The Employee-Organisation Relationship
of University Academics

Social Exchange, Psychological Contract &
Organisational Support Perspectives

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The Employee-Organisation Relationship of University Academics

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Declaration of Original Work

I hereby certify that this thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted to any other University or Higher Education institution, or for any other academic award. Where the work of others is reported, every effort is made in acknowledging and referencing this material.

______________________________
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Date:_____________________


Abstract

While the Higher Education literature is replete with studies investigating the effects the work environment has on the employment relationship and job-related attitudes of academics, there is a paucity of empirical research which directly examines the underlying nature of the exchange mechanisms manifest within this environment. Therefore, in response to calls to expand our understanding of factors which influence employee attitudinal outcomes in the workplace, this study sought to investigate those mechanisms which reflect and influence the employee-organisation relationship of University academics. Grounding itself within the broad framework of Social Exchange Theory, the present study utilised and integrated Psychological Contract and Organisational Support Theories as exemplar representations of the exchange approach to the employment relationship. Quantitative results from an on-line cross-sectional survey of 445 university academics unearthed the presence of two distinct clusters of employee-organisation relationship as evidenced by two contrasting forms of psychological contract. In turn, each exchange relationship reflected differential levels of job satisfaction, affective commitment, normative commitment, perceived organisational support and perceptions of psychological contract breach, violation and fulfilment. Multiple regression analyses confirmed that the underlying nature of the exchange relationship significantly explained work-related attitudes. As such, compared to academics experiencing a weak, more transactional type of exchange relationship, academics holding a strong, relational type psychological contract were more satisfied in their work, more committed to their academic institution, felt more supported by their University and perceived less psychological contract infringements. Accounting for different levels of exchange relationship, it was found that perceptions of psychological contract breach and violation were significant negative predictors of work outcomes, and that violation had varying mediational effects on the relationship between breach and employee attitudes. Additionally, perceived organisational support returned as an important determinant of the exchange relationship of academics to the extent that for some academics, the presence of University support represented a fulfilment of their psychological contract, and for others it ‘buffered’ the negative effects of breach. Qualitative analysis of 192 open-ended responses revealed a number of issues pertaining to fairness and equity in the exchange relationship, value and recognition of contribution, teaching/workload demands and negative support perceptions; as salient concerns for the employee-organisation relationship of academics. Implications for University management and future directions for research are discussed in light of the study’s findings.
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To Stella & Méabh

My inspiration and my world

Love, Daddy
“Many have said that human beings should serve social institutions. The person who thinks psychologically will add that social institutions should serve human beings”

(Harry Levinson, 1962)
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Chapter 1

Introduction

“To speak of social life is to speak of the associations between people- their associating together in work and in play, in love and in war, to trade or to ownership, to help or to hinder.”

(Peter M. Blau, 1964)
1.1 Introduction

Referring to the disorders which have taken place in social, political and economic settings as construed in the divide between the welfare state, the rule of capital and the free market, Sparrow and Cooper (2003) argue that issues relating to insecurity, uncertainty and the loss of clearly defined boundaries as a result of these divisions have come to define the modern world. This in turn has had two principal effects. The first is motivational which, according to Sparrow et al (2003, p.10) is: “experienced when economic and social expectations are not met and when members of society sense a lack of meaning and motivation in their employment life”. The second effect relates to the opinions and attitudes people have toward the integrity of authoritative structures to the extent that “the legitimacy of key state and organisational institutions become threatened with disintegration and fragmentation as people neither trust them nor continue to behave in a normative manner (Sparrow et al., 2003, p.11). For some authors (e.g. Thompson and Hart, 2006; Edwards and Karau, 2007; Shore, Bommer, Rao and Seo, 2009), these issues represent tensions (and a possible breakdown) in the social contract between individuals and the state.

From an organisational perspective, this reflects a transformation in the meaning, nature and quality of the employment relationship and thus, an alteration in the contractual relations between employee and employer (Rousseau, 1995; Herriot, Manning and Kidd, 1997; Millward and Hopkins, 1998; Sparrow et al., 2003). These effects (in both private and public sectors) have, as Guest (2004: 543-544) identifies, “impacted work practices such that different patterns of working hours….greater variety of forms of employment
contract… the fragmentation of the workforce… and the growth of individualism and flexibility”, are typical manifestations of the new, altered organisational environment. The new work arrangements operating in concert with emerging forms of employment contracts have transferred some of the risks associated with employment away from the state and economy and onto the shoulders of individuals (Sparrow et al., 2003).

Contracts are fundamental aspects of life, both inside and outside of the work environment. They influence the attitudes and behaviours of individuals and the actions of organisations (Rousseau and McLean Parks, 1993). Within an organisational setting, contracts entail cooperation and accord among individuals, are a source of dispute and disagreement, used to reflect self-serving pecuniary activities and can symbolise sentiment and communal relations (Rousseau et al., 1993; Rousseau, 1995).

Robinson, Kraatz and Rousseau (1994) suggest that the ubiquitous nature of employment contracts provides a mechanism through which individuals and organisations “regulate” their behaviour and activities for the good of the company. For Kallerberg and Reve (1993, p. 1105) the notion of the employment contract encompasses a multitude of factors that reflect “the salient features of employment relations, including how work is organised, governed, evaluated, and rewarded”. They view it as broadly defining the bilateral, reciprocal agreements, expectations and behaviours between employees and employers (Kallerberg et. al., 1993) and can come to define the type of relationship an individual has with his/her employer. In terms of the parties’ respective obligations in the employment relationship, agreement regarding the type and amount of employer inducements (employer obligations) that are provided and exchanged for employee contributions
(employee obligations) is determined not only by the initial formal written employment contract (MacNeil, 1985; Rousseau, 1995); but also through more subtle, implicit and subjectively-driven mechanisms by which employees come to interpret their work environment, the actions of their employer and inform them of the nature of their employment relationship (Levinson et al., 1962; Rousseau, 1989, Rousseau, 1990; Rousseau and McLean Parks, 1993; Herriot, Manning and Kidd, 1997).

The study of the relationship between individual and organisation (the employee-organisation relationship) represents a significant component of organisational behaviour and human resource theory (Rousseau, 1995; Tsui, Pearce, Porter and Tripoli, 1997; Conway and Briner, 2005) and is a research perspective long associated with industrial and organisational psychology (e.g. Barnard, 1938; March and Simon, 1958, Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl and Solley, 1962; Schein, 1980). The analysis of the employee-organisation relationship (EOR) has gained considerable currency over that past couple of decades among organisational experts (Shore et al., 2004) with increasing emphasis placed not only on the legislative aspects of work agreements, but also concerning the social-psychological underpinnings of the exchange processes influencing the relationship. Owing to the environmental vicissitudes which have impacted, and ultimately altered the competitive performance of domestic economies and governance structures of organisations (in particular the past six years), exploring the effects these changes have brought to bear on the employment relationship has assumed an even greater significance (Gould-Wiliams and Davies, 2005; Eisenberger et al., 2011).
The EOR is an overarching term which relates to the relationship an individual has with his/her organisation, and develops from the process of social interaction and interconnections that exist between an employee and employer (Armstrong, 2006). It represents the salient economic and socio-psychological factors which facilitate the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships in the workplace, which in turn influences employee attitudinal and behaviour outcomes (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Shore, Tetrick, Taylor, Coyle-Shapiro, Linden, McLean Parks, Morrison, Porter, Robinson, Roehling, Rousseau, Schalk, Tsui and Van Dyne, 2004). The EOR encompasses a number of levels of analyses including micro-level (individual), meso-level (group/unit/organisation) and macro-level (societal) viewpoints (Shore et al, 2004; Coyle-Shapiro and Shore, 2007); each of which offer complimentary perspectives regarding the interactions affecting and defining the employment relationship. In particular, exploring individual and organisational level issues which foster and promote positive workplace experiences, attitudes and behaviours among employees is central to EOR investigations, and the raison d’être for organisational scientists. Further, knowledge of those factors which lead to satisfied, loyal and committed employees, whose efforts contribute to the achievement of organisational goals, is a refrain long associated in the scientist-practitioner debate (Conway and Briner, 2005; Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2007).

Findings in the organisational behaviour and human resource literature have consistently confirmed to employers the importance and benefit of establishing and maintaining positive employment relationships with employees (Montes and Irving, 2008; Eisenberger and Stinglhamber, 2011). Empirical studies have shown that employees experiencing high quality EOR’s in the work place are more satisfied in their job, exhibit stronger levels of loyalty and commitment to their organisation (Wayne, Shore and Linden, 1997; Millward
and Hopkins, 1998; Wayne, Shore, Bommer and Tetrick, 2002; Gould-Williams and Davies, 2005; Lew, 2009; Wayne, Coyle-Shapiro, Eisenberger, Linden, Rousseau and Shore, 2009), are more trusting of their employer (Robinson, 1996, Rousseau, 1998; Atkinson, 2007), demonstrate more positive organisationally focused citizenship behaviours (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkle, Lynch and Rhoades, 2001; Brandes, Dharwadkar and Wheatley, 2004; Peele, 2007) and display more positive emotional affective states at work (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996; Guerrero and Herrbach, 2007; Eisenberger et al., 2011). With regard to what the extant research demonstrates, two issues need to be addressed in this regard. Firstly, in what way can the perceived quality of the EOR be interpreted and evaluated? Secondly, and for the purposes of this study, what are the attitudinal consequences associated with different quality EOR’s?

Organisational scholars have increasingly conceptualised the interaction between the employee and employer dynamic (the employee-organisation relationship) as an exchange relationship (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986; Coyle-Shapiro and Conway, 2005; Cropanzano et al., 2005). That is, what the employer offers by way of organisational inducements, and what the employee offers as exchange through his/her contributions. Central to this conceptualisation are the tenets of social exchange theory as explicated by Blau (1964) and the universal reciprocity norm as postulated by Gouldner (1960).

The application of social exchange has become an important approach to comprehend the relationships between individuals and their organisation (Coyle-Shapiro and Conway, 2005) and the “concern with factors that influence the stability and intensity of employee
dedication to organisations as employers” (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson and Sowa, 1986, p. 500). In addressing the employment relationship from an exchange perspective, and by extension, its perceived quality, management scholars have invoked two major competing, yet complimentary exchange-based theories with which to represent the EOR, and evaluate the consequential outcomes on employee work-related attitudes and behaviours.

Psychological contract theory (PCT) (Argyris, 1960; Levinson, et al., 1962; Schein, 1980; Rousseau, 1989; 1990; 1995) and perceived organisational support theory (POS) (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986; Eisenberger et al, 2011) serve as dual, micro-level social exchange lenses through which to elucidate the exchange dynamic of the EOR and gain insight into the thoughts, feelings and perceptions employees have concerning the employment relationship they have with their employer. Both theories are archetypal representations of the social exchange framework in that they reflect the process and mechanisms which influence the nature and type of resources exchanges between employees and employers (Gouldner, 1960; Blau, 1964; Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000; Aselage and Eisenberger, 2003) and provide useful approaches to evaluating the quality of the EOR (Wayne et al., 2009; Eisenberger and Stinglhamber, 2011).

Empirical investigations on psychological contracts and organisational support have developed independently over the past three decades. These studies have demonstrated the theoretical and practical significance each approach offers in terms of explicating the exchange processes and associated attitudinal and behavioural outcomes underpinning the
employment relationship (Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000; Aselage et al., 2003). Recently, studies integrating psychological contract and perceived organisational support theories have appeared in the organisational literature, emphasising their theoretical complementarity in furthering our understanding of EOR determinants, linkages and outcomes in workplace exchange relationships (e.g. Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2000; Tekleab, Takeuchi and Taylor, 2005; Guerrero and Herrbach, 2007; Zagenczyk, Gibney, Few and Scott, 2011). Given that both approaches are exchange-based perspectives of employee-employer interactions, research has shown that the type of psychological contract experienced by individuals in an organisation is strongly related to the level of perceived organisational support conveyed by his/her employer, and that both perspectives offer additional insights regarding salient work outcomes. Research further suggests that perceived organisational support evinces direct as well as intervening effects on employee attitudes within the context of a person’s psychological contract (Guerrero et al., 2008) to the extent that the effect of perceived organisational support operates differently depending on the nature of the psychological contract.

Therefore, the current study explores the employee-organisation relationship of University academics in the Republic of Ireland, and in doing so, offers an integrated account of the underlying mechanisms and associated consequences through the application of psychological contract and organisational support perspectives. The remainder of this chapter presents a conceptual and theoretical background to the study and provides a rationale for the study’s focus. An overview of the research methods applied in this thesis is provided and the principle research questions are identified.
1.2 Theoretical Background to the Research

The Social Exchange Framework

In situating the analysis of employee-organisation relationship within the social exchange framework, Molm (1997) cogently captures the essence of exchange with the following assertion:

“Both economic and social exchanges are based on a fundamental characteristic of social life: much of what we need and value in life (e.g., goods, services, companionship, approval, status, information can only be obtained from others. People depend on one another for such valued resources…through the process of exchange. Social exchange theory takes as its particular focus this aspect of social life- the benefits that people obtain from and contribute to, social interaction, and the pattern of dependence that govern those exchanges.” (p.12)

Thus, the fundamental premise of social exchange theory is that individuals interact with each other based on the perceived value each attaches to the relationship and the mutual benefit each person derives from the exchange relationship (Chadwick-Jones, 1976; Heath, 1976; Molm, 1997). Self-interest and interdependence are characteristic properties of social exchanges (Molm, 1997; Lawler and Thye, 1999).

According to Blau (1964) social exchange “refers to the voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring
from others” (p.91). Further, “an individual who supplies rewarding services to another obligates him...to discharge this obligation, the second must furnish benefits to the first in turn” (p.89). The discharge and repayment of these obligations which may initially “originate in pure self-interest, generates trust in social relations through their recurrent and gradually expanding character” (Blau, 1964, p.94). As a consequence of repeated reciprocal exchange transactions over time, where each person becomes obliged and has proven the ability to repay the sentiments and resources received from another, the relationship evolves into one where it becomes embedded with a sense of trust, loyalty and mutual commitments (Gouldner, 1960; Blau, 1964; Cropanzano et al., 2005). Key features of the framework relate to the type of resource exchanges that occur among individuals and organisations, and the level of obligation balance that exists between the parties. Combined, these two salient factors define the underlying exchange relationship between agents.

In the language of social exchange, the notions of an exchange resource or exchange obligation is usually treated as being interrelated in both meaning and focus. According to Molm (1997, p.15-16): “several concepts are used to refer to aspects of what actors’ exchange: resources, outcomes, rewards, costs, value, exchange domains. When an actor (individual/group/organisation) has possessions or behavioural capabilities that are valued by other actors, they are resources in that actor’s relations with those others”. Further, “social exchange resources include not only the tangible goods and services of economic exchange but capacities to provide socially valued outcomes such as approval or status” (Molm, 2006, p.26).
In terms of the type obligations which reflect the social exchange relationship, it is generally accepted that exchange transactions assume two primary forms: economic and socio-emotional (Blau, 1964; Molm, 1997; Coyle-Shapiro and Conway, 2004; Cropanzano et al., 2005; Molm, 2006). Blau (1964) distinguishes between exchanges where the nature of the obligations are specific, time-bound and purely economic, to those guided by more open-ended, socio-emotional factors. A resource exchange transaction in social exchange, according to Blau (1964, p.93): “differs in important ways from strictly economic exchange. The basic and most crucial distinction is that social exchange entails unspecified obligations”. While economic-type exchanges emphasise clear, explicit agreement regarding the obligations expected and anticipated between individuals (e.g. the formal written employment contract), social exchanges reflect a deeper, more implicit understanding between the parties such that there is a general expectation of some future return of which ‘its exact nature is definitely not stipulated in advance’ (Blau, 1964). Thus, “only social exchange tends to engender feelings of personal obligation, gratitude, and trust; purely economic exchange as such does not” (Blau, 1964, p.94). Referring to the nature and role of obligations which constitute social exchanges, Blau (1964, p.95) states that: “The obligations individuals incur in social exchange, therefore, are defined only in general, somewhat diffuse terms. The specific benefits exchanged are sometimes primarily valued as symbols of the supportiveness and friendliness they express, and it is the exchange of the underlying mutual support that is the main concern of the participants”.

The second salient element of exchange theory relates to the issue of balance in the relationship. Closely associated with the concept of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) and the various types of reciprocity which define social exchange relationships (Sahlins; 1972),
Blau (1964) emphasised the role and importance of balance in social exchange relationships, arguing that lack of balance in the reciprocation and fulfilment of obligations has negative consequences for the individuals involved in the exchange relationship, and lays doubts over the future existence of the relationship itself (Shore et al., 1998). Akin to the general precepts of equity theory (Adams, 1965) where an individual compares his/her inputs to the outputs derived from the employment relationship, balance from a social exchange perspective relates to the employee’s perception that that the level of employee and employer obligations within the EOR is somewhat similar (Brandes et al., 2004). As such, when an employee believes that the contributions he/she makes is perceived to be similar in terms of perceived value and utility to the level of inducements provided by his/her employer, the exchange is balanced. However, if employee contributions are perceived to be greater (or lower) than employer contributions, the exchange relationship is imbalanced, with consequences for the employment relationship.

Thus, in aspiring to meet organisational goals and strategic objectives, employers seek to have satisfied, highly motivated, committed and engaged employees through whom to achieve these ends (Hannah & Iverson, 2004; Eisenberger et al., 2011). The degree to which employees are motivated to reciprocate and contribute to helping the organisation accomplish its operational mission, is based in the belief that they have a supportive employer, concerned about their general well-being and professional needs, and have the necessary financial and financial resources with which to perform their job (Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000; Dulac, Coyle-Shapiro, Henderson, & Wayne, 2008; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986). Simply stated, when employees’ feel that their employer is sufficiently providing the necessary environmental conditions and upholding its obligations for them to do their job, employees enact a felt obligation to reciprocate by
contributing the necessary work efforts in return (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986). Antithetically, believing that their organisation is not forthcoming in its obligations in the workplace, employees’ will re-dress this by holding back on their contributions and display more negative attitudes in this regard. As stated by Blau (1964, p.28): “A person who supplies services in demand to others obligates them to reciprocate. If some fail to reciprocate, he has strong inducements to withhold the needed assistance from them in order to supply it to others who do repay him for his troubles in some form”.

*Social Exchange in the Workplace: The Psychological Contract Perspective*

As an important determiner of workplace behaviour (Schein, 1980) psychological contract theory provides a useful framework with which to evaluate the quality of the employee-organisation relationship (Shore and Tetrick, 1994; Robinson and Morrison, 1997; Eisenberger et al., 2011) and is an exchange-based dynamic that either implicitly or explicitly prescribes a quid pro quo exchange of employment obligations.

While a more detailed explication of its conceptual heritage is presented in Chapter 3, the author notes that much debate has surrounded the concept of a psychological contract in terms of its definitional conceptualisation (Conway and Briner, 2005). For example, some notable authors (e.g. Schein, 1980; Herriot, 1996) advance a bi-lateral, dyadic interpretation of the psychological contract to the extent that both employee and employer are somewhat aware that a certain implicit agreement delineates the employment relationship. Other organisational theorists (e.g. Rousseau, 1989; 1990; 1995; 2001; Rousseau and McLean-Parks, 1993; Robinson and Rousseau; 1994; Robinson and
Morrison, 1995) postulate a uni-lateral interpretation and emphasise that a psychological contract is a subjectively-driven phenomenon which lies solely in the mind of the employee. A further point closely associated with its conceptualisation rests with the issue of with whom the employee has a psychological contract. Does an employee experience a psychological contract with the abstract agent known as ‘the employer’ or can an employee have ‘multiple psychological contracts’ within the work environment? While not specifically addressed in the current study, it should be noted that these employment obligations develop as a result of the multiple interactions individuals have with co-workers, supervisors, managers and other agents of the organisation, as well as interpreting the multiple types of information, communiques and actions associated with these interactions (Levinson et al., 1962; Schein, 1980; Shore et al., 1994; Rousseau; 1995).

Further, Guzo and Noonan (1994) and Sims (1994) argue the viewpoint that the policies and procedures linked to human resource (HR) practices indicate to employees the type of employment relationship and thus, the nature of the psychological contract, expected in the workplace.

For the purpose of this study, a psychological contract is here defined as “individual beliefs shaped by the organisation, regarding terms of an exchange agreement between the individual and organisation” (Rousseau, 1995, p.9). Promissory in nature (MacNeil, 1985; Rousseau, 1995), a psychological contract relates to the subjective interpretation by the employee of the perceived promises and obligations (what the employer has promised to employees and what the employees has promised in return, as perceived by the employee) believed to constitute the employment relationship above and beyond that prescribed in the formal, written contract (Rousseau and McLean-Parks, 1993, Herriot et al., 1997). Similarly, McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher (1998, p.698) define the
contract “in terms of the idiosyncratic set of reciprocal expectations held by employees concerning their obligations (i.e. what they will do for the employer) and their entitlements (i.e. what they expect to receive in return). It invokes the tenets of social exchange theory and the theory of reciprocity (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960) as a general framework and mechanism for interpreting exchange processes in the workplace and facilitates an analyse of the work relationship at the individual level between employer and employee (Guest, 2004). Psychological contracts are important as they specify how an employee defines the deal and whether or not the employee feels that the deal has been honoured or violated (Conway et al., 2005; George, 2009).

The extant literature shows that the influence of an individual’s psychological contract imparts on employee job attitudes and behaviours and thus, the quality of the EOR, is based on three standpoints: 1) the dimensional characteristics of the exchange obligations underlying the psychological contract (MacNeil, 1985; Rousseau, 1990; Rousseau, 1995; Conway et al., 2005), 2) the perceived degree of exchange balance in mutual obligations between employee and employer (Tsui, Pearce, Porter and Tripoli, 1997; Shore and Barksdale, 1998) and 3) whether or not these perceived obligations are being breached or fulfilled by the organisation (Rousseau, 1995; Robinson et al., 1997, Conway et al., 2005).

A number of seminal typological approaches relating an employee’s psychological contract to their EOR exist in the literature. In terms of construing an individual’s psychological contract and evaluating the effect it has on employee attitudes and behaviours in a work environment, Conway et al (2005) state that the majority of research
in the field has focused on the contents and dimensions that constitute the contract, and whether or not these items are being fulfilled by the organisation.

**Dimensions and Balance within the Employee-Organisation Relationship**

Drawing upon the principles of social exchange (Blau, 1964) concerning the distinction between economic and social exchange transactions, empirical studies have confirmed that an individual’s psychological contract spans a contractual continuum of which Rousseau’s (1990; 1995) typological description is seminal. Anchoring one end of this continuum is the transactional contract which is “comprised of short-term monetisable agreements with limited involvement of each party in the lives and activities of the other” (Rousseau et al., 1993, p.10). Such contracts reflect exchanges where affective ties and emotional bonds between the parties (employee and organisation) are tenuous and weak (Rousseau, 1995). Typical examples would include employees on part-time, contingent employment contracts where the specific, closed-ended nature and structure of the contractual agreement delineates the type of EOR held by the individual. This reflects a social exchange which Blau (1964) termed ‘economic-type exchange transactions’.

While also evincing transactional/economic exchanges, relational psychological contracts emphasise obligations which are more socioemotional in nature and where loyalty, support, trust and mutual commitment characterise the exchange relationship (Rousseau et al., 1993; Rousseau, 1990; Rousseau, 1995; Morrison et al., 1997; Eisenberger et al., 2011). The understanding between employee and employer in this type of social exchange is driven by affective bonds and mutual investment in the relationship (Blau, 1964; Guest,
Research has shown that employees holding a relational type psychological contract exhibit more favourable work attitudes and behaviours (Sparrow and Cooper, 2003; George, 2009).

Building on typology developed Rousseau (1989, 1990 and 1995) the EOR models postulated and tested by Tsui, Pearce, Porter and Tripoli (1997) and Shore and Barksdale (1998) serve as excellent extensions and adaptations of the transactional-relational approach to the employment relationship. These models approach the EOR (albeit from two different perspectives) in terms of the degree of balance present between the contribution both parties make to the employment relationship (Taylor and Tekleab, 2004). Both models assert that balanced relationships lead to more positive attitudinal and behavioural outcomes for individuals, and enhanced performance consequences for organisations (Taylor et al., 2004; Conway et al., 2005; De Cuyper, Rigotti, De Witte and Mohr, 2008). Further, by including the issue of balance into the lexicon of both the EOR and psychological contract theory, Tsui et al (1997) and Shore at al (1998) highlight the role that reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) brings to bear on the exchange process in the employment relationship.

For example, Tsui et al (1997) assessed the nature of the employee-organisation exchange relationship from the employer’s perspective in terms of the level of employee-investment reflected in human resource practices. In their study, the responses from HR managers regarding the type of contributions they expected from employees based on the inducements offered by the organisation were categorised into four types of EOR exchanges each indicating a characteristic level of employee-employer relationship.
investment balance. The results of the Tsui et al (1997) study found that employees performed better on core operational tasks and reported stronger affective organisational commitment when they were part of either a mutually high investment relationship or employer-overinvestment relationship.

Adopting the balanced/unbalanced approach to the employee-organisation relationship, Shore et al (1998) investigated the perceptions of a sample of MBA students regarding the level of obligations between employee and employer, as perceived by the employee. Shore et al (1998) argued that while the underlying obligation dimensions of the psychological contract (transactional-relational) are important factors to consider when evaluating the state of the EOR, the degree of balance in the exchange of these dimensions is an equally salient factor in determining the quality of the employment relationship. Responses to Rousseau’s (1990) fifteen-item survey measuring a range of transactional and relational psychological contract items were cluster analysed resulting in four patterns of relationships. Analysis of variance results supported the hypotheses that each contract type was significantly different regarding perceptions of organisational support, affective commitment, turnover intentions and career future attitudes (Shore et al., 1998). Additionally, those participants who represented the mutual high obligations cluster scored significantly higher on the organisational support, commitment and career future measures compared to members of the mutual low obligation cluster.
A second perspective associated with psychological contract research relates to an employee’s evaluation of the state of the contract (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2000; Guest, 2004). That is, whether or not the obligations perceived by the employee to be part of the psychological contract are being fulfilled or breached (Rousseau, 1990; Morrison and Robinson, 1997; Conway et al., 2005). Dulac, Coyle-Shapiro, Henderson and Wayne, (2008, p. 1085) suggest that “because developing an exchange relationship entails rendering oneself vulnerable to the behaviour of another, concluding that a series of events has culminated in breach within the relationship may be particularly stressful.” Fulfilment or non-fulfilment of exchange obligations can impact on the quality of the employment relationship (Van Dyne and Ellis, 2004). Conway et al. (2005) suggest that a breach of psychological contract arises when there is a perceived discrepancy between what was promised by the employer and what was actually delivered upon. When this “fulfilment incongruence” exists, tension, confusion and frustration can permeate the employment relationship (Wolfe-Morrison and Robinson, 2004) and devolve into a sense of violation. Both breach and violation are viewed as exemplars of negative workplace events that have deleterious effects on employee attitudes and behaviours (Morrison et al. 1997; Rousseau, 2000; Suazo, 2008). Accordingly, an understanding of the psychological affect experiences of workers centres on differentiating the relative cognitive and emotional responses to psychological contract breach and violation.

