

Black British Psychological Contract

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Abstract

This paper investigates the psychological contract of black British clerical workers in English local authorities. It is argued that each employee upbringings differ from one person to another and from one country to another. Employers often offer the same exchange agreement to each employee regardless of his/her upbringing or desires, thus making it particularly difficult for many black British workers, whose upbringings are poles apart from their white colleagues to have the same psychological contract. For this reasons the black British workers argued they have to continue renegotiating the exchange agreement so as to achieve their desired expectations. This argument leads this paper to explore the factors that helps shape black British psychological contract.

Keywords: Psychological Contract, Black British workers, Local authority, Employee relations, Employer and employee.

1. Introduction

This research focuses on the employee perspective rather than the organization. The term ‘organization’ was used to describe local authorities. According to literature, as UK ethnic minority population increases, managing diversity has been regarded as one of the biggest challenges to English local authorities (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990; Howard, 1995). Therefore, it became essential for management to find new ways of managing and improving their exchange relations, hence the interest in psychological contract. It is argued that race is a key element in interpersonal interaction. In support, Mamman (2002) argued that what matter is not the actual race but the meaning people attach to it. This argument was born from the belief that each employee is different because of their upbringings. This inconsistency among staff members is the reason exchange relations vary from one country to another and from person to person. It is further argued that the character of a national culture on the development of the organization culture appears in many cases to dominate contemporary management practices (Gerhart, 2008; John, 2006; Hofstede, 1980, 2001). In support, Akporherhe (2002) defined culture as the way of life, particularly for black Africans. According to Mamman (1996, 2002) a heterogeneous workforce are influenced by variables such as: culture, race and gender; these characteristics distinguish the employee from other members of the organization, which cannot be easily changed or manipulated. Furthermore, a study by Kickul, Lester and Belgio (2004) revealed that the Hong-Kong Chinese were more concerned about their earning power (because of their primary responsibility to provide for their families and kinship groups) than their ability to achieve career progression. In contrast, USA employees often place greater value on work careers and job progression. These different behavioural patterns and perceptions led this paper to study:

- The nature of the black British psychological contract in the context of English local authorities.
- The sub research question is:
- What are the factors that help shape the black British psychological contract?

For this paper to address these research questions, a qualitative methodology was adopted based on an interview method. In the next segment, this paper explores the earlier development of the psychological contract concept and how it influences the black British psychological contract.

2. *The Psychological Contract.*

For new researchers, defining the psychological contract concept is fundamental. According to Guest (1998a & 1998b), the moment you begin to ask people about the definition of psychological contract, you immediately run into problem. It is not because there is no definition, but rather it is owing to the believe that people perception varies from one person to another (Conway & Briner, 2005) and that influences the way people interpret the exchange agreement, hence the argument that it is impossible for every person to have similar psychological contract. According to literature, psychological contract is defined as a set of individual obligations or expectations unknown to the employer in respect of the exchange agreement between the parties involved (Dadi, 2012). According to Roehling (1997); Morrison and Robinson (1997), the development of the psychological contract concept have been attributed to the earlier researchers like Dr Karl Menninger, Prof Chris Argyris, Dr Harry Levinson, Dr Edgar Schein, Dr John Kotter, and Prof Denise Rousseau.

The criticisms levied against these researchers were that they all seem to limit the psychological contract concept to a relationship between employee and employer (Dadi, 2012). Therefore, the question now is whether the psychological contract exists outside the workplace? We were met to believe that expectations, promises and obligations are factors that help shape the employee's psychological contract (Levinson, et al 1962; Rousseau, 1989, 2003). But it was argued that this may not necessarily be the case for others, because exchange relations is not limited to the employer and employee (Dadi, 2012), but also exist in other exchange relationships such as between doctors and patients, the state and individuals, husbands and wives, teachers and students, football clubs and their players, politicians and voters, lawyers and clients. The criticism is that if we ignore the existence of psychological contract in these areas because of little research interest outside the workplace, then we run the risk of making the psychological contract look vague. In a multicultural society like in England, where you have people from various countries or nations working together, it is argued that their expectations or desires varies from person to person because of their cultural backgrounds and this differences help shape their perception and interpretation of the exchange agreement, which others argued leads to different psychological contract. Furthermore, because of the lack of research interest on the black British employees working in English local authorities, this paper noticed there is a gap in the psychological contract literature. In the next section, this paper intend to draw lights onto the black British worker, the aim at this stage is to define the term 'black British' and explore their growth in English local authorities.

