated objectively, as this would better support individuals in the process as much as the business using them. These more formal methods would allow for greater inclusion; removing biographical information before the shortlisting phase could see a more diverse talent pool be taken forward using attributes related to the role.

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Small-to-Medium-Enterprises (SMEs) and the opportunities and challenges of "life-friendly" employment practices

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Overview

This research paper reports on the findings from a collaboration between the University of Manchester and Working Families which focuses on UK-based SMEs (organisations with fewer than 250 employees) and family-friendly work practices.

We develop knowledge and understanding of the particular challenges faced by SMEs in supporting employees with families and other caring responsibilities, and the concerns they hold. This includes consideration of the context of SMEs and the reasons why some go beyond their statutory obligations, looking at how policies have developed and why. We also address the ways that SMEs have adapted in the context of Covid-19: identifying emerging effective practices and future concerns.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Despite the high proportion of SMEs in the UK (61% of UK private sector businesses have under 250 employees (Ward, 2021)), much of the literature on family-friendly policies tends to focus on larger organisations (Maxwell et al, 2007). However, the research that has focused on SMEs has found them to be a diverse group that warrants further attention. Medium-sized SMEs (50-249 employees) were found to be more likely to have formal flexible working arrangements (FWAs) than small (CIPD, 2012; Maxwell et al., 2007). Further, the organisational strategy adopted may determine the FWAs available; SMEs employing those with professional, managerial and trade skills may be more likely to provide FWAs than those with mostly unskilled employees (Kotey, 2017).

In their literature review of maternity management in SMEs, Stumbitz et al (2018) found a lack of research comparing attitudes to parental leave across organisational cultures and market conditions, calling for more research about when SMEs voluntarily fund leave beyond statutory provision and the benefits that accrue (e.g. savings on recruitment costs, improved retention rates).

SME's size is often heralded as an advantage, making them more agile and responsive: able to make changes to their business more quickly and easily than larger organisations. The Covid-19 pandemic therefore offers us the opportunity to test this theory and see if SMEs were better equipped to adapt to the changes demanded of them at short notice from March 2020 and throughout the pandemic.

This research aims to:

- Generate knowledge and understanding of the particular challenges faced by SMEs in supporting employees with families and other caring responsibilities.

- Understand how SMEs have adapted in the context of Covid-19, what established practices have proved effective and what practices have emerged/developed in response to new circumstances.

- Involve SMEs in driving policy debate, ensuring they can share effective practice and influence change relating to the future of work.

- Harness new evidence to provide tailored support to SMEs, developing effective policy and practice.

Research methods

Twenty semi-structured interviews are planned with individuals with HR responsibilities within SMEs. At the time of submission, 10 interviews have taken place (via Zoom) in the period from May to July 2021. The sample includes both small (10-49 employees) and medium-sized (50-249) SMEs from the private, public and third sectors.

An online questionnaire was also distributed to HR/similar representatives of UK SMEs via various networks, resulting in 42 usable responses. The survey had two main functions. First it provided an overall picture of SMEs' approaches to workplace flexibility and family-friendly working. Second, it provided respondents with the opportunity to signal their interest in participating in a research interview. The interview schedule was informed by the survey findings, yet was sufficiently flexible to respond to the rich variety of SMEs participating. Data was fully transcribed and analysed using NVivo software; a picture of each SME's approach will be built on an individual basis followed by the identification of common themes.

Research findings or argument

Preliminary findings suggest that SMEs differed in their approaches to family-friendly (or what one participant termed "life-friendly") policies. Key to these differences was the positioning of the organisation. SMEs *leading by example*, strive to be employers of choice and win awards for their family-friendly provision which are strongly aligned to their organisational values and ethos. On the other hand those we categorised as

seeking *comparability* benchmarked themselves against other organisations of a similar size and sector, positioning themselves to be comparable as opposed to "the best". In further unpacking these approximate categories we seek to develop understanding of employers' journeys towards these goals; their motivations and understanding of what it means to provide a family-friendly working environment.

Of course this research has been conducted in the midst of a global pandemic. SMEs provided many examples of how they adapted to new working conditions while ensuring continuation of their service. All participants interviewed so far agreed that their response to the pandemic had challenged any reservations about home working, changing the attitudes of employees but also organisational leaders in this regard. There was evidence that SME's response to the pandemic had expedited and helped embed certain initiatives which may not have happened quite so quickly otherwise.

Future concerns centred on the challenges of keeping a remote workforce connected. This was particularly the case for SMEs who were expanding and anticipating recruiting new employees into their business in the next year; while there was a desire to continue with the flexibility afforded by the pandemic this was being weighed against a need to maintain organisational culture and develop less experienced employees.

Practical importance and implications of research

This study will contribute to an improved understanding of the challenges facing UK SMEs in supporting employees with families, other caring responsibilities and 'life-friendly' employment practices more widely.

It builds the evidence base relating to the effectiveness of SMEs in supporting parents and carers in the workplace, thus focusing provision and support to increase inclusion and diversity. It also provides insight as to when and why SMEs voluntarily fund parental leave and the benefits that accrue (e.g. savings on recruitment costs, improved retention rates).   This will help further develop the business case within SMEs for the provision of family-friendly policies that go beyond the statutory minimum and enable good practice to be both celebrated and shared.

It is intended that the results of the research will be used by Working Families, the UK's leading work/life balance charity, to develop their offering (which currently tends to focus on large organisations) for SMEs. It is envisaged that this will include the creation of case studies informed by the good practices identified and an employer's toolkit with access to templates and e-learning, amongst other items (which will depend on the final findings and the funding available*).*

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5B: Work technology

We need to talk about digital HR ethics! A review of the academic literature on ethical aspects of algorithmic Human Resource Management (HRM) technologies

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Overview

A scoping literature review indicates the rate of academic discussion of ethical aspects of algorithmic HRM technologies lags the rate at which these technologies are being discussed in academia as a whole. Increased attention to this topic is necessary to enable HR practitioners and organisations to implement digital technologies responsibly, and understand their risks while maximising business benefits.

Research focus, rationale and questions

This paper explores the extent to which ethical aspects of algorithmic HRM technologies have been discussed in academic literature, and identifies implications for HR practitioners and organisations.

While HRM literature has considered impacts of new technologies for years [1-5], consideration of broader ethical implications of digital HRM is much more limited, and recent ([3], [6-8]). This is significant given that an increasing range of HR technology products incorporate algorithmic technologies, and many HR practitioners may be using algorithmic features in software applications on a daily basis.