Studies investigating breach and violation of the psychological contract as forms of contract evaluation as an area of interest have grown in frequency and is one of the dominant areas of psychological contract research (Conway et al., 2005). The need to
expand and develop empirical research linking the impact of negative workplace events to employee work outcomes have been encouraged in an attempt to comprehend the direct and indirect effects of contract infringement on attitudes and behaviours (Suazo, 2008). Breach of psychological contract could be considered as a rational, cognitively-orientated appraisal of perceived unmet obligations that may incorporate a short-term imbalance in the employment relationship (Morrison et al., 1997; Pate, Martin and McGoldrick, 2003) but may evolve into a sense of violation through continued non-fulfilment of obligations. Perceived breach can be interpreted as an antecedent to contract violation (Raja and Ntalianis, 2004; Suazo, 2005; Suazo, 2008). The more often perceptions of breach arise, the greater the probability that its cumulative effects will generate negative feelings. Contract violation, as espoused by (Morrison et al., 1997) incorporates a more “emotional and affective state that may, under certain conditions, follow from the belief that one’s organisation has failed adequately to maintain the psychological contract” (p. 230).

Given the interdependent components of social exchange, any situation or event where this interdependence is compromised results in a re-appraisal of the exchange relationship (Blau, 1964; Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2000; Conway et al. 2005; Morrison et al., 1997; Zhao et al. 2007). When employees perceive that their psychological contract has been breached or violated, trust in their employer is compromised; they are less inclined to invest emotionally, attitudinally or behaviourally in the relationship and will attempt to rebalance the exchange (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996; Robinson et al. 1997; Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2000; Conway et al., 2005). Research indicates that employment relationships centred on more relational footings, exhibit a greater degree of emotional response in the face of contract breaches (Robinson et al., 1994; Robinson and Rousseau, 1994; Morrison and Robinson, 1997; Tekleab and Taylor, 2003). Research further indicates that a contract
violation has a negative relationship on job satisfaction, organisational citizen behaviours, trust (Rousseau, 1990; Robinson and Rousseau, 1994; Robinson and Morrison, 1995; Robinson, 1996; Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski, & Bravo, 2007) and general employee exchange relations (Perceived Organisational Support) and the employing organisation such as reduced levels of commitment and loyalty (Pearce, 1995) and lower employee well-being (Conway and Briner, 2005).

Originally treated as representing the same meaning (Rousseau, 1990), Conway et al (2005) emphasise the advantage of distinguishing between breach and violation from the perspective that it allows to separate and understand the saliency of both scenarios into their relative impact on the employment relationship. Further, studies have attempted to separate out and interpret the sources, processes and differential effects of psychological contract breach and violation via the theoretical framework of Affective Events Theory (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996) as a means of understanding employee reactions to workplace events and the consequential work outcomes (e.g. Morrison and Robinson, 1997; Zhao, Wayne, Blibkowski and Bravo, 2007, Suazo, 2005, 2008). Further, the utility of applying ‘intervening variable’ analysis as a mechanism for unlocking causal relationships between breach, violation and job attitudes has been encouraged and demonstrated in recent times (Raja et al., 2004 Zhao, et al. 2007; Suazo, 2008).

Concurrent with the subjective orientation of the psychological contract as defined in the literature, AET theory emphasises an ‘individual level’ analysis (Wegge, van Dick, Fisher, West and Dawson, 2006). As Dulac, et al., (2008, p. 1084) contend “it is important to understand how individuals respond to opposing views that their relationships are founded
on trust and mutual dependence, yet their psychological contracts may have been breached. AET advocates principles and mechanisms by which workplace environments influence employee attitudinal and behavioural responses to particular positive and negative stimuli (Fisher, 2002). The centrality of the theory places an emphasis on the role of events as proximal sources of affective reactions and other ‘distal’ antecedents of behaviours (Weiss et al. 1996). Furthermore, the literature indicates that affective reactions to certain events influence work actions, attitudes and cognitive-driven behaviours over time (Grandey, Tam and Brauburger, 2002).

For example, empirical evidence indicates that violation is not only negatively related to organisational work outcomes, but mediates the impact of breach on the same outcomes (Raja and Ntalianis, 2004; Suazo, 2008; Raja, John and Bilgrami, 2011). Specifically, this study analyses contract violation as an important mediating variable in the relationship between psychological contract breach and three important work outcomes: job satisfaction, organisational commitment and perceived organisational support.

Taken together, perception of breach and violation undermines the employee-employer relationship which can ultimately lead to undesirable employee attitudes and behaviours on the job such as reduced job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Zhao et al. 2007; Montes and Irving, 2008). As Fisher (2002, p4) states: “the cumulative experience of momentary positive and negative feelings while working influence attitudes.” A fuller appreciation of psychological contract breach, violation and related work outcomes is presented in chapter three.
This study incorporates perceptions of psychological contract fulfilment as an additional variable with which to evaluate the EOR. Previous investigations treated breach and fulfilment of the psychological contract as opposite ends of the contract infringement continuum. However, it has been suggested that perceptions of breach and perceptions that one’s employer has (or is) fulfilling its obligations, represent different interpretations of the psychological contract. While breach is an everyday occurrence (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994), there are aspects of the psychological contract which an employee could interpret as being fulfilled or possibly over-fulfilled which have different effects to perceptions of broken promises (Conway et al., 2005).

Social Exchange in the Workplace: The Perceived Organisational Support Perspective

Perceived organisational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986) is a global belief an employee develops about the perceived level of support and concern that is conveyed by the employer to him/her in the work environment. Just as an individual’s psychological contract can be determined by the actions and policies prevalent in the organisation (Rousseau, 1990; Guzo et al., 1994), organisational support perceptions are similarly derived from the policies, procedures, human resource practices and social interactions prevailing within the company (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002; Eisenberger et al., 2011). As stated by Eisenberger, Jones, Aselage and Sucharski (2004): “based on the experience of personally relevant organisational policies and procedures, the receipt of resources, and interactions with agents of the organisation, an employee would distill the organisation’s general orientation toward him or her” (p.207).
As a way of judging the quality of the EOR, employees perceiving that that their employer provides important socio-emotional as well as relevant economic support, this would give employees a sense that they are part of a high quality exchange relationship (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2000; Wayne et al., 2009; Eisenberger et al., 2011). Perceiving that the organisation values his/her contributions and expresses concern for their well-being through its actions, the employee develops a felt obligation to reciprocate this treatment through stronger levels of commitment and effort (Gouldner, 1960; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Makanjee, Hartzer and Uys, 2005). Eisenberger et al (1986) further emphasise that the dynamics of perceived organisational support operate on a similar grounding based upon commitment in interpersonal social relationships and thus, by offering a supportive environment, the organisation can generate positive employee work outcomes and “thereby develop a positive emotional bond (affective attachment) to the organisation” (Eisenberger et al., 1986, p. 504).

High levels of perceived organisational support for the employee is reciprocated with increases in employee’s support regarding organisational goals and values (Porter et al., 1974) and continued membership with the organisation (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2000; Aselage et al., 2003). For example, in their study of relationship between POS and OC, Settoon et al., (1996) found a positive and significant correlation between the two constructs. Similarly, Shore and Wayne (1993) indicated the positive correlation between POS and affective organisational commitment and O’Driscoll and Randall (1999) reported POS as a strong functional relationship with affective commitment and job involvement over continuance commitment. A meta-analysis conducted by Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch and Topolnytsky (2002) confirmed that perceived organisational support had the strongest direct positive correlation with the
affective component of organisational commitment. However, in linking organisational support theory with the theory of the psychological contract, a number of important aspects must be considered in terms of their inter-relatedness, and how this would impact work on outcomes.

Facilitated by the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), organisational support theory and psychological contract theory each incorporate the exchange of economic and socio-emotional resources in the exchange relationship. In terms of psychological contract theory, the strength and quality of this exchange relationship is influenced both by the nature and form of the exchange relationship (the balance between transactional and relational obligations) and the extent to which employees experience breach or fulfilment of the specific promises to have been made by his/her employer. Organisational support theory contends that perceptions of organisational support arise without regard to what has been promised by the organisation or employee (Aselage et al., 2003). As such, while psychological contract theory specifies the particular conditions of exchange under which the employee-organisation relationship is judged, organisational support theory maintains that the quality of the EOR is not determined by specific, concrete exchange conditions (Eisenberger et al., 2011).

Given that a psychological contract incorporates a relational exchange dimension (Rousseau, 1990; Rousseau, 1995), there is a strong probability that employees perceiving to have this type of contract would view this as an example of their employer wishing to promote a strong, affective-type relationship, thus conveying a sense of support to employees. The quality of the EOR may also be influenced by how well employees
perceive their employer is fulfilling or not fulfilling its obligations as part of the psychological contract. Research indicates that breach of the psychological contract and perceptions of organisational support are correlated (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2000; Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2005) such that “failure to fulfill the terms of the psychological contract conveys a low evaluation of the employee’s contribution and lack of concern with the employee’s well-being” (Aselage et al., 2003, p.501).

Furthermore, recent studies have shown that perceived organisational support is an important mediating variable between an employee’s psychological contract and work outcomes (Guerrero et al., 2008; Suazo and Turnley, 2009). Employees perceiving breach and/or experiencing violation in their psychological contract would interpret this as an example of unfavourable treatment (negative workplace events) from the organisation and thus would impact negatively on job attitudes. Antithetically, perceiving that their employer is fulfilling its obligations in the contract would convey to the employee that his/her employer cares about their well-being and appreciates their effort and contribution to the organisation and would have a positive effect on their job satisfaction and commitment levels. Therefore, it is argued here that perceived organisational support operates as a channel through which psychological contract fulfilment is experienced. Additionally, perceived organisational support is posited to buffer and mitigate the negative effect of breach perceptions on work attitudes.
1.3 Rationale for the Research & Research Questions

University academics perform complex duties where the interdependent functions of knowledge creation, knowledge transmission through their research and teaching activities, as well as service to society, represent their core professional work life functions (Houston, Meyer and Paewai, 2006; Coates, Dobson, Geodegebure and meek, 2010). The environment within which academics carry out these core responsibilities has become increasingly challenging in the past two decades (Tipples, 1996; Newton, 2002; Shen, 2010). The need to have more efficient and accountable public sectors in the face of rising national and international economic pressures, combined with rising government deficits and contracting national budgets (Kolsaker, 2008; Abramavov, 2012), Enders and Musselin (2008, p.145) highlight “increasing financial constraints, processes of differentiation within massified higher education systems, demands for accountability and responsiveness to societal needs, market-like approaches to higher education, and rising international co-operation and competition” as the principal drivers contributing to the demands placed on Universities and other third level institutions.

The adoption by the public sector of private sector management principles and techniques as represented in the New Public Management ideology (Fredman and Doughney, 2012), have permeated the education sector, and defines the operational management of HE institutions. The move from loosely controlled institutional administration and professional collegiality (Dearlove, 2002) to the application of rational, neo-liberal economic principles of management and accountable governance and performance management systems, are features of the 21st century higher education (Deem, 1998; Abramavov, 2012).
Considering the level of theoretical and empirical studies associated with psychological contract and organisational support theories which have appeared during the past three decades, there is a dearth of such research applied to academic environs. In fact, the majority of the published work cited in this thesis relate to many different organisational contexts other than educational institutions. This is strange considering the fact that academic work is exposed to and associated with increasingly complex and demanding internal and external environments (Houston, Meyer and Paewai, 2006) brought about by the raft of public sector changes that have taken place over the past decade or so. In particular, appreciating the systemic rationalisation which national and international higher education sectors have, and are currently experiencing, a limited body of research dedicated to exploring the employment relationship of academics from a psychological contract perspective has appeared in the organisational literature.

Considering that the concept of the psychological contract is increasingly being used as a platform upon which to comprehend the effects that these sectoral changes are imparting on the professions and in particular, an academic’s relationship with their institution and resultant job attitudes (e.g. Tipples and Krivokapic-Skoko, 1997; Tipples and Jones, 1999; Newton, 2002; Dabos and Rousseau, 2004; Tipples, Krivokapic-Skoko, O’Neill, 2007; O’Donoghue, Sheehan, Hecker and Holland, 2007; O’Neill, Krivokapic-Skoko and Dowell, 2010; Shen, 2010), there appears to be no systematic or integrated framework upon which such studies have been based. Moreover, at the time of writing this thesis, I could not find any similar type investigation which focused specifically on the University sector of the Republic of Ireland.
Little is known about the underlying nature and dimensional characteristics of the psychological contract of university academics in the Republic of Ireland. Therefore, the present investigations seek to address this issue by applying the tenets of social exchange theory to a heretofore under researched occupational group in the Republic of Ireland. In particular, approaching the employee-organisation relationship of University academics from a social exchange perspective facilitates the application and integration of psychological contract theory and organisational support theory through which to explicate the EOR of academics. Additionally, this study incorporates dimensional and exchange balance perspectives associated with an academic’s psychological contract to determine if different types of exchange relationships exist among a sample of third level academics. By doing so, a number of the assumed principles, elements and theoretical relationships derived from exchange theory can be systematically tested and outcomes evaluated.

In light of the theoretical background upon which this study is based, and acknowledging the empirical reasons guiding the overall research rationale for the enquiry, the following five key research questions serve to guide this investigation:

**Research Question One:** In terms of dimensional characteristics, what is the underlying exchange nature of a University academic’s psychological contract?

**Research Question Two:** Is the underlying nature of an academic’s psychological contract associated with differential work attitudes and exchange relationship quality perceptions?
**Research Question Three (a):** Does an academic’s psychological contract significantly explain their level of job satisfaction, affective and normative commitment as well as perceptions of organisational support?

**Research Question Three (b):** Does an academic’s psychological contract significantly explain perceptions of breach, violation and contract fulfilment?

**Research Question Four:** Accounting for different psychological contract types, what is the relationship between psychological contract breach, violation, fulfilment perceptions and the work attitudes of academics?

**Research Question Five:** Does perceived organisational support mediate:

(i) the negative effects of psychological contract breach on work-related outcomes? And (ii) the positive effects of psychological contract fulfilment on work-related outcomes?

### 1.4 Methodological Approach

In order to address the five principal research questions of the investigation, consideration as to the most suitable research method and data collection approach was given due time and thought. Given that a fundamental component of this study rested on the need to determine the underlying dimensional nature of an academic’s psychological contract, and from which all subsequent analyses and interpretations are founded, a cross-sectional survey design was employed in this regard. As such, the current investigation takes a largely quantitative approach.
An on-line survey was created and e-mailed to a population of academics employed in the seven constituent Universities in the Republic of Ireland. Survey data was collected from a sample of 3,348 University academics during the month of February, yielding a response rate of 13.3% (n = 445). The research instrument contained a battery of standardised survey instruments measuring the psychological contract (Rousseau’s Psychological Contract Inventory, 2000), Survey of Perceived Organisational Support – Short Form (Eisenberger et al., 1986), Affective Organisational Commitment and Normative Organisational Commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1997), Perceived Psychological Contract Breach (Morrison and Robinson, 2000), Psychological Contract Violation (Morrison and Robinson, 2000), Psychological Contract Fulfilment (Rousseau, 2000), and Job Satisfaction (Self-designed measure). Each and all of the stated measures reached acceptable levels of internal reliability (Cronbach, 1956). Using the Psychological Contract Inventory as a measure of the psychological contract based on the relational-transactional dimensions underpinning the construct, cluster analysis of the research sample was then applied in order to determine the underlying structure of the employee-organisation exchange relationship. A combination of descriptive statistics, inferential statistics (t-tests) and multivariate statistical analyses (multiple correlation analysis and multiple regression), were employed to address each of the five research questions and related hypotheses.

One open-ended question was included on the survey and presented an opportunity to the participants to provide their own personal, subjective accounts regarding the employee-organisation relationship of academics in terms of their employer’s obligations in the psychological contract. This data was qualitatively analysed and the results of which are incorporated into Chapter Five. Of the 445 participants who responded to the overall
survey, 192 (response rate of 43.1%) provided written accounts to the open-ended question. The methods used in this study are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

Chapter Two builds upon the theoretical and conceptual background of the investigation as presented in the introductory chapter and provides an appraisal of the relevant literature associated with the exchange based view of the employee-organisation relationship. A more detailed account of the Social Exchange Framework as it applies in a work setting is offered. Following on from this, a detailed review of Psychological Contract Theory (PCT) is given which provides an account of the conceptual evolution of the psychological contract construct and how the construct has been explicated from an empirical perspective. This is followed by a discussion on Organisational Support Theory (OST) with a specific focus on the Perceived Organisational Support (POS) construct. This study argues that integrating PCT and POS theories offer additive insights into the social-psychological mechanisms underlying the employee-organisation relationship. As such, a review of the extant research which has combined both exchange-based theories is provided. A conceptual model of the study outlined which synthesises the overall thrust of the investigation.

Chapter Three details the research approach employed in this study. It reviews the process and decisions taken regarding the choice and justification of the data collection mode. Given that this investigation is largely quantitative in nature, the methods and statistical techniques utilised throughout the study are described. The choice and measurement of the
variables of interest, along with details concerning factor structure and psychometric integrity is discussed. In particular, the use of Cluster Analysis and Mediated Regression Analysis as the primary multivariate statistical applications, are explained. An initial descriptive account of the research sample is provided.

Chapter Four re-connects with the key research questions and associated hypotheses which guided the study and reports on the findings derived from the quantitative data. Emphasis here is placed on deriving the underlying structure and nature of the exchange relationship of University academics as reflected in their perceptions of the psychological contract. The hypotheses underpinning each research question are tested and decisions are made whether they confirm or disconfirm as a results of the statistical techniques employed. A summary of the results concludes this chapter.

Chapter Five builds upon the results derived from the previous chapter and presents a critical discussion of the overall findings of the study. The discussion is framed around each of the research questions and emphasises where the results of the present research support or contradict prior studies. The chapter focuses on the influence an academic’s psychological contract has on job satisfaction, affective commitment and normative commitment as well as pointing out the variation in job attitudes that is attributable to the underlying nature of the employee-organisation relationship. Additionally, new insights regarding the differential effects that Perceived Organisational Support brings to bear on the EOR is noted and explained. The chapter concludes with a discussion on how the present study contributes to our understanding of the employment relationship in general,
and the EOR of academics in particular. Research limitations are noted and suggestions for future investigations resulting from the study are offered.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

‘Exchange theory is one of the oldest theories of social behaviour, and on that we still use every day to interpret our own behaviour”

(George Homans, 1958)
2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature relating to the employee-organisation relationship and incorporates a number of relevant theoretical perspectives and frameworks to explicate exchange relations in the workplace. Psychological Contract Theory (PCT) and Organisational Support Theory (OST) are presented as the principal exemplar theories which reflect the social exchange approach to workplace interaction, and offer complimentary conceptualisations of the employee-employer relationship. While both approaches to understanding the dynamics of the employment relationship have developed independently of each other over the years, recent suggestions have encouraged the integration of both organisational behaviour perspectives (Aselage and Eisenberger, 2003) to build on the inherent strengths of both theories to further enhance this understanding. The current chapter is thus divided into a number of sections in this regard. The first part presents a description and justification of Social Exchange Theory (SET) as an appropriate framework through which to understand the employment relationship. In particular, reference to the seminal works of Peter Blau (1964) and Alvin Gouldner (1960) serve as the key authors whose conceptualisations of social exchange theory have been applied in an organisational context.

The next part focuses on Psychological Contract Theory (PCT). Issues regarding its definition and measurement are presented along with a review of the approaches used to measure the dimensions of the psychological contract. Additionally, literature relating to manner in which an individual evaluates his/her psychological contract will be highlighted. As such, a discussion regarding psychological contract breach and fulfilment will be noted.
and the consequences that the psychological contract imparts on workplace attitudes will be emphasised. The literature review proceeds presents with a theoretical overview of Organisational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al, 1986). Specifically, Perceived Organisational Support (POS) is discussed as an alternative yet complimentary approach to evaluating the quality and strength of the employee-organisation relationship. A review of the relevant literature and key research studies relating to POS and the employment relationship will serve as the bulwark of this section.

Part four extends the independent discussions of PCT and POS from the previous sections by emphasising the commonalities both theories bring to bear on the employment relationship. Specific reference will be made to those theoretical expositions and research studies which have integrated both PCT and POS theories in attempting to enhance our understanding of the exchange relationship in the workplace.

Finally, a conceptual model reflecting the theoretical and empirical thrust of this study is presented. This is further supported with a number of research questions and associated hypotheses based on the conceptual model developed for this thesis.

2.2 The Social Exchange Framework

Social exchange theory (SET) asserts that all social behaviour results from the interaction processes between individuals (Yukl, 1981) and is described by the social contingencies of reinforcement that determine inter-personal relationships and rewards (Homans, 1958, 1961; Blau, 1964; Molm, 1983). Lawler (2001) states that social exchange “is a joint
activity of two or more actors in which each actor has something the other values” (p.322). As such, the central premise of SET is that individuals interact with each other based on the mutual benefit and perceived value each attaches to, and derives from the exchange relationship.

A number of definitions of social exchange have sought to conceptualise the essence of the framework. For example, Emerson (1976, p.359) stresses that “Exchange theory takes the movement of valued things (resources) through social process as its focus...and is defined by an assumption: that a resource will continue to flow only if there is a valued return contingent upon it.” Marcus and House (1973, p. 209) state that “exchange theory is based upon social psychological assumptions, one of which is that persons will show behaviour that they consider equally valuable or less valuable than behaviour shown to them...the formulation is based upon a person’s perception and evaluation of the behaviour shown to him”

Simpson (1972, p.2) suggests that the fundamental precept of social exchange theory is that “people must undergo psychological costs to get psychological rewards. In their interaction they try to maximise rewards and minimise costs to obtain the most profitable outcomes. They choose one activity or situation instead of another if one is more profitable or less costly to them than the other.” Roloff (1981) considers exchange as a “transference of something from one entity to another in return for something else...a person gives or denies a resource to another (proaction) which elicits a certain response from the other person (reaction)”. Cook and Whitmeyer (1992) offer the following perspective of social exchange and interaction based on two underlying principles: “(i) The actor can be modelled as motivated by interests and rewards/punishments- i.e. all
behaviour can be seen as motivated; (ii) most interactions consist of the exchange of valued (though not necessarily material) items” (p. 114). Finally, commenting on human interaction, Molm (1997) cogently captures the essence of exchange with the following assertion:

“Both economic and social exchanges are based on a fundamental characteristic of social life: much of what we need and value in life (e.g., goods, services, companionship, approval, status, information) can only be obtained from others. People depend on one another for such valued resources...through the process of exchange. Social exchange theory takes as its particular focus this aspect of social life- the benefits that people obtain from and contribute to, social interaction, and the pattern of dependence that govern those exchanges.” (p.12)

The preceding definitions regarding the concept of social exchange lend themselves to the specific works of Peter Blau (1964) and Alvin Gouldner (1960). The contributions of Blau and Gouldner regarding the principles, mechanisms and outcomes of social exchange processes are regularly cited as the guiding tenets upon which the theories of psychological contract and organisational support are based. A brief overview of their work will be discussed in this regard.

For Blau (1964) the fundamental principle of exchange relates to the value associated with the voluntary giving and receiving of unspecified obligations: “An individual who supplies rewarding services to another obligates him. To discharge this obligation, the second must furnish benefits to the first in turn” (p.89). Further, social exchange “refers to the voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others” (Blau, 1964, p.91).
Blau (1964) distinguishes between exchanges that are economic based and market focused, to those embedded in a social relationship. For Blau (1964) “only social exchange tends to engender feelings of personal obligation, gratitude, and trust; purely economic exchange as such does not” (p.94). He defined social exchange as the ‘voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns that they are expected to bring and typically do bring from others’ (Blau, 1964, p.91). Further, according to Blau (1960), social exchanges are inherently social in nature, unspecified regarding the type of obligations to be repaid and are not time-bound. They are based on an individual’s trust that gestures of goodwill will be reciprocated at some point in the future (Blau, 1964; Settoon, Bennet and Linden, 1996).

As Blau (1964, p.93) states, social exchanges “involve favours that create diffuse future obligations, not precisely specified ones, and the nature of the return cannot be bargained about but must be left to the discretion of the one who makes it”. Economic exchanges, he contends are specific, time-bound and impersonal in nature and driven by utilitarian, self-interested motives (Blau, 1964). As such, an economic exchange “rests on a formal contract that stipulates the exact quantity to be exchanged” (Blau, 1960, p.93).

According to Cropanzano et al (2005, p.875): “one of the basic tenets of Social Exchange Theory (SET) is that relationships evolve over time into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments”. A fundamental mechanism which facilitates such enduring exchange relationships is the concept of the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). Though there are various forms of reciprocity which can be manifest as positive, negative or balanced forms of resource exchange (e.g. Mauss, 1928; Sahlins, 1974), the general act of receiving and repaying obligations in social interaction serves as the functional underlying process of
human interaction. Emphasising the role of exchange theory as a mechanism for studying social dynamics, Conway et al. (2005, p.57) assert that “when individuals receive benefits they feel indebted and obliged to reciprocate”. This feeling to repay in kind any benefits received is founded on the universal social norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960).

According to Gouldner (1960, p.176), this norm states that: “(1) people should help those who have helped them and, (2) people should not injure those who have helped them’ (Gouldner, 1960, p.171). Further, the norm of reciprocity “requires that if others have been fulfilling their status duties to you, you in turn have an additional obligation (repayment) to fulfil your duties to them”.