3. *Black British*

According to literature, the term 'black British' has had different meanings, but widely used to describe UK ethnic minority populations with 'African ancestral origins' or African-Caribbean origin (Black British, 2008). But in the 1950s it was completely different as people used the term 'black British' for political motives and racial label (Black British, 2008). The Black British communities exist throughout the UK but they are concentrated largely in London. According to the 2012 Office for National Statistics publication, the population figure of the non-white British population increased from 6.6m in 2001 to 9.1m in 2009, this represents 4.1% a year to 37.4% a year. What this mean is that nearly one in every six people is non-white. It was reported that the mixed-race population has grown from 672,000 in 2001 to 986,600 in 2009; statistically this is an increase of almost 50%. In London where the research was carried out, the mixed race population has reached 4.4%. It is argued that this report shows the British people are becoming less divided ethnically. Statistically, black British people are reported to have a much younger population, which means the black population will continue to increase, even though there is no more black immigration to England (UK Home Office Census (2001)). In the next section, this paper discusses why this study is targeting the black British clerical workers and then explains the rationale for targeting this focus group.

4. *Why focus on 'Black British clerical workers'?*

The primary focus of this research is the employee's thoughts and the factors that help shape the black British clerical workers psychological contract. As departments within local authorities work closely, the black British clerical workers attracted more attention for a number of reasons shown below:

- Literature on the psychological contract has revealed little interest to date about research on black British clerical workers employed in English local authorities.

- There are more black British employees in clerical positions across English local authorities compared with those in managerial positions. Therefore, as this paper targets those in clerical positions, the aim is to maximize quantitatively a wide-ranging perspective of black British workers employed in English local authorities, which the research seeks to attain.
- Managers are seen as the organizational representatives and the research is particularly concerned about the employee's perspectives rather than the organizations.
- It was considered fitting to focus research on the employees at this stage because of the time scale involved in combining the employer and employee perspectives. Therefore, it is hoped that in the future researchers will study black British managers employed in English local authorities.

According to the local government association (LGA), and the National Joint Council (NJC), this paper research focal group (which includes men and women) are white-collar workers or junior administrative/clerical staff members working in the office with no supervision or managerial responsibilities. Their local government position, 'under the single status agreement,' falls within the basic salary range of grade/scale two to five, on a remuneration of £14,622 to £22,692 per annum. It is argued that culture help define the black British way of life. Therefore, in the next section, this paper intends to explore the role of culture on the black British behaviour at work.

5. The Role of Culture on black British Employees

The black British people are best described as people of culture, whose way of life are influenced by traditional beliefs and extended family network. This is supported by Schein (1965) when he affirmed that employees are influenced by culture and past experience. This aligns with Hofstede's (1983, 2001) definition of culture "as being a mental programming from past experience, which distinguishes the members of one group, society or nation from another". Akporherhe (2002) defines culture as the people's way of life, and "the way in which a group of people solve problems and reconcile dilemmas". While Kessapidou and Varsakelis (2002) defined culture as a major determinant of how people think and behave.

