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ARTICLE

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Full Length Research Paper

Psychological contract fulfillment and its implication on performance of employees: The case of Asanko Gold Mine, Ghana

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This study attempts at providing knowledge and further understanding into issues of Psychological Contract Fulfilment (PCF) and its implication (s) on performance of employees at Asanko Gold Mine. The research applied a case study in design, and quantitative methodologies. The research applied the mixed method to review data, and apply a household survey. The research focused on a population of 500 employees from Asanko Gold Mines and a sample of 188 respondents. Probability sampling used for the study involved a cluster that categorized staff of Asanko Gold Mine into the Departments of Mining, Finance, Processing, Environmental, Community Affairs, Exploration, and Organizational Capability. A moderate simple random sampling was applied to select respondents from each department. A purposive sampling approach was also used to intentionally select the heads of each department. The study identified PCF as a core value supporting organizational objectives at Asanko Gold Mine, Also, it was identified that an effective measure to improve productivity of employees will require a strong PCF policy since such measures could motivate employees to arrive at work early, produce to meet expected production levels, use time effectively, encourage voluntary contributions at work, as well as work to meet deadlines.

Key words: Psychological contract fulfillment, skills, productivity, gold mine, employer, employees.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of Psychological Contract Fulfilment (PCF) has in recent past gained prominence in the literary discourse due to its ability to moderate the performance of employees (Rousseau, 1995; Guest and Conway, 2002; Guest, 2007) at Asanko Gold Mine, the human

capital of the mine- opportunities and investments in labour and skills training that provide occupation to people (Carney, 1995; Dzodzi, 2006; Moser, 2008; Baez et al., 2010; Van den Berg, 2010; Li et al., 2016).

PCF relates to issues of perceptions of expectation(s)

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in the employer-employee relationships including reciprocal promises and obligations, expectations of gains and responsibilities, and sanctions and rewards associated with such expectations (Frankel and Otazo, 1992; Guest, 2007; Rayton and Yalabik, 2014; van den Heuvel et al., 2017). In other literature, psychological contracts are argued to mean promises of committing self to a future exchange necessary for continual sustenance of employer-employee relationship (Rousseau, 1995). The need to improve the contributions of human capital to the growth of establishments is critical since psychological contract fulfilment can proffer some lessons, including boosting growth and development through improved commitment and loyalty of employees.

The quality of employee performance, attitudes and conduct of workers in the working environment constitutes an important part of the productivity of an establishment (Stoner and Gallagher, 2010). For example, employee desires and expectations in the context of promotion, pay, training, job security, career improvement constitute a critical part of PCF.

PCF can also determine to a larger extent whether an employee can provide additional working hours, volunteerism, and patriotism at the workplace (Waiganjo, 2012). These attributes of PCF when enhanced can impact the performance of employees because PCF tends to diminish insecurities and envision future trades, which can mediate performance for both employees and associations (Shore and Tetrick, 1994).

In some scope, it is suggested that enhancing PCF for employees can ultimately enhance productivity through the activities of employee associations (Seeck and Parzefall 2008). Meanwhile, the practice of upholding PCF is not without challenges including the failure to improve the productivity of employees.

In other literature it has been identified that fulfilling psychological contract at the workplace is bedevilled with challenges including changes in the management of an organization, poor performance in the areas of openness of communication and transparency in leadership, poor management skills of employers, and the inability of employer-employees to develop and uphold a congenial and fruitful work environment (Pate and Scullion, 2016; Metz et al., 2017).

In other circumstances of upholding PCF, employees fail to honour their obligations as a result of challenges including coping with children, spouses or parents with mental or physical problems (Alcover and Rico, 2016; Bolino and Klotz, 2016).

The mix of benefits and challenges associated with the effect of psychological contract fulfilment on the performance of employees, provide a motivation for carrying out this research that explored issues relating to psychological contract fulfilment and its implications on performance of employees at Asanko Gold Mine, Ghana.