Levinson (1965) in his treatise on the relationship between man and organisation emphasised the role and function both parties served toward each other. He affirmed that in a culture of reciprocation “each partner shapes the other to some extent” (Levinson, 1965, p. 389). In his study of mental health issues in industry, Levinson (1962), the concept of reciprocity arose as an explanation for the ‘process of fulfilling mutual expectations and satisfying mutual needs in the relationship between man and his work organisation’ (Levinson, 1965, p.384). Furthermore, Levinson (1965) suggests that this process of reciprocation is in effect a reflection of a psychological contract between both focal agents. Further, ‘to the extent that both partners possess and are willing to supply resources strongly desired by the other, reciprocation of increasingly valued resources strengthens the exchange relationship’ (Aselage et al., 2003, p. 492). It is these underlying elements of social exchange and the theory of reciprocity that have supported the conceptual development of the workplace psychological contract.
2.2.1 Social Exchange in the Workplace

Cole, Schaninger and Harris (2002) note that management research has focused extensively on the nature of employee centred social exchange relationships in the workplace. As such, SET as a framework is recognised as a powerful ‘paradigm’ for comprehending workplace dynamics (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005) and is utilised for exploring “a variety of organisationally-desired outcomes …and…how employees view their relationship with their employer” (Coyle-Shapiro and Conway, 2005, p.5).

Social exchange theory as applied to the workplace focuses on the nature of the employee-organisation relationship by highlighting the role that the receipt and repayment of mutual obligations have on employee behaviours and attitudes. Obligations are basic component of social exchange relationships (Robinson et al., 1994) and it is these obligations that form the core feature of a psychological contract. As Conway and Briner (2005, p.56) state “individuals seek out and remain in social exchanges for many reasons, not least because of the incentives available for doing so”. An occurrence of positive exchanges in the workplace can result in mutual gains and benefits to both the employee and employing organisation (Gould-Williams and Davies, 2005). Similarly, the occurrence of fair transactional relationships between individuals can “produce effective work behaviour and positive employee attitudes” (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005, p.882). For Eisenberger, Arneli, Rexwinkle, Lynch and Rhoades (2001):

“Meeting obligations helps employees maintain the positive self-image of those who repay debts, avoid the social stigma associated with the reciprocity norm’s violation, and obtain favourable treatment from the organisation. Accordingly, workers are motivated to compensate beneficial treatment by acting in ways valued by the organisation”. (p.42)
Taking the spirit of social exchange as a theoretical foundation for the employment relationship, Kallerberg and Reve (1993, p. 1105) view the employment contract as broadly defining the bilateral, reciprocal agreements, expectations and behaviours between employees and employers, suggesting that the notion of employment contracts encompasses a multitude of factors that reflect “the salient features of employment relations, including how work is organised, governed, evaluated, and rewarded”. Similarly, Robinson, Kraatz and Rousseau (1994) suggest that the ubiquitous nature of contracts provides a mechanism through which individuals and organisations “regulate” their behaviour and activities for the good of the company. Specifically, the social exchange framework forms the basis upon which the concept of psychological contract is derived, explicated and justified in the employment exchange relationship (Brandes, Dharwadkar and Wheatley, 2004; Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000; Rousseau, 1995).

Using a social exchange framework (Blau, 1964) as the basis for the employment relationship, Linden, Bauer and Berrin, (2004, p. 226) define the work relationship between the employee and employer as “a reciprocal exchange in which employees engage in work-related behaviours that benefit the organisation in return for resources and support provided by the organisation”. As Levinson (1965) suggested, the relationship between the two focal agents in the employment relationship is based on a reciprocal grounding where the organisation “contributes to the growth of the person by the demands it makes upon him which stimulate him to new learning……..and the growth of the person contributes to the character of the organisation” (p.387). Supporting this assertion, Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson and Sowa (1986) posited that satisfying important material and socio-emotional needs in the workplace parallels the fulfilment of individual needs such as respect, love and support in personal relationships.
2.3 The Psychological Contract

In terms of the employment relationship, the psychological contract is an important construct used to analyse and comprehend exchange relationships and workplace behaviours, and is viewed as an important element in the maintenance of employee and organisational well-being (Rousseau, 1990; Pate, 2003). As a fundamental concept underpinning the employment relationship, the psychological contract has gained considerable currency over the past few decades as a meaningful framework with which to evaluate the state of employment relations in the wake of changing organisational structures, work practices and unstable business environments brought about recent economic difficulties (Rousseau, 1989, 1990, 1993, 2001; Sparrow and Cooper, 2003; Suazo, 2007 Taylor and Tekleab, 2004).

One of the key issues that has influenced and in some ways, confounded research into the psychological contract research is its actual definition. As Conway and Briner (2005, p. 8) submit “…many of the current debates and confusion in psychological contract theory can be seen, in part, as a consequence of the diverse uses of the psychological contract concept during its historical development.” It is generally accepted that the conceptualisation and hence, the definition of a psychological, can be divided into two distinct periods: Pre and post Denise Rousseau (Anderson and Schalk, 1998; Roehling, 2001 and Conway and Briner, 2005). Marks (2001) asserts that there are two main camps regarding definitional perspectives of the psychological contract; one that emphasises the “classical definition” of the dyadic exchange relationship between an employee and employer and one focusing on the subjective, individual orientated aspect. Similarly, Freese and Schalk, (2008) highlight that the bilateral perspective emphasises a psychological contract encompassing
both employee and employer perceptions of exchange obligations, while the unilateral viewpoint focuses solely on “the employee perspective on employee and organisational expectations and obligations” (p.270). As Anderson and Schalk (1998, p. 639) suggest, “that two different conceptualisations of the concept exist, can lead to confusion and misunderstanding, and this must be kept in mind when looking at the literature on psychological contracts.” A further issues relating to definitional problems relates to the suggestion that an individual can have more than one or even multiple psychological contracts in the workplace (Arnold, 1996; Guest, 1998; Marks, 2001) reflecting both global and local perspectives in exchange relations (Brandes, Dharwadkar and Wheatley, 2004). As Latornell (2007, p.279) attests “this variance in definition of the psychological contract is an important issue when considering the relevance of the psychological contract to the field of employment relations”. The question remains is, at what level should psychological contract research focus on?

2.3.1 Definitional Perspectives of a Psychological Contract

Table 2.1 presents an overview of the various definitional perspectives associated with the psychological contract concept. Detailed reviews of the origins and history of the concept by Roehling (1997) and Conway et al. (2005) assert that the term ‘psychological contract’ came to describe different phenomenon in social and psychological contexts. Reohling (1997) further notes that the fundamental elements which constitute today’s interpretation of psychological contract vary somewhat to the conceptualisations of the construct that were explicated during the 1950’s, 1960’s and 1970’s. Additionally, most accounts which examine the history and early conceptualisation of the construct refer to the seminal works of Karl Menninger (1958), Chris Argyris (1960) and Harry Levinson (1962; 1965) with
subsequent developments attributed to the writings of Kotter (1975), Portwood and Miller (1976) and Edgar Schein (1965; 1980).

Reference to the psychiatric work of Karl Menninger (1958) and his book, *Theory of Psychoanalytic Technique*, is usually taken as the starting point for the conception of the phenomenon and which allowed for the subsequent development of psychological contract theory. Menninger (1958) observed that an understanding in the form of an unwritten contract developed between the interaction of the psychotherapist and patient during the course treatment.

Menninger noted that the relationship between both parties developed through a process of conscious (tangible) and unconscious (intangible) exchanges such that that continuation of the relationship depended on there being a satisfactory level of ‘reciprocation’ between the doctor’s services and the patient’s needs. That is, as long as the patient required and was satisfied with the type of help being provided by his/her doctor, and as long as the doctor could satisfy the psychological and emotional needs of the patient, the exchange relationship continued therein. As Menninger states:

“In any engagement between two individuals in which a transaction occurs, there is an exchange, a giving and a gain of something by both parties with a consequent meeting of the needs in a reciprocal way, mutual way. When this balance is not achieved, either because one does not need what the other has to offer or because one does not give what the other needs or because there is a feeling on the part of one that the exchange is not a fair one, the contract tends to break up prematurely”.

(1958, p.21)
### Table 2.1
Definitional Perspectives of the Psychological Contract

1. Argyris, (1960, p.97) offers that ‘Since the foremen realise the employees in this system will tend to produce optimally under passive leadership, and since the employees agree, a relationship may be hypothesised to evolve between the employees and the foremen which might be called the ‘psychological work contract’.

2. Levinson (1962, p.21) suggests that ‘A series of mutual expectations of which the parties to the relationship may not themselves be dimly aware but which nonetheless govern their relationship to each other’.

3. Kotter (1973, p.92) opines that it is ‘An implicit contract between an individual and his organisation which specifies what each expect to give and receive from each other in the relationship’.

4. Schein (1980, p.22) views that ‘The notion of a psychological contract implies that there is an unwritten set of expectations operating at all times between every member of an organisation and the various managers and others in that organisation.’

5. ‘The term psychological contract refers to an individual’s belief regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between the focal person and another party. Key issues here include the belief that a promise has been made and a consideration offered in exchange for it, binding the parties to some set of reciprocal obligations.’ (Rousseau, 1989, p. 123)

6. ‘The psychological contract is individual beliefs, shaped by the organisation, regarding terms of an exchange agreement between the individual and their organisation.’ (Rousseau, 1995, p.9)

7. ‘The perceptions of both parties to the employment relationship, organisation and individual, of the obligations implied in the relationship.’ Herriot and Pemberton, 1995, p. 45) & ‘It refers to the perceptions of mutual obligations to each other held by the two parties in the employment relationship, the organisation and the employee.’ (Herriot, Manning and Kidd, 1997, p.151)

8. ‘An employee’s beliefs about the reciprocal obligations between that employee and his or her organisation, where these obligations are based on perceived promises and are not necessarily recognised by agents of the organisation.’ (Morrison and Robinson, 1997, p.229)

**Source:** Conway and Briner, 2005, pp.21-22

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The observations derived by Menninger’s (1958) study regarding the establishment of an unwritten contract between two parties and the emergent properties associated
with the exchange relationship were according to Conway and Briner (2005), instrumental in highlighting and distinguishing between the content of a psychological contract in terms of the resources exchanged, and the factors influencing the process through which the exchange relationship develops, is maintained and eventually terminates.

From an organisational science perspective, Chris Argyris (1960) and Levinson et al. (1962) are credited with formally introducing the vernacular most associated with the conceptual and subsequent development of psychological contract theory. Both writers conducted qualitative observational research which focused on the relationships between the employee and the organisation in large commercial operations with Argyris (1960) being the first to derive and apply the term ‘psychological work contract’ to explain the implicit understanding which developed between employees and their immediate supervisors (Roehling, 1997; Conway et al., 2005). Subsequently, Levinson et al, (1962) interviewed over eight hundred and fifty crewmen and foremen working at the Midland Utilities company in North America to study the impact that the work environment had on the well-being and mental health of its members. Between the two, the underlying dynamics which explicated the employment relationship were derived.

Argyris (1960) observed that the relationship between the foremen and employees was influenced by the informal employee culture which permeated the organisation and described the “embeddedness of the power perception and the values held by both parties (organisation and employee)” (Cullinane and Dundon, 2006, p.114). The foremen who progressed up through the ranks in the firm had themselves learned that employees’ worked more efficiently if they were left to manage their day to day
work responsibilities without undue managerial interference. Argyris determined that the norms and culture which developed among the group of employees, if acknowledged, respected and allowed by management to continue within the formal organisational structure; employees would thus return or ‘reciprocate’ this understanding by respecting the right of the organisation to evolve and react to changing economic environments (Conway et al., 2005). Argyris termed this implicit understanding between employee and the organisation as the ‘psychological work contract’. Referring to the relationship between management and employees, Argyris (1960, p.97) noted that:

“Since the foremen realise the employees in this system will tend to produce optimally under passive leadership, and since the employees agree, a relationship may be hypothesised to evolve between the employees and the foremen which might be called the ‘psychological work contract. The employees will maintain high production, low grievances, etc., if the foremen guarantee and respect the norms of the employee informal culture (i.e. let the employees alone, make certain they make adequate wages, and have secure jobs). This is precisely what the employees need.”

Emphasising the contribution of Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl and Solley (1962) and the study they published in their book Men, Management and Mental Health, Roehling (1997) and Conway et al., (2005) affirm that the formal conceptualisation of the psychological contract was derived from this work. As Conway et al. (2005, p.10) assert that “their analysis is remarkably insightful and provides a rich conceptualisation of the psychological contract...including the definition of expectations, the stability of
psychological contract, and the role of needs and reciprocity in forming and maintaining the psychological contract”. Though re-interpreted in later decades by management scholars to reflect a more behavioural focus, the original thrust of the work of Levinson et al, (1962) highlighted an understanding of the employment relationship from a psychological ‘needs-based’ perspective and the role of occupational identity in the formation of workplace exchange relationship. Additionally, Levinson et al. (1962) further extended their discussion of the psychological contract and by emphasising the expectations of the company, thus highlighting the mutuality between employee and organisation in the employment relationship.

Levinson et al. (1962) identified the processes associated with mutual interdependence and the effects of change in personal and professional life as key issues underlying the employment relationship, and highlighted the importance of and conditions for reciprocation as a principal mechanism on which the relationship operated.

Levinson et al. (1962, p.21) defined the psychological contract as “a series of mutual expectations of which the parties to the relationship may not themselves be dimly aware but which nonetheless govern their relationship to each other”. Such expectations emerge from the interactions and reciprocal understanding between individuals in a particular context, and can be forged prior to and after taking up employment. As Levinson et al. (1962, p22) asserted, these expectations between employee and employer are “(a) largely implicit and unspoken, and (b) they frequently antedate the relationship of person and company”. To further draw attention regarding the issue of mutuality within the employment relationship, Levinson et al. (1962, p.36) connote:
“What we emphasise here, however, is the interplay of expectations and their compelling quality. It is as if both employees and company are saying to each other, “You must, for I require it.” When the employee goes to work, he brings expectations with him. The company tacitly accepts them when it accepts him. In turn, he tacitly accepts the company’s expectations. This mutuality, with its inherent obligatory quality and its system of rewards, constitutes a psychological contract”.

These expectations usually take the form of ‘normative’, duty-bound obligations that each party in the relationship must uphold such that they were “generally accepted, conscious, if usually unspoken, informal agreements arrived at out of joint experience” (Levinson et al., 1962, p.28). Making reference to both tangible and intangible obligations present in the relationship, Levinson et al. (1962) noted that many aspects of the work were indirectly understood:

“While many specific features of work were mentioned as important and regarded them as matters of right – adequate pay, fair supervision, job security, and the like – many other expectations were revealed only indirectly: by the way in which people described the company or fellow-worker, by the way they behaved on the job, by the way they talked about changes that had occurred over the years” (p.22)

Of central importance for an effective work relationship was the notion of reciprocation between the employee and organisation, a concept which he would later expand upon (e.g. Levinson, 1965). For Levinson et al. (1965) the maintenance of the employment
relationship depended on the psychological needs of the individual and sense of history between man and organisation, “characterised by interdependence, balanced distance, and mutual coping with change. The interaction of these processes, the total process of fulfilling the psychological contract, we call reciprocation” (p.125). As Conway et al. (2005) suggest, it is the felt need to reciprocate that motivates individuals to remain in the relationship and when operating fluidly, the more the organisation reciprocates the efforts and needs of the individual, the stronger the sense of affiliation and identification the individual has for the organisation. In order for reciprocity to develop in and with an employee, Levinson et al. (1962, pp.129-130) stated the necessary conditions for its maintenance which referred to the need for individuals which included:

“to act on the organisation, to shape it to some extent to one’s own values, to experience oneself and the organisation as confronting stress together, to obtain gratification of psychological needs for dependence and support, to have the feeling of a fair-share partnership with the company and to be stimulated, which includes the experience of growth and change”.

A further contribution by Levinson et al. (1962) relates to the idea that a psychological contract is dynamic and ever-changing. Attention is brought to the fact when new employees entre the organisation, they bring with them their own socio-psychological needs and expectations. Once the employee becomes socialised into the company “only after they have become part of the organisation do they appreciate the intricacies of even the more obvious aspects of their relationships and the limitations of the company’s ability to fulfil many of their needs” (p.37).
Following on from the groundbreaking work of Argyris (1960) and Levinson et al (1962), the concept of the psychological contract was subsequently developed by the writings of Edgar Schein (1965, 1980) in his book *Organisational Psychology*. Largely influenced by the aforementioned writers, Schein emphasised that role that the psychological contract conveys in understanding and managing behaviour in the workplace and the developmental qualities associated with it. Schein (1980, p.22) defines the psychological contract as follows:

“The notion of a psychological contract implies that there is an unwritten set of expectations operating at all times between every member of an organisation and the various managers and others in that organisation.”

Further,

“Both individual employee and manager forge their expectations from their inner needs, what they have learned from other, traditions and norms which may be operating, their own past experience and a host of other sources”

(Schein, 1980, p.24).

Similar to Levinson et al. (1962), Schein (1965, 1980) emphasises the dynamic nature of the psychological contract and how changes in the external environment can effect changes in expectations for both parties such that the “psychological contract changes over time as the organisation’s needs and the employee’s needs change” (p.23). These changes motivate interactions between employees and organisation, “unfolding through mutual influence and mutual bargaining to establish a workable psychological contract (Roehling, 1997, p.209). As such, the psychological contract ‘must be constantly
renegotiated’ (Schein, 1965, 1980, p.24) in order to maintain balance in the employment relationship. Schein explicitly highlights the issue of violation of both explicit and unwritten expectations which constitute the psychological contract by acknowledging both parties’ perspectives. From the employee side:

“each role player, that is, employee, also has expectations about such things as salary or pay rate, working hours, benefits and privileges that go with a job, guarantees not to be fired unexpectedly, and so on....Some of the strongest feelings leading to labour unrest, strikes, and employee turnover have to do with violations of these aspects of the psychological contract, even though the public negotiations are often over the more explicit issues of pay, working hours, job security, and so on”

And from the employer’s perspective:

“The organisation also has more implicit, subtle expectations- that the employee will enhance the image of the organisation, will be loyal, will keep organisational secrets, and will do his or her best on behalf of the organisation (that is, will always be highly motivated and willing to make sacrifices for the organisation. Some of the greatest disappointments of managers arise when a valued employee seems to have become less motivated or “unwilling to put out for the company”.” (Schein, 1965, 1980, p.23).

Kotter (1973) extended Schein’s (1965) conceptualisation of the psychological contract by conducting an experiment with a sample of master’s graduates and fellows of the Sloan School of Management. The research focused on new employees starting out in employment and wanted to explore the nature and degree
of the new entrants’ expectations in the ‘joining-up process’. The extant literature indicates this as being one of the first formal attempts to empirically measure the psychological contract (Roehling, 1997; Conway et al., 2005).

Kotter (1973, p.92) defines the psychological contract as “an implicit contract between an individual and his organisation which specifies what each expect to give and receive from each other in their relationship”. Kotter (1973) continues by suggesting that the psychological contract “is very different from a legal or labour contract. It may have literally thousands of items in it” (Kotter, 1973, p.92). Kotter (1973) posited that the alignment of expectations held by both parties can either be the same or different in what he terms the ‘matching’ of expectations. A twenty-nine item questionnaire was given to each employee and their respective supervisor/manager. The employee/graduates were asked to indicate their level of agreement regarding the items they expected from their employer and vice versa. That is, the participants were asked to consider both their own and others expectations to determine if there existed matches in the possible items expected in the relationship. As Conway et al. (2005) suggested, the matching process experiment focused on the relationship level in that both parties’ expectations were considered, rather than at the individual level, where only employee perceptions of expectations are considered. The results indicated a considerable number of statistically significant matches such that that the greater level of matching between employer and employee expectations, higher levels of job satisfaction, productivity and lower turnover intentions were reported.

Kotter’s study was an important early attempt at quantifying the role and impact that the psychological contract can bring to bear on the experiences and expectations of both new recruits and the organisation. It was also an early attempt to measure the ‘content’ of an
employee’s psychological contract. The study’s reference to early socialisation experiences of new employees (Schein, 1968, Feldman, 1976a, 1976b) and the necessity to manage ‘unrealistic employee expectations’ (Wanous, 1977; 1978), served as important outcomes concerning the consequences of an imbalanced psychological contract. As Kotter states, “in many organisations this process is mismanaged, or not at all. The costs of mismanagement are very high” (1973, p.98).

Finally, Portwood and Miller (1976) defined the psychological contract as:

“an implicit agreement, negotiated between the employee and the employing firm (usually at the time of the employee’s time of entry), and it is a recognition of mutual obligations to be fulfilled by both parties in the course of their association. The terms of this contract generally include some understandings as to the rewards and considerations the individual can expect from the organisation and the demands and restrictions to be placed on the individual in the work situation”. (p.109)

Portwood et al. (1976) emphasised the importance of establishing a reciprocally balanced relationship such that both parties to the exchange are “getting adequate value returned for services rendered” (p.109). Acknowledging that the balance of power rests with the company, they were interested in exploring the effects of employee perceptions of inequities in the employment relationship, That is, they were interested in the “employee’s reactions to assumed violations of the terms of the contract” (Portwood et al., 1976, p.109)
They conducted a quantitative longitudinal study at a Midwestern retail company over a nine month time frame based on a model describing both the content of the psychological contract and the process through which the interaction of the content elements explained job satisfaction and a measure of employee satisfactoriness based on task competence, commitment and compatibility fit measures. For the content dimension, Portwood et al. (1976) hypothesised that the expectations individuals had of their work were influenced by personal needs, attitudes toward work, relevant knowledge of the job and work experience, what Portwood et al. (1976) termed ‘job integration’. Additionally, Portwood et al. (1976) acknowledged the organisation’s expectations regarding the reality of the work environment, nature of the job tasks and the demands placed on employees by the company, which they referred to as ‘Job Reality’. As Portwood et al. (1976, p.110) emphasised, “the employee must therefore relate to the organisation through a process of comparing personal expectations with conditions as they exist”. Moderate correlations were found between job integration and job satisfaction (r = 0.372) and job satisfactoriness (r = 0.245). They concluded that while there was a relationship between an employee’s psychological contract and job environment, other factors and variables explained a higher level of variance in job satisfaction and job satisfactoriness other than the items contained in their study.

2.3.2 The Contemporary School: Rousseau’s Perspective
The conceptualisation of the psychological contract described in the aforementioned works of Menninger (1958), Argyris (1960), Levinson et al. (1962), Schein (1965, 1980), Kotter (1973) and Portwood et al. (1976), emphasised the mutuality of employee and employer expectations in the employment relationship. Reference made to both explicit and implicit reciprocal understandings and agreed-upon expectations between employee and the organisation served as central, common tenets for these perspectives. That is, both employee and employer were collectively involved at some level regarding the agreed-upon nature of the roles, responsibilities and obligations to be exchanged. However, it is widely accepted that the re-introduction of the psychological contract construct by Denise Rousseau in the late 1980’s and beyond, initiated a renewed interest from both academic and practitioner arenas. Specifically, Rousseau’s definition, while acknowledging employees and employers each have respective expectations of each other in the employment relationship; introduced an amended vernacular to demarcate the old school from a newer way of thinking about the phenomenon. Specifically, Rousseau approached the employment psychological contract by placing the emphasis of interpretation squarely on the shoulders of the individual employee.

For Rousseau, the psychological contract is defined as “an individual’s beliefs regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between that focal person and another party” (Rousseau, 1989, p. 123). An important distinction between Rousseau’s conceptualisation of a psychological contract and prior definitions lies with the notion that it is a subjectively derived belief based on a perceived promise that some future benefit will be conferred and reciprocated between the two focal agents (Rousseau, 1989; 1990; 1995; Robinson and Rousseau, 1994). As a fundamental departure from prior conceptualisations, the idiosyncratic nature of a psychological contract is its defining
characteristic, as it resides in “eyes of the beholder” (Robinson et. al, 1994; Schalk and Roe, 2007).

As emphasised by Rousseau (1990):

“Beliefs become contractual when the individual believes that he or she owes the employer certain contributions (e.g. hard work, loyalty, sacrifices) in return for certain inducements (e.g. high pay, job security)...When individual employees believe they are obligated to behave or perform in a certain way and also believe that the employer has certain obligations toward them, these individuals hold a psychological contract”.

(p. 390)

Central to the definition is that the individual must have a belief that a promise was made, either in writing orally, behaviourally or other means, about some future benefit to be received (Rousseau and McLean Parks, 1993; Rousseau, 1995). Rousseau (1995, p.9) states that it “is shaped by the organisation, regarding terms of an exchange agreement between the individual and their organisation.”

How an employee comes to perceive a promise or promises being made is a function of three fundamental elements of promissory contracts:

1. A Promise – a commitment to do (or not do) something;
2. Payment – something of value offered in exchange for the promise; and
3. Acceptance – consent to the terms of the contract reflecting the contract’s voluntariness

(Rousseau et al., 1993, p.6)
Perceived obligations between employee and employer form the essence of the psychological contract (Robinson, Kraatz and Rousseau, 1994) and the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of such can impact on the quality of the employment relationship (Van Dyne and Ellis, 2004). Robinson et al., (1994, p. 138) define obligations as “beliefs, held by an employee or employer, that each is bound by promise or debt to an action or course of action in relation to the other party…which may derive from implicit or explicit promises of future exchange or reciprocity”. Further, as Rousseau et al., (1993) state, an obligation:

“is a commitment to some future action and agreement means mutual acceptance, but what the commitment means exactly, when its fulfilment is anticipated, and the extent of mutuality itself opens the contract to contention” (p.3)

The current study bases its approach on Rousseau’s definitions of the psychological contract. Levinson (1965) highlights that “organisations become important psychological devices’ for individuals, and with them, they bring past attitudes, impulses, wishes and expectations…in exaggerated form into present situations” (pp. 375-376). The author contends that the essence of a psychological contract rests on the subjective interpretation of an individual. Rousseau (1989, 1990) and Rousseau et al. (1998) elucidate that a psychological contract is an individual perception that develops when a person infers promises leading to the belief in the presence of reciprocal obligations between an employee and employer. Similarly, Freese et al. (2008, p.270) assert ‘…a psychological contract is literally psychological. That is to say, it is by definition an individual perception.’ Finally, Rousseau et al., (1998) emphasise that given the subjective nature of the employment experience, the individual is best placed at reporting ‘on beliefs regarding
his or her own obligations as well as beliefs regarding reciprocal obligations owed by another’ (p.680). Furthermore, the author agrees with the position of DelCampo (2007) from the perspective that ‘psychological contracts are theoretically developed as individual perceptions of mutuality/agreements’ (p. 433).