Generally culture reflects people's upbringings and distinguishes them from one group to another (Olurode, 1994, 2003; Mamman, 1996). This paper believes this notion applies to the black British workers because of their cultural upbringing. This debate as to whether cultural obligation influences the formation of the black British psychological contract, has brought out the gaps in the psychological contract literature in terms of determining whether the black British psychological contract can be formed only by promises made during the present exchange relations or by factors outside the organization. As people move from one country to another, they live behind loved ones whom they are responsible for their physical wellbeing and finances (Thomas & Ravlin, 2003). Therefore, the question now is whether the employee cultural obligations towards his/her loved ones, could impact the formation of the psychological contract. It is argued that this could be problematic as some researchers had painted cultural obligations as being outside the psychological contract concept.

In contrast, there are others who described cultural obligations as psychological, because it is embedded within the mind of the employee, which they carry from one organization to another. It is important there is a balance between individual employee needs originating from cultural obligations and the exchange agreement between the employer and employee. This is supported by Kotter (1973) matching expectations, as he argued that employee must match his/her traditional obligations and their organizational obligations so as to enable the psychological contract to continue. One of the important characteristics of black British culture is the association to an extended family structure. This paper interest on extended family grew out of personal observations on individual behaviour particularly between the old and young employees. Black extended family is defined: 'As a multigenerational, interdependent kinship system which is welded together by a sense of obligation to relatives and it extends across geographical boundaries to connect family units to an extended family network (Martin, 1980). African people attach greater importance to the extended family system in which husband and wife, children, grandchildren, cousins, uncles and nieces plus other relatives form a social network of relationships that is based on communal dependence (Martin, 1980; Fisher, 1982).

This paper affirms that when participants talk about extended family they are referring to their cultural obligations and that the obligations are mental programs from their past experience, as supported by Hofstede (1983).

These obligations are embedded within the participant and so they are psychological. About 70% of the black British workers indicated that they benefited from the extended family association and as such had a duty to reciprocate that care to other members of the extended family. In contrast, if you do not feel obliged to care for your extended family, you might argue this is someone offering a favour? A Westerner would be right to think in that mindset, since individuals in Europe get paid unemployment benefits when they become unemployed, but not in Africa, where an individual's well-being depends on his/her extended family handouts. From the black British workers' perspectives this is a cultural obligation. Therefore, it can be argued that the extended family structure is a major factor that helps shape the black British psychological contract. In an extended family structure, the old, retired members, sick, orphaned, or frail are all assured of long-term care, even till death (Shimkin, 1978; Fisher, 1982; Berger, 2007). In contrast, others argued particularly younger people growing up in England, that the concept of extended family is really not necessary in Western society, where there are sufficient provisions in place to take care of individual needs when he/she retired. The black British workers, especially the old generation, are particularly concerned about long-term job security because of family commitment. In contrast, this is not the case with young people, as they are mostly concern with career, buying a car and house. In the next segment, this paper intends to explore the influence of intergenerational issues on the black British communities.

6. *The intergenerational issues on the black communities*

In this section the aim is to investigate the effect intergenerational issues have on the black British communities, particularly among the young and older black people, and its effects on their psychological contract.

Intergenerational issues reflects the variations in cultures (Walker & Myrick, 2006; Kaplan, Henkin & Atsuko, 2002a), and cut across all ethnic groups and community in the UK (Lowe, 2002; Lowenstein & Antonucci, 2003). Generational groups are people who are usually of similar ages, while the term intergenerational relations refer to the interactions between various generational groups e.g. the young and older people (Pain, 2005). Older people are people over the age of 60, while young people are people under 25 years (Kerns, 2003). Intergenerational relations are part of social identity such as race, faith, gender, disability and age (Edmunds & Turner, 2002). According to Biggs (1993), Featherstone and Wernick (1995), when there are incidents like rioting and murder in a community, government tends to dialogue and remain dependent on information from older people. In contrast, it is argue that this is not always the case, as the government often advise everyone, including young and older people to provide information about crime in their local areas. On the other hand, young people argued that the older community leaders do not represent their views (Jan-Khan, 2003). To a certain extent young people believe their views are contemporary and different from older people. While older people are concerned about murder and accident, young people on the other hand are much concerned about education and careers (Pain, 2005). These different views among the young and older people affect their psychological contract. Generally, obtaining the views of the various generation groups helpsto reveal the different expectations individual employees bring to the organization and how it helps to shape the black British psychological contract. Therefore, in the next section, this paper explores the factors helping to shape the black British psychological contract.