The research will also explore the following research objectives;

- (1) Identify whether employers of Asanko Gold Mine provide support for the psychological fulfilment of their employees,
- (2) Examine whether employees of Asanko mine have the requisite skills to identify and demand psychological contract fulfilment at the workplace,
- (3) Assess whether psychological contract fulfilment can mediate employee performance at Asanko Mine, and
- (4) Examine challenges associated with the application of PCF at Asanko Gold Mine.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of psychological contract

The term 'psychological contract' first attracted some attention in the '60s when Argyris defined the concept to be the implicit understanding between a set of employees and their Forman (Argyris, 1960). The underlying philosophy was that the best way for the foremen to get their workers to meet their expectations was to maintain what was at the time, an informal employee culture.

The scholarly discourse relating to the concept later evolved into issues of men, management, and mental health (Levinson et al., 1962). Other authors that explored PCF included Roehling's quantitative assessment PCF (Roehling, 1997); and Schein's organizational psychology (Jurek, 1968; Schein, 1978).

One critical emphasis is the work of Rousseau (1989) that influenced the thought and arguments of PCF. According to Rabstojnek (2008) it was until the 1990s that a serious empirical study into Psychological Contract (PC) was undertaken.

Various theories have over the years provided some underlying foundations for PC. These have included Bernard's Organization Equilibrium Theory that emphasised the individual's attempt to maximize the satisfaction he derives from achieving his needs and motives (Bernard, 1938; Mano, 1994); Simon's Organization Equilibrium Theory that argued that the organization is a system of human behaviour that works to optimise benefits of all parties (Simon, 1945); and the Social Exchange Theory characterised by the exchange of activity, tangible or intangible which is more or less rewarding or costly among a minimum of two people (Aselage and Eisenberger, 2003; Cheung and Chiu, 2005; Treviño and Tilly, 2015). The major lessons of these theories amongst others are the concept of equity and reciprocity among parties involved in PCF (Chibucos, 2004).

Psychological contract fulfilment in organizations is

important for many reasons including the potential to create generational effects to promote retention, and talent management (Festing and Schafer, 2014). However, the ability to explore the benefits of PCF is limited by feelings of violation and workplace familism leading to PC breach and organizational defiance (Restubog et al., 2013; Piccoli and De Witte, 2015).

An organization that upholds and promotes PCF can improve relationship between the various categories of employees including superiors and colleagues in an establishment (Ng et al., 2014). In support of the argument on PCF, Vantilborgh et al. (2014) add that an ideological and relational psychological contract breach can adversely impact on the fulfilment of PC such as volunteers' work effort, given that volunteers can freely decide on work schedules and expectations.

Providing a better PCF therefore calls for the application of practices that explore better and competitive business advantage to support the contemporary business environments, and create a novelty in production for business sustenance (Stoner and Gallagher, 2010). The provision of a better recruitment process, selection and orientation policies including discovering, attracting and selecting qualified personalities can give rise to well motivated employees who meet an organization's resource prerequisites (Shore and Tetrick, 1994; Dries et al., 2014).

Employees who are provided with ample opportunities for skills development can uphold astute human resource management practices that ultimately impact on employee perceptions, performance appraisals, promotion systems (Dries et al., 2014). Hui et al. (2004) add that the regular review of employee performance and work evaluations, as well as use of reward systems (Armstrong, 2006; Beardwell and Claydon, 2007) can aid in dispelling any untrue beliefs of either party on the notion of psychological contract. Achieving a better PCF therefore calls for skills that enable employers-employees to identify and develop competence in the effective application of PCF.

Training effectiveness designed to improve skill deficiencies in PCF, behaviour modelling, and the development of skills and abilities necessary for long term application of PCF, competence in collecting information related to employers interests, skills, and personalities is critical for the effective application of PCF (Noe et al., 2014). It is important to note that the application of PCF has not come without challenges. Identifying and addressing the 'human resource (HR) strategy and performance' missing link through hiring of workers with transferable skills, and the application of a more comprehensive analysis of the interplay between leadership styles and HR strategies, can promote effective psychological contracts (McDermott et al., 2013).