2.4 Measuring the Psychological Contract: Typological Perspectives

Psychological contracts exhibit “many textures and hues, patterned to reflect a variety of underlying exchanges and interdependencies” (Rousseau et al, 1993, p.10) and “potentially includes beliefs about anything and everything the employee could give to the employer and anything and everything they could receive in return” (Conway et al., 2005, p.31). Similarly, Kotter (1973, p.92) suggests that the contract “may have literally thousands of items in it although the job seeker or new employee may consciously think of only a few”, thus making it impossible to generate a complete listing of all contract items (Anderson and Schalk, 1998).

DelCampo (2007, p.434) states that “the major plague cast upon psychological contract research is the lack of consistency in choice of what to measure.” Equally, McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher (1998) suggest: “it is that the dynamic and evolutionary nature of employment arrangements makes it difficult to develop a set of content measures that are useful across a variety of employment settings.”(p.700). The question of what actually constitutes an employee’s psychological contract remains an important issue when it comes to researching the employment relationship.
Rousseau and Tijoriwala (1998) presented a review of the issues that surrounded the research, measurement and theoretical development of psychological contract. The aim of this review was to solidify and systematise the measurement debate in order to form “an organising framework to guide future researchers in the operationalisation of the psychological contract, its related processes and features.” (p.680) Furthermore, suggestions regarding the use of quantitative and qualitative strategies were discussed in the context of appropriate methods to follow under particular conditions which as Rousseau et al. (1998) highlighted as depending on whether the research pursued reflected an ‘etic’ or ‘emic’ perspective. That is, whether the research wishes to generalise findings across populations or focus on contextually subjective environments.

2.4.1 Transactional & Relational Typologies

One of the most commonly used typologies for analysing psychological contracts resides with Denise Rousseau who developed measures to account for content items and terms reflective of an individual’s psychological contract. As Jannsens et al. (2003) highlight: “Although the typology is constructed using dimensions, psychological contracts were operationalised in a content-orientated approach focusing on individual contract elements”.

Research has indicated that the psychological contract comprises of two core dimensions that span the contract obligation exchange continuum and have dominated much of the research focus into the psychological contract (Conway and Briner, 2005). According to Rousseau (1995, p.90) “Although contracts can take an infinite number of forms, certain
types of contract terms tend to cluster together”. These clusters have been described as being either ‘Transactional’ or ‘Relational’ in nature, each of which resides at opposite ends of a contractual continuum (McNeil, 1985; Rousseau, 1989, 1990, Rousseau et al., 1993; Rousseau, 1995). Table 2.2 details the contrasts between transactional and relations employment contracts.

### Table 2.2

**The Psychological Contract Continuum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transactional</th>
<th>Relational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Economic, Emotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>Whole person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed-ended/Specific</td>
<td>Open-ended, indefinite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>Written, unwritten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Static</td>
<td>Dynamic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrow</td>
<td>Pervasive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public/Observable</td>
<td>Subjectively understood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time frame</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formalisation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangibility</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from Rousseau, 1995)

Transactional psychological contracts relate to the pecuniary elements of the employment contract and emphasise the more economic and utilitarian aspects of the employment relationship. Such contracts may encompass specific, short-term, monetisable, closed-ended obligations that require limited involvement by the organisation and employee (Robinson et al., 1994; Herriot, Manning and Kidd, 1997; Cavanagh and Noe, 1999). They are concerned with an economic-focused exchange (e.g. level of remuneration for effort) and are usually explicit, formalised and agreed upon by both parties (Conway et al., 2005). As Grimmer and Oddy (2007, p.155) suggest “employees are more concerned with compensation and personal benefit than with being good organisational citizens”. Thus, job description detailing pay, conditions, function and tenure are considered to be aspects of transactional contract arrangements. Characterised by brief time-frames, transactional psychological contracts: “create exchange relationships whose parties have
limited involvement in the relationship in terms of dedicated assets, organisation-specific
skills as well as emotional ties and loyalties” (Rousseau et al., 1993, p.11). Transactional
contracts have been associated with reduced levels of organisational commitment (Coyle-
Shapiro and Kessler, 1998) and lower levels of job satisfaction ((Beard and Edwards,
1995).

The relational psychological contract emphasises the felt obligation and socio-emotional
qualities ascribed to the exchange relationship (Rousseau, 1989, 1990, 1995; Robinson et
al., 1994; Herriot et al., 1997) and reflects the quality of the exchange relationship between
employee and employer. While they can also include transactional elements (Coyle-
Shapiro et al., 2002), relational contracts represent a more holistic, inter-personal
connection between employee and employer and usually emerge from interdependent
social exchanges which foster commitment and loyalty (Brandes, Dharwadkar and
Wheatley, 2004; Blau, 1964; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Winter and Jackson, 2006).
Rousseau (1995) asserts that contracts based on a relational basis describe the personal
efforts and interests vested in the employment relationship and tend to relate to obligations
that are ‘emotional and intrinsic in nature’ (Grimmer et al., 2007). They can be
characterised as written or unwritten agreements, open-ended and indefinite in nature and
are subjectively understood by both parties (Rousseau, 1995).

It should be noted that while the transactional-relational contract continuum is explicit in
demarcating the separate forms of contract, the reality is that the psychological contract
held by employees can be comprised of both types simultaneously and to different degrees.
Robinson et al. (1994) conjecture that employees can exhibit both types of dimension in
their own psychological contract and are associated with the explicit and implicit
obligations perceived to be present in the exchange relationship (Winter and Jackson, 2005). Similarly, Willard and Herriot (2000) assert that the transactional-relational divide is not totally an exclusive one such that employee can hold combinations of both types of contract simultaneously and to different degrees. A further point to note is that while an employee might hold a mostly transactional contract early in his/her career, this could serve as a “trial run before formulation of a longer term relational agreement and can evolve into relationships” (Rousseau et al., 1993, p11). For example, a study of contingent workers in South Africa conducted by John-Lee and Faller (2005) confirmed that the longer an employee stayed with the organisation, the more relational the underlying psychological contract became.

A number of studies exist which demonstrate both the existence and effects of transactional and relational contracts in the employment relationship. For example, Rousseau (1990) investigated the perceptions of newly hired employees regarding their own and their employer’s contractual obligations. A list of possible employee-employer obligations and commitments was derived from the qualitative analysis of responses from a number of personnel and human resource managers. The list contained items which reflected both an employee and employer transactional dimension and relational dimension. The factor scores derived from canonical correlation analysis confirmed the presence of two underlying dimensions. In that study, it was found that employee and employer transactional obligations were positively correlated \( (r = 0.37, p< .001) \) as well as the relational obligations between employee and employer \( (r = 0.35, p< .001) \). Additionally, employees’ perceived relational obligations were positively correlated to expected organisational tenure \( (r = 0.27, p< .001) \) while commitment to stay with the organisation was negatively related to employers transactional obligations \( (r = -0.11, \)
both employee transactional ($r = 0.12, p< .05$) and relational ($r = 0.17, p< .01$) obligations were positively correlated with future organisational commitment.

Robinson, Kraatz and Rousseau (1994) conducted a longitudinal study of business school graduates to explore the changing nature of mutual obligations over time. Similar to Rousseau (1990), Robinson et al (1994) interviewed human resource managers from a number of companies employing these graduates and developed a list of obligations typically associated with the recruitment phase. Graduates were surveyed at two different time periods to determine if their perceptions had changed regarding the obligations they were promised early in their employment. Factor analyses revealed the presence of transactional and relational type obligations for employees and employers. For example, typical transactional employer obligations included rapid advancement, promotion opportunities, and performance-related pay. Employer relational obligations included long-term job security, training and professional development. Employee relational obligations related to aspects such as loyalty to the company, work extra hours if required and volunteering to do other tasks. Employee transactional obligations consisted of proper notification if leaving the company, willingness to accept a transfer and maintain confidentiality. The key finding from the Robinson et al (1994) study was that employee obligations declined during the formative years of employment due to perceptions that their employer had violated both transactional and relational promises to them.

In developing her original study from 1990, Rousseau (2000) developed the Psychological Contract Inventory (PCI) to extend the transactional-relational dimension typology of psychological contracts. The PCI was designed to provide a useful, generalisable psychometric instrument that could assess the content of the psychological contract across various organisational settings and, as a mechanism to support managerial and professional
education (Rousseau, 2000). Furthermore, it facilitates the subjective interpretation of the employment exchange relationship from disparate perspectives and frames of reference which span the work environment; from employees to top management (Rousseau, 2000). Additionally, it provides an ‘etic’ perspective of the employment relationship such that it does not focus on specific contract items per se, but rather on the general content areas perceived as being present in the employment relationship by employees (Rousseau et al., 1998).

In exploring the degree of obligation mutuality between University research directors and research scientists, Dabos and Rousseau (2004) operationalised the psychological contract by using the newly developed PCI survey. Factor analyses confirmed the existence of both transactional and relational dimensions with internal reliability estimates consistently above the 0.7 threshold signifying the psychometric strength of the measure. The results of this study revealed a relationship based on transactional obligations was significantly and negatively correlated to the quantity of research publications (r = -0.30), degree of co-authorship (r = -0.44) and prospects for career advancement (r = -0.34). Research scientists perceiving a more relationally-based exchange relationship with their director resulted in a positive correlation with these same work-related outcomes.

In a second study which utilised the PCI, Hui, Lee and Rousseau (2004) tested the generalisability of the instrument in a non-Western context. This study investigated the relationship between the nature and forms of psychological contract and organisational citizenship behaviour at a large Chinese steel company. Using a sample of N = 605 subordinate-supervisor dyads, confirmatory factor analyses confirmed the presence and internal reliability of both transactional (α = 0.63) and relational (α = 0.85) contract
Correlation results indicated that both contract dimensions were significantly related to altruism ($\text{PC}_R = 0.18$, $\text{PC}_T = 0.12$), conscientiousness ($\text{PC}_R = 0.17$, $\text{PC}_T = 0.13$), civic virtue ($\text{PC}_R = 0.17$, $\text{PC}_T = 0.14$), courtesy ($\text{PC}_R = 0.13$, $\text{PC}_T = 0.10$) and sportsmanship ($\text{PC}_R = 0.13$, $\text{PC}_T = 0.15$).

Raja, Johns and Ntalianis (2004) studied the employment relationship of employees from a sample of private and public employees in Pakistan. In that study, Raja et al (2004) explored the relationship between a number of work-related attitudes and employee personality, psychological contract type, perceptions of breach and violation. Specifically, hierarchical regression confirmed both transactional and relational dimensions of the psychological contract as having significant explanatory power on an employee’s intentions to quit their job and leave the organisation, their affective commitment to their organisation and level of job satisfaction. Furthermore, the relational contract was significantly and positively related to an employee’s degree of commitment ($r = .49$) and level of job satisfaction ($r = .43$), and negatively correlated with intentions to quit ($r = -.53$) while the transactional dimension displayed significantly negative relations with these same variables.

Comparing the psychological contracts of a sample of contingent and permanent workers employed at a number of South African companies, Lee and Faller (2005) employed the Psychological Contract Scale developed by Millward and Hopkins (1998) to examine the effects of different psychological contract types. Lee et al (2005) found that organisational tenure was significantly related to contract type such that the longer a worker was employed at their company, the less transactional the underlying psychological contract. The Lee at al (2005) study further indicated a number of interaction effects such that those
employees perceiving a more relational-type exchange relationship with their employer perceived significantly higher levels of organisational job satisfaction and lower perceptions of contract violation.

Research conducted by Grimmer and Oddy (2007) examined the effects of transactional and relational dimensions for a group of Australian MBA students. They found that both dimensions were negatively correlated with each other (\(r = -0.317\)) suggesting the existence of differential bases and levels of contract type within the psychological contract. Further, the results of this study revealed significantly positive relationships between the relational dimension and affective commitment (\(r = 0.68\)) and trust in the organisation (\(r = 0.49\)). Negative correlations were found for the transactional dimension and affective commitment (\(r = -0.33\)) and organisational trust (\(r = -0.15\)). In essence, the employee believes that there will be a supportive and developmental work environment offered by the employer which will be exchanged in return for loyalty, commitment to the organisation, performance and other un-specified job behaviours that are of benefit to the employer (Roehling, 2004).

Hughes and Palmer (2007) investigated a sample of permanent and temporary staff employed at an information technology company regarding their psychological contract. The purpose of the study was to determine the effects of transactional and relational employment contracts on affective commitment, continuance commitment and organisation-based self-esteem. Partial least squares regression supported the hypothesis that relational-based contracts had a stronger positive effect on affective commitment (\(\text{Beta} = 0.37, P < .05\)) than for continuance commitment (\(\text{Beta} = 0.34, p < .05\)). Conversely, there was a stronger relationship between continuance commitment and transactional
contracts (Beta = 0.30, p < .05). The study highlighted that permanent employees exhibiting stronger relationally-based contracts displayed higher levels of affective commitment (Beta = 0.37, p < .05) compared to temporary staff (Beta = 0.29, p < .05). Additionally, a relationally-based psychological contract had a stronger association with organisation-based self-esteem (Beta = 0.39, p < .05) compared to psychological contracts based on transactional obligations (Beta = 0.12, p > .05).

Finally, Montes and Irving (2008) surveyed a group of Canadian undergraduate students prior to and during a four month cooperative placement programme. Using items similar to the Rousseau study (1990), the purpose of the Montes et al (2008) study was to investigate the differential effects of promised and delivered inducements associated with transactional and relational employer obligations and the consequences of these impacts on job satisfaction, perceptions of violation and future organisational intentions. Factor analysis indicated the presence of both contract dimensions. They found that the difference between what was promised to the candidates and what was actually delivered had differential effects on job satisfaction and future organisational intentions in terms of accepting a permanent contract. Further, Montes et al (2008) noted that these effects depended on the underlying nature of the psychological contract such that disparities in relational inducements had a stronger effect in terms of violation perceptions (r = -0.32), employment intentions (r = 0.45) and job satisfaction (r = 0.47) compared to transactional inducement differences (r = -0.14, r = 0.28 and r = 0.25 respectively). Additionally, trust was determined to be a significant mediating variable between a relational psychological contract breach and job satisfaction.
2.4.2 The ‘Mutual Investment’ Typology

While Rousseau’s transactional-relational contract continuum is one of the most widely used typologies for studying the nature and consequences of a psychological contract (Conway et al., 2005), alternate approaches have been proposed as being more theoretically, methodologically and practically robust.

For example, using exchange theory as the conceptual foundation, Tsui, Pearce, Porter and Tripoli (1997) developed and tested a typology which circumscribed the employee-organisation relationship based on the level of investment strategy derived from human resource practices. The defining aspect of this typology was that it captured the employer’s perspective and not the subjective perceptions of employees. According to Tsui et al (1997): “An employee-organisation-relationship strategy includes the employer’s expectations about specific contributions that it desires from employees and the inducements that it uses to effect the desired contributions.” While not discounting the role that employee perceptions have in the relationship, the emphasis here is on the employer’s side given that the key strategic HR decisions are placed on the shoulders of the organisation (Tsui et al., 1997). Further, the policies, practices and actions of human resource departments are considered to be instrumental in the shaping of psychological contracts (Rousseau, 1995; Sonnenberg, Koene and Paauwe, 2011).

Tsui et al (1997) generated four types of employee-organisation relationships based on the level of balance between the inducements offered by employers and contributions exchanged by employees. Of the four types, two related to ‘balanced’ employee-organisation relationships. A mutually low investment relationship (also referred to as a
Quasi Spot Contract and comparable to the transactional dimension suggested by Rousseau) relates to exchanges that are economic in nature and of a short-term duration. In this relationship “The employer offers short-term, purely economic inducements in exchange for well-specified contributions by the employee (such that) neither party expects contributions or inducements beyond those specified” (Tsui et al., 1997, p.1091/1092). Conversely, a mutually high investment relationship results from HR practices that generate more socio-emotional, open-ended and enduring exchange relationships where both parties offer longer-term, high investment inducement-contribution exchanges (Tsui et al., 1997; De Cuyper, Rigotti, De Witte and Mohr, 2008). This type of exchange is similar in nature to the relational dimension as explicated by Rousseau (1990, 1995).

Tsui et al (1997) also identified two ‘unbalanced’ exchange relationships where differing levels of contributions and inducements determine the nature of the employment relationship. An ‘underinvestment’ exchange relationship is one where the balance of employer-expected employee contributions is greater than the level of employer inducements. Employees are expected to make open-ended, extraordinary work effort contributions but where the employer makes only short-term, well-defined and specific inducements with little or no commitment to long-term investment in the employee. Conversely, an ‘overinvestment’ exchange relationship occurs when the employer conveys a more relationally-focused exchange investment but where the employee provides only limited, specific contributions to the organisation. Tsui et al (1997) found that an employment relationship based on a high mutual investment strategy resulted in stronger levels of employee organisational commitment, perceptions of organisational fairness and trust in co-workers.
2.4.3 The ‘Obligation Balance’ Typology

Shore and Barksdale (1998) developed a four-type typology (Figure 2.1) of psychological contracts based on the degree of balance in employee-employer obligations in the exchange relationship as perceived by the employee. According to Shore et al (1998) a psychological contract is balanced when an employee believes that the employment relationship exhibits either high or low levels of both employee and employer obligations, respectively referred to as ‘mutual high obligations’ and ‘mutual low obligations’. Shore et al (1998, p.734) assert that an employment relationship based on high mutual obligation perceptions reflect a more socially orientated and relationally based exchange relationship such that “the employee perceives that they owe the organisation a great deal (i.e., they feel highly obligated to fulfil a wide variety of contract terms) and that the organisation is also highly obligated to them”.

When the relationship is perceived to be founded on mutually low to moderate obligations, the employee believes that only a minimum level of effort in obligation exchange is required to maintain the exchange relationship. Such exchanges represent weak relational ties between employee and employer, and are more directed by short-term, transactional type exchanges with little or no affective underpinnings. Additionally, the employment relationship can be characterised as being ‘unbalanced’ regarding the exchange of obligations between both parties. Shore et al (1998) noted that a when the employee believes that they convey more obligations than their employer, “individuals feel indebted to the organisation due to past good treatment by the organisation” (p.734) and attempt to
re-balance the exchange relationship accordingly. This type of exchange is termed ‘employee over-obligation relationship’.

**Figure 2.1**

*Exchange Balance Typologies*

![Figure 2.1](image)

(Source: Shore and Barksdale, 1998)

Similarly, employees perceiving their employer as having high obligations to employees yet employees perceiving low obligations in return, the relationship is termed ‘employee under-obligation’. As Shore et al (1998, p734) assert: “This group of employees would likely view their own part of the exchange as having been fulfilled in the past, while the organisation has not reciprocated by fulfilling obligations to the employee”.

Cluster analysis of 327 part-time MBA students revealed four distinct clusters of exchange relationship types, each reflecting the four categories of psychological contract as proposed by Shore et al (1998). Both mutual high and mutual low obligation type exchange relationships returned as the most common form of psychological contract. Furthermore, analysis of variance results supported the hypotheses that each contract type was significantly different regarding perceptions of organisational support, affective commitment, turnover intentions and career future attitudes. Additionally, those
participants who represented the mutual high obligations cluster scored significantly higher on the organisational support, commitment and career future measures compared to members of the mutual low obligation cluster.

In the only other study to utilise and test the efficacy of Tsui et al’s (1997) typology, and build upon the Shore et al (1998) exchange balance study, De Cuyper et al (2008) applied latent cluster analysis to a cross-sectional survey of 1,267 permanent and temporary contract employees from German and Belgian companies. This study combined both content and exchange balance approaches to examine the effect that different psychological contract types had on a number of work attitudes. The content aspect incorporated both transactional and relational psychological contract items derived from prior research (e.g. Rousseau, 1990) while the exchange balance aspect was based on the perceptions employees had of their and their employer’s obligations based on these dimensions.

Four separate clusters were derived from the analysis representing each of the four types of investment exchange relationships as explicated by Tsui et al (1997) and the exchange balance types of Shore and Barksdale (1998). The ANOVA results of the De Cuyper et al (2008) study confirmed that employees perceiving mutual high investment exchange relationships based on the level of obligation balance between employee and employer, were significantly more committed to their organisation, more satisfied with their job and reported lower perceptions of psychological contract violation, compared to each and all of the other three relationship types.
2.5 Evaluating the State of a Psychological Contract: Breach, Violation & Fulfilment Perceptions

2.5.1 What is Breach?

“Perceived obligations compose the fabric of the psychological contract such that they consist of sets of individual beliefs or perceptions regarding reciprocal obligations” (Robinson et al., 1994, p.138). When an employee feels that they have kept their side of the bargain in the employment relationship, and perceive that the employer has not, the employee may begin to interpret this as either a breach or violation of the implicit rules underlying the relationship (Rousseau, 1989, 1990, 1995; Lewis-McClear and Taylor, 1997). If an employee perceives that employer obligations have been unfulfilled or have fallen short of expectations, the employee will view the employment relationship as unfavourable (Cavanaugh et al., 1999; Suazo, 2009) and in turn, will re-evaluate the relationship with his/her employer (Lewis-McClear et al., 1997).

Breach of psychological contracts by and large constitute a large area of the contract literature (Meckler et al., 2003; Conway et al., 2005). The perception of breach and or violation undermines the employee-employer relationship which can ultimately lead to undesirable employee attitudes and behaviours on the job such as reduced job satisfaction and trust (Montes and Irving, 2008). Given that a psychological contract is founded on a subjective perception of promises and mutual obligations, issues arise which relate to differences of opinion between employee and employer as to the exact nature of these obligations and whether or not such implicit promises were made in the context of the employment relationship (Robinson et al., 1994; Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000; Atkinson, 2007). While promises need not be made explicit (Rousseau, 1990, p. 390),
“how people interpret the circumstances of this failure determines whether they experience a violation” (Rousseau, 1995, p.112).

2.5.2 Types and Causes of Breach

Conway et al., (2005) and Suazo (2009) suggest that a breach of psychological contract arises when there is a discrepancy between what was perceived to be promised by the employer and what was actually delivered upon. When this fulfilment incongruence exists, tension, confusion and frustration can permeate the employment relationship (Rousseau, 1990, 1995; Wolfe-Morrison and Robinson, 2004). Rousseau (1995) extends the analysis further by categorising three main forms of violation in the psychological contract:

“Inadvertent violation occurs when both parties are able and willing to keep their bargain, but divergent interpretations lead one party to act in a manner at odds with the understanding and interests of the other. Disruption to the contract occurs when circumstances make it impossible for one or both parties to fulfill their end of the contract, despite the fact that they are willing to do so. Reneging or breach of contract occurs when one side, otherwise capable of performing the contract, refuses to do so”. (p. 112)

In developing Rousseau’s categorisations of psychological contract infringement, Morrison et al (1997) offered a more detailed exposition on the nature and types of breach
that can arise in the employment relationship. For Morrison et al (1997), breach results when an employee believes that his/her employer has reneged on some part of the perceived promise as interpreted by the employee. Breach can also arise when there is a misunderstanding or ‘incongruence’ as to the interpretations of psychological contract fulfilment.

Reneging, according to Morrison et al (1997, p.233) occurs when “agents of the organisation recognize that an obligation exists but they knowingly fail to follow through on that obligation”. Further, reneging is manifest when it is interpreted that the organisation is either unable or unwilling to fulfil the perceived obligation(s) in the contract. An organisation’s inability to meet of fulfil an obligation can be a result of too many promises being made earlier in the employment relationship to the extent that fulfilment of such promises is unrealistic and beyond the capability of the employer (Rousseau, 1995; Morisson et al, 1997; Turnley and Feldman, 1999). Additionally, “even when promises are made in good faith, a changing internal or external environment or an unanticipated decrease in the availability of resources may preclude the organisation from keeping them (such that) the likelihood of reneging will increase as the rate of organisational turbulence increases or as a firm’s performance declines” (Morrison et al., 1997, p.233). For example, the role of human resource policies and practices serve as important mechanisms through which promises and obligations are communicated to employees (De Vos and Meganck, 2007; Aggarwal and Bhargava, 2008; Sonnenberg, Koene and Paauwe, 2011).

A second source of reneging on the contract is the situation when the organisation is unwilling to meet its obligations. As Morrison et al (1997, p. 233) state: “Agents may
make a promise with no intention of fulfilling it, or they may decide to purposefully renege on a promise that they had originally intended to keep”.

Finally, incongruence relates to situations when one party believes they have fulfilled an obligation, yet is perceived as unfulfilled by the other in the employment relationship (Morrison et al., 1997). As Morrison et al (1997, p.235) assert: “Incongruence is when an employee has perceptions of a given promise that differ from those held by the organisational agent or agents responsible for fulfilling that promise”. In support of this, Morrison et al (1997) found that incongruence in perceived obligations was a fundamental factor that manifests a perception of psychological contract breach and or violation. A study by Lewis-McClear et al (1997) of manager and employee perceptions regarding their mutual obligations confirmed that the discrepancies between what the employee believed were important obligations were at variance with those obligations considered salient by managers.

Reactions to a breach in the exchange relationship can depend on the basis of the psychological contract. That is, if a psychological contract is founded on transactional rather than relational foundations, an employee’s reactionary behaviour will vary along this employment exchange continuum. Grimmer at al (2007) found evidence that an employee’s perception regarding their expectations that their employer would fulfil their obligations was negatively correlated with a transactional psychological contract. Further, Raja et al (2004) derived negative correlations between psychological contract breach and affective organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

### 2.5.3 The Relationship between Psychological Contract Breach and Perceptions of Contract Violation
It has been noted by some authors (for example: Conway et al., 2005; Guerrero and Herrbach, 2007; Suazo, 2008; George, 2009) that researchers in the past conceived psychological contract breach and violation as one and the same. However, it has been empirically demonstrated that conceptually differentiating breach from violation experiences serves as an added insight into the relationship between psychological contract infringement and work outcomes (Morrison and Robinson, 1997; Dulac et al., 2008; Suazo, 2005, 2008).