7. *The factors helping to shape the black British psychological contract*

People decide to work for various reasons, but for some it is to fulfil their obligations towards paying the mortgage, rent and accomplishing career. On the other hand, it is argued that working is about taking responsibility over one's own life and not really to fulfil your emotional obligation. The outcomes of this research revealed five distinct features exhibited as being the primary factors that helps shape the black British psychological contract. These features discussed below includes: change of perceptions, individual beliefs, feeling valued, team support, and age gap.

Change of perceptions

To have a change of perception is for things to turn out the way you did not expect or what you thought might be ... but did not materialize as you expected it, and as a result your perception about the organization has changed. It was not a surprise to discover that most participants had changed their perception once they started working. For most employees the surprise they meet on their first day at work is to discover that the workforce is culturally diverse.

In contrast, others might find it interesting and a good experience, being that the UK is a multi-cultural society. Because of their differences, each employee would have to renegotiate the terms and conditions of their exchange agreement if they want to fulfil their expectations. Hence Schein (1965) advocated that the psychological contract is continuously in operation and constantly being renegotiated.

Most participants suggested that their change of perception was influenced by outside factors such as the way friends think highly of them. Other participants felt disappointed as they did not imagine employees would be more concerned about meeting their daily work targets than building better exchange relations with other colleagues. Overall, majority of the participants had a change of perceptions, but 70% agreed that the changes were for the better as they helped shape and enhance their psychological contract.

Individual Belief

When participants talked about beliefs they were referring to their upbringing and cultural background. The view that each employee comes to the organization with their own beliefs is supported by Olurode (1994) when he indicated that beliefs vary from one person to another. It is this dissimilarity in beliefs that lead employees to produce different psychological contracts. This paper support Jan-Khan's (2003) view that individual behaviour originates from upbringings and background and not necessarily from the present exchange relations as we are led to believe. Upbringing demonstrates how one's beliefs can affect how a person behaves, interacts and responds to issues at work. Based on this evidence it is concluded that employee's beliefs not only affect how he/she relates to his/her work colleagues but can shape their psychological contract.

Feeling Valued

To feel valued means your contribution and hard work have been recognized. In some cases participants would receive gratification for a job well done. About 80% of the participants indicated they are very proud to work in local authorities. When asked why, they indicated that their hard work is continuously acknowledged. It was not a surprise to note at the interviews that there is less social interaction between employees and managers. About 60% of the black British workers indicated that they spent more time at work than they do at home, hence they would find it difficult to work in an office where they could not get on with other staff members. It was found that the exchange relations between black British workers and their managers are more target-driven, hence they rarely go out to eat or drink together after work. Participants felt more valued when they achieved their work targets and improved on their performances, than in having good exchange relations. There seems to be a link between achieving work target and feeling valued. This brings constant worries upon employees to do better if they want to feel valued. This paper supports the view that achieving a work target is linked to feeling valued. Based on this discussion, it is concluded that to feel valued does in fact help shape the black British psychological contract, which is consistent with the views of Lewis, Thornhill and Sounders (2003) when they suggested that employees are happy as long as they are valued.

Team Support

To have team support means to work collectively together as a group in achieving a common goal and objectives. This means covering for absent colleagues even though they did not arrange for someone to cover for them. Employees working in a team regularly get support from other colleagues, may be to answer phones when they are tied up on other duties due to deadline. Having a good team spirit helps foster better exchange relations with other members of the team. Departmental objectives can be accomplished through team effort if members work together as one team. For many employees team bonding is very important as it helps to maintain a good relational contract with colleagues. However, team spirit can be in jeopardy when manager reneges on promises. When that happens, staff members feel let down and disillusioned, and that makes them reduce their contributions. It is concluded that a good team bonding brings satisfaction and makes employees proud of being a member of the team. This helps foster a good relational contract and helps to shape employees' psychological contract.