In the last decade academic movements have emerged in the last decade that spotlight ethical implications of technology choices. These include socially responsible HRM [9-10], and responsible innovation [11-12] in the context of industry (e.g. [13-16]) and digital technologies [16-17]. Responsible innovation's emphasis on aligning innovation with societal expectations is relevant to Ulrich and Dulebohn's call for 'outside in' approaches to HR strategy [18].

The paper addresses the following questions:

• To what extent may algorithmic HRM technologies pose new ethical challenges for HR practitioners and organisations?

• To what extent has peer-reviewed HRM literature discussed ethical implications of algorithmic HR technologies to date?

• How does the rate of academic publications on ethical implications of algorithmic HR technologies compare to the rate of publications on algorithmic HR technologies, and the rate of publications on algorithmic technologies in general?

• What implications do ethical concerns associated with algorithmic HR technologies have for HRM practitioners and organisations?

Research methods

A scoping review was conducted in the Scopus, Web of Science and EBSCO databases to establish the extent to which ethical aspects of algorithmic technologies have been considered in peer-reviewed HR literature. A combination of search terms was used based on the research questions to identify papers in the HR literature discussing ethical aspects of algorithmic technologies. Papers were classified based on year of publication, type (empirical, conceptual or review) and level of analysis. Separate searches were carried with combinations of the three components (for example ethical aspects of algorithmic technologies, and ethical aspects of HRM technologies) to enable comparison of publication trends.

Research findings or argument

The paper considers terminology in use in relation to algorithmic HRM, before exploring ethical issues associated with digital technologies and referencing the concepts of responsible innovation and socially responsible HRM. It then reports results of the scoping review, describing the current landscape of conceptual, empirical and review studies in this area before contrasting frequency of publications on ethical aspects of HRM technologies with broader trelated topics.

Results indicate that while general implications of digital HRM have been discussed for decades, the rate of discussion of ethical aspects of algorithmic HRM

technologies lags the rate of discussion of HRM technologies generally, and the rate of discussion of algorithmic technologies and responsible innovation in the academic literature. We find that studies addressing broader ethical aspects of algorithmic HRM technologies have only recently started to emerge and that there is very limited empirical evidence of algorithmic HRM practices, in particular relating to employee, practitioner, and longitudinal perspectives.

Our finding that academic discussion of ethical aspects of algorithmic HR is limited, recent, and lags the wider rate of engagement with these technologies is a call to action to HR academics to develop a wider base of empirical evidence for the effects of algorithmic technologies and ways to manage them.

Practical importance and implications of research

This study highlights the need for additional research into the ethical aspects of algorithmic HRM technologies, if we are to equip HR practitioners with awareness of their implications and the ability to guide managers in their responsible use. It is therefore relevant to academics researching HRM as well as to trade bodies such as the CIPD, and HR professionals.

The study has implications for research into IT professional responsibilities, as digital technologies, increasing HR analytics adoption, and self-service manager tools challenge organisational boundaries of responsibility, and evidence [19] highlights the frequently limited role HR practitioners have in choices over smart technology deployment. IT professionals will need to involve a range of stakeholders including HR, if they are to implement new technologies in ways that anticipate ethical concerns of employees.

As HR technology decisions involve various stakeholders – from companies who develop them, to IT and/or HR practitioners who implement them and advise on interpretation, to managers who use them as part of decision-making, the findings have broader relevance for responsible innovation discourses, which have often focussed on the decisions of inventors rather than organisations.

The study is also relevant from an HR strategy perspective – an 'outside in' approach to HR strategy means we need to understand how HR technology choices can impact employee and stakeholder relations. In adopting algorithmic technologies whose implications are not yet fully understood, practitioners may incur unexpected risks to their organisations.

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Rapid Recruitment in Retail: the importance of trust in the technology in user responses to the introduction of an AI-assisted hiring process

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Overview

This paper investigates a large retail firm's implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in response to the need to massively upscale recruitment due to the coronavirus pandemic. It charts how technology was deployed to speed up recruitment to respond to increased labour demand at store level and staff responses to the changes. Trust in the technology and it's capabilities emerged as a major factor in how staff responded to the changes with significant implications for success against organisational objectives. The case study provides a use case for the labour-augmenting use of AI and for understanding technological change in organisations.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Advances in AI and machine learning have greatly expanded the range of uses computers can be put to (Brynjolfsson, Rock and Syverson, 2017), including a range of HR processes (Bogen and Reike, 2018; Mirowska and Mesnet, 2021). Algorithmic Decision Making (ADM) holds the promise of removing known human bias from the hiring process, making hiring more data-driven (Houser, 2019), although some caution against a lack of transparency and that such technologies may reinforce existing social biases (Eubanks, 2018; O'Neil, 2016). The achievement of any

potential gains from technology introduction relies on: 1) the technology being up to the job; and 2) human operators using the technology in the intended way. While trust in one's employer in relation to organisational change has received attention in organisational research (Siebert, Martin and Bozic, 2016), trust in technology itself has received far less attention.

This exploratory case study investigates how AI was deployed in a large retail organisation in order to massively upscale hiring during the pandemic while aiming to improve retention and ensure hiring was fair and unbiased. It charts how user response to the application of the technology can potentially undermine organisational objectives and how trust in the technology and its outputs are critical for successful implementation. The research asks: 1) how is AI being deployed in the hiring process and for what objectives? 2) How do the users of the technology respond to technology change in their jobs? 3) What are the implications of user response to successful implementation?

Research methods

The paper draws on case study research with a large retail organisation in the US. The case study involved semi-structured qualitative interviews with twelve respondents with a range of responsibilities in relation to the hiring process, including: 7 head office staff responsible for implementing the changes; 5 store HR staff and managers and 2 recently recruited hourly paid employees. Interviews, lasting 30 to 90 minutes, were conducted by video conferencing during the pandemic from September to December 2020. These were supplemented by regular bi-weekly meetings with a business sponsor at the organisation and follow-up information gathered via email. Interviews were transcribed and analysed thematically using Nvivo.

Research findings or argument

The Coronavirus pandemic acted as a catalyst to bring forward existing plans to update the hiring system for store-level staff. The use of AI sought to make hiring more data-driven in order to:

- speed up and expand the hiring process to meet increased demand;

- protect the health and safety of staff and applicants during the pandemic;

- Improve selection and retention of new hires and reduce 90-day turnover rates;

- Remove the potential for human bias in the hiring process.