In their detailed paper, Morrison and Robinson (1997) posited that contract breach and violation is “moderated by an interpretation process through which the employee takes into account outcome issues, why and how the breach occurred, and the social contract governing the relationship”(p. 232/233). They ascribe an interpretation process that incorporates issues surrounding the identification of discrepancies between the “two ratios of fulfilment”, whether or not the breach was misconstrued (incongruent beliefs) or intended (reneged upon) and gives credence to the nature of the employment relationship (based on a transactional or relational continuum).

Following the definition of Morrison et al., (1997, p. 230) “ perceived breach refers to the cognition that one’s organisation has failed to meet one or more obligations with one’s contribution…and represents a cognitive assessment of what each has promised and provided the other”. It focuses on a more matter-of-fact interpretation of the employment relationship and encompasses less emotional reactions to unfulfilled employer obligations. Yet, none the less, a perceived contract breach may still explain an employee’s feeling of disappointment and ensue some form of relationship-withdrawal reaction (Conway et al., 2005) and can eventually lead to a more socio-emotional backlash as a consequence of
frequent instances of breach. As such, a breach of psychological contract can be regarded as a rational, cognitively-orientated appraisal of perceived unmet obligations that may incorporate a shot-term imbalance in the employment relationship (Pate, Martin and McGoldrick, 2003) but may devolve into a sense of violation trough continued non-fulfilment of obligations. For Morrison et al (1997) reneging and incongruence are the two primary conditions which gives rise to perceptions of violation (George, 2009).

Contract violation, as espoused by (Morrison et al., 1997) incorporates a more “emotional and affective state that may, under certain conditions, follow from the belief that one’s organisation has failed adequately to maintain the psychological contract” (p. 230). Compared to perceptions of breach, experiences of contract violation can create a sense of injustice for the employee which could lead to particular emotional and behavioural responses. Psychological contract violations reduce trust in the exchange relationship (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994). When employees perceive that their psychological contract has been breached or violated, trust in their employer is compromised, they are less inclined to invest emotionally or behaviourally in the relationship and will attempt to rebalance the exchange (Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000; Conway and Briner, 2005). As Robinson and Rousseau (1994) elucidate, a breakdown of the psychological contract is a breakdown of the trust that facilitated the growth of the relationship.

Research indicates that employment relationships centred on more relational footings, exhibit a greater degree of emotional response in the face of contract breaches (Robinson et al., 1994; Robinson and Rousseau, 1994; Morrison et al., 1997; Teklab and Taylor, 2003). Research further indicates that a contract violation has a negative relationship on job satisfaction, organisational citizen behaviours, trust (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994;
Robinson and Morrison, 1995; Robinson, 1996) and general employee exchange relations (Perceived Organisational Support and Leader-member exchange) with supervisors and the employing organisation such as reduced levels of commitment and loyalty (Pearce, 1995) and lower employee well-being (Conway and Briner, 2005). Further, the sense of disappointment and negative affect borne from contract violation can re-route the employment relationship from one based on a relational, socio-emotional footing to one more calculating and transactional (Pate, Martin and McGoldrick, 2003). As Robinson and Rousseau (1994) elucidate, a breakdown of the psychological contract is a breakdown of the trust that facilitated the growth of the relationship.

Recent efforts have attempted to separate out and interpret the sources, processes and differential effects of breach and violation under the theoretical framework of Affective Events Theory (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996) as a means of understanding employee reactions to workplace events and the consequential work outcomes. For the purpose of this research, AET forms a suitable framework within which to situate an analysis of the effects of breach and violation on employee work outcomes. Concurrent with subjective orientation of the psychological contract as defined in the literature, AET theory bases its foundation on an ‘individual level’ analyses (Wegge, van Dick, Fisher, West and Dawson, 2006). Further, the incorporation of AET as an appropriate model within which to analyse the dynamics of the psychological contract infringement has been argued on the grounds of the link between breach/violation and the role of affect (Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski and Bravo, 2007). As Dulac, et al., (2008, p. 1084) contend “it is important to understand how individuals respond to opposing views that their relationships are founded on trust and mutual dependence, yet their psychological contracts may have been breached. This
understanding centres on differentiating between psychological contract breach and violation”.

Affective Events Theory (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996, p. 11) “focuses on the structure, causes and consequences of affective experiences at work”. Given that work forms a vital aspect of an individual’s life, AET attempts to discern the complex interplay between an employee’s behavioural and attitudinal reaction to some workplace event (Judge, Brent and Ilies, 2006). As Weiss et al. (1996, p.31) contend, AET centres on workplace events “that generate a reaction or mood change in people”. Given the variety and complexity of exchange processes and items within the employment relationship, discerning what is a breach and what justifies a violation exhibits considerable variation from person to person. Thus, the purpose of this study is not to pin-point the constituent item(s) or component(s) of breach or violation, but to interpret the relationship between the construct in terms of affective influence on work outcomes.

Weiss et al (1996, p.11) highlight that AET focuses on events as ‘proximal causes of affective reactions’. Similarly, an employee’s job-related attitude can be attributed to cumulative affective experiences and events at work (Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Warren and de Chermont, 2003) and implies some form of event-mediation process. Another way of discerning the antecedents, process and outcomes of workplace events that generate emotional responses can be explained through the Cognitive-Motivational-Relational theory of emotion (Lazarus, 1991b, 199c). The central tenet of this theory of emotion argues that it is “relational, motivational and cognitive” (Lazarus, 1991b, p. 819). The following abridged quote explicates this tenet:
“Relational means that emotions are always about person-environment relationships that involve harms (for the negative emotions) and benefits (for the positive emotions).…Motivational means that acute emotions and moods are reactions to the status of goals in everyday adaptational encounters and in our lives overall…Cognitive means knowledge and appraisal and consists of situational and generalised beliefs about how things work…Appraisal consists of an evaluation of the personal significance of what is happening in an encounter with the environment” (Lazarus, 1991b, p. 819-820).

As Dulac et al. (2008) assert ‘an individual’s reaction to some critical event or events follows a two-step process in that cognition precedes emotion’. Thus, for the purpose of this research, it is understood that breach and violation of the psychological contract are treated as proximal critical workplace events that influence emotional reactions in an employee with breach (cognitive element) preceding violation (affect element) in the event sequence. Recent studies have demonstrated the strong positive correlation between perceptions of breach and violation (Raja et al., 2004; Zhao et al., 2007; Suazo, 2005, 2009; Dulac, Coyle-Shapiro, Henderson and Wayne, 2008; Raja, John and Bilgrami, 2011) such that breach is interpreted as an antecedent to feelings of violation. Additionally, each of these studies have borne evidence supporting the positive link between contract breach and violation, and also confirmed the mediational effects of perceived violation between breach perceptions and work outcomes.

For example, Raja et al (2004) surveyed a sample of N = 197 employees from a selection of private and public sector organisations ion Pakistan. Factor analysis confirmed the empirical distinction between breach and feeling of violation. Further, that study not only confirmed the negative relationship between breach and each of affective organisational
commitment (r = -.45, p < .001) and job satisfaction (r = -.27, p < .001) as well as the relationship violation had with both sets of employee attitudes, the results indicated that breach was a significant explanatory variable of violation and that violation was an important intervening variable which mediated and exacerbated the negative relationship between breach and these work outcomes. In a later study, Raja, Johns and Bilgrami (2011) found that not only was violation functionally related to job satisfaction (β = -.44, p <.001) and job performance (β = -.17, p < .01), its effects were stronger for employees experiencing a relational rather than transactional contract.

In replicating and extending the Raja et al (2004) study, Suazo (2005) and Suazo (2009) reported similar effects relating to the direct and indirect relationship of breach and violation on work outcomes and behaviours. Firstly, the 2005 study confirmed that breach was indeed related to feelings of violation (β = .71, p < .001). Further, violation mediated the relationship between breach and intentions to quit (β = .49, p < .001) and professional commitment (β = -.27, p < .01). Subsequently, Suazo (2009) investigated the effects of breach and violation on employee work-related attitudes and behaviours. Suazo (2009) confirmed that breach was a significantly correlated with violation (r = .71, p < .001). Additionally, violation fully mediated the negative relationship between breach and job satisfaction (β =-.39, p < .01), organisational commitment (β = -.39, p < .01), perceived organisational support (β = -.48, p < .01). Violation also fully mediated the positive relationship between breach and intentions to quit (β = .51, p < 0.01).

A meta-analyses undertaken by Zhao et al (2007) tested a number of theoretical assumptions regarding the direct effects of breach and a number of work attitudes and behaviours, as well as exploring the mediating effects of violation with these same
assumptions. Using structural equation analysis to test a number of theoretical models, the Zhao et al (2007) study confirmed the mediational effects of workplace affect (psychological contract violation), such that violation acted as a strong intervening variable between breach and work outcome relations. Further, breach reportedly had an average statistically significant positive correlation of \( r = .52 \) with violation. Breach was also found to be significantly and negatively correlated with Job Satisfaction \( r = -.54 \), \( k \) studies = 28, \( N \) total observations = 14,252 and organisational commitment \( r = -.38 \), \( k \) studies = 20, \( N \) total observations = 12,523. Finally, employing structural equation modelling, Dulac et al (2008) conducted a longitudinal study of \( N = 241 \) employees at three Belgian companies to explore underlying social exchange processes. Specifically, the Dulac et al (2008) study sought to investigate the separate effects that cognitive and affective processes on work attitudes. Their study reported that breach was found to be significantly and positively related to violation \( \beta = .78, p < .01 \) and that violation mediated the relations between breach and affective commitment, trust in organisation and turnover intentions.

### 2.6 Psychological Contract Research in Academia

Considering the level of theoretical and empirical studies associated with the psychological contract which has appeared during the past three decades, there is a dearth of such research applied to academic environs. In fact, the majority of the published work cited in this thesis so far relate to many different organisational contexts other than educational institutions. Further, much of the formative investigations of psychological contract dynamics focused on North American MBA students (Conway et al., 2005; Deery, Iverson and Walsh, 2006). This is extraordinary considering the fact that academic work is
exposed to and associated with increasingly complex and demanding internal and external environments (Houston, Meyer and Paewai, 2006) brought about by the raft of public sector changes that have taken place over the past decade or so. In particular, appreciating the systemic rationalisation which national and international higher education sectors have, and are currently experiencing, a growing body of research dedicated to exploring the employment relationship of academics has appeared in the organisational literature. The concept of the psychological contract is increasingly being used as a platform upon which to comprehend the effects that these sectoral changes are imparting on the professions and in particular, an academic’s relationship with their institution (e.g. Tipples and Krivokapic-Skoko, 1997; Tipples and Jones, 1999; Newton, 2002; Dabos and Rousseau, 2004; Tipples, Krivokapic-Skoko, O’Neill, 2007; O’Donoghue, Sheehan, Hecker and Holland, 2007; O’Neill, Krivokapic-Skoko and Dowell, 2010).

The first evidence of the application of psychological contract theory in third level institutions is usually credited to Tipples and Krivokapic-Skoko (1997). Tipples et al (1997) investigated the impact that state sector reforms were having on third level institutions in New Zealand. In particular, the effect these changes were having on the employment relationship of academics was the central objective of the study. Coincidently, the methodologies employed in this dissertation are somewhat akin to that used by Tipples et al (1997) such that both quantitative and qualitative data collection strands were utilised. Academics were asked to consider the level of fulfilment of perceived obligations by their university, whether or not certain aspects were neglected by the institution and if academics believed that their employment relationship had changed over a ten year time frame.
The results of the Tipples et al (1997) study highlighted that while academics were of the opinion that their university had fulfilled its promised obligations to academics. However, their study indicated that twenty seven percent (27%) of faculty had experienced contract breach or violation at some point during their tenure at the university and that fifty seven percent (57%) believed that their relationship with the institution had changed considerably over a ten year period. Issues such as promotions policies, insufficient research and teaching resources, poor management and communication systems relating to decision making represented the most common types of obligations academics felt were not being fulfilled by the university. In determining the nature of the exchange obligations academics believed were owing to them, Tipples et al (1997) noted that career development, job satisfaction, promotion opportunities, job security, suitable remuneration and the availability of organisational support were the most cited types of such obligations. In terms of what academics believed they owed their institution, issues relating to loyalty, extra-role and organisational citizenship behaviours as well as willingness to remain at their university for a minimum period of time, reflected academics’ obligations in the exchange relationship. Further, Tipples et al (1997) emphasised the changing nature of the employment relationship academics believed to have occurred owing to the greater work load demands placed on them from management and administrators and the increased focus on accountability resulting from the pervasiveness of performance-related systems. In general, academics conveyed quite negative opinions regarding the managerialist direction of the university and the strains derived from the work environment.

As a follow-up study to the 1997 research, Tipples and Jones (1999) further analysed the quantitative data. Tipples et al (1999) found that there was a negative correlation between
the level of job satisfaction of academics and perceptions that the university had failed to meet its obligations. Additionally, Tipples et al (1999) reported positive relationships between perceptions of obligations fulfilment with increased job satisfaction and levels of organisational trust, as well as a strong correlation between job satisfaction and trust levels.

In his qualitative study on the barriers to effective management and leadership in Universities in the United Kingdom, Newton (2002) highlighted that increased academic managerialism was mitigating the nature of front-line faculty relationships with the institution, reflected in terms of “suspicion of management motives, the breakdown of reciprocal accountability and trust” (p. 186). Exploring the role and impact that quality assurance policies had on the employment relationship between academics and the university, Newton (2002) emphasised that the psychological contract could be used to explain the perception that academic staff had regarding the lack of recognition and reward for their efforts. Dabos and Rousseau, (2004) examined the role of perceived mutuality and reciprocity of obligations between researchers and their programme managers in a research-orientated environment in a Latin American college. Their findings indicated that the degree of similar or mutual understanding of exchanged obligations between both parties enhanced the work relationship and facilitated greater productivity in research output.

Using a sequential, multi-method research design incorporating focus groups; and a combination of factor and cluster analysis, O’Neill, Krivokapic-Skoko and Dowell (2010) assessed the contents of business academics’ psychological contracts at an Australian University. Focus group analyses revealed a number of specific themes relating to the
obligations academics conceived as being part of the exchange relationship. Academics cited expectations regarding recognition of professional expertise and knowledge, good leadership, fairness and transparency in promotion and decision making procedures and autonomy as being of salience to them. Building upon the empirical findings from the focus group phase, O’Neill et al (2010) developed a survey instrument which was administered to a sample of academics. Factor analysis of the survey derived revealed a total of eight factors relating to academics’ perceptions of the university’s obligations to academics, and three factors associated with academics’ obligations to the university. For university obligations to academics, fair treatment in promotion, support and development for staff, good management and leadership, a quality work environment, appropriate remuneration, performance rewards and healthy workplace relations; accounted for a high percentage of the variance in university obligations. Demonstrating commitment to the university, providing extra-role behaviours and adhering to academic standards returned as the principal academic obligations to the university. Extending the analysis further, a two-step cluster analysis of perceptions of university obligations to academics revealed four defined groupings of academics exhibiting significantly different psychological contract perceptions:

Cluster 1-those who were ‘satisfied’ with the way the university conducted its policies and procedures for promotion, performance rewards and organisational support for staff development and with general management practices at the university;

Cluster 2 – *Life-style academics* were more concerned with aspects of the employment relationship relating to the general work environment and academic lifestyle as well as placing greater emphasis on the quality of workplace relations;
Cluster 3 – Academics who expressed ‘complacent’ attitudes toward their university and the relationship therein reflected an ambivalent approach to the employment relationship. These academics were not overly concerned with the systems and policies existing in the university;

Cluster 4 – The final cluster included academics who conveyed a sense of ‘ambition’ regarding the importance they placed on the performance and promotion system. These individuals placed a high level of importance to the issue of equity and fairness in the relationship.

From an Irish perspective, a recent article published in the Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management examined the employment relationship of university accounting and finance academics (Byrne, Chughtai, Flood and Willis, 2012). Though not strictly presented as a study of the psychological contract of academic staff, the thrust of the investigation lends itself to some useful and relevant insights into the academic employment relationship. Investigating the influence that job content and contextual factors had on the level of job satisfaction, Byrne et al (2012) observed that both source variables were significantly related to academic’s satisfaction. While academics reported a relatively positive attitude toward their work in terms of the modules taught and the degree of autonomy they had on a daily basis, Byrne et al (2012) note that many were dissatisfied with the time allocated for research projects and the system of promotions operating within the institutions. Stepwise regression highlighted that the nature of the relationship an academic has with their head of department was a significant predictor of academics’ job satisfaction.
In relation to this finding, Byrne et al (2012) emphasise that developing and maintaining high quality relationship with departmental managers affords academics the opportunity to benefit from increased support from both management and organisation such that “senior management should encourage department heads to create a supportive work environment by treating their staff with respect and compassion, acknowledging their contributions” (Byrne et al., 2012, p.164). On this point, the next section presents a review of the literature on organisational support theory. In particular, the influence of perceived organisational support on the employment relationship and hence, the psychological contract, is discussed.

2.7 Organisational Support Theory

Similar to the theory of psychological contract (PCT), organisational support theory (OST) is grounded in the fundamental principles of social exchange (Homans, 1958, 1961; Blau, 1964) and relies on the universal norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) as the mechanism through which all resource exchanges occur. According to OST, employees form a global belief regarding their perceptions of the organisation’s benevolent treatment of employees in the workplace by the nature, frequency and quality of the resources exchanged (Eisenberger et al., 1986). As Eisenberger et al (2011, p.44) assert “to employees, and in social relationships generally, the receipt of material and social resources is valued more strongly when it signifies that the donor cares about the well-being of the recipient”. The theory suggests that when employees perceive their organisation as fulfilling individuals’ economic and socio-emotional needs in the workplace, they develop a positive perception regarding the organisation’s concern for
their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger, Fasolo and Davis-La Mastro, 1990; Aselage and Eisenberger, 2003). The more favourable the perception of organisational support interpreted by employees, the greater the ‘felt obligation to reciprocate with higher levels of effort and commitment by employees in helping their employer achieve important organisational goals (Eisenberger et al., 1986, Eisenberger, et al., 1990; Settoon, Bennett and Linden, 1996; Rhodes, Eisenberger and Armeli, 2001).

Such positive perceptions that the organisation cares about employee well-being becomes all the more potent if the actions conveyed by the organisation are interpreted as being discretionary rather than enforced by external constraints and circumstances (Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 1990; Eisenberger and Stinglhamber, 2011). Gouldner (1960) argued that when the resource exchanged from a donor is considered a discretionary and benevolent act by the recipient, the recipient would interpret this as an expression of positive regard and concern to the extent that the donor cares about the well-being of the recipient. As Gouldner (1960) reasoned:

“The value of the benefit and hence the debt is in proportion to and varies with- among other things- the intensity of the recipient’s need at the time the benefit was bestowed (“a friend in need...”), the resources of the donor (“he gave although he could ill afford it”), the motives imputed to the donor (“without thought of gain”), and the nature of the constraints which are perceived to exist or to be absent (“he gave of his own free will...”)” (p.171)

By extension, Rhodes and Eisenberger (2002) note the positive effects that discretionary rather than circumstantial actions from the organisation impart on an employee’s work
life. As Rhodes et al. (2002, p.698) contend “organisational rewards and favourable job conditions such as pay, promotions, job enrichment, and influence over organisational policies contribute more to POS if the employee believes that they result from the organisation’s voluntary actions, as opposed to external constraints”. As such, positive, discretionary actions conveyed by the organisation would be taken as proof that the organisation had concern for an employee’s well-being and could be therefore be dependable for future rewards (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Aselage et al, 2003; Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkle, Lynch and Rhodes, 2001; Eisenberger et al., 2011).

An underlying tenet of OST relates to the humanising of the organisation by the employee such that the organisation is perceived to exhibit its own particular personality. Organisational support theory postulates that employees personify their employer by attributing human like characteristics to it and from this personification; individuals generate a global perception (Perceived Organisational Support) of the level of support they can expect to receive or not receive. As Eisenberger et al., (1986, p. 500) assert “beliefs in organisational support or malevolence may be fostered by employees’ anthropomorphic ascription of dispositional traits to the organisation”. Further, Eisenberger and Stinglhamber (2011, p.41) assert that “the employee’s experience of the organisation as a lifelike being with its own motives is so ubiquitous and powerful that it is immediately recognisable to almost all those who have worked in organisations”.

Levinson (1965) adapted Freud’s psychoanalytic concept of ‘transference’ to an organisational setting to explicate the relationship between man and organisation. Transference as a phenomenon, Levinson (1965) suggests, is an everyday occurrence whereby “people project upon organisations human qualities and then relate to them as if
the organisations did in fact have human qualities” (p.377). He continues by saying that ‘they generalise from their feelings about people in the organisation who are important to them, to the organisation as a whole, as well as extrapolating from those attitudes they bring to the organisation’ (Levinson, 1965, p.377). Individuals ‘anthropomorphise’ the organisation in order to attribute tangible meaning and actions to an otherwise intangible entity (Eisenberger, et al., 1986) and “in a sense, the organisation assumes an anthropomorphic identity in the eyes of the employee” (Morrison and Robinson, 1997, p.228) through the actions and behaviours of its management agents. For Levinson, (1965):

“Moreover, the actions of individual people in an organisation are viewed by them, by the objects of the action, and by observers, as actions of the organisation.” (p.378)

And

“The generalised mode of behaviour characteristic of organisational agents as they act on behalf of the organisation, together with the demonstration of the organisation’s power, make it possible for transference phenomena to occur which give the organisation a psychological reality in the experience of the individual members.” (p.380)

Additionally, the personification of the organisation is influenced and abetted by the legal, moral and financial responsibilities of its agents, the norms, culture and social standing of the organisation, and the type and degree of power the organisation and its agents have over individual employees (Eisenberger et al., 1986, 2002, 2011). In essence, “the personification of the organisation was assumed to represent an employee’s distillation of views concerning all other members who control that individual’s material
and symbolic resources” (Eisenberger et al., 1986, p.500). Attributing such human-like descriptions to the organisation, any favourable or unfavourable treatment displayed toward the employee would be interpreted by the individual “as an indication of the extent to which the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being”. (Aselage et al., 2003, p.493). In reality, the development of perceived organisational support is by and large as result of the multiple constituencies and multiple exchange partners that exist within an organisation.

As Eisenberger et al (2011) advise:

“The kinds of support provided to employees by top management, immediate supervisors, co-workers, and subordinates differ in some ways…. (but) because upper level managers are charged with setting the general goals and objectives for the organisation, supportive treatment from upper management should be judged by employees as more indicative of organisational support than supportive treatment from other organisational members lower in the organisational hierarchy” (p. 103)

2.7.1 Antecedents & Consequences of Perceived Organisational Support

In their original seminal work, Eisenberger et al. (1986) developed the concept of Perceived Organisational Support as a framework for explaining and predicting the development of organisational commitment of employees. The idea was to identify the salient factors which influenced employees to develop positive and/or negative perceptions regarding their employer and therefore indicate the level of commitment the organisation had toward employees. Given that that the terms and obligations of an individual’s psychological contract are somewhat “shaped by the organisation” (Rousseau
et al., 1993; Rousseau, 1995), perceptions of organisational support are similarly
determined by the actions and behaviours of the organisation and its agents (Coyle-
Shapiro et al., 2005).

According to Eisenberger et al. (1986) perceived organisational support would be
“influenced by various aspects of an employee’s treatment by the organisation and would,
in turn, influence the interpretation of organisational motives underlying that treatment”
(p.501). As such, the nature of the policies, decisions and organisational systems which
are created and Eisenberger et al. (1986) posited that the development of perceived
organisational support would be influenced by the frequency and voluntariness attached
to statements of approval and recognition. The more times an employee experienced
these positive sentiments and discretionary acts of concern, the more likely an employee
would incorporate “organisational membership into self-identity and thereby develop a
positive emotional bond (affective attachment) to the organisation” (Eisenberger et al.,
1986, p.501). Additionally, remuneration, promotion opportunities, job enrichment and
involvement in policy decision-making would further contribute to the benevolent image
of the organisation.

A meta-analysis conducted by Rhodes and Eisenberger (2002) highlighted a number of
important factors which contribute to the creation, maintenance and dilution of
organisational support perceptions among employees. In that study, Rhodes et al (2002)
specified that perceptions of fairness and organisational justice within the organisation
contribute to perceptions of organisational support. Additionally, the relationship
between employees and their immediate supervisors along with organisational rewards
and general work conditions were explicated as other primary antecedents of POS (Aselage et al., 2003; Eisenberger et al., 2011; Rhodes et al., 2002).

In terms of fairness, Rhodes et al (2002) emphasised the influence of procedural, distributive and social/interactional justice perceptions in the attribution process of POS. Procedural justice relates to the degree to which the application of organisational rules, decision-making policies and human resource procedures are perceived to be fair and consistent (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter and Yee Ng; 2001 Sparrow and Cooper, 2003). Distributive justice emphasises the perceived fairness of outcomes, rewards and resource allocation related to decision-making procedures (Sheppard, Lewicki and Minton, 1992) while social/interactional justice refers to the quality of interpersonal treatment associated with decision-makers in resource allocation procedures (Eisenberger et al., 2003; Sparrow et al., 2003). Whereas perceptions of procedural justice are directly attributable to the wider organisation, interactional justice is more focused on the proximal interrelationships between subordinates and their immediate managers and the quality of the social exchange relationship therein (Colquitt et al., 2001; Eisenberger et al., 2011; Rhodes et al., 2002). Perceptions of interactional justice include issues associated with dignity, respect, trust and communication between superior and subordinate to the extent that the quality of these elements affects employee attitudes such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment, and behaviours such as organisational citizenship behaviours and intentions to leave (Bies and Moag, 1986; Masterson and Taylor, 1996; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman and Taylor, 2000). As such, supervisor support relates to the quality of the relationship employees have with their superiors such
that employees’ believe that their superior care for their well-being and value their contributions.

A final antecedent contributing to the formation of POS focuses on general work conditions and the level of organisational rewards. The Rhodes et al (2002) study highlighted a number of salient factors such as recognition, remuneration, training, promotions, job security, autonomy and job-related stressors such as work overload, as important elements which determine the level of POS among employees. As Rhodes et al (2002, p.700) assert “favourable opportunities for rewards serve to communicate a positive valuation of employees’ contributions”. Similarly, “employees’ expectation that the organisation will generously reward achievable high levels of performance indicates to employees that the organisation values their contributions and thus should increase perceived organisational support” (Eisenberger et al., 2011, p.78). On the basis of social exchange and the reciprocity norm (Gouldner, 1960), such perceptions would induce employees to reciprocate with greater effort and convey more pro-social work attitudes and behaviours (Settoon et al., 1996). Meta-analytic results from the Rhodes et al (2002) study further confirmed the beneficial consequences associated with high levels of organisational support. Significant correlations were found between POS and job satisfaction (r = .55), overall organisational commitment (r = .60) as well as the sub-dimensions of affective (r = .65) and continuance (r = -.13).