Age Gap

The intergenerational gap issue draws attention to the differences between the older generation and the younger generation. This research found there are gaps between the young and older generations.

For example, older participants are more family oriented and have the propensity to take care of their extended families in Africa or the Caribbean. In contrast, younger participants are more concerned about seeking to develop their work careers, further education and planning to have a family. It is this gap between the two generations that makes them have different psychological contract.

It was not surprising to find that older generations respond differently to problems at work compared to the younger generation. For the older one it is difficult to adapt to new setting (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984; Mamman, 1996). The rationale is that younger people believe they have many years ahead of them and so they cannot be bothered to continue feeling unhappy and prefer to seek for another job. On the other hand, the older generation blame this type of attitude on the European circulatory system, which they argue is a materialistic generation rather than the one that takes care of their loved ones. The thought of looking for another job when they should be preparing for retirement is a daunting task for the older generation. At an old age, one factor that older people dread is the fear of losing their job, as a result older people are more likely to renegotiate their exchange agreement so as to revitalize the psychological contract. Whereas the younger generation will continue to respond differently to disappointment, but as long as they feel their expectations are being met, that would serve as a moderating factor that helps shape their psychological contract. In the next section, this paper discusses the research method used to address the research questions.

8. Research Method

This research employed the use of qualitative method approach, based on interview method, combined with participant's observation as supported by Hardy and Bryman (2004), Silverman (2004), Creswell (2003). The interviews were conducted over ten weeks, which saw the researcher interviewed 4 pilot participants and 34 core participants, using a semi-structured method. All the interviews conducted were taped, transcribed and analysed one after the other in a manner informed by Glaser and Strauss's concept of grounded theory approach ((Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Crossley & Vulliamy, 1997). The findings that emerged from this study analyses have been deliberated in the discussion section below.

9. Discussion

We have now come to the discussion section of this paper. The task now is to discuss the research findings and to summarize the journey this research has taken. At this stage the findings are now brought together from answering:

The Research Main Questions:

- To explore the nature of the black British psychological contract in the context of English local authorities?

The Sub Research Question is:

- What are the factors that help shape the black British psychological contract?

This section serves the important role of introducing the participants' voices through the various texts and stories collected. To bring this research to life on paper, extracts have been lifted from the word to word comments researchers had with all the interviewees, assembled under common themes. As promised to the interviewees, their anonymity is retained by using only the first four letters of their fore-name. False names might have been used to describe the participants, just as other researchers have done in the past, as supported by Hardy and Bryman (2004), and after concluding all interviews, going through the comments and stories again brings a reminder of their faces. Emerged from this research questions as previously revealed are five most recurring codes that have helped shape the black British clerical workers' psychological contract. These have been discussed below.

Change of perceptions

80% of the participants indicated their perceptions concerning the organization have changed since they started working.

Ewah, a former bank employee, did not know what to expect when she joined her new organization, as she recounts her experience:

Previously I was dealing with technical job in the bank, but my new job in this local authority wasn't demanding, everything you do here has to be allocated to you (Ewah)

Ewah, although pleased with her new task, wasn't expecting how relaxed the staffs were in local authorities. Fola, formerly from the private sector, agrees with Ewah, as both ladies didn't know what to expect when they joined local authorities:

In my previous job, I go home when my company closes at 5.00pm, but in this place I was surprised at the amount of flexibility available compared to my previous job. Over here, I am allowed to go home once I have done my 7 hours. I think it is great; I love it (Fola)