To achieve this the organisation made the following changes:

- Developed a machine learning algorithm to rank applicants for store-level positions;

- Removed in-person interviews (for telephone interviews);

- Enabled hirers to make remote job offers;

- Made changes to the hiring system user interface (UI) to raise the prominence of highly ranked candidates and their strengths and weaknesses.

While candidates accepted the changes and valued the time and health and safety benefits, lack of awareness and trust in the hiring system and their ability to assess candidates over the phone meant some hirers acted in ways which undermined the organisational objectives.

Some users were unaware that the system aimed to predict 'good' hires or were unconvinced of the algorithm's ability to do so and continued to interview applicants from further down the list or interviewed more candidates than intended. Others had reverted to bringing candidates in for face-to-face interviews. These responses slowed the process and undermined the objectives of making hiring more data-driven and less open to human bias.

Practical importance and implications of research

The research shows that trust and confidence in technology are important factors in its acceptance and ultimately the success of technological change in organisations. This was not lost on the organisation who identified trust in the technology and what they were trying to achieve as important, describing implementation of the changes as a journey and a two-way learning process.

While the development team had implemented changes to the user interface in order to make the reasons for candidates' relative position on the list more transparent, it is clear that some users lacked confidence in the capabilities of the technology.

Incongruence between the recommendations of the algorithm, which predicted 90-day turnover, and users' own assessments of candidates suitability (based on potential performance, fit and customer service) may go some way to explaining lack of confidence in the system.

The findings show that, in this case at least, in order to improve trust and acceptance of the new technology two conditions are important:

- The technology must perform as intended and its outputs need to be in line with user expectations;

- Awareness of the technology used and its intended outputs may help users understand the technology's performance and explain any misalignment with expectations;

- In relation to the latter point, successful communication about the technological change and its objectives is key.

The findings also underline the need for further research into the issue of trust in the technology in relation to technological change in organisations.

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5C: The role of line managers in developing employees

Exploring supervisor support in relation to learning transfer for leadership degree apprentices

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Overview

This paper explores supervisor support in terms of learning transfer in the context of leadership degree apprentices to identify catalysts and barriers based upon Holton, Bates and Ruona (2000), learning transfer framework.   Leadership development is of interest to HRD in the creation of leadership development strategies and is relevant to the rise of leadership degree apprenticeships within HRD. Leadership degree apprenticeships allow HRD to be involved in shaping and influencing programmes (Rowe, 2017). It identifies supervisor support is a significant barrier to learning transfer for leadership degree apprentices and it recommends how HRD can improve this in the workplace.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Learning transfer is a key metric of training effectiveness (Blume et al., 2021). A number of models of learning transfer have been proposed and this study draws on existing learning transfer and leadership studies in a work-based context (Dragoni, Tesluk, Russell, 2009; Holton et al., 2000; Kirwan & Birchall, 2006; Mulder, 2014; Pirrioni, 2018; Renata Davids, Van de Bossche, Gijbels, Garrido, 2017; Rowe, Perrin, Wall, 2017; Scott De Rue & Wellman, 2009; Sørensen, 2017), to identify how the integration of knowledge, skills and behaviours can be enhanced through learning transfer.   It contributes to practice by focussing on the areas of learning transfer and leadership development (Sørensen, 2017) within context of apprenticeships (Pirrioni, 2018) and bridges a number of gaps in relation to curriculum design (Bishop & Hordern, 2017; Fjellström & Kristmanssaon, 2019) through recommending improvements to supervisor support. Leadership programmes have grown significantly in HEI business schools over the last 30 years with one in five business schools offering this type of prgramme (CABS, 2017). With the recent development of degree apprenticeships within UK as a new distinctive model of vocational education (Bravenboer, 2016) there is a limited number of published current studies most notably (Rowe et al., 2017; Rowe et al., 2018; Rowe, 2017 & 2018) as to the importance to HRD.

Research question: How can HRD support supervisors of leadership degree apprentices to enhance learning transfer in the workplace?

Research methods

A pragmatic approach utilizing sequential mixed methods was used to explore learning transfer across management and leadership programmes within a mixed economy college in the North East of England (case study organisation), as an inside-researcher.   The mixed methods approach had two stages – the first quantitative surveys were issued and the data analysed. Stage two involved focus groups and interviews based on the findings from the quantitative data analysis. Surveys were issued over a 15-month period, followed with qualitative focus groups and interviews as suggested as a valid approach by Holton, et al., (2000). 484 management and professional learners from the case study organisation were included in the quantitative sample with 40% response rate. 49 learners participated in follow-up focus groups and four participated in interviews based on the earlier findings from the quantitative study.

Research findings or argument

Using Bates and Coyne (2005) scaled arithmetic mean and editing this for a 4-point rather than 5-point scale, produced the following categories:

<2   Severe barrier to learning transfer

2.1 -2.8   Barrier to learning transfer

2.9-3.2   Weak catalyst for transfer needing improvement

>3.2   Catalyst for learning transfer

Supervisor support had a mean score of 2.39 and was the lowest from all questions asked indicating a barrier to learning transfer (Hall et al., 2018; Tonhauser & Burke, 2016). 13% of learners identified that they had planned to meet with their supervisor, (Lim & Johnson, 2002). At the start of the programme 75% of learners confirmed they had mentor support, however when this question was asked at the end of the programme only 35% confirmed that they had received support from the mentor which is a drop of 50% which is worrying and could have negatively contributed to unsuccessful learning transfer (Blume et al., 2010, Burke & Hutchins, 2007). Sørensen (2017) identified that without supervisor support learning transfer would be minimal and the findings from this study confirm this.

A recommendation would be to develop the capability of supervisors and peers to provide an integrated approach to support the leadership apprentice through ongoing executive coaching and feedback to enhance learning transfer.

Practical importance and implications of research

The study offers evidence that supports arguments from Holton et al., (2000) learning transfer model and identifies that if supervisor support is missing or weak then learning transfer will not take place. The importance of developing supervisors within the workplace who can provide the support, coaching and feedback enables the leadership apprentice to develop and perform effectively in the workplace is of importance to HRD due to the vast expense spent on leadership development. Understanding how supervisor support can improve learning transfer and development of leadership skills and behaviours in the workplace is significant to the design and development of leadership programmes and this research provides practical solutions for employers. By involving HRD and supervisors' in the design and development of programme activities facilitates positive support to the apprentice through the development of a transfer design toolkit. In addition, understanding how supervisor sanctions can be incorporated into the tripartite learning agreement provides HRD with better understanding of how to manage these programmes in the workplace. Developing the capability and knowledge of supervisors to understand the leadership apprenticeship will enable more guided support to transfer learning. By involving supervisors before the start of the programme and encouraging them to set goals aligned to organisational objective to provide more coherent strategy of learning would enhance learning transfer in the workplace.