2.8 Integrating Psychological Contract Theory and Organisational Support Theory
The discussion thus far explored both the literature and associated empirical research related to psychological contract theory and the theory of perceived organisational support. In both cases, the extant research has supported the general underlying thrust of these theories and how they independently capture exchange relations in the employment relationship. Aselage et al (2003) proposed that much insight could be gained by integrating PCT and OST in the study of the employment relationship given that each theory is grounded in the social exchange framework (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). As such, this final section considers the potential benefits of integrating both PCT and POS to further our understanding of the employment exchange relationship and highlights the complementarity of both exchange-related processes.

As previously discussed, the social exchange framework prescribes the principles and processes through which social relationships begin, are maintained and decline in terms of the value attributed to, and subsequent reciprocation of, impersonal and socio-emotional resources in an exchange relationship. Based on the universal norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) individuals who benefit from the receipt of valuable resources are obligated to repay this benefit through some means. From an organisational perspective, employees who experience high quality exchange relationships [holding relational psychological contracts and perceiving strong organisational support] with their employer are motivated to repay this treatment by demonstrating higher levels of commitment and effort therein.

Both PCT and OST “incorporate the exchange of socio-emotional resources, promoted by the reciprocity norm, as an important aspect of the development of exchange relationships between employees and their work organisation” (Aselage et al., 2003, p.497).
Accordingly, PCT and POS can be viewed as mechanisms by which the quality of the employment relationship is interpreted (Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2002; Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2005).

From a psychological contract perspective, the relationship quality is determined through the subjective perceptions of employees that the employing organisation has either fulfilled or breached its obligations and promises believed to be present in the employment relationship (Aselage et al., 2003; Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2005; Guerro and Herrbach, 2007; Eisenberger et al., 2011). Further, the nature of the underlying psychological contract in terms of whether the employment exchange is based on the fulfilment or breach of transactional or relational obligations also conveys the quality of the employment relationship such that relational contracts reflect stronger employee-employer socio-emotional linkages (Rousseau, 1990, 1995; Grimmer et al., 2007; Zagenczyk, Gibney, Few and Scott, 2011). Similarly, the perception that the organisation is concerned about the well-being of its employees is evidenced by the nature of the resources available from the organisation which can range from emotional-relational items to more tangible items such as training, performance appraisal and general working conditions (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Aselage et al., 2003; Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2005; Guerrero et al., 2007; Eisenberger et al., 2011). Conway et al (2005) suggest that an important link between PCT and OST is that inadequate (or absent) levels of relevant organisational support are a particularly salient antecedent contributing to perceptions of breach. This would stand to reason given the high relational component ascribed to both phenomena. Employees perceiving that they are not valued in the eyes of their employer based on the actions of the organisation would construe this as a form of infringement in their employment relationship and thus, would react accordingly (Eisenberger et al.,
This point offers a potential indication as to the mediating effect POS might have in the relationship between an individual’s psychological contract and job attitudes.

While PCT and POS relate to each other on particular aspects of the employee-employer exchange relationship, the two concepts differ on a number of aspects. Firstly, PCT is founded on the subjective belief of mutual obligations of both employee and employer in the employment relationship. The quality and state of the psychological contract is evaluated on the basis of the discrepancy between what was believed to be promised and what was actually delivered by the organisation (Rousseau, 1990, 1995; Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2005; Kiewitz, lloyd, Restubog. Zagenczyk and Hochwater, 2009). In contrast, POS reflects an aggregated evaluation such that it captures only a bi-lateral perception regarding the organisation’s treatment and commitment to the employee regardless of whether such obligations were explicitly or implicitly communicated (Aselage et al., 2003; Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2005; Kiewitz et al., 2009; Eisenberger et al., 2011) POS theory further predicts that employees will convey a ‘felt obligation’ to reciprocate on the basis of the perceived level of support they receive such that the higher the level and more positive the perception there is that support is present in the relationship, employees will expend greater effort to respond via pro-active work behaviours and attitudes. Given their conceptual similarity, studies relating psychological contract and perceived organisational support theories have appeared in the organisational literature in recent years.

For example, the first empirical attempt to relate the two theories is represented in the study conducted by Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2000). In a study of 703 public sector employees in the South East of England, it was hypothesised that employees who
perceived their employer as fulfilling its obligations within the psychological contract, also associated such perceptions as an expression of organisational support toward employees. Coyle-Shapiro et al (2000) found there to be significantly positive correlations between POS and relational fulfilment ($r = .46$) and transactional fulfilment ($r = .38$). Hierarchical regression confirmed that perceptions of contract fulfilment significantly contributed an additional 4% of variance in organisational support over and above a number of control variables. Additionally, psychological contract fulfilment explained and extra 12% of variance in organisational commitment over and above the variance explained through perceptions of organisational support. Interestingly, the effect of relational fulfilment on commitment was fully mediated by perceived organisational support.

Coyle-Shapiro et al (2000) concluded that when considering both psychological contract fulfilment perceptions along with evaluations of organisational support, employee attitudes are either positively or negatively influenced by the actions of their employer. In a similar study, Coyle-Shapiro and Conway (2005) surveyed a sample of local government employees at different time periods to test the hypothesis that that psychological contract fulfilment and perceptions of organisational support were reciprocally correlated, with the weighting of predictive power on the fulfilment side. Results of regression analyses revealed that fulfilment perceptions significantly predicted support perceptions, but not the opposite direction.

Tekleab, Takeuchi and Taylor (2005) conducted a longitudinal study of the effects of perceived organisational support and perceptions of contract violations over different time periods. The study revealed that prior perceptions of organisational support were
significantly and negatively related to subsequent violation perceptions. That is, when employees experience some form of contract violation, the level and quality of the employment relationship as reflected by perceptions of organisational support, reduces the negative consequences of contract infringement. The study also highlighted the mediational effects of violation perceptions between POS and employee job satisfaction such that perceptions of psychological contract violation fully mediated the relationship between organisational support and job satisfaction. That is, job satisfaction is more influenced by perceptions of psychological contract violation than by perceived organisational support.

Guerrero and Herrbach (2007) examined the connection between psychological contract fulfilment and affective work states. Utilising Affective Events Theory (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996) and integrating psychological contract theory with organisational support theory, Guerrero et al (2007) hypothesised that perceived organisational support represented an important mediating variable which arose from the cognitive evaluation of the employment exchange relationship. In the same manner in which psychological contract violation mediates the relationship between a cognitive assessment of breach and attitudes, Guerrero et al (2007) posited that perceived organisational support reflected a salient affective attitudinal mind-set resulting from perceptions of contract fulfilment such that organisational support is viewed as a mechanism through which fulfilment is experienced. Results from structural equation analysis confirmed both the direct and positive relationship between fulfilment and POS ($\beta = .60, p < .001$), and the mediating effect of POS between fulfilment and positive/negative workplace affect. Guerrero at al (2007) concluded that a positive evaluation of the employment relationship based on
psychological contract fulfilment perceptions creates both positive attitudes in the form of perceived organisational support and affect-laden moods in the workplace.

Hypothesising that psychological contract breach represents a conveyance of low organisational support; Kiewitz et al. (2009) conducted a longitudinal survey of white collar workers via an on-line survey at two time periods over a three month time frame to test the relationship between breach and support perceptions. Utilising the breach measure developed by Robinson and Morrison (1995) which captured both transactional and relational contract items, Kiewitz et al. (2009) found support of the breach-POS relationship such that perceptions of contract breach were significantly and negatively related to perceptions of organisational support. Hierarchical regression results indicated that relational-type breaches ($\beta = -.20$, $p < .01$) and transactional-type breaches ($\beta = -.16$, $p < .01$) in Time period 1 negatively influenced perceived organisational support in Time period 2.

Finally, a study which utilised social exchange theory and integrated both psychological contract and organisational support theories was recently evidenced by Zagenczyk, Gibney, Few and Scott (2011). In that study, Zagenczyk et al. (2011) hypothesised that the experience of breach in the psychological contract would have a negative effect on the degree of organisational identification. A sample of 274 University faculty staff at a South Carolina university participated in the research. The results confirmed that psychological contract breach negatively predicted the degree to which an employee identified with their University. Additionally, perceived organisational support fully mediated this relationship suggesting that when employees perceive that their contract has been breached in some manner, employees interpreted this as an indication that the
University did not care about their well-being and thus, employees would reduce their sense of identification with their employer. Thus, a negative perception of organisational support would be interpreted as a form of psychological contract breach.

2.9 Conceptual Framework: Research Questions & Hypotheses

According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p.18) a conceptual framework is a visual or written description that “explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied—the key factors, concepts, or variables—and the presumed relationships among them”. Additionally, “it is primarily a conception or model of what is out there that you plan to study, and of what is going on with these things and why—a tentative theory of the phenomena that you are investigating (Maxwell, 2005, p.33). Underpinning the conceptual framework is that of a conceptual map. Maxwell (2005, p.47) states that developing a conceptual map allows the researcher to “pull together, and make visible, what your implicit theory is, or to clarify an existing theory. This can allow you to see the implications of the theory, its limitations, and its relevance for your study”. Therefore, so as to clarify the overall research topic and situate the important elements relating to the employment relationship of academics, a graphical representation in the form of a conceptual framework is presented (Figure 2.2).

This study approached the employment relationship as an ‘exchange relationship’ by incorporating Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958, 1961; Blau, 1964, Gouldner, 1960) as a justifiable framework to capture and explicate the interaction processes between employees and their employing organisation. Social exchange theory posits that
social (and economic) relationships develop and continue to exist, based on the mutual benefit individuals derive from the exchange of ‘needed resources’ (Cropanzano et al., 2005). The ‘felt obligation’ to reciprocate (Gouldner, 1960; Eisenberger et al., 1986, 1990) one exchange event with another circumscribes the fundamental principal for ongoing relationship maintenance.

In a work context, the resources exchanged between an employee and his/her employer can be many and varied, socio-emotional and economic, relational and transactional. The exchange of work effort, commitment and loyalty from the employee in return for pay, recognition, support and advancement opportunities from the employer, serve as typical examples of work-related resources exchanged in the employment relationship.
Such resources may be explicitly acknowledged by both parties, as per the formal written employment contract, or could be subjectively perceived to exist by one or both parties, as derived from concept of a psychological contract (Rousseau, 1990, 1995, 1998).

Within the broader social exchange framework, psychological contract and organisational support theories are integrated in order to enhance our comprehension of the exchange dynamics between academics and universities. For the purpose of this research, Rousseau’s individual-focused conceptualisation of the psychological contract is used such that it is the subjective, personal interpretations an academic may have regarding the promises and obligations perceived to be conveyed by their University as well as those promises and obligations an employee perceives to convey to their employer during the course of the employment relationship and which either have a negative or positive effect on work attitudes.
On the one hand, the underlying nature of the psychological contract determines how an academic’s perception of their contract influences their work attitudes. As such, while the psychological contract acts as the ‘filter’ through which employees evaluate and react to the employment relationship with their employer based on the nature and perceived fulfilment of obligations; perceived organisational support, it is argued in this dissertation, is treated as an antecedent, an outcome and an intervening variable, and represents an overall evaluation of the employment exchange relationship.

For example, an employee may exhibit high levels of commitment to the organisation if it is perceived by the employee that the organisation is seen to be fulfilling its obligations in the employment relationship by, for example, conveying a sense of organisational support to employees (Eisenberger et al., 1986). In these situations, the employee may feel satisfied in their work environment and thus, with their job. When an employee feels that their employer is failing in some way to fulfil those obligations perceived to be part of the exchange relationship, a sense of psychological contract ‘breach’ or ‘violation’ results which can have a negative effect on the work attitudes and behaviours of employees though reduces levels of loyalty, commitment and job satisfaction (Deery, Iverson and Walsh, 2006; Montes and Zweig, 2009; Morrison and Robinson, 1997; Robinson and Morrison, 1995; Rousseau, 1989, 1990, 1995, 2004).

Accounting for the theoretical and empirical literature discussed in this chapter a number of hypotheses were created to reflect and expand upon the five principle research questions which guided the overall investigation.
**Research Question One:** In terms of dimensional characteristics, what is the underlying exchange nature of a University academic’s psychological contract?

**Research Question Two:** Is the underlying nature of an academic’s psychological contract associated with differential work attitudes and exchange relationship quality perceptions?

- Hypothesis 2(i): Academics who experience a transactional-type psychological contract report lower levels of job satisfaction compared to academics perceiving a relational-type psychological contract
- Hypothesis 2(ii): Academics who experience a transactional-type psychological contract report lower levels of affective commitment to their University compared to academics perceiving a relational-type psychological contract
- Hypothesis 2(iii): Academics who experience a transactional-type psychological contract report lower levels normative commitment to their University compared to academics perceiving a relational-type psychological contract
- Hypothesis 2(iv): Academics who experience a transactional-type psychological contract report higher levels of psychological contract breach and violation compared to academics perceiving a relational-type psychological contract
- Hypothesis 2(v): Academics who experience a transactional-type psychological contract report lower levels of psychological contract fulfilment compared to academics perceiving a relational-type psychological contract

**Research Question Three (a):** Does an academic’s psychological contract significantly explain their level of job satisfaction, affective and normative commitment as well as perceptions of organisational support?

- Hypothesis 3(i): Relational-type psychological contracts are positively related to, and significantly predict the job satisfaction of academics
- Hypothesis 3(ii): Relational-type psychological contracts are positively related to, and significantly predict an academic’s affective commitment to their University
- Hypothesis 3(iii): Relational-type psychological contracts are positively related to and significantly predict an academic’s level of normative commitment to their University
• Hypothesis3 (iv): Relational-type psychological contracts are positively related to and significantly predict an academic’s perceptions of organisational support from their University

**Research Question Three (b):** Does an academic’s psychological contract significantly explain perceptions of breach, violation and contract fulfilment?

• Hypothesis3 (v): Relational-type psychological contracts are negatively related to and significantly predict an academic’s perception of psychological contract breach and perceptions of contract violation
• Hypothesis3 (vi): Relational-type psychological contracts are positively related to and significantly predict an academic’s perception of psychological contract fulfilment

**Research Question Four:** Accounting for different psychological contract types, what is the relationship between psychological contract breach, violation, fulfilment perceptions and the work attitudes of academics?

• Hypothesis 4(i): Psychological contract breach is positively related to, and significantly predicts perceptions of psychological contract violation
• Hypothesis 4(ii): Psychological contract breach is negatively related to an academic’s level of job satisfaction
• Hypothesis 4(iii): Psychological contract violation is negatively related to an academic’s level of job satisfaction
• Hypothesis 4(iv): Psychological contract breach is negatively related to affective commitment
• Hypothesis 4(v): Psychological contract violation is negatively related to affective commitment
• Hypothesis 4(vi): Psychological contract breach is negatively related to normative commitment
• Hypothesis 4(vii): Psychological contract violation is negatively related to normative commitment
Hypothesis 4(viii): Psychological contract breach is negatively related to perceptions of organisational support

Hypothesis 4(ix): Psychological contract violation is negatively related to perceptions of organisational support

Hypothesis 4 (x): Psychological contract violation mediates the relationship between breach and each of job satisfaction, affective commitment, normative commitment and perceived organisational support

**Research Question Five:** Does perceived organisational support mediate: (i) the negative effects of psychological contract breach on work-related outcomes? And (ii) the positive effects of psychological contract fulfilment on work-related outcomes?

- Hypothesis 5(i): Perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract breach and job satisfaction
- Hypothesis 5(ii): Perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract breach and the affective commitment of academics
- Hypothesis 5(iii): Perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract breach and the normative commitment of academics
- Hypothesis 5(iv): Perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract fulfilment and job satisfaction
- Hypothesis 5(vi): Perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract fulfilment and affective commitment
- Hypothesis 5(vi): Perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract fulfilment and normative commitment
Chapter 3

Research Method

“This social phenomena that we study ‘on the ground’ in the real world are arguably complex, dynamic, and contextually diverse... We therefore need to use all of our methodological expertise and skills in this endeavour.”

(Greene, Benjamin and Goodyear, 2001, p.25)
3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research process, design and methods employed to collect and analyse the data required to study the employment relationship of academics currently employed in the University sector of Ireland. According to Gelo, Braakmann & Benetka (2008, p.266) “scientific investigation can be characterised by a set of philosophical and meta-theoretical assumptions concerning the nature of reality (ontology), knowledge (epistemology), and the principles inspiring and governing scientific investigation (methodology), as well as by technical issues regarding the practical implementation of a study (research methods).” Creswell (2009, p.5) offers a similar perspective such that researchers need to acknowledge “the philosophical worldview assumptions that they bring to the study, the strategy of inquiry that is related to this worldview, and the specific methods or procedures of research that translate the approach into practice.”

Jonker and Pennink (2010) provide a useful model which describes the principal elements associated with a research methodology. Figure 3.1 offers a visual overview of the structure for this chapter which details the various steps and phases pursued in order to apply an appropriate design for the study. Unlike the Jonker et al (2010) model, an amended, inverted five-level pyramid is applied in this instance. The model delineates
the philosophical, conceptual and methodological considerations associated with the overall research approach taken, the subsequent establishment of an appropriate research design and the choice of specific data collection techniques and instruments.

**Figure 3.1**
**Research Approach & Design Considerations**

The top (first) level of the pyramid forms the initial phase of the research wherein choices must be made regarding how the researcher views the nature of reality and its relationship with the creation of knowledge. The researcher must choose that ‘paradigm’ from multiple options which best suits the nature of the study and which facilitates in answering the core research question. Selecting the appropriate philosophical stance from the range of paradigms is vital as “they are the starting points or givens that determine what inquiry is and how it is to be practiced” (Guba, 1990, p.18). The remaining four levels of the pyramid are collectively referred to as the *research design*. These levels delineate the structural aspects of the research regarding the decisions and process involved with planning the research, deciding on the appropriate research strategy and
techniques for collecting and analysing the information required to answer the core research questions.

Therefore, this chapter presents a conceptual overview of the research topic and discussion a of the research paradigm upon which the study rests. A description of the research design procedure including the sampling procedure and questionnaire development. Finally, the psychometric testing of the survey instrument used in this study will be presented.

3.2 Research Purpose, Goals & Questions

The choice and selection of methodological approaches is be determined in large part by the general goal of the investigation, purpose of the study and the nature of the research question(s) which direct the thrust of the scientific inquiry. Greene (2007, p.17) asserts that all “social inquiry begins with purpose...from purpose come specific inquiry questions, and from questions, particular inquiry design and methods.” Further, she adds that “historically, the dominant purpose for social research has been to develop sound explanations for social phenomena in order to better predict and control them, following the model of the natural sciences.” (Greene, 2007, p.18)

Maxwell (2005) highlights the importance that goals play in the formulation and dissemination of a research study. He notes that a research goal refers to the motivations and purposes of a study, the utility and value attributed to conducting the study and the implications the findings may have on policies and practices vis a vis the context of the
research sample. The primary goal of the research here was to explore the employment relationship of university academics in Ireland’s higher education sector. Specifically, this research sought to examine the relationship between an employee (academic) and his/her employer (the University) from an ‘exchange’ perspective through the ‘lens’ of the Psychological Contract (PCT) and Organisational Support Theory (OST). Therefore, to achieve this goal, an overarching research question was developed and which subsequently guided this study:

**Overarching Research Question**

Does the integration of psychological contract and organisational support theories offer additional insight to our understanding of the mechanisms associated with the employee-organisation relationship of University academics?

As discussed in the literature review, the psychological contract has been researched on the basis of each of the following perspectives: The content of the Psychological Contract vis-à-vis transactional and relational dimensions; Fulfilment or Non-fulfilment of employer/employee obligations; Breach and Violation of the contract and the consequences of contract infringement on work attitudes and behaviours. Thus, a number of supporting research questions were generated to reflect these perspectives of psychological contract research for the present study.

*Research Question One:* In terms of dimensional characteristics, what is the underlying exchange nature of a University academic’s psychological contract?

*Research Question Two:* Is the underlying nature of an academic’s psychological contract associated with differential work attitudes and exchange relationship quality perceptions?
**Research Question Three (a):** Does an academic’s psychological contract significantly explain their level of job satisfaction, affective and normative commitment as well as perceptions of organisational support?

**Research Question Three (b):** Does an academic’s psychological contract significantly explain perceptions of breach, violation and contract fulfilment?

**Research Question Four:** Accounting for different psychological contract types, what is the relationship between psychological contract breach, violation, fulfilment perceptions and the work attitudes of academics?

**Research Question Five:** Does perceived organisational support mediate: (i) the negative effects of psychological contract breach on work-related outcomes? And (ii) the positive effects of psychological contract fulfilment on work-related outcomes?

### 3.3 Establishing a Research Paradigm

Rousseau and Tijoriwala (1998) presented a review of the issues surrounding the research, measurement and theoretical development of the psychological contract construct. The aim of Rousseau at al.’s (1998) review was to solidify and systematise the measurement debate in order to form “an organising framework to guide future researchers in the operationalisation of the psychological contract, its related processes and features” (p.680). Furthermore, suggestions regarding the use of quantitative and qualitative strategies were discussed in the context of appropriate methods to follow under particular conditions which as Rousseau et al. (1998) highlighted as depending on whether the research pursued reflected an ‘etic’ or ‘emic’ perspective. That is, whether the
research wishes to generalise findings across populations or focus on contextually subjective environments. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, research focusing on the psychological contract has focused on a number of approaches for investigating the processes, content and consequences that the organisational phenomenon brings to bear on the employment relationship. Therefore it was necessary to consider an approach most appropriate suitable for investigating the nature and influence of the psychological contract as applied to academics.

Greene (2007, p.18) notes that “research purposes tend to be rooted in the philosophical paradigm that is framing the research study, explicitly or, perhaps more commonly, implicitly.” An important tenet underlying any form of academic research lies in the perceptions, values and beliefs a researcher brings to an investigation (Gelo and Pitre, 1990). The manner in which a phenomenon is explored is as much influenced by one’s philosophical stance and paradigm inclinations as it is by the context and subject matter of the phenomenon being investigated. Creswell (2007) suggests that these paradigms and worldviews are in some way influenced and shaped by “the discipline area of the student, the beliefs of advisers and faculty in a student’s area, and past research experiences” (p.6). As such, any form of “organisational study is paradigmatically anchored” (Gelo et al., 1990, p.585).

As noted by Gelo et al (1990) and Creswell (2009), the decisions regarding the design, strategies and objectives associated with the pursuit of research are not only interdependent, but stem from the researcher’s position regarding the nature of reality (ontology) and the means and methods by which sources of knowledge (epistemology) are derived. These elements represent what Gelo et al (1990) refer to as ‘a paradigm’ or
‘worldview’, according to Creswell (2007), and “all research needs a foundation for its inquiry, which is provided by worldviews and scientific paradigms” (Gelo, Braakmann, and Benetka, 2008, p.269). Defined by Guba and Lincoln:

“A paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the ‘world’, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts” (2006, p.219-220).

3.3.1 The Positivist and Interpretivist Paradigms

While a number of paradigmatic strands exist in the social and psychological fields, traditionally, social science research has been dominated by two opposing philosophical ‘worldviews’; the Positivist/Postpositivist school and Interpretivist/Social Constructionist school of social inquiry; with each school attending to the dissemination and explanation of social phenomena through their own dialectical interpretation of ontology, epistemology and methodology (Guba and Lincoln, 1985, 1990, 2006; Bryman, 2008). These perspectives are also known as the ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ paradigms of scientific investigation (Guba, 1990; Bryman and Bell, 2003; Greene, 2007; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2009).

In demarcating the underlying edicts of both the positivist/quantitative and constructivist/qualitative philosophies:

“Quantitative paradigms see reality as single and tangible, where the knower and the known are considered as relatively separate and independent. Qualitative paradigms,
however, view reality as a multiple, socially and psychologically constructed phenomenon, where the knower and the known are inextricably connected to each other”


Whilst the focus of positivism is the objective measurement and quantification of social phenomena, social constructionism emphasises the deeper, richer and more subjective qualities of these same phenomena. As such, “central to the debate are different assumptions about the nature of the social world and the nature of social knowledge” (Greene, 2007, p.37). Table 3.1 below presents the distinctions between positivism and constructivism based on their beliefs across five core assumptions or ‘axioms’ about the social world.

From an ontological perspective, positivists believe that “the social world is real; that is, it exists independent of our knowledge of it. And it is assumed to operate much like the physical or natural world” (Greene, 2007, p.37). This notion is similarly supported by Bryman and Bell (2003) such that positivism “advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond” (p.14). Additionally, positivists approach the interpretation of social phenomena from a ‘deterministic’ standpoint such that the cause and effects that determine social phenomena can be quantitatively observed, tested, predicated, confirmed or disconfirmed (Creswell, 2009; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007; Greene, 2007; Holden and Lynch, 2004). As Nicholls (2009, p.527) cogently states:
“The belief that objects had their own ‘essence’ – regardless of what we thought about them, led scientists to want to find these ‘essences’; to locate the structural properties of matter; the physical forces that governed nature; the elemental properties of our existence”

Believing that socio-psychological phenomena exhibit an objective reality where the relationships between them can measured in terms of generalisable causal effects, typifies this tradition (Gelo et al, 2008; Guba, 1990; Kelle, 2006). They believe that scientific investigations can be conducted in an objective, independent manner, such that their “interests, values and beliefs will have no influence on what they study or what methods they use” (Holden et al, 2004, p.402).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axiom/Dimension</th>
<th>Positivist Paradigm</th>
<th>Constructivist Paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontology (the nature of reality)</td>
<td>Reality is single, tangible and fragmentable</td>
<td>Realities are multiple, constructed and holistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemology (The relationship of the Knower to the Known)</td>
<td>Knower and Know anre independent</td>
<td>Knower and known are interactive, they are inseparable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axiology (the role of values)</td>
<td>Inquiry is value-free</td>
<td>Inquiry is value-bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The possibility of generalisation</td>
<td>Time &amp; Context-free generalisations (nomothetic statements/hypotheses) are possible</td>
<td>Only time- and context-bound working hypotheses (idiographic statements) possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The possibility of causal linkages</td>
<td>Real causes exist. Temporally precedent to or simultaneous with their effects</td>
<td>All entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping. Impossible to distinguish causes from effects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Slightly amended format from Guba and Lincoln, 1985, p.37
Dialectically, social constructionists view the social world and hence, social reality, as being rooted in the qualities of the lived experiences of individuals (Greene, 2007) such that “individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work” (Creswell, 2009, p.8). While positivists contend that “the world (and thus reality) predates individuals- it is prior to the existence of human consciousness” (Holden et al, 2004, p.401), social constructivists opine that is human thought which creates and brings meaning the social world in which they exist. As Guba (1990, p.26) asserts “reality exists only in respondents’ minds.” As such, the social constructivist school approaches the social realm from an ‘anti-objectivist’ perspective such that it is the subjective interpretation of social phenomena and the significance ascribed to their meaning that “guide and shape human behaviour, more so than external forces or factors” (Greene, 2007, p.37). As Holden et al (2004, p.404) assert, “Subjectivists focus on the meaning of social phenomena rather than its measurement. Their goal is to understand and to explain a problem in its contextual setting”. As such, the differences between these schools concerning the existence of social phenomena is as much about the subjective understanding of human behaviour as it is about identifying and measuring the facts explaining human behaviour (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Essentially, knowing the quantity of facts is at variance with knowing their quality and underlying meaning.