A key criticism of PCF is the 'deceptive and inapt'

debates on what constitutes a 'contract' hence PC (Cullinane and Dundon, 2006). In other spheres, some literature have argued that financial and liquidity challenges affecting many establishments can inhibit efforts to provide rewards to employees (Gondo et al., 2016 in *the role of the psychological contract in employee retention for local authorities in Zimbabwe*). In Bordia et al. (2015) *promises from afar: a model...business education*, it is argued that inadequate higher education can create challenges for the application of quality assurance tenants, a key attribute for the effective application of PCF in an establishment. A breach of PCF as well as the lack of research regarding PC can undermine efforts to motivate workers to fulfil their work obligations, including voluntary services (Vantilborgh et al., 2014).

The need to provide a working PCF is critical to the progress of any establishment and most especially, to meet the core needs of employers and employees of any organization. The application of effective PCF as identified in the many literature suggests the urgency to highlight the relevance of PCFs, and the need to apply the concept to improve the stakes for employees. Attempts to achieve these PCF objectives will call for a better discourse in addressing the factors that inhibit the smooth application of PCF at Asanko Gold Mine . This study will attempt to add to literature and provide knowledge and further understanding into issues of PCF and its implication (s) on performance of employees in an organization.

Study area

Asanko Gold Mine is one of the recent addition to the gold mining companies in Ghana. The Mine is a fully financed, multi-million ounce company with a gold resource base of approximately 7.9 Million ounce. The mining operations of Asanko Gold Mine is structured in phases with the 1st phase completed in Jan 2016. Asanko Mine has a highly prospective land packaged on both the Asankrangua and Sehwi belts in Ghana, West Africa (Asanko Gold, 2016).

Asanko Gold is strongly committed to highest standards in their operations in Ghana. These standards include environmental management, social responsibility, and health and safety for its employees and neighbouring communities (Asanko Gold, 2016). As part of the corporate responsibilities of the management of the mine is the mission to provide a safe and healthy working environment for its employees, a key tenant of the company's psychological contract fulfilment with its employees. Meeting an effective PCF calls for a structure that has the capacity to implement the tenets of PCF.

Asanko Gold Mine as part of its mission intends to develop and implement the organizational capability required to achieve and sustain business growth objective (Asanko Gold, 2016).

In the 2016 operational year of Asanko Gold, the company has provided an excellent first year of operations, provided an exceptional safety records, with only one time injury and a rolling including others. In the discharge of its operations, Asanko Gold Mine has provided support to a mix of the Ghanaian populace including being a proud winner of the Ghana Mining Industry Awards 2016 for Corporate Social Investment Project of the Year. The Company has also provided \$18.5 million support in goods and support for 211 Ghanaian businesses, and employed Ghanaians to fill 98% positions in the Mine (Asanko Gold, 2016).

PCF from the backdrop of Asanko Gold Mine's responsibilities to employees, can help Asanko Gold Mine to achieve its objective of providing a safe and healthy working environment. This research that explored the effect of PCF on the performance of employees of Asanko Gold Mine is critical as the study can contribute to knowledge and provide recommendations for developing, sustaining and improving PCF for its employees.

METHODOLOGY

The research was more of a case study in design, and also applied quantitative methodologies. Case study resides on empirical inquiry to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context (Woodside, 2010). The use of a case study was significant to the study because it allowed for a combination of different data collection methods from a wider variety of sources (Gray, 2013).

A critique of case study such as a weakness to generalize results for a wider population was addressed through the use of multiple methods for data collection such as the use of a household survey that applied a moderate probability sampling method of sampling (Robson, 2011). The research applied a mixed methods design to review data and apply a household survey (Heale and Forbes, 2013). Primary and secondary data were collected through the use of questionnaires and information from journals and scholarly books.

The research focused on the population of 500 employees of Asanko Gold Mine (Asanko Gold, 2016). According to Fraenkel and Wallen, 2000, Best and Khan (1998) and Nwana (2008) population is basically any group of individuals with a one or more commonality that are of interest to the researcher. A sample of 188 was drawn from the population based on the application of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula for determination of sample size for a population.