Fola's comment shows a positive outcome due to the flexible working scheme. However, Solt who previously worked as a supervisor in a Plywood company in Liverpool had a different view. In contrast to Ewah's and Fola's accounts, Solt wasn't so content to find out that she has to reapply for every job if she wants to move up the ladder. This is particularly difficult for Solt, because in her previous company, progression came automatically once an employee obtained a diploma. Below Solt narrates her experience:

I was very pleased to get this job after being made redundant. When I joined this local authority, initially I thought promotion must be easy here, but I was mistaken as I discovered after I started work here, that you do not need any qualification to do the kind of work I am doing now, therefore I have to reapply for every new vacancy even though I am over-qualified for the job (Solt)

Solt is not a happy lady from the look of things, but her decision to continue working for this local authority was due to the fact that there are better opportunities, flexibility, and her office is closer to home compared to her previous company. In contrast to Ewah's and Fola's stories, both Solt and Igbi had different viewpoints. Below Igbi, a former air hostess, recounts her experience:

I never knew things were like this when I apply to work here. In my previous job we work as a team. On my arrival here I noticed everyone minds their own business in this place, and very much concern about achieving their daily work targets than entering into a relationship with other colleagues (Igbi)

Other participants expressed the view that their perception was influenced by outside factors. Below are narratives showing how outside factors have helped them shape their psychological contract:

Ussh a senior clerical officer working in local authority. To him the idea of working in a local authority is a status symbol back in his native country in Africa. This job offers me respect within my community, as most people look at me as a breadwinner in my family (Ussh)

Ussh, a former coco farmer, feels very proud working for local authority. In support, Eser narrates below how his continued stay with this local authority has been influenced by his extended family background:

My parents are very poor in Africa and don't get any social security benefits from the government, in fact they depend on me financially to buy food, pay rent etc. And since joining this organization I was surprised to discover that my salary keeps on increasing annually compared to my previous employer where you have to negotiate for any pay-rise that comes your way. For this reason I am pleased to be working here. In fact I needed this type of work that can help me meet my family obligations (Eser)

Individual Beliefs

Participants indicated that their upbringing and cultural background helped shape their beliefs and this belief has helped shape their perceptions. It is for these reasons that individual beliefs vary from one person to another and as a result produce different psychological contracts.

At the interview, Tutu made the following comment:

If people are not different, Britain will not be described as a multicultural society (Tutu)

Tutu's comment describes Britain's multicultural society as a country with people of different beliefs, culture and backgrounds.

During the interviews about 80% of the participants confirmed that the key influence on individual behaviour originated from their upbringing and background, which in turn helped shape their perceptions of the exchange agreement. It was also gathered at the interviews that their beliefs had a lot to do with their way of life, and also on the people they interact with. Participants were asked if their cultural upbringings and background influence the kind of people they make friends with at work. During the interviews Rama narrated her experience below:

A young man named Boji, was working here two years ago. Boji always refuses to go out to the local pub with colleagues. Lots of colleagues including me called him a wimp without knowing his background. Six months later Boji invited everyone to his house for a drink ...

'What are you celebrating?' Kofi asked.

'I was consecrated as a pastor yesterday,' Boji replied.

I couldn't believe Boji kept this from everyone, I thought.

Later we discovered his parents are both senior pastors (Rama)

Rama's story demonstrates how an individual upbringing and background can influence behaviour at work and the kind of people he/she makes friend with. Among the participants interviewed, there was a general consensus which stands to confirm that individual upbringing and background is a moderating factor that helps form their psychological contract.

Feeling Valued

Participants were asked if they felt a sense of pride working there. Do they have black and white friends? If yes, do they drink after work and socialize with their boss? In response participants indicated they feel a sense of pride working in their respective local authorities. 50% indicated they have few white friends, but have a lot of black friends, while about 70% indicated they do not drink after work and rarely socialize with their boss. Below Koro made the following comments:

I wish I have the time to socialize with my boss, but I don't. If I want to develop a good relation with my manager, I have to ensure I meet my daily stats, because if I'm behind in my stats, my manager will definitely tell me off. For me the most important thing is being happy in my job and to feel valued in the team (Koro)

('Stats' are statements of works completed i.e., daily, weekly or monthly).