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"Ownership gets you up in the morning, but keeps you awake at night": Early Career Professionals Development of Psychological Ownership

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Overview

This paper examines the development of job-related psychological ownership (PO) in individuals at the start of their career. In the same way that we can develop feelings for our possessions, we can also foster similar feelings to workplace targets such as our job roles or the organisation itself which results in feelings of "mine" (Pierce et al 2001).

This study concentrates on the development of PO in early career professionals, a currently neglected area of PO research. We provide further clarification of the PO process and highlight the positive and negative implications for those new to the workplace.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Psychological Ownership (PO) is a complex, multi-facetted phenomenon with cognitive and emotional elements eliciting a desire to possess tangible and intangible targets in individuals (Pierce et al 2003). Since the early 2000's this concept has become increasingly popular due to its association with a range of organisational and individual benefits including job satisfaction, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour and organisational based self-esteem (Van Dyne et al 2004; Mayhew et al 2007; Bernhard and O'Driscoll 2011; Liu et al 2012; Knapp et al 2014; Song et al 2014).

There are three suggested routes to job-related PO; control, opportunities to invest self and intimate knowledge of the job role (Pierce 2003). Certainly, the latter two routes suggest an investment of time is required to be able to experience PO, yet no research studies have been undertaken to clarify time periods or other factors which facilitate this process.

Therefore, this research concentrates on early career professionals who in this instance are participating in a work placement. Work placements are often considered to be early career talent pipelines providing organisations with an opportunity to find future talent and individuals the chance to see how "work works". By choosing this population sample, we were able to consider:

- To what extent individuals at the organisational entry/initiation period of their working life able to feel psychological ownership toward their job role?

- What influences the development of job-related psychological ownership in these individuals?

- What do individuals and managers perceive to be the potential outcomes for individuals and organisations?

Research methods

This study was undertaken over a two-year period (prior to Covid-19) using a qualitative approach. Surveys have been the dominant method in PO research and thus we are missing the rich, detailed lived experience of such a complex construct. To provide some methodological diversity, 26 semi structured interviews were undertaken with a variety of individuals connected to work placements. These included 20 business and marketing students undertaking a compulsory work placement; 3 employers who managed work placement students and 3 Placement Development Advisors who are university representatives supporting students during their work placement.

Interviews explored the onboarding processes, "learning the ropes" of a new role and investigating new employee's skill
development, challenges, and organisational contribution. Questions also focussed on the mechanisms of psychological ownership development and possible

implications. All interviews were conducted by a sole investigator who undertook a thematic analysis of the transcribed data (Braun & Clarke 2019).

Research findings or argument

Most participants developed job related PO within 3-6 months of joining their organisations, although for some ownership was instantaneous, whilst for others there was only partial development. Ownership was often developed via building blocks of tasks providing individual control and opportunities to invest self in their job-role. Three key organisational factors influenced rapid job-related PO, Organisational culture, the line manager and trust. Ownership development was most effective when "given" by the line manager to the new employee:

"A lot of trust in me, yes…She slowly started testing me…she started showing me signs that she wanted to push me to the point that I feel comfortable in just going to her and saying, I would like to do this."
(Participant 11)

For those participants who looked for placements with high levels of responsibility, they often found themselves in cultures where ownership was immediately expected. One participant discussed how in week two he was expected to lead on markets and strategy whilst his line manager was on holiday. When he asked for support, they suggested a preference to jump in, learn the hard way to get the most benefit.

Participants suggested that ownership can be a "win-win" for stakeholders with individuals providing a greater contribution to the business. Individuals showed greater signs of jobs satisfaction and organisational commitment feeling they had left a legacy.

However, those individuals who developed high levels of job-related PO undertook too high a workload causing some stress with the potential for burnout.

Practical importance and implications of research

This research helps to understand the way in which ownership feelings can be developed in early career professionals. "Giving" ownership requires an organisational culture which facilitates personal responsibility in its staff members and provides early career professionals with a building block approach to PO development. By line managers giving early ownership opportunities via small tasks, individuals felt supported and trusted developing responsibility for their job role more quickly.

Individual benefits include feeling productive, happy, and fulfilled, whilst the organisation benefitted from proactive workers who were actively looking to make improvements. Nevertheless, for those individuals with very high levels of ownership there can be a tendency to undertake too much work and feel weighed

down by responsibility. Fear of disappointing line managers could result in internalising stress and eventual burnout.

Practical steps for organisations wishing to develop ownership feelings in early career professionals:

- Embed ownership within company values and reiterate via appraisals and personal development meetings.

- Appropriate selection of line managers for early career professionals who show great trust and develop confidence. Coaching, democratic and pacesetting leadership styles may be most suitable.

 Be aware of those individuals who say yes to everything. Those who show the greatest ownership, may also feel the greatest stress.

To sum up PO's impact:

"Ownership means that you work hard, are organised, are driven, that you care and perform. I think it helps you to get up in the morning, but at the same time, you might not be able to sleep at
night."
  (Participant 15)

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Poster Presentations

Iron fists in velvet gloves: Exploring female educational leaders' experiences in Higher Education in the UK

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Overview

This multiple case study explored 40 female educational leaders' current experiences in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) to unravel both barriers and facilitators using semi-structured interviews and opportunity and snowball sampling. It revealed that they still face sex-related barriers but have more support as more women have entered HEI. Despite limitations, the study highlights the facilitators of female educational leaders' advancement and indicates that the redefinition of capabilities of successful leaders and modern trends such as reverse mentoring and gender-neutral recruitment may assist to eliminate gender bias and highlight attractive traits that female educational leaders bring to the table.

Research focus, rationale and questions

As Gouthro et al. (2018) observe, the literature on learning organizations, which claim emancipatory promises in principle, ignore issues of gender which, in practice, are a distinctive and defining feature of our workplace contexts. Female leaders face multiple barriers in their effort to reach senior leadership positions in HEI and their challenges have been vividly portrayed by various researchers (Nguyen, 2013).

Gendered institutional cultures, formal and informal gendered practices, and caring responsibilities are only some of the obstacles that they may face (Rudman et al., 2012). Major facilitators for female leaders are the provision of flexible work, mentoring/coaching schemes and equality training (Hannum et al., 2015; Equality Challenge Unit, 2017).