Following the application of the formulae, a sample size of 188 was used for the analyses. This was made up of 75% males and 25% females. Majority (46%) of the respondents were aged 26 to 35 years, 38% for 36 to 60yrs, 13% for 20 to 25 years, and 3% for over 60 years respondents. The educational background of respondents is categorized into 31.3% university graduates, 25.5% polytechnics graduates, 23.5 senior high school graduates, and

19.7% junior high school graduates. The study employed both probability and non-probability sampling techniques to select respondents (Uprichard, 2013).

Probability sampling that ensures a fair chance for the selection of respondents, involved the use of cluster to categorized staff of Asanko Gold Mine into the Departments of Mining (19%), Finance (18%), Processing (16%), Environmental (9%), Community Affairs (15%), Exploration (7%), Organizational Capability (6%), and Health and Safety (10%).

A moderate simple random sampling-lottery for this case, was also applied to select respondents for each department. The availability of the selected respondents to participate in the research was critical and this reflected the overall number of respondents selected from each section of the Mine. The selection of respondents also involved a non-probability purposive sampling to allow for the selection of Heads of Departments to respond to questions. It is believed that the selection of these categories of respondents was critical because these leaders are believed to possess in-depth knowledge of the recruitment procedures as well as service conditions of employees within their departments. The main data collection tool applied for this study was the questionnaire. Questionnaire is an important data collection tool because it allows for a wider coverage, confidentiality in responses, as well as provides adequate room for respondents to fully respond to the questions (Robson, 2011).

The questionnaire was developed from the background of the literature and objectives of the study. Questions sought information on the background of respondents (such as sex, years in employment, educational background, and department of work), practices that support PCF (such as remuneration and incentive packages, appreciation of workers, opportunities for promotion, welfare service), skills for applying PCF and its implication on productivity of employees of Asanko Gold mine, Ghana (that is, technical knowhow, literacy, working under minimal supervision, and team work), influence of PCF on performance of employees (including arrives to work on time, meets work schedules, effective use of time, working within budget) and challenges associated with the application of PCF at Asanko Gold Mine (such as absence of job security, poor training and development policies, poor policies on promotions). A 5-point likert scale was applied to the questions. A pre-test was conducted with other researchers with expertise in mining to allow for better design, relevance, and understanding of the issues the questions sought to investigate.

Data was analysed descriptively through the use of themes and categories from the data (Robson, 2011). Themes were developed to guide the analysis of the quantitative data. Themes related to practices associated with PCF in Asanko Gold Mine. The findings were first given to other researchers to review to confirm the accuracy of the interpretations developed. The quantitative data obtained from the survey were coded and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 17 software. The analyses looked at how respondents perceive PCF at Asanko Gold Mine. The findings were reported with respect to each objective/statement coded on a scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree, and 5 = strongly disagree. The tables provided further analysis that explored variability in responses through comparisons of a number of independent variables.. The mean and S.D. statistic were used to explore the weight of each PC item for comparison.

RESULTS

Table 1 provides insights into PCF practices at Asanko

Table 1. PCF practices applied at Asanko Gold Mine.

PCF practices	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Standard deviation
Payment of good Salary	20.7	38.3	11.7	19.1	10.1	2.60	1.29
On-the-time payments of salary	29.4	61.5	8.0	1.1	0.0	1.81	0.62
Provision on overtime bonus	25.1	46.4	6.6	13.1	8.7	2.34	1.23
Worker appreciation	36.2	53.0	7.6	3.2	0.0	1.78	0.72
Provision of equipment for work	33.0	59.6	6.9	0.5	0.0	1.75	0.60
On-the-time promotion	30.5	45.4	13.4	9.1	1.6	2.06	0.97
On-the-job training	31.7	58.1	9.7	0.5	0.0	1.79	0.63
Good pension benefit package	45.7	45.2	9.0	0.0	0.0	1.63	0.64
Accommodation at minimum fee	46.8	45.7	6.5	1.1	0.0	1.62	0.66
Provision of health facilities	50.5	46.2	2.7	0.5	0.0	1.53	0.58
-	-	-	-	-	Ave:	1.89	0.79

Gold Mine. Of the 188 respondents, majority agree that PCF is highly upheld in the Mine. The highest score of 96.7% was for the provision of health facilities. The highest score for disagreement is payment for good salary and overtime bonus that stood at 19.1 and 13.1%, respectively. Meanwhile no respondent showed disagreement for the practice of good pension benefit package at Asanko Gold Mine.