3.3.2 Paradigms and the Psychological Contract

Rousseau and Tijoriwala (1998) presented a review of the issues that surrounded the research, measurement and theoretical development of psychological contract. According to DelCampo (2007, p. 433): ‘While many researchers have conducted empirical studies
involving the psychological contract, there have been almost as many operational definitions and measures as there have been studies’. The aim of Rousseau at al.’s (1998) review was to solidify and systematise the measurement debate in order to form “an organising framework to guide future researchers in the operationalisation of the psychological contract, its related processes and features” (p.680). Furthermore, suggestions regarding the use of quantitative and qualitative strategies were discussed in the context of appropriate methods to follow under particular conditions which Rousseau et al. (1998) highlighted as depending on whether the research pursued reflected an ‘etic’ or ‘emic’ perspective. That is, whether the research wishes to generalise findings across populations or focus on contextually subjective environments.

Recent suggestions have argued for an expanded approach to measuring the psychological contract. With the exception of a very small number of studies, the majority of psychological contract analyses used cross-sectional methods. As Conway and Briner (2005) assert, “the most common method for researching the psychological contract is the cross-sectional questionnaire survey” (p. 109). This research stream has focused on a priori theoretical development of certain facets and elements associated with the psychological contract in terms of its structure and content (Transactional & Relational Dimensions) and the consequences of unmet or unfulfilled employer obligations (Breach and Violation) related to specific attitudinal and behavioural work outcomes. From their examination of past contract research during a fifteen year period, Conway et. al, (2005) noted that over ninety percent (90%) of those studies reflected the hypothetic-deductive approach. The remaining percentage spread across qualitative studies that utilised critical incident, personal interview and case study techniques (Conway et. al, 2005). Furthermore, whilst the merits of the well-established structured
survey approach in generating theoretical propositions and predictive abilities regarding
the psychological contract and employee/work outcomes, they emphasise that this has “
hampered conceptual, theoretical and empirical advance in this area” (Conway et. al,

The utility of the quantitative route lends itself to the subscription of standardised
generalised findings that inform us of the pervasiveness of the psychological contract in
various organisational and cultural contexts. In their review of measurement issues
associated with the psychological contract, Rousseau et al, (1998) highlighted that in
stable economic and work environments “standardised quantitative assessments of the
content of psychological contracts are typically used in research focusing on theory and
generalisability” (p. 684). However, if some form of change occurs in either the internal
or external business environments, it would be prudent to incorporate qualitative methods
to support the quantitative findings (Rousseau et al, 1998). In light of the preceding
discussion regarding the methodological approaches psychological contract studies have
been conducted, and in keeping with the central focus of the aims, goals and purpose of
the current study, the decision was taken to incorporate both research approaches.

For this study, an on-line survey instrument was created to measure the salient variables of
the employment relationship phenomena of academics and to measure and test the
relationships between them and on specific work outcomes. This represented the primary,
quantitative strand of the research. Additionally, an open-ended question accounted for
the qualitative response data from the sample. This question was placed at the end of the
survey so as to elicit more descriptive, subjective accounts from participants regarding
their perceptions of the employment relationship with their University. As such, the
The embedded design has a number of desirable features which augment the goals of a research inquiry. As Creswell (2009, p. 215) clearly states, “a researcher is able to collect the two types of data simultaneously, during a single data collection phase. It provides a study with the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative data. In addition, by using the two different methods in this fashion, a researcher can gain perspectives from the different types of data or from different levels within a study.”

3.4 Sampling Procedure and Sample Profile

As the focus of the study delineated the academic employment relationship as the phenomena of interest, and the level of analysis was the individual lecturing staff member; the list of all academic staff working in the university sector became the ‘defined target
population (Hair, Bush and Ortinau, 2003). To select the cases for inclusion, an appropriate sampling frame was required.

A sampling frame, according to Cooper and Schindler (2003, p.188) “is closely related to the population. It is the list of elements from which the sample is actually drawn. Ideally, it is a complete and correct list of population members only. Additionally, this allows for saturation sampling (Sue and Ritter, 2012) such that the population of interest and the subsequent sample to be derived is accessible through an on-line environment. For this study, the listing of those institutions which had the word ‘University’ and/or ‘College’ in their title was accessed through the National University of Ireland website (www.nui.ie). Table 3.2 lists all of the institutions currently members of the National University of Ireland system as of March 2012.

**Table 3.2**

**Members of the National University of Ireland**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituent Universities of NUI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University College Dublin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University College Cork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National University of Ireland, Maynooth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National University of Ireland, Galway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Universities in Ireland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The University of Dublin (Trinity College Dublin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Limerick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin City University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of Ulster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen’s University of Belfast</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recognised Colleges of the NUI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Public Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milltown Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National College of Art and Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon College of Hotel Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Angela’s College, Sligo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The National University of Ireland (NUI) is the federal body for the establishment, governance and development of third level education on the island of Ireland. Through its legislated incumbency, it is the purveyor of academic quality and standards throughout the Irish university system. Historically, this system comprised of four, original constituent universities which were established during the 1850’s: National University of Ireland, Dublin (University College Dublin), National University of Ireland, Cork (University College Cork), National University of Ireland, Galway (University College Galway) and the National University of Ireland, Maynooth (Maynooth). Additionally, it is comprised of other institutions that have formally established university status or are recognised colleges within the NUI system. In total, there are fifteen member institutions of the NUI system.

For the purposes of this study only those institutions which were either constituent members of the NUI and/or had university status in the Republic of Ireland, were selected as the principal elements from which to generate a representative sample. Therefore, the following seven universities were included in the final population and sample decision procedure:

| 1. University College Galway          |
| 2. University College Dublin         |
| 3. University College Cork           |
| 4. University of Limerick            |
| 5. University College Maynooth        |
| 6. Trinity College Dublin            |
| 7. Dublin City University            |
3.4.1 Sampling Technique

Once the sampling frame and defined target population were identified, the next step in the design procedure was to generate a sample which would be relevant and representative of the overall population (Salkind, 2003). Sampling is the process which “involves selecting a relatively small number of elements from a larger defined group of elements and expecting that the information gathered from the small group will allow judgements to be made about the larger group” (Hair et al, 2003, p.333). There are typically two approaches to generating a sample; probability sampling and non-probability sampling.

While probability sampling can involve the use of a systematic, technically derived method for randomly selecting elements such that each element has an equal opportunity of being included in the final sample (Hair et al, 2003; Teddlie et al, 2009), non-probability samples are generated based on “some type of intuitive judgement, desire, or knowledge of the researcher” (Hair et al, 2003, p.350). Each approach offers various techniques and rationale for choosing a particular method. Given that the current study was quite specific regarding the level of analysis (academic/lecturer) and the organisational context within which the phenomenon was investigated, a decision to employ a non-probability sampling approach was deemed appropriate. As such, a ‘Purposive’ non-probability sampling method was used in this study to generate the sample.
According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007, p. 230) “purposive or judgemental sampling enables you to use your judgement to select cases that will best enable you to answer your research question and to meet your research objectives.” Similarly, Cooper and Schindler (2003, p.201) assert that judgement sampling occurs when a researcher selects sample members to conform to some criterion.” Similarly, using a purposive sampling approach lends itself to generating a sample that “represents, as closely as possible, a broader group of cases” (Teddle et al, 2009, p.174).

As an initial step in the sampling procedure, the process for generating the database required the research to log on to an institution’s website and access each Faculty home page. From there, all available academic e-mail addresses that were listed were copied into a spread sheet for future use. This phase of the research design is typical of e-mail surveys which utilise electronic platforms to identify and generate a research sample (Sue et al, 2012). Seven separate spread sheets were created in this regard during the month of October and November, 2011. Once all universities were included in the initial database, several distribution lists (between and within each university) were generated on Microsoft Outlook. A total of thirty-one distribution lists were created. This step was undertaken during the month of January and early February, 2012. For example, five separate distribution lists were created for University College Dublin. Each one contained approximately one hundred e-mail addresses. Additionally, to emphasise anonymity and prior to distribution, each individual distribution list and e-mail were given its own code as follows:

Distribution List: University College Dublin 1

E-mail Code: UCD1, UCD2.......UCD100
To further emphasise anonymity and confidentiality, all distribution lists were ‘Bcc’d’ on MS Outlook, thereby preventing all participants from knowing who else received the survey. A data base of 3,348 e-mails was created to include each and all of the established Faculties and Schools listed for all seven University institutions (Table 3.3). Further, only those individuals who were listed with an accessible/available e-mail and registered as teaching/lecturing staff were included in this research.

Table 3.3
E-mail Responses per University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Academic Institution</th>
<th>Obtainable E-mails</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>University of Limerick</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>NUI, Cork</td>
<td>767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>NUI, Galway</td>
<td>569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>NUI, Maynooth</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dublin City University</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Trinity College</td>
<td>553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>University College Dublin</td>
<td>508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,348</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4.2 Survey Responses

A number of issues arose from the above sampling procedure which may have had implications for the final sample generated and used for this study. Firstly, a number of e-mails returned an ‘Out of Office’ reply notification resulting in approximately seventy eight (78) occurrences. Additionally, approximately one hundred and six (106) e-mails returned an ‘Undeliverable’ notification. That is, over one hundred e-mail addresses that were extracted from the full sample of addresses did not receive the on-line survey. Whilst the majority of the ‘out of office’ replies indicated that these individuals would be back in the office within two weeks of sending out the survey, it is impossible to tell if any or all
seventy-eight participants eventually completed and submitted the survey. Additionally, regarding the e-mails which did not reach the intended individuals, these were subsequently excluded from the original database. This reduced the potential sample size to 3,242 participants. The on-line survey was available to academics for completion throughout the month of February, 2012. The survey was taken off-line on March 1st.

A total of six hundred (600) surveys were submitted via an online survey system during the month of February, 2012. This represented a return/submission rate of 17.9% from the initial sample of three thousand, three hundred and forty-eight (3,348) e-mail distribution list created for this study. Of the 600 logged/submitted questionnaires, approximately four hundred and forty five (445) surveys were almost or fully complete. By examining the spread of responses it became apparent that many sections/items were not completed by the original 600 e-mail responses. For example, eighty (80) participants only completed Section A, the ‘background section’ of the survey. Thirty-four (34) participants completed Section A but only partially completed Section B and went no further, and a further forty one (41 participants responded to Sections A, B and partially completed Section C. Therefore, it was decided to exclude these participants given the high level of missing information. The final sample of 445 represented a useable response rate of approximately 13.3%.

The open-ended question was an optional choice for participants and did not impact on the final sample size decision. A total of one hundred and ninety-eight (N = 198) participants completed the open-ended question representing a response rate of 44.49%.
3.4.3 Sample Characteristics

A number background details were collected from the on-line survey pertaining to background characteristics of the participants. Data relating to gender, age, tenure and job role variables were gathered and are presented below.

3.4.4 Gender

Table 3.4 details the gender composition of the research sample. Males (N = 218) accounted for 49 percent of the total sample with females (N = 227) representing 51 percent of the 445 participating academics. The percentage breakdown represents a useable balance when exploring the possibility of gender differences vis-à-vis the psychological contract and work outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Valid %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4.5 Academic Age Profile
Table 3.5 presents the spread of participants’ age across a number of categories. The majority of academics (n = 168) were aged between 40 – 49 and accounted for 37.8 percent of the sample followed by those in the 50 – 59 (n = 125, 28.2%) and 30 – 39 (n = 114, 25.7%) age categories. Those who belonged to the youngest and oldest age groups represented 3.2 percent and 5.2 percent respectively of the overall sample. One individual did not indicate an age category. The age profile reflects a relatively normal distribution of frequencies.

Table 3.5
Distribution of Participant Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Valid %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 - 29</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 39</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 49</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 59</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 60</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>444</strong></td>
<td><strong>99.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Missing System</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>445</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4.6 Job/Role Position at the University

Participants were asked to indicate from a range of options, that role/job position which best described their current status at their University. Table 3.6 details the responses to this question.
Not surprisingly, the majority of participants (n = 360) indicated that their current job role was that mostly associated with academic work. As such, 80.9 percent held a primary role comprising of lecturing and research responsibilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position/Role</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managerial</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturing/Research</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>80.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturing-only</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research-only</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>445</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of those who held non-lecturing roles, 9.2 percent of the participants indicated that they were in managerial-type job roles. These roles relate to functions whose primary focus included departmental responsibilities other than lecturing and/or conducting research. A smaller number of participants held a lecturing-only role (4%) and research-only role (1.8%). Those who responded as ‘other’ represented those in a teaching assistant role and accounted for 4 percent of the overall sample.

### 3.4.7 University Tenure

Finally, participants were asked indicate the length of time they were with their employer. Table 3.7 presents the percentage breakdown of academics’ University tenure. The purpose of this question was to afford the opportunity to test an assumption that
differences in the nature of the underlying psychological contract may be determined by length of service at a University. As per Table 3.7, slightly over one fifth (21.3 percent) of academics were employed by their University for five years of less.

Table 3.7
Distribution of University Tenure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 &lt; 5 years</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 &lt; 10 years</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 &lt; 15 years</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 &lt; 20 years</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 20 years</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>445</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of academics (n = 132, 29.7%) had a tenure ranging from five to less than ten years, 21.8 percent (n = 97) for between ten and fifteen years, 11.7 percent (n = 52) for between fifteen and twenty years, and 15.5 percent (n = 69) with a tenure of over twenty years. Cumulatively, over 50 percent of the sample has a University tenure range of ten years or less with 49 percent employed at their academic institution for more than ten years.

3.5 Data Collection Instrument: Design & Content

As Teddlie et al (2009, p.232) suggest “when questionnaires are used in a study, the researcher is employing a strategy in which participants use self-report to express their
attitudes, beliefs, and feelings toward a topic of interest.” The purpose of the questionnaire was to measure the employment exchange relationship based on the working of the psychological contract between academics and their University. An on-line, self-administered e-mail questionnaire was developed for this research to measure the impact of an academic’s psychological contract on work outcomes. On-line methods of data collection have become popular in recent years given the ubiquity of information and communications technology in the workplace (Sue et al, 2012). An internet survey “presents a self-administered questionnaire that is placed on a website for prospective subjects to read and complete” (Hair et al, 2003, p.269). Additionally, on-line surveys can be “created using survey software and accessed by respondents through a link in an e-mail invitation” (Sue et al, 2012, p.14). E-mail surveys have a number of advantages over traditional postal surveys such as reduced development costs, quick turnaround of results, real-time monitoring of completed survey from participants and cross platform flexibility for data analysis (Cooper et al, 2003; Sue et al., 2012).

The survey was developed in a way that would allow not only the possibility to test for statistical relationships, but also to determine the direction and strength of these relationships for hypotheses testing. The platform upon which it was created was through ‘freeonlinesurveys.com’, an on-line company specialising in survey development and deployment. The survey was administered during the month of February, 2012. It was available on-line for a period of twenty-five days after which the survey was ‘taken down’.

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative strands of data collection and analysis, with the main emphasis placed on multivariate quantitative analyses of response data. The choice of utilising both data collection modes was guided both by the nature of
the phenomenon under study, previous research evidence and the benefits derived from combining both data types to augment the overall interpretation of results. As previously discussed at the beginning of this chapter, research focusing on the psychological contract has focused on a number of approaches for investigating the processes, content and consequences that the organisational phenomenon brings to bear on the employment relationship. Of primary concern with this phase of the questionnaire design was the choice of relevant measures that tap into and support the theoretical framework under investigation (Schindler et al, 2003; Maxwell, 2005; Creswell, 2009).

A number of measures were selected to represent the salient variables as explicated in the conceptual model of the exchange relationship. Further, to reflect the dynamic nature of a psychological contract and incorporating the subjectivity of its interpretation, an open-ended question was included on the survey which offered participants’ the opportunity to reflect on their own perceptions as to the relationship they have with their University. As such, the final questionnaire was comprised of the following sections and respective survey measures:

### 3.5.1 Background Variables

Section A contained five variables related to the current role/position a participant held at the time of survey administration. Additionally, data regarding the participant’s employment contract, tenure at the University, age profile and gender, were included. These variables were nominal in structure and of which tenure and gender were treated as the primary control variables for multivariate analyses.
3.5.2 The Psychological Contract: University & Academic Obligations

For Sections B and C, participants were asked to consider their employment relationship in terms of the perceived contractual obligations they believed was conveyed by, and present in their employment relationship with their University (Section B) as well as their perceived obligations and commitments to their University (Section C). The purpose of this was to determine the perceptions of academics as to the nature and form of the employment relationship based on the nature of resources exchanged. This approach honours the underlying thrust of Rousseau’s definition of the psychological contract such that it views the exchange relationship from the ‘eyes of the beholder’ (Rousseau and McLean Parks, 1993).

The Psychological Contract Inventory [PCI] (Rousseau, 2000) was used in the current study to measure the general content areas and evaluation of the psychological contract based on the transactional and relational dimensions that contribute to the employment exchange relationship (Rousseau, 1990, 1995, Rousseau et al., 1998; Dabos and Rousseau, 2004). The PCI, was designed to provide a useful, generalisable psychometric instrument that could assess the content of the psychological contract across various organisational settings and, as a mechanism to support managerial and professional education (Rousseau, 2000). Furthermore, it facilitates the subjective interpretation of the employment exchange
relationship from disparate perspectives and frames of reference which span the work environment; from employees to top management (Rousseau, 2000). Additionally, it provides an ‘etic’ perspective of the employment relationship such that it does not focus on specific contract items per se, but rather on the general content areas perceived as being present in the employment relationship by employees (Rousseau et al., 1998; Hui, Lee and Rousseau, 2000).

A total of thirty one items reflecting both transactional and relational elements of the employment exchange relationship were included in this measure. Sixteen items were utilised to operationalise University obligations and fifteen items related to the employee perceptions of their obligations to their University. All items were measured using a five point Likert rating scale which measured the extent academics perceived that the University had conveyed particular obligations to employees and vice versa. The rating categories were: 1 = Not at all, 2 = Slightly, 3 = Somewhat, 4 = Moderately and 5 = To a great extent

Sample employer ‘transactional contract’ obligations reflecting time-frame and performance requirement features respectively included:

- Only short-term employment, and
- Limited involvement in the University

Sample employer ‘relational contract’ obligations reflecting the features of loyalty and stability included:

- Concern for my personal welfare, and
- Salaries, wages and benefits I can count on

Sample employee ‘transactional contract’ obligations reflecting time-frame and performance requirement features respectively included:

- Quit whenever I want, and
- Do only what I am paid to do
Sample employee ‘relational contract’ obligations reflecting the features of loyalty and stability included:

- Make personal sacrifices for the University, and
- Continue to work here at the University.

### 3.5.3 Measures of Breach and Violation of the Psychological Contract

In accordance with prior research which suggested that breach and violation of the psychological contract should be treated as related but independent of each other, the Robinson and Morrison (2000) measures were utilised. These measures allow employees to form a general or global interpretation of the health of their exchange relationship based on their perceptions of breach and violation in their psychological contract. All nine items from the Robinson et al (2000) global measure of breach and violation were used in this research using a five point Likert agreement scale as follows: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree/Disagree, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Sample items representing ‘perceived breach’ included:

- Almost all the promises/commitments made by my University have been kept so far
- My University has broken many of its promises/commitments

Sample items reflecting a sense of ‘felt violation’ included:

- I feel that this University has violated the contract between us
- I feel betrayed by the University

### 3.5.4 Measures of Psychological Contract Fulfilment
Psychological contract fulfilment was measured with the scales created by Rousseau (2000) as part of the Psychological Contract Inventory instrument. Fulfilment of the psychological contract was measured from both employer and employee perspectives.

Sample items measuring employer fulfilment included:

- In general, how well does the University live up to its promises to you?
- Overall, how well does the University fulfil its commitments to you?

Sample items representing employee fulfilment perceptions included:

- In general, how well do you live up to your promises to your University?
- Overall, how well have you fulfilled your commitments to the University?

3.5.5 Measure of Perceived Organisational/University Support

An important objective underlying this study in response to suggestions from the literature was to explore the relationship between an individual’s psychological contract and the perceptions of support (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Organisational support theory asserts that individuals form a general belief regarding the extent to which their organisation values employees’ contributions and well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986, 2003, Eisenberger and Stinglhamber, 2011). Perceived organisational support (POS) was measured using the ‘Survey of Perceived Organisational Support-Short Form. This form includes the eight highest factor loading items from the original thirty-six item survey. The term ‘organisation’ was substituted with ‘university’ to reflect the employment context of academics. All support items were measured using a Five-point Likert agreement scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree/Disagree, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Sample items include:
My University cares about my well-being
In general, I feel I have the support of my University
My University strongly considers my goals and values

3.5.6 Measure of Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment has been explicated as an individual’s global attitude regarding his/her personal identification with and involvement in an organisation (Buchanan, 1974; Porter et al, 1974; Porter et al, 1976; Mowday et al, 1979). It incorporates a person’s “strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation’s goals and values; a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation; and (emphasises) a definite desire to maintain organisational membership” (Porter et al, 1974, p.604).

For the current study, Allen and Meyer’s (1990) definition of Organisational commitment was operationalised and an academic’s commitment to their University was measured using items from the three-component instrument scale developed and revised by these authors (Allen et al, 1997). These components included affective and normative types of employee commitment.

Five items were used to measure an academic’s affective attachment to the University. Sample items include:

- I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this University
- This University has a great deal of personal meaning for me
Six items were used to measure the continuance commitment level of an academic. Sample items include:

- It would be very hard for me to leave the University right now, even if I wanted to
- Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave the University now

Four items from the Normative Commitment scale were included to reflect this form of commitment. Sample items include:

- I owe a great deal to my University
- The University deserves my loyalty

All commitment items were measured using a Five-point Likert agreement scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree/Disagree, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

3.5.7 Measure of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction relates to the feeling that people have about their jobs and the work they do and is “generally assessed as an attitudinal variable” (Spector, 1997, p.2). It relates to an employee’s perceptions and evaluations of the work they do and reflects the environment, circumstances, values and expectations associated with the tasks and responsibilities perceived by the employee (Lok and Crawford, 2001; Buitendach and Witte, 2005). Similarly, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one’s job consists of the feelings and attitudes associated with it, and “all aspects of a particular job, good, bad, positive and negative, are likely to contribute to the development of feelings of satisfaction” (Riggio, 2003, p.214). Therefore, the possibility of occurrence of some negative work event will contribute to a sense of diminished appraisal of one’s job in terms of satisfaction.

In their review of the definition and measurement of job satisfaction, Weiss et al. (1996, p.2) cogently argued that job satisfaction is “an evaluative judgement about one’s job that
partly, but not entirely, results from emotional experiences at work….Together, affective experiences and belief structures result in the evaluation called job satisfaction.” The premise for their argument was that affect-driven behaviours (emotions) and cognitive-driven appraisal (moods) should be analysed separately from evaluative judgements in order to accurately account for the impact of negative work events on job satisfaction (Judge, Scott and Ilies, 2006; Wegg et al. 2006). Weiss et al. (1996) emphasise that both affect and cognitive behaviours have different distinguishable causes and consequences on work outcomes.

As previously discussed in Chapter Two, an employee’s level of satisfaction is influenced by the quality of the employment relationship. In particular, an employee’s work satisfaction is influenced by the nature of their psychological contract and its subsequent evaluation. That, research continuously reports the negative effects breach and violation have on an employee’s satisfaction at work. Also, research has demonstrated the positive effects that perceptions of psychological contract fulfilment have on this attitude.

Spector (1997, p.3) notes that job satisfaction can be measured and evaluated either as a “global feeling about their job or as a related constellation of attitudes about various aspects or facets of the job. The global approach is used when the overall bottom line is of interest. For this study, job satisfaction was evaluated using a self-designed global measure to explicate a general opinion of academic job satisfaction.

The following four items were measured on a five-point scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree/Disagree, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

- All in all, I am satisfied with my job
- In general, I like the job that I do
- In general, I am not satisfied with my job (R)
- My job gives me a sense of personal satisfaction

3.5.8 Open-ended Question

In recognition of the limitations associated with closed-ended questions with respect to measuring the dynamic nature of the psychological contract, Participants were invited to provide an account of an incident that was felt to be important to them in terms of their relationship with the University. This took the form of the following open-ended question:

**Q:** Think of an incident/situation that occurred where you felt that the University 'did' or 'did not' come through in fulfilling/meeting an expectation you believed was owing to you.

*Please describe the incident and how it might have affected your feelings, thoughts, and perceptions regarding your relationship with your University.*

3.6 Psychometric Properties & Tests for Internal Reliability

In order to determine the usability of all survey measures prior to multivariate data analyses, factor analysis and reliability tests were conducted as a means of determining the psychometric integrity and factor structure. Factor analysis is a data reduction technique that groups items into clusters or factors that have similar psychometric characteristics (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994) and is a powerful multivariate technique that explores the structure of the interrelationships among a large set of observable measures to create a set
of highly correlated variables known as factors (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson and Tatham, 2006; Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum and Strahan, 1999). These factors represent the latent dimensions of the construct being investigated and allows for a more parsimonious representation of the phenomena (Kline, 1994; Fabrigar et al., 1999). Furthermore, factor analysis has the added benefit of mitigating the problems of multicollinearity that exist when variables are highly correlated with each other (Hair et al., 2006; Miles and Shevlin, 2006). This is particularly useful when conducting multiple regression analyses. Each of the independent and dependent variables were subjected to Maximum Likelihood factor analysis using an Oblimin rotation. Various guidelines facilitated the decision to conduct and use factor analysis.