The current article addresses a 'gap' in the literature on female educational leadership in HEI in the UK (Gedro et al., 2020). As there is not sufficient research on this issue in the UK (Macfarlane and Burg, 2019), it was deemed as necessary to have this exploratory study in the current context. Only 22% of female academic staff, who comprise 45% of academic staff in Higher Educational Institutions (HEI), become senior educational leaders although most Higher Education (HE) students (56%) and staff (54%) are currently women (ECU, 2017). HEI are facing significant challenges requiring traditional leadership to be rethought and renewed. Only then can HEI move forward and attain sustainable aims and guide the societies they live in into becoming more equitable and fairer (Kioupi and Voulvoulis, 2020). The current study aims to answer the following research questions:

- Which are the main guiding principles of female educational leaders in HEI?

- What are the barriers and facilitators that female educational leaders face in their careers?

Research methods

The current study used an exploratory multiple case study qualitative approach to explore forty female educational leaders' experiences of leadership in HEI at four HEI in London, UK (Gustafsson, 2017). The study used a qualitative semi-structured interviewing data collection method which is more suitable for exploratory studies that implement interpretive philosophy (Saunders, 2016). Using opportunity and snowball sampling processes due to time, money, and access limitations (Patton, 2002), forty women participated in this study. Although case studies are not credible, undoubtedly carry interviewer and participant bias (Punch, 2013) and have low reliability, validity, and replicability (Cohen et al., 2013), this study showed meticulousness and precision but admitting that its research findings will probably not be generalizable. Participants had to sign an informed consent form and their anonymity was guaranteed. All interviews were recorded, data was analysed using thematic analysis and the coding followed loosely grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

Research findings or argument

The female educational leaders of this study depicted their passion for inclusivity and ethical leadership and stressed their reliance on collaboration, compassion, and authenticity as their guiding principles. They also expressed their strong belief in transparency as they tried to be open to their followers.

They relied on their family and a trusted circle of friends, and were facilitated by collaborative female and male colleagues, short-term mentoring, informal coaching and working part-time when they had caring responsibilities. However, these

responsibilities, the sexist environment and the lack of long-term mentoring and formal coaching were some of the barriers they faced. Female leaders clearly indicated ways in which organizational systems, habits and beliefs treated women unfairly while they tried to progress in their careers, e.g., unfair practices on women coming back from leave and prejudice against female employees in selection and advancement by favoring 'people like us' (Pollack, 2015).

They also had to undertake 'academic housework' and complained about their work/life balance and the so-called 'boys' club' which posed barriers in their progression to senior leadership. Female leaders in our study were inclusive towards their staff as they provided coaching and mentoring and showed respect and discretion. They were fair and transparent to their followers giving them credit and encouraging them to get promotions. Finally, they felt uncomfortable about getting feedback and opted for constructive criticism instead.

Practical importance and implications of research

Research implications:

Future research needs to be planned in more HEI, involving more stakeholders from wider HEI contexts. It would be worthwhile to compare the facilitators and the challenges of female educational leaders in the UK with those in other European countries. The similarities and differences in female academic leaders from such comparative studies would advise universities on ways to better empower and advance female educational leaders. Such specific knowledge is very important in building gender equity in these contexts.

Implications for practice:

Female educational leaders face a lot of challenges at HEI, but there are ways in which HR departments can support them. Explicit, clear hiring and advancement criteria can assist to eliminate the impact of the 'old boys' networks. To address gender prejudice in manager's assessments, managers and administrators who participate in the hiring, selection, and advancement processes of HEI should be trained (Smith, 2020). To change this status quo, HR managers with similar problems could use policy measures, e.g., gender-neutral recruitment, transparent gender practices and selection processes and preferential treatment of women.

Sponsoring, coaching and reverse mentoring could also help senior male or female leaders get to know these young, talented colleagues and hopefully take their perspectives on issues affecting HEI specifically and the society at large into consideration (Ibarra et al., 2013; Morris, 2017).

Finally, HEI HR departments should promote awareness of gender equity, assistance for women's network, implementation of a gender equality policy and gender mainstreaming to inspire, attract, and retain female educational leaders to challenge the male-dominated status quo and stimulate cultural change.

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How does Universal Credit impact on the way employers recruit, retain and progress their staff?

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Overview

Universal Credit and Employers: exploring the demand side of UK active labour market policy is an ESRC-funded project. It focuses on employer perspectives of the conditions and support that underpins Universal Credit for unemployed people and workers on a low income. The research will explore how ALMP is understood and experienced by UK employers, how it impacts on how businesses are run, and how employment services can work more effectively with employers, leading to better outcomes for individuals and the wider economy. A poster will outline the focus of the project and how HR practitioners can get involved.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Active labour market policies (ALMPs) are government interventions traditionally focused on moving unemployed people into work. As those ultimately in control of the employment opportunities participants are seeking to access, employers are fundamental to ALMP outcomes. However, research and policy relating to ALMP has tended to ignore employers.

The UK's main vehicle for ALMP, and flagship policy of recent welfare reforms is Universal Credit (UC). UC is the new working age benefit for those who are either out of work or on a low income (DWP, 2010). Under UC, social security for unemployed people is conditional on claimants demonstrating work search and other work-related activities. This is underpinned by a 'Work First' approach, emphasising high volumes of applications and fast work re-entry. It also potentially involves the extension of conditionality to those in work, blurring the traditional distinction between social security claimants who are in and outside of the paid labour market (Dwyer and Wright, 2014).

The project is underpinned by four research questions:

RQ1) How is UK Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) understood and experienced by employers?

RQ2) How does ALMP impact on UK businesses, including how they recruit, retain and progress their staff?

RQ3) How does the impact of ALMP on employers vary in different low pay sectors?

RQ4) How can the public employment service work effectively with employers, and lead to better outcomes for individuals and the wider economy?

Research methods

This is a qualitative research project, based on semi-structured interviews with three key groups:

1. 80 employers (with a focus on those in social care, hospitality and retail)

2. 20 local stakeholders (Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire)

3. 20 national policy stakeholders

Research findings or argument

See Poster Presentation

Practical importance and implications of research

This research has been designed to have clear benefits for multiple stakeholders: policymakers 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 which 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 which 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.

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Do codes of conduct improve the health and safety of workers in the Bangladeshi garment industry?