Mean scores show that payment of good salary (mean=2.60, SD.=1.29) and overtime bonus (mean=2.34, SD.=1.23) were the worst performing PCF at Asanko Mine (Table 1). The best performing PCF was provision of health care (mean=1.53, SD.=0.58). In all, three items under PCF practices that is payment of good salary, provision of overtime bonus, and on-the-time promotion scored above the mean average of 1.89 (SD.=0.79).

Scores examining relevant skills to apply PCF at Asanko Gold Mine were also shown under Table 2. Respondents were emphatic in indicating the relevance of all the items under Table 2. The highest score for agreeing to the availability of relevant skills to apply PCF as Asanko Gold Mine is 96.3% and lowest of 50.8 % for ability to read and write and ability to effectively apply chemical without health risk respectively.

Mean scores showed worst for ability to effectively apply chemical without health risk (mean 2.76, SD.=1.41) and better for ability to read and write (mean=1.55, SD=0.56). The mean scores for ability to work under pressure, respond to work call, and effectively apply chemical without health risk (Table 2) were items that fell above the mean average of 1.79 (SD. 0.75) (Table 2).

The views of respondents were also sought for the effects of PCF on productivity of human capital at Asanko Gold Mine (Table 3). For all items under Table 3, majority of respondents agreed that PCF has an effect on

productivity of employees at Asanko Gold Mine. The highest contribution of PCF on productivity was recorded for arrives at work on time (93.9%) and lowest for ability to mine at least 190,000 ounces of gold annually (44.2%). Meanwhile there was no disagreement for arriving at work on time since all respondents (except 6.1% undecided) agreed that PCF affect productivity.

Table 4 also sought information from respondents, on challenges associated with the application of PCF at Asanko Gold Mine. Respondents identified a number of challenges including the highest score being absence of job security (70%) and lowest for failure of organization to provide training and development for employees (36.8%).

Mean scores showed worse for no clear understanding of expectations for both employees (mean=3.06, SD. 1.23) and the organization but better for absence of job security (mean 2.16, SD. 0.98). Items with means below the mean average of 2.67 (SD. 1.10) were absence of job security, employee dissatisfaction with benefit and incentive packages offered by the organization, and identity and worth of employees defined by the organization.

DISCUSSIONS

This study that explored the effects of PCF looked at three key issues, that is, whether Asanko Gold Mine observes practices that support PCF of their employees, the requisite skills needed to achieve psychological PCF, the relationship between PCF and employee performance, and the challenges associated with the implementation of PCF at Asanko Gold Mine.

The study results indicate that Asanko Gold Mine is actively pursuing activities jeered towards providing a good support for the PCF of employees. Such practices

Table 2. Relevant Skills to Apply PCF at Asanko Gold Mine.

Relevant Skills for PCF	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Standard deviation
Technical Know how	41.8	54.3	3.3	0.5	0.0	1.62	0.57
Ability to Read and write	48.7	47.6	3.7	0.0	0.0	1.55	0.56
Ability to Verbally express	47.8	47.3	4.8	0.0	0.0	1.57	0.58
Skills to operate machine	48.1	44.9	6.5	0.5	0.0	1.59	0.63
Working without supervision	43.5	43.5	11.3	1.6	0.0	1.71	0.72
Ability to Work under pressure	37.2	49.4	8.9	4.4	0.0	1.81	0.77
Ability to respond to work call	33.9	46.2	13.4	3.8	0.0	1.95	0.93
Ability to effectively apply chemical without health risk	23.5	27.3	13.9	19.8	15.5	2.76	1.41
Effectively work with others	43.0	52.2	3.2	1.60	0.0	1.63	0.62
Ability to effectively relating to other Workers	47.8	46.2	4.8	0.5	0.5	1.60	0.66
-	-	-	-	-	Ave:	1.79	0.75

Table 3. Effects of PCF on productivity of Human Capital at Asanko Gold Mine.