Koro's comment shows the significance of being happy in his job, as well as showing little concern about relational contract. For him, he did not join local authority to make friends. It is quite obvious that the most important thing for him is to feel valued by other members of the team through hard work and meeting his daily stats; otherwise he feared he ran the risk of being told off or losing his job. In so doing he is able to form a better psychological contract with his manager. In support, Abdu made similar comment when asked the same question:

I am appreciated and I have only been here for few years. I am highly valued and highly depended upon. They don't even want me to go. There are some occasions, say once every three month when I do in fact drink after work and socialize with my boss. I see the reward of what I am doing in the team and I make things happen by achieving above our projected team target (Abdu)

Abdu's comments indicate that participants feel valued through hard working. It is obvious that you will not have good exchange relations with your manager if you have problem meeting your daily targets. Although he does not have drinks with his manager regularly, the most important thing is fulfilling the target the manager has set for him. There was a general consensus among the participants interviewed that one can only form a psychological contract by continuing to meet the departmental target, because the continue stay with the organization depends on it. This raises the issue of team support.

Team Support

Participants were asked what they would do if their boss asked them to work late to cover for a colleague. Would you do it? About 95% of participants indicated that they regularly use their initiatives to cover for absent colleagues without their manager knowing about it. Below Eser made the following comment when asked the same question:

We are only four in the team and we support each other. Whenever any member of the team calls to say he/she is coming late or going to be absent, we usually pull every resource together as a team to cover for the absent colleague without the manager knowing about it (Eser)

Eser's comments acknowledge the importance of team spirit and bonding. This is very important to black British workers as they feel less stressful believing when they do return to work, they would not have to work extra hours so as to meet their targets, therefore team support not only helps to build a better exchange relationship, but helps participants to form and maintain their psychological contract. In support Adet made the following comment about team support:

We support each others in the team. I have done it before. I think I would do it again if it would help achieve the objective of the team (Adet)

Adet's comment shows departmental objectives can be accomplished through team effort and if everyone supports each others. This helps everyone in the team to enhance their exchange relations with their managers if they all meet their targets.

Black British clerical workers has revealed that team bonding is particularly important in helping to pull resources together in the event of a team member being absent. However, despite having a strong bonding within the team, participants indicated there are occasions when individuals are let down by managers reneging on their promises. It was found that participants' response to disappointment varies among the young and the older generation. This led this paper to investigate the issue of intergenerational gap between the young and older generation.

Age Gap

For most participants the gap between the older generation and the younger generation is an intergenerational issue. Older participants indicated that the influence of a strong cultural background and good upbringing on an individual has a lot to do with the gap among the generational groups. During the interviews 90% of the participants indicated that the older generation that immigrated to the UK more than forty years ago came here for economic reason and so have the propensity to care for their extended family left behind in Africa or in the Caribbean, but as long as their goal remains reasonably attainable, they are naturally motivated to work which helps them to form their psychological contract. The second generations that arrived in the UK twenty-five years ago and those that were born in the UK are generally influenced by the circular system they themselves have been brought up in, and therefore have more concern about seeking to build and develop their employment careers and education, rather than care for relatives or extended families in Africa or the Caribbean that they do not even know.