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Overview

Bangladesh is a world leading garment exporter, employing millions across thousands of factories. However, factory workers are found to be employed under

highly exploitative working conditions. The occupational health and safety is poor, particularly in lower-tier factories. Eventually, global attention and negative publicity to a series of fatal accidents pressurized foreign buyers to take corrective action. They responded by requiring suppliers to adopt codes of conduct. This study finds that codes have improved fire and building safety. Yet, health problems and chronic illnesses are prevalent among garment workers due to a lack of codes covering hygiene, ergonomics and occupational hazards.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Existing research has confirmed that government action is ineffective in addressing the regulation of health and safety in supplier factories. Unfortunately, public health regulations are not enacted vigorously and factory cooperation is low. Moreover, codes of conduct do not address all aspects of health and safety and there is an intensive debate about their effectiveness. Existing literature does not highlight why codes are successful in only enhancing select aspects of health and safety. Another under-researched area is that previous studies on governance of labour have focused on lead firm initiatives and the implications for health and safety. Scholars agree that more research is necessary to uncover exactly which governance mechanisms in the garment global production network (GPN) are predominant in explicitly attending to the health and safety of workers. The role of codes in shaping health and safety deserves further academic attention. A comprehensive analysis of the conditions under which health and safety is advanced for both male and female workers is also largely missing from GPN literature. In seeking to contribute to this gap, this study aims to examine the role of private codes in promoting or constraining the health and safety of workers in the garment GPN. The main research question is: To what extent do codes of conduct improve the health and safety of workers in the Bangladeshi garment industry? To address this research question, this study draws upon the GPN and private governance conceptual frameworks to analyse the empirical case of the garment industry in Bangladesh.

Research methods

The study is based on an interpretivist epistemology and constructivist ontology. The study uses a qualitative research strategy and exploratory multiple case study research design. This allows proximity to reality and intensive observation while enabling participants to give rich interpretations of health and safety conditions. The study entails purposive sampling. Primary data is collected using semi-structured and in-depth interviews of male and female shop floor workers and key informant interviews with line supervisors. Template analysis will provide the framework for data analysis. Participant responses are audio-recorded, translated, transcribed and coded for emergent themes, followed by a comprehensive analysis.

Research findings or argument

Preliminary findings show that codes of conduct emphasize factory and building safety while ignoring worker health. Participant responses reflect the progress made by the Accord and other codes in reducing fatal accidents following the proliferation of codes since the Rana Plaza collapse. However, codes have made minimal

progress in addressing workplace safety training, protective gear, needle wounds, pure drinking water, hygiene, adequate breaks, on-site medical facilities, physical stress, ergonomics, occupational hazards, illnesses and pregnancy. Moreover, workers do not have knowledge of codes because of limited access to information. Workers do not report safety violations and health problems because they are not aware of their rights. The findings corroborate existing literature as participants are unaware of any national health policy or code. A key argument based on expected results is that codes have improved structural violations, but worker health is ignored. Hence, a broader conceptualization of the congruence between private governance and the scope of state regulation in shaping the health and safety of workers in supplier factories is required.

Practical importance and implications of research

The realities in developing countries are beyond the reach of many Western scholars and this study will make a valuable contribution in broadening the GPN analytical approach. The findings and recommendations from the study will directly benefit Bangladesh. The findings from the study will also encourage adoption of better labour practices and health and safety in other major Asian garment exporters like China, India, Vietnam, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Overall, the policy implications of this study will inform both public interventions and lead firm initiatives to address the inherent challenges faced by suppliers in improving health and safety in the garment GPN.

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The impact of social support and technology on the well-being of employees in Bangladesh and Vietnam during the pandemic

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Overview

This study investigated impact of social support and technology on service sector employees' well-being during pandemic in Bangladesh and Vietnam. Qualitative interviews of married and single employees of both genders revealed men were stressed mostly by miscommunication in virtual meetings while constant fear of family getting virus-infected distressed women. Maintaining work-life balance was the main challenge for married women but married men stressed over job security. Overall, remote working induced stress among employees of both countries with increased working hours and poor workplace communication. Findings advocate substantial social/organisational support and balanced use of technology to strengthen employee well-being during pandemic.

Research focus, rationale and questions

This study explores the impact of social support and technology on the well-being of employees in Bangladesh and Vietnam during the pandemic.

- Since the Covid-19 pandemic started, governments & organisations have implemented new workplace measures including remote working, which have brought significant changes influencing employees' working conditions & personal lives *(Richter, 2020; Spurk & Straub, 2020).*

- This paper used the Job-Demand Resource *(Bakker & Demerouti, 2007)* and Conservation of Resource Theory *(Hobfoll, 1989)* to understand the impact of social support and technology on employees' well-being.

- The main question is : How did technology and social support influence the well being of employees in Vietnam and Bangladesh during the pandemic?

- This research makes a significant contribution by being the first qualitative and cross-cultural study examining the impact of social support and technology on employee well-being in two countries in South and Southeast Asia during the pandemic.

- While the majority of existing studies on employee well-being and social support during the pandemic (e.g. *Allan et al. 2020; Jecker et al. 2020*) have

focused on health care and other frontline workers, this study focuses on employees from various service industries.

- We contribute to fill another important gap in the work-family literature by considering married and single employees from both gender.

Research methods

- Qualitative method, analyses using thematic analysis

- 20 semi-structured interviews from each country

- Face-to-face, video call, and telephone interviews

- Interviews were recorded, transcribed and anonymised

- **Sample:**
    - Age range: 22-40.
    - Industries: Banking, Consulting, Telecommunication
    - Vietnam:
        - 55% Female, 45% Male
        - 90% Single ,10% Married
    - Bangladesh:
        - 60% Female 40% Male and 45% Single , 55% Married

Research findings or argument

- **Similarities:** Across nationalities, gender and marital status:
    - Stress from poor communication & management.
    - Technology's negative impact on health.
    - Overworking due to increased working hours, impacting on both work & family responsibilities.
    - Organisational & social support are crucial in mitigating stress and in improving well-being.

- **Differences**
    - ***Between nationalities:***
        - Vietnam: Companies were more flexible thus adapted more quickly to remote working.
        - Bangladesh: Companies needed more resources to invest in suitable technology to switch to remote working.
    - ***Between gender:***

- Men were more likely to express negative emotions than women in virtual team meetings.

- Fear of family members falling sick led to more stress in female participants than their male counterparts.

  o ***Between marital status:***

- Male married participants felt more pressure from job insecurity.

- Female married participants had more difficulty balancing work-family responsibilities.

- Single participants were more prone to feeling lonely and disconnected.

Practical importance and implications of research

- Give employees more autonomy and less control from managers.

- Clear boundary setting between work and non-work hours in order not to overload and overwhelm employees.