PCF on human capital	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Standard deviation
Arrives a work on time	40.3	53.6	6.1	0.0	0.0	1.66	0.59
Meets work deadlines	28.3	61.6	10.0	0.6	0.0	1.83	0.62
Proposes solutions to problems	29.8	60.7	9.0	0.6	0.0	1.80	0.61
Uses time effectively	29.8	60.7	9.0	0.6	0.0	1.64	0.57
Able to produce more than yearly budget	22.8	48.0	17.0	10.5	1.8	2.20	0.97
Ability to mine at least ounces of gold annually	17.9	26.3	33.0	17.9	5.0	2.66	1.12
Ability to mine at a lower cost than planned	17.9	47.5	20.1	13.4	1.1	2.32	0.96
Ability to mine within budgeted expenditure	19.1	56.2	14.6	8.4	1.7	2.17	0.89
Safe from injury/work hazard throughout the year	50.0	39.4	7.8	1.1	1.7	1.65	0.81
-	-	-	-	-	Ave:	1.99	0.79

Mean scores under Table 3 recorded worse for ability to mine at least 190,000 ounces of gold annually (Mean=2.66, SD.=1.12) and better for arrives at work on time (mean=1.66, SD.= 0.59).

are common to the majority of workers at the Mine. It speaks well to say that the organization is actively pursuing policies that uphold the interest of workers in areas such as on-time payment of salaries, provision of overtime bonuses and worker appreciation packages, and health facilities (highest rated PCF practice).

These policies and practises ultimately lead to improved conditions of service for the employees in Asanko Gold Mine. These practices are in consonance with Rayton and Yabibik (2014) and van den Heuvel et al. (2017) write-up on "*how change information influences attitudes towards change and turnover intention: the role of engagement, psychological contract fulfilment, and*

trust" that argued that expectations in the employer-employee relationships including promises and obligations, responsibilities and gains provide important PCF to support work and ensure maximum output from employees. The results of the study including others (Franklel and Otazo, 1992; Guest, 2007), call for a better understanding and application of PCF since employers ultimately stand to gain from the positive output that can be derived from employees with fulfilled psychological contract.

Skills for applying PCF as indicated in the study included technical knowhow, and ability to read and write. Generally, the study supported the need for the

Table 4. Challenges associated with the application of PCF at Asanko Gold Mine.

Challenges of PCF	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Standard deviation
Absence of Job security	26.2	44.3	18.0	9.8	1.6	2.16	0.98
Failure of organization to provide training and dev't for employees	9.3	27.5	20.9	34.6	7.7	3.04	1.14
Disinterest of management in ensuring PCF	11.5	29.0	27.9	26.2	5.5	2.85	1.10
Employee dissatisfaction with benefits and incentives packages offered by the organization	22.8	41.3	19.6	12.5	3.8	2.33	1.08
Identity and worth of employees defined by the organization	18.5	40.2	19.0	20.1	2.2	2.47	1.08
No clearly defined path for promotion and career dev't for employees	10.9	35.9	25.0	22.8	5.5	2.76	1.09
No clear understanding of expectations for both employees and the organization	36.4	20.7	19.6	14.1	9.2	3.06	1.23
-	-	-	-	-	Ave:	2.67	1.10

development of special skills in the application of PCF since these skills are paramount to the performance of employees. Overall, the ability to apply chemicals without health risk stands out to be the highest rated skill to apply PCF in an establishment such as Asanko Gold Mine. Meanwhile the ability to read and write was the less rated skill for applying PCF. The study results corroborates Dries et al. (2014) literature on "*Self-perceived employability, organization-rated potential, and the psychological contract*" that argued for particular emphasis to be placed on the development of skills, review of performance, and work evaluation to support an effective implementation of PCF.