Furthermore, older participants were asked "How is your experience at work, would you say your response to problem will be different from your children's?" 90% of the older participants indicated they would respond differently to problem in the workplace. Whereas about 70% of the young generation indicated that they are likely to resign and then move on, when faced with problems of unfulfilled promises or disappointment. Below are some of the narratives from both the young and older generational groups as they were asked whether the young generation would respond differently to unfulfilled promises:

We have a young person in my team that management wanted to move to another district and he fought it. If it were to be me, I would not fight it. My son who is 20 years old would handle the situation differently from me, in that he would fight it and if management try to force him to stay, he will just resign (Adet, an older person)

Adet's story shows how the young and older people respond differently to problems at work. In support, Simb, a young person, made the following comment below:

Many young people would respond differently to problem in the workplace, because things have changed, lots of people have learnt to accept you as a black person and so there are lot of choices for young black people. Whereas previously it wasn't the case, as most white people didn't have the opportunity to work with so many black people in the office and so job evaluation was based on what they felt about you individually, rather than your ability to do the job (Simb, a young person)

Simb's comments emphasize the improvement that has happened in the past on race relations and that these have made life relatively easier for young people because job evaluation is no longer based on who you are, but on what you can do. In support, Rama, an older person, made the following comment:

For young people things have changed for them. We the older generation have successfully bridged the gap between white and black people, whereas for the young generation they didn't have to face racism in the workplace, because the changes are already there, and now everything is based on your ability to do the job rather than the colour of your skin. These have given the younger generation plenty of choices, e.g. where to work or which career to pursue (Rama, an older person)

Rama's comment not only supports Simb's narratives but indicates the problem of race issues are no longer visible; as a result both young and older people are able to form their psychological contract by performing to the best of their abilities. The conclusions that emerged from this study analyses have been deliberated below in the conclusions section.

10. Conclusions

We have now come to the concluding section of this paper. The task now is to summarize and evaluate the journey this research has taken and then discuss the research findings.

The journey to this point has been slow and long. The difficulties encountered in conducting this research have ranged from the usual time constraint and seeing enthusiasm evaporate from the frustration of exploring a phenomenon that has never been researched in the UK, meaning the nature of the black British psychological contract in the context of English local authorities. The research outcomes are unique to the geographical area of London, the capital city of the UK, where the research was conducted. As the capital city, London is the largest city in the UK with a population of over ten million residents and has 32 local authorities compared to other cities where there is only one local authority, and so this research can argue that London is a fully representative area of the entire UK, with a population greater than most countries in the Middle East, such as Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Palestine, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, and Israel, also including some African and North and South American countries. The use of the qualitative interview was the best option and has provided a very useful insight into the lived experience of the black British clerical workers, and in so doing, this paper has improved the researcher's knowledge and understanding of the psychological contract from the perspectives of black British clerical workers. The findings of this research are summarized below:

First, the black British psychological contract is partly influenced by societal factors such as economic conditions, culture, upbringings and outside support. It was found that these factors from the employees perspectives are the reasons why black British clerical workers viewed the exchange agreement differently from other co-workers.

Second, the finding shows that the different perceptions each individual employee has, made it complicated for them to fulfil their expectations. Therefore the findings revealed that black British clerical workers will have to renegotiate the terms of their exchange agreement with their line manager or the organization representative if they wish to enhance and manage their psychological contract.

Third, the findings shows that black British clerical workers, has endorsed different characteristic of the psychological contract, which are unique and different from any psychological contract study that had been conducted in the past.

Fourth, the findings to this paper main research question revealed that the nature of the psychological contract for black British clerical workers is not mainly inspired by individual interest such as opportunities and security and the desire for a higher salary, but rather is largely shaped and formed by broader social structures e.g. extended family obligations, uncertainty of the job market and partly determined by the employee's personal circumstances.

Fifth, the findings of this research show that the intergenerational gap issues between the younger and older generations were due to their different expectations, experiences and upbringing, thus influencing their perceptions about the exchange agreement and result in them having different psychological contract.

Finally, the research findings revealed that the older generation are more connected to the extended family network than the younger generations, and as a result the older generation are more likely to seek for job stability and long-term job security than a short-term higher salary. While the younger generation were found to be very much concerned about their job career, education, making lots of money, and buying their house.

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