- Ensure balanced use of communication technology.

- Provide managers with better training on remote working technology and on leadership and interpersonal skills.

- Provide counselling for employers & employees to manage their emotions.

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Human Rights and Human Resource Management theory and practice: Future Risks and Opportunities

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Overview

This research examines the relationship between human rights and HRM theory and practice in the UK. Applying a multimethod and interdisciplinary research strategy, the growing significance of the legal mechanisms offered by the Human Rights Act 1998 is examined and the perceptions and experiences of HR professionals in understanding and applying human rights in the workplace is explored. A consideration of human rights in the workplace is pertinent in light of the changing nature of work, as well as recent developments including the impact on workers' rights following Brexit, with the European Charter of Fundamental Rights no longer applicable, and government initiated Independent Human Rights Act Review (IHRAR) launched in January 2021.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Human rights established in international treaties and provided by national laws are rooted in the universality of protection and grounded in principles of fairness. In the UK the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) enables certain human rights (Convention Rights) to be protected by the law. The Convention rights offer rights to workers and public authority employers act unlawfully if they do not comply. Workers are unable to make a direct human rights claim against non-public employers, but human rights can influence the hearing of all employment cases because of judicial duties requiring the interpretation of statutory employment rights and development of case law in accordance with the Convention rights.

Previous research examining the impact of Human Right Due Diligence (HRDD) reveals the important role the human resource function plays in human rights impact identification in companies where human rights are only considered as part of labour rights or health and safety or indirectly through other due diligence processes. The same research reveals this approach to HRDD means broader human rights impacts are significantly less likely to be identified (McCorquodale, et al, 2017). This research seeks to examine the meaning, perceptions and experiences of human rights within the HR profession and how it impacts HR strategy and practice. The aim is to support theoretical and professional development in terms of how human rights can become embedded within the profession to support the development of sustainable HRM and responsible business practices for workers throughout globalised organisations.

Research methods

The research project adopts an interdisciplinary and multi-method approach. Firstly, a review of recent case law is being conducted which demonstrates opportunities for the advancement of human rights claims with courts and tribunals interpreting employment legislation to comply with Convention rights. For example, the Supreme Court judgment in Gilham v Ministry of Justice which employed Convention rights to extend statutory whistleblowing protection is explored and Mercer v Alternative Future Group Limited in 2021 where the Employment Appeal Tribunal accepted the reading of a statute to protect striking workers and allow claims over suspension and discipline for industrial action.

The research project will also conduct twenty-five semi-structured interviews with HR Managers in the UK. HR Managers were selected as typically they are exposed to both strategic and operationally focused people issues within organizations. A thematic analysis will be conducted to explore their perceptions and experiences of the human rights legislation and philosophy within their practice application.

Research findings or argument

This research project is at the emergent stage with the literature review and legal analysis currently being undertaken and the research interviews being planned and conducted. Emergent findings from the analysis of recent case law reveals the potential for the area vacated by EU law as a means to assist worker claims domestically. The HRA has the potential to advance human right claims as an alternative and develop universality of human rights in the workplace. The key provisions of the Act provide mechanisms for the enforcement of Convention rights that cover a wide range of human rights written in the language of 'everyone' which rejects differentiation on grounds of worker status. These are significant findings given the growth and prominence of the gig economy. The emergent findings also support a key aim of the research which seeks to demonstrate how with human rights increasingly being advanced, courts and tribunals are using human rights to solve employment issues and extend employment protection against public employers, but also through horizontal effect allow the claims of workers against private companies.

Another key argument emerging from the research findings is a need to rebalance a current emphasis in the guidance literature on HRDD in the workplace that focuses on international human rights protections as set out in documents such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) and International Labour Organisation's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (ILO). Whilst important guiding principles this research highlights the importance of domestic human rights law and that more awareness in the HR profession is required relating to the potential opportunities and risks afforded by this.

Practical importance and implications of research

There are a number of practical contributions for HR practice from the proposed research. To date there is an over emphasis in the guidance for workplace HRDD on the non-mandatory United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and its recognition in Principle 12 of the international rights derived from the UDHR and the ILO as a minimum. Although important, this focus on the voluntary UN Guiding Principles risks a lack of engagement with the legal liability and legal requirements of domestic human rights law, as well as a failure to consider national human rights impacts. This research seeks to redress this imbalance by highlighting the current role of the HRA in employment tribunal and higher court decisions on employment rights and identifies areas of risks and opportunities for organisations providing universal human rights protections.

Through an in-depth examination of human rights perceptions and experiences amongst HR professionals the research makes a practical contribution for how

human rights can be embedded in professional development within the profession, both via curricular and non-curricular development. The research also supports the development of a holistic approach to human rights within the profession which recognises the importance of health and safety and labour rights protections but also a practical approach for embedding broader HRDD into HR strategy and practice for more sustainable outcomes.

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Workplace Conflict and Resolution during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Overview

ACAS (2021) revealed the yearly financial costs of workplace conflict to UK businesses as approximately £28.5 billion. This figure represents lost productivity and abstraction costs of organisational actors drawn into often lengthy and costly grievance and disciplinary procedures. In addition to the high financial cost the cultural impact and individual damage to wellbeing means workplace conflict remains a significant challenge for organisations. Following the last global crisis, we witnessed a rise in punitive grievance and disciplinary processes. This research seeks to examine if the current crisis will afford opportunities for more restorative and innovative strategies for managing workplace conflict.

Research focus, rationale and questions

Workplace conflict can be problematic to define and resolve due to its multiple and often insidious form. As collective representation has declined in UK organisations incidences of strike action as a means of articulating conflict has also declined. Despite this conflict is still prevalent in many organisations. ACAS in 2021 revealed the significant financial costs associated with the management of conflict.

They estimate the costs to be approximately £28.5 billion and that 485,000 employees leave organisations each year due to workplace conflict. After the last global crisis in 2008 incidents of punitive grievance and disciplinary actions increased. This research seeks to explore how workplace conflict and approaches for resolving conflict management strategies has changed since early 2020. A key aim of the study is to examine if the current crisis will provide an opportunity for more innovative and strategic approaches to addressing workplace conflict which have been called for by ACAS (2019) and the CIPD (2020).

The research is being conducted with HR leads for the management of conflict and trade union representatives in UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The research addresses calls from more contextually rich experiences of managing conflict to provide deep insights into the realities of conflict management. As a quasi-public and unionised environment this locality is conducive to the study of workplace conflict as a range of organisational actors are involved in the management of conflict and their different perspectives and experiences can reveal a more holistic understanding of the issues.