Similarly, the study results conform to the findings of Noe et al. (2014) document on "*Employee Development: Issues in Construct Definition and Investigation of Antecedents. Improving Training Effectiveness in Work Organizations*" that argue for the development of skills and competence in employees interests, skills and personality in order to effectively apply PCF at the workplace.

The study results on Asanko Gold Mine confirm that PCF can mediate employee performance in many ways. PCF influence on productivity of employees include helping to provide solutions to problems, meeting work schedules, and improving safety at the workplace. The study results showed that the least influence of PCF on employee performance is on production output, i.e. annual gold production. Meanwhile, the Asanko study agrees that the greatest influence of PCF is the ability of employees to use time effectively. Comparing with other literature, the study results support a win-win situation for employers/employees, especially in the performance of

work functions including voluntary contributions at the work place (Treviño and Tilly, 2015 in "*George C. Homans: History, Theory, and Method*").

Similarly, there is a corroboration of the Asanko study by Festing and Schafer (2014) that argue that PCF promotes retention through job satisfaction. Ng et al. (2014) "*Psychological contract breaches and employee voice behaviour: The moderating effects of changes in social relationships*" also site good relationship between workers as a major reason for PCF to be properly promoted and practised at the work place.

The study identified that the application of PCF at the workplace is not without challenges. Such challenges include the issue of no clear understanding of expectations, and failure of the organization to promote training and development of staff, a key PCF practice. The greatest challenge of PCF implementation at Asanko Gold Mine related to the absence of job security which also undermines voluntary support and commitment from employees. On the issue relating to the difficulty of employers to meet the benefit and incentive packages of employees as identified by Gondo et al. (2016) study on "*Role of the psychological contract in employee retention for local authorities in Zimbabwe*" provide a support by identifying liquidity challenges at the workplace as a key issue impeding the smooth implementation of PCF.

Conclusion

This article is about PCF and how PCF practices mediate productivity of employees at Asanko Gold Mine, Ghana. It covered PCF practices, skills to apply the practices,

effect of PCF on productivity, and challenges associated with PCF application.

While PCF has become popular with many organizations abroad, its focus and relevance has been minimal in many enterprises in Ghana. Some employers have integrated PCF into core human resource development issues rather than projected the concept as an independent core value of an organization's human resource practice. This study concludes by identifying PCF as a core practice supporting organizational objectives as well as meeting the expectations of employees. For example, PCF practices such as provision of health facilities, accommodation, and good pension facilities at the workplace will meet the core PCF requirements for majority of employees. It stands to argue for a better policy and implementation strategy to see to the full incorporation and implementation of PCF in the human resource management provisions at the work place.

Relevant skills including training and development of technical knowhow, extensive literacy, operation of machinery, and ability to work under minimal supervision are needed if an organization, including a mining firm intends to effectively apply PCF in the corporate work and management plan of the employees of Asanko Gold Mine. These skills must be mutually inclusive to both employees and employers as these skills tend to provide a better working relation that ensures that the collective interest of all parties in an organization are upheld. Poorly trained staff can definitely undermine efforts to develop, sustain, and implement effective PCF policies that impact human capital.

An effective measure to improve productivity of human capital will require a strong PCF policy since such efforts can motivate employees to arrive at work early, produce to meet expected production levels, use time effectively, encourage voluntary contributions at work, as well as work to meet deadlines. Meanwhile PCF application may not be a strong approach to achieve gold mining targets, and mine at reduced cost and within budgeted expenditure in a mine because the influence of these attributes for a Mine such as Asanko GOLD Mine is minimal.

It is recommended that employers that intend to fully exploit PCF for productivity pay particular attention to the provision of job security, good benefits and incentive packages, and provision of identity and worth for employees in the organization. Such measures will ultimately develop and sustain the efforts and contributions of employees.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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