Research methods

This study seeks to understand workplace conflict in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The research adopts a qualitative methodology and examines in-depth the perceptions and experiences of workplace conflict and resolution with HR managers and trade union representatives in HEIs through semi-structured interviews. The interviews are being conducted online and last between 45-60 minutes. Approximately 20 interviews with both HR managers and trade union representatives are being conducted. The interviews are being transcribed and a thematic analysis will be conducted to identity the key themes emerging across the sample in relation to how workplace conflict and resolution had changed or been impacted since early 2020. At each stage of the research analysis process participants and their organisations are fully anonymised and all research data is stored securely and in a confidential manner.

Research findings or argument

Whilst this research is still at an early stage some interesting research findings are emerging. A key theme emerging is that adversarial and low trust environments will make the introduction of new and more restorative workplace conflict resolution processes problematic. For workplace conflict management strategies to change, wider culture change, which prioritises open dialogue and constructive challenge will be required.

Another emergent finding is that some of the changes associated with the resolution of conflict are also being tied to individual wellbeing strategies, due to the significant stress that it can place on individuals. This raises questions relating to the purpose of wellbeing strategies and if organisations are tackling the root causes of conflict or are simply trying to provide remedies once it has occurred.

Workplace conflict has been identified as the dominant HR operational issue and there is a disconnect between this and the strategic ambitions of the profession

(Roper and Higgins, 2020). The emergent findings and key arguments made from this research seek to readdress this imbalance by providing insights for how more holistic and strategic approaches for conflict resolution can be identified that take in the perspective of organisational actors tasked with resolving conflict.

Practical importance and implications of research

There are a number of practice benefits and implications for workplace conflict and resolution strategies. The research will provide practice insights for how conflict can be managed during periods of change and crisis. To date workplace conflict has received less attention in return to work policies and organisational crisis management strategies for dealing with the pandemic. This research will address this practice gap.

Given it has been undertaken during the pandemic and the large increase in online and home working, the study will also provide practical ways in which conflict can be managed in enhanced digital and homebased working environments.

The research will also identify ways in which conflict resolution has changed during the pandemic and if opportunities for innovation and a more holistic or strategic approach to conflict has emerged as a result of the crisis. As such the research will provide practical insights for new approaches to conflict resolution and the supporting conditions, risks and opportunities that new approaches afford to organisations and individuals. In particular, the research provides insights for how key organisational actors with a remit for conflict resolution can work together for more effective ways for addressing conflict in organisations. Key barriers and the cultural change required to enable this will be identified, as applied to practice in HE institutions.
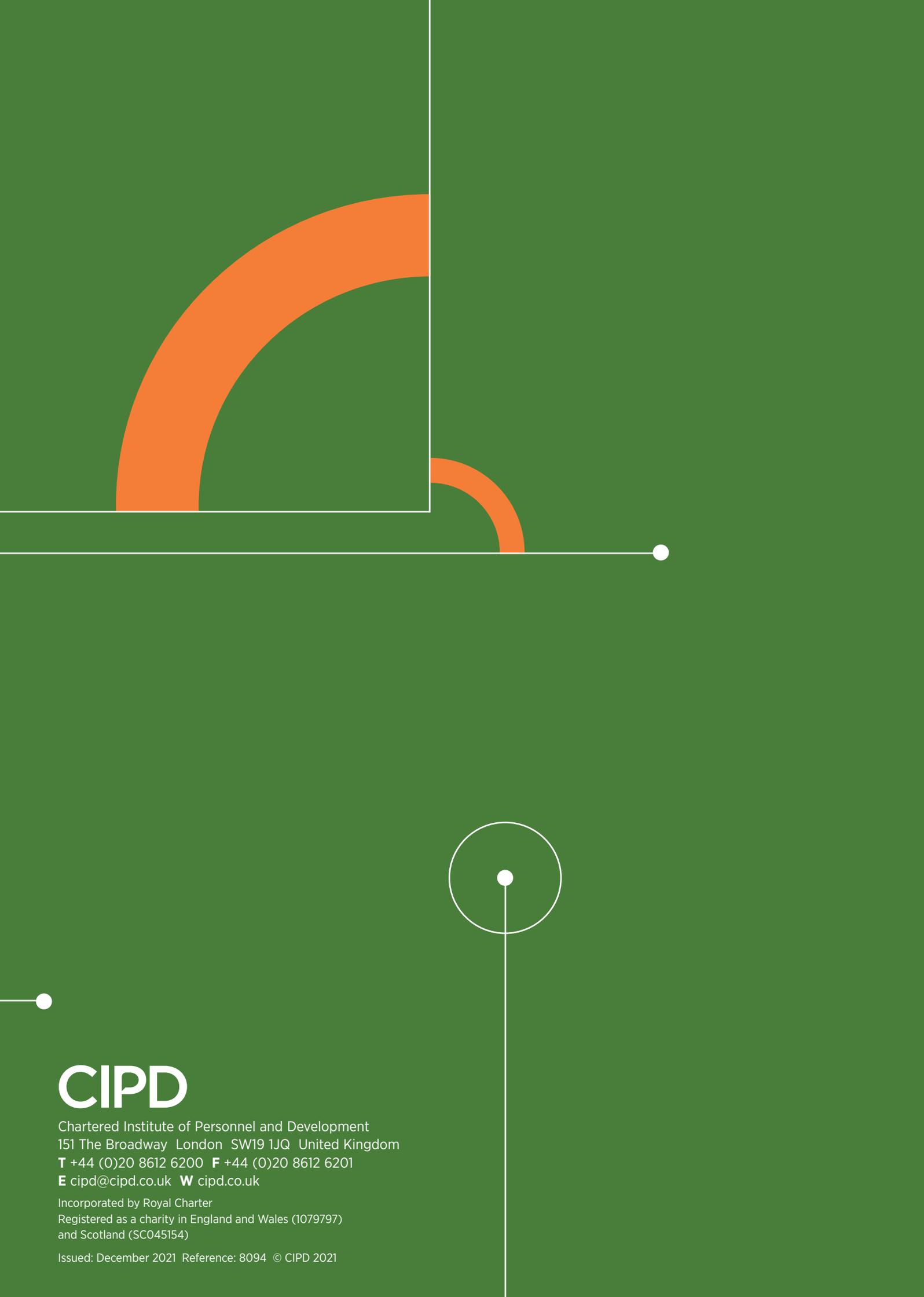
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CIPD