1. A minimum sample size to item ratio of 5:1 is usually deemed acceptable for factor analyses (Hair et al., 2006). This level was satisfied for the present study with a 7:1 case to item ratio.

2. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) determines the strength of the intercorrelations between the variables of interest (Filed, 2009; Hair et al., 2006). This is based on an index from zero to one such that values closer to one confirms the appropriateness of factor analysis. A minimum threshold of above 0.6 is usually deemed acceptable (Hair et al., 2006).

3. The utility of factor analysis is further buttressed by the presence of a sufficient number of significant inter-item correlations in the total correlation matrix as indicated by Bartlett’s test of Sphericity. “It provides the statistical significance
that the correlation matrix has significant correlations among at least some of the
variables (Hair, et al., 2006, p.114). A significance of p < .05 is desirable.

4. The **Kaiser criterion** for selecting factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1 was
employed. The purpose of this rule ensures that only factors which account for a
meaningful level of variance greater than or equal to 1 are retained (Hair et al.,
2006). Only those factors that contributed between 50% to 60% or more to
explained variance were kept.

5. As a final selection criterion, items which had a **factor loading** of 0.4 or less were
excluded from the analysis (Kline, 1994; Hair et al., 2006) and any evidence of
items cross-loading on one or more factors were deleted from the analysis.

Further analyses to evaluate the usability of the variable measurements utilised the
Cronbach Alpha test for internal reliability (Cronbach, 1951). Internal reliability refers to
the extent that the items used to measure a phenomenon or construct exhibit homogeneity
of variance such that they measure what they are intended to measure (De Vellis, 2003).
Additionally, “it is concerned with the degree of interrelatedness among a set of items
designed to measure a single construct” (Netemeyer, Bearden and Sharma, 2003, p. 49). It
is generally accepted that a measure is reliable and deemed internally consistent if an alpha
score of 0.7 or more is generated (Nunnally et al., 1994). Therefore, each measured
variable was tested for internal reliability using this accepted criterion.
3.6.1 Psychometric Properties of the PCI Measure: University & Academic Obligations

The University and Academic elements of the PCI measure were individually factor analysed using the Maximum Likelihood technique. The correlation matrix for both measures revealed that all item coefficients were greater than the .3 acceptable level. Additionally, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (MMO) statistic was .832 for the University part and .827 for the Academic, thus exceeding the minimum threshold of .7 (Kaiser, 1970). The Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity attained statistical significance for both sets of obligations at < .001 (Bartlett, 1954) supporting the use of factor analysis. The results of the factor analyses for both the University and Academic contract obligation measures are presented in Tables 3.8 and 3.9.

Table 3.8
Extracted Factors for PCI-University Obligations
For University obligations, four factors were extracted which represented 68.78% of explained variance in perceived employer obligations. While there was no evidence of item cross-loading, four items did not reach the .4 cut-off point. As such, these were excluded from subsequent analyses. Two components represented the transactional side of the psychological contract (Short-term; narrow focus) and two representing a relational focus (loyalty; stability) as per Rousseau’s conceptualisation (2001, 2004). Both transactional components were combined to form one overall transactional factor and a summated, composite score was calculated for each participant by taking the mean value of these items. Similarly, the two relational components were also combined to create one general relational factor. A composite score was calculated in this regard for all participants. Once the transactional and relational factors were formed, each factor was

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Obligation Items</th>
<th>Short-term</th>
<th>Narrow</th>
<th>Loyalty</th>
<th>Stability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only Short-term employment</td>
<td>0.954</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A job for a short time only</td>
<td>0.860</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A position limited to specific, well-defined responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.984</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires me to perform only a limited set of duties</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.492</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A job for as long as the University needs me *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.927</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsive to my personal concerns and well-being</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern for my personal welfare</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.891</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern for my long-term well being</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.850</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make decisions with my interests in mind</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.809</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training me for my current position/role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steady employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.986</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.855</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries, wages and benefits I can count on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.793</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable benefits for employees' families</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.569</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes no commitments to retain me in the future *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited involvement in the University *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eigenvalue: 5.41 3.02 1.53 1.05  
% of Variance: 33.78 18.88 9.57 6.55  
% Cumulative Variance: 33.78 52.66 62.23 68.78

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.  
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.  
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.  
* Item did not load at .4 cut-off point and was excluded from final analysis.
tested for internal reliability taking the Cronbach Alpha as the chosen measure. The Alpha-score for the transactional and relational factors were $\alpha = .69$ and $\alpha = .81$ respectively, thus exceeding the minimum acceptable level of .7 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

Table 3.9
Extracted Factors for PCI-Academic Obligations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Obligation Items</th>
<th>Stability</th>
<th>Short-term</th>
<th>Narrow</th>
<th>Loyalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan to stay here at the University for a long time</td>
<td>-0.942</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to work here at the University</td>
<td>-0.902</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make no plans to work anywhere else</td>
<td>-0.762</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remain with the University indefinitely</td>
<td>-0.656</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quit whenever I want</td>
<td>0.993</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave at any time I choose</td>
<td>0.884</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have no future obligations to this University</td>
<td>0.538</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am under no obligation to remain with this University</td>
<td>0.514</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perform only required tasks</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.841</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do only what I am paid to do</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.820</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfil a limited number of responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.764</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only perform specific duties</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.706</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make personal sacrifices for the University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commit myself personally to the University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take the University's concerns personally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.655</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eigenvalue: 5.211  2.256  2.09  1.466  
% of Variance: 34.74  15.037  13.936  9.773  
% Cumulative Variance: 34.74  49.777  63.713  73.486

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Similarly, four factors were extracted for Academic obligations accounting for 73.49% of explanatory variance. All items loaded above the .4 cut-off point. Two academic transactional factors (Short-term, Narrow) and two academic relational factors (Stability, Loyalty) were each combined to form one overall transactional and relational factor for each contract type. A summated, composite score was calculated for each participant as such. Internal consistency scores (Cronbach, 1954) were calculated for both factors such that a Cronbach alpha of .81 was derived for the transactional factor and an alpha score of
.85 for the relational factor, thus exceeding the minimum acceptable level of .7 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

3.6.2 Psychometric Properties of the Organisational Commitment Measure

The organisational commitment measure was factor analysed and the correlation matrix revealed that all item correlation coefficients exceeded the .3 threshold level. Both the KMO value (KMO = .863) and Bartlett’s Sphericity test for significance (<.01) each indicated the factorability of the data. Table 3.10 details the result of the factor analysis.

Two separate components were extracted through maximum likelihood factor analysis totalling 62.81 of the explained variance in organisational commitment. Items which loaded on the first factor characterised Affective Commitment, items on the second related to Normative Commitment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extracted Factors for Organisational Commitment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A summated, composite score was calculated for each of the commitment types. The internal reliability estimates for affective commitment (\( \alpha = .90 \)) and normative commitment (\( \alpha = .79 \)), with each exceeding the .7 reliability threshold (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

### Organisational Commitment Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affective Commitment Items</th>
<th>Normative Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AF I feel emotionally attached to this University</td>
<td>0.966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF I feel a strong sense of belonging to this University</td>
<td>0.942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF This University has a great deal of personal meaning for me</td>
<td>0.902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF I feel like part of the family at my University</td>
<td>0.758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career here</td>
<td>0.554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF I really feel as if this University's problems are my own</td>
<td>0.498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC I do not feel any obligation to remain with my University*</td>
<td>0.932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC I owe a great deal to my University</td>
<td>0.726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC The University deserves my loyalty</td>
<td>0.512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC I would feel guilty if I left my University now</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Eigenvalue: | 5.23 | 1.13 |
| % of Variance: | 51.38 | 11.43 |
| % Cumulative Variance: | 51.38 | 62.81 |

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.
Rotation converged in 5 iterations.
* Did not Load above the .4 cut-off
AF = Affective Commitment; NC = Normative Commitment

3.6.3 Psychometric Properties of Perceived Organisational Support
The results of the factor analyses for the perceived university support measure are detailed in Table 3.11.

### Table 3.11
Perceived University Support Factor Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POS Item</th>
<th>Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My University cares about my well-being</td>
<td>.880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, I feel I have the support of my University</td>
<td>.848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My University strongly considers my goals and values</td>
<td>.825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help is available from my University</td>
<td>.763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My University is willing to help me if ever I need a</td>
<td>.733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My University cares about my general satisfaction at</td>
<td>.696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My University shows little concern for me *</td>
<td>-.691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My university would forgive an honest mistake on my</td>
<td>.578</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Eigen Value:                | 4.99   |
| % of Variance:              | 62.42  |

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization
One factor extracted after 4 iterations
*. Item is reversed scored

Both the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value (KMO = .902) and Bartlett’s Sphericity test for significance (<.01) each indicated the factorability of the data. Additionally, all item correlation coefficients were above the .3 level. Eight items of the short form measure of perceived organisational support loaded above the .4 cut-off point and onto one extracted factor. These items accounted for over sixty-two percent (62.42%) of explained variance in the organisational support factor. Further, an internal consistency score of $\alpha = .91$ indicated the reliability of the POS variable (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

### 3.6.4 Psychometric Properties of Academic Job satisfaction
As previously discussed, a self-generated measure of global Job Satisfaction was created for the study. Given that this was the only non-standardised variable used in the research, factor analyses was important to determine the utility of the measure. Preliminary analysis indicated the factorability and uni-dimensionality of the measure. Table 3.12 details the factor analysis results.

Table 3.12
Job Satisfaction Factor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Satisfaction Items</th>
<th>Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All in all, I am satisfied with my work</td>
<td>0.912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, I like the work that I do</td>
<td>0.796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, I am not satisfied with my work *</td>
<td>-0.748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My work gives me a sense of personal satisfaction</td>
<td>0.725</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eigenvalue: 2.897  
% of Variance: 72.42

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.
1 factor extracted. 5 iterations required.
* Item is reverse scored

The KMO value (.793) for the Job Satisfaction variable marginally reached the accepted minimum level (Kaiser, 1970) with Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity reaching significance at < .01. Maximum likelihood factor analyses extracted one factor based on the items used. These items accounted for over seventy-two percent (72.42%) in explained variance. Additionally, a Cronbach alpha score of $\alpha = .87$ indicated a reasonable reliability level. Thus, this measure of Job satisfaction reflected acceptable psychometric criteria. A summated, composite score was created for each participant by taking the mean score of the four items.

3.6.5 Psychometric Properties of Breach, Violation & Fulfilment of the Psychological Contract
As discussed earlier, perceptions of psychological contract breach and violation are treated as separate manifestations of psychological contract infringement. Prior research has reported the utility of distinguishing between both forms of infringement for theoretical and empirical reasons. Similarly, this study treated breach and violation as related, but distinguishable constructs associated with one’s evaluation of the employment psychological contract. The perception of psychological contract fulfilment was also independently measured as it has been suggested that rather than treat fulfilment as the opposite end of the breach/violation spectrum, fulfilment of certain aspects of the psychological contract can co-exist with perceptions that one’s employer has failed to fulfil other elements of the exchange relationship. Thus, Robinson et al.’s., (1997) global measure of breach and violation along with the three item measure of psychological contract fulfilment (Rousseau, 2000) were factor analysed and its underlying psychometric properties investigated, the results of which are detailed in Table 3.13.

The initial correlation matrix indicated that the minimum correlation between the items was .48, thus suggesting the factorability of the measure. Additionally, both the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value (KMO = .927) and the Sphericity test (<.001) confirmed the suitability of factor analysis. As can be observed, all items inputted into the analysis loaded on their respective underlying factors, with a combined variance of 85.36%. Of this, the psychological contract fulfilment measure accounted for the majority of variance at 70.17% in evaluation variance. Violation and breach accounted for 8.96% and 6.22% respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor Analysis Results of Psychological</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contract Evaluation Measures

### Psychological Contract Evaluation Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>PC Fulfilment</th>
<th>PC Violation</th>
<th>PC Breach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall, to what extent has the University met its commitments/obligations to you?</td>
<td>-0.881</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, how well does the University live up to its promises to you?</td>
<td>-0.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, how well does the University fulfill its commitments to you?</td>
<td>-0.818</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel a great deal of anger toward my University</td>
<td>0.961</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel betrayed by my University</td>
<td>0.936</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that the University has violated the contract between us</td>
<td>0.831</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel extremely frustrated by how I have been treated by my University</td>
<td>0.764</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have not received everything promised to me in exchange for my contributions</td>
<td>0.837</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost all the promises made by my University during recruitment have been kept</td>
<td>0.728</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that my University has come through in fulfilling the promises made to me</td>
<td>0.702</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So far my University has done an excellent job of fulfilling its promises to me*</td>
<td>0.674</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My University has broken many of its promises to me even though I’ve upheld my end</td>
<td>0.598</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Eigenvalue:** 8.42 1.58 1.11
**% of Variance:** 70.17 8.96 6.22
**% Cumulative Variance:** 70.17 79.13 85.36

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.
Rotation converged in 16 iterations.

In terms of internal reliability, each of the evaluation measure returned strong Cronbach Alpha scores as follows:

- Psychological Contract Fulfilment: \( \alpha = .97 \)
- Psychological Contract Breach: \( \alpha = .92 \)
- Psychological Contract Violation: \( \alpha = .94 \)

In general, each and all of the variables used and measured for the study exhibited relatively strong psychometric qualities in terms of hypothesised factor structures and internal consistency credibility.

### 3.7 Tests for Assumptions of Normality
Prior to any formal statistical analysis, the data were examined to determine if the each and all of the variables adhered to the assumptions underlying the statistical bases for multivariate analysis (Hair et al., 2006). That is, it was important to establish if the data in question, and more specifically the variables measured, satisfied a number of theoretical criteria. The most fundamental of these assumptions relates to the concept of ‘normality’ which according to Hair et al., (2006, p.79) refers “to the shape of the data distribution for an individual metric variable”. When a distribution violates the normality assumption, subsequent statistical analyses would produce results which would be biased and incorrect interpretations made (Hair et al., 2006; Mile et al., 2006).

Two approaches were employed to detect if the data for this study violated this assumption, a calculation-based approach and a graphical approach. The first approach involved estimating two principal statistics, Skewness and Kurtosis. Skewness relates to the spread of values in a distribution, and can be positive or negative. Kurtosis is associated with the height ‘peakedness or flatness’ of the distribution. As a conservative rule of thumb, absolute values of skewness Sk ≤ 2 and kurtosis K ≤ 8 are indicative of a relatively normal distribution (Klein, 2005). Table 3.14 details the skew and kurtosis statistics for each of the measured variables in the study.

As can be observed, all of the variables met the normality criteria given that no absolute skew value was greater than 2 and all of the variables reported low (≤ 8) kurtosis coefficients.

Table 3.14
Descriptive Statistics along with Skew and Kurtosis Values
Thus, this test reported relatively normal distributions for each variable. A second approach employed a visual representation of each variable’s distribution in the form of ‘normal probability plots’. A probability plot compares the actual distribution for a variable with that of a theoretically normal distribution. As suggested by Miles et al (2006, p.71) “if the distribution we are interested in matches the normal distribution fairly well, we can conclude that our data are normally distributed”. That is, “the points of the probability plot that we generate will lie is a straight lie along the diagonal from the bottom left to the top right” (Miles et al., 2006, p.71). The further above or below the straight line our distribution may be, the higher the probability of normality violation. The probability plots for each of the variables can be found in Appendix C.

Visually examining each of the P-P Plots, it can be affirmed that each of the metric variables do not deviate to a great extent from the theoretical distribution. In fact for the affective and normative commitment variables, there is almost an identical match between their respective distributions and that of the normal distribution. Therefore, the non-violation of normality assumption is supported.

### 3.8 Statistical Analyses & Techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness SK</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Kurtosis K</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>-1.06</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Commitment</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>-0.35</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Commitment</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>-0.63</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Organisational</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC -Breach</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>-0.51</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC -Violation</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>-0.60</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC - Fulfilment</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>-0.55</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 445
A number of univariate and multivariate statistical techniques were utilised in this study to reflect the overall thrust of the investigation and the associated research questions. Apart from presenting basic descriptive analyses in the form of means and standard deviations, this research employed a variety of more advanced, multivariate methods to reflect the complexity of the relationships between the variables studied and the hypotheses posited.

A Two-Step cluster analysis was used to unearth the potential transactional and relational patterns of the psychological contract among a sample of academics. Cluster analysis is a multivariate technique which groups objects (in this case academics) together based on the similarity of their characteristics (Hair et al., 2006). Similarly, “it is a set of techniques for accomplishing the task of partitioning a set of objects into relatively homogenous subsets based on the inter-object similarities” (Kachigan, 1991, p.261). As an important objective for this study was to generate a ‘psychological contract profile’ for academics, this technique facilitated in grouping the sample into a number of smaller cohorts according to their similar or dissimilar perceptions regarding the University’s obligations to academics, and academics obligations to their University. Once grouped, further analyses could be conducted to explore differences in perceptions and attitudes with respect to their psychological contract experiences and work attitudes. As such, simple t-tests of mean differences were included in the analysis to determine if groups, based on the nature of the underlying psychological contract, differed with respect to their work attitudes and perceptions of their psychological contract.

After establishing initial descriptions of the research sample vis-a-vis, psychological profile, work attitudes and fundamental group differences, a number of hypotheses were
tested through the use of a combination of multiple correlation and multiple regression analyses. These hypotheses focused not only on the theoretical connections between the variables, but also the statistical associations between them. Correlation analysis using Pearson’s Product-moment correlation (r), is an approach which quantifies the statistical relationship between two (bi-variate) or more (multiple) pairs of relationships (Hair et al, 2006). As Cohen and Cohen (1983, p.25) attest: “one of the most general meanings of the concept of a relationship between pairs of variables is that knowledge with regard to one of the variables carries information about the other variable”.

The correlation coefficient relates to the nature of the relationship between two or more variables such that changes in one variable may be associated with changes in another (Hair et al., 2006). This coefficient can range from positive to negative in terms of the direction of the relationships and can take a measure between -1 to +1, indicative of the strength of the relationship between the variables (Field, 2009). In general, a correlation coefficient of $0 < \pm .19$ is considered weak, a correlation of $.2 < .39$ is considered moderate, while a correlation of $.40 < \pm .59$ is strong.

Multiple regression analysis was used as a follow-on technique to the initial correlation analysis, and was the principal approach for testing the various hypotheses. In particular, hierarchical regression served as the technique of choice. Multiple regression analyses the relationship between a single dependent (criterion) variable and two or more independent (predictor) variables (Hair et al., 2006). Given that the majority of hypotheses for this study related to testing the predictive power of an employee’s psychological contract on work attitudes, multiple regression was used as “the objective of the analysis is to predict a single dependent variable from the knowledge of one or more independent variables” (Hair
et al., 2006, p.177). Hierarchical regression allows the researcher to enter independent variables at different steps to determine the incremental significance and predictive power of these variables on the dependent variable. Additionally, hierarchical regression allows testing for the significance of intervening variables. This procedure is described in the next chapter.

### 3.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented an overview of the research design and data collection methods employed in this study. In particular, this chapter offered a justification for employing a mixed-method approach to the study, highlighting the benefits associated with paradigm. The use of an on-line data collection procedure was explicated and assessment of the procedures associated with testing the psychometric properties of the variables chosen for this research were detailed. Considerations regarding the ‘normality’ of the data were explored which indicated that the data and each of the variables adhered to the concept of normality. Finally, a description and justification of the various univariate and multivariate statistical techniques was also provided. The next chapter presents the data analysis and empirical results related to the principal research questions and associated hypotheses.

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**Chapter 4**
Results

“The keys to meaningfulness are to proceed from some position that anticipates results”

(Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994)

4.1 Introduction
The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of third level academic staff regarding their employment relationship with their University. Specifically, this research sought to explicate the ‘academic-university’ employment relationship through the ‘lens’ of psychological contract theory and explore the possibility that potential variations in such contracts exist among a sample of University academics. Further, the research sought to reconnoitre the consequential influence that an academic’s psychological contract brings to bear on a number of work outcomes in terms of job satisfaction, affective, and normative forms of organisational commitment as well as perceptions of organisational support. Investigating the perceptions, incidence and differential effects of psychological contract ‘breach’ and ‘violation’ on these same work outcomes served as an important focus underpinning the study.

Both quantitative and qualitative modes of data collection and analyses were employed to support the overall research objectives and questions. The quantitative analyses provided the basis on which to test a number of hypotheses concerning the explanatory power of the psychological contract on work attitudes while the qualitative data provided a more subjective interpretation of this organisational phenomenon. Therefore, this chapter presents the results from both data modes with the qualitative element acting as the secondary source to the mainly primary quantitative data. As such, this chapter is divided as follows:

**Section One** is associated with *Research Question 1* and *Research Question 2*. Using cluster analysis, a profile of the underlying nature of the psychological contract of Irish academics will be presented and discussed. The purpose of this is to explore the underlying pattern of psychological contracts regarding the type of contract a sample of
academics perceive to have with their University. This analysis potentially unearths the possibility that certain groups of academics might hold varying levels of transactional and relational contract obligations which define their employment relationship, and that underlying structural differences exist between groups of academics and their respective psychological contracts which can translate into varying levels of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and University support perceptions. In support, a number of statistical tests in the form of t-tests are discussed vis-à-vis psychological contract types.

Section Two (Research Question 3) further extends the analysis by establishing the predictive influence that an academic’s psychological contract imparts on work attitudes. As such, an investigation of the statistical relationships between the dimensions of an academic’s psychological contract, the perceptions of breach, violation and fulfilment and an academic’s level of job satisfaction, commitment and support perceptions will be presented. Correlation analysis was be used to determine the quantitative association between the aforementioned psychological contract variables and each work-related attitude. Additionally, hierarchical multiple regression analysis tested the explanatory and predictive effects an academic’s psychological contract has on the same work attitudes.

Section Three (Research Question 4) solely focuses on the theoretical and statistical relationship between psychological contract infringement and work attitudes and incorporates both direct and indirect/mediated analysis of these relationships. Section Four (Research Question 5) introduces Organisational Support Theory and integrates Perceptions of Organisational Support (POS) with psychological contract theory. This section serves to highlight both the additive effects that POS brings to the employment exchange analysis over and above the influence of the psychological contract. A series of mediated regression analyses are discussed in this regard.
4.2 Section One: Profile of an Academic’s Psychological Contract & Associated Work Attitudes

4.2.1 Descriptive Analysis of Work-related Attitudes & Psychological Contract-Full Sample

Regarding work–related outcomes, respondents were asked to rate their level of Job Satisfaction (JS), Affective Commitment (AC) and Normative Commitment (NC) toward their University. Further, academics were also asked for their opinion relating to the sense of support they feel is available from their employer. This attitude was measured using the short form Perceived Organisational Support (POS) survey (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

The psychological construct was measured using the Psychological Contract Inventory (Rousseau, 2000). While this measure does not ‘tap’ into the specific contents associated with their psychological contract *per se*, the measure offers a general perspective on the influence that underlying contract dimensions impart on work attitudes. From an academic’s perspective, the perceived transactional and relational obligations that are believed to constitute the employment relationship (in the eyes of academics) between the employee and employer were measured. As such, the transactional and relational obligations expected by academics from the University (Uni-Transactional, Uni-Relational) as well as the perceived obligations expected by their employer (Acd-Transactional, Acd-Relational) form the content measures of the psychological contract. Additionally, academic perceptions of psychological contract breach, violation and fulfilment perceptions were also measured. Unless otherwise stated, all variables were
measured on a five point Likert agreement scale with One (1) and Five (5) anchoring the categories of Strongly Disagree and Strongly Agree respectively.

Table 4.1 details the mean scores and standard deviations for each and all of the aforementioned variables measured in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Commitment</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Commitment</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Organisational Support</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uni-Transactional Obligations</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uni-Relational Obligations</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acd-Transactional Obligations</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acd-Relational Obligations</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of Breach</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of Violation</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uni-Fulfilment of PC</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acd-Fulfilment of PC</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, academics who participated in this research appear to be reasonably satisfied in their job and with the work they do (M = 4.25, SD = .69). They also exhibit a certain degree of commitment to their University but with variations among the types of commitment they convey. While all academics feel some degree of identification with and affective attachment to their employer as measured by their affective commitment (M = 3.29, SD = .92), they also at the same time display lower levels of normative commitment to their University (M = 2.77, SD =1.03). In terms of organisational support, academics
also appear to perceive relatively low levels of support from their institution (M = 2.88, SD = .82).

When discussing the psychological contract, it is important to consider the construct from the various perspectives through which it has been studied. As such, the content of the psychological contract in terms of its transactional and relational elements, along with evaluatory inferences in terms of breach and violation perceptions, are salient aspects from which to analyse the construct. Additionally, whether or not the contract has been met and fulfilled, and the impact such fulfilment perceptions have on work attitudes offers a further avenue for interpretation. The mean scores indicate that academics perceive their exchange relationship with their University to be more based upon relational understandings (M = 2.82, SD = .87) rather than transactional-based obligations (M = 1.90, SD = .82). A paired samples t-test returned a statistically significant difference between the two types of University obligations (t(444) = -13.58, p < .001) as perceived by academics. That is, there is a greater emphasis placed on the more relationally-orientated commitments academics expect from their institution over and above transactional commitments. Similarly, academics view their psychological contract with their University as also being relationally based (M = 3.29, SD = .96) and these contractual perceptions are significantly different than one delineated by transactional obligations (M = 2.17, SD = .81), t(444) = -15.73, p < .001). A closer inspection of the individual items measured as part of the transactional-relational dimensions reveals and confirms why these differences are evidenced. Tables 4.2 and 4.3 detail the breakdown of descriptive statistics for each of the University and academic obligation items as measured on the PCI.

Table 4.2
Means, Standard Deviations for Perceived University Obligations

\[\text{Table 4.2}\]
\[\text{Means, Standard Deviations for Perceived University Obligations}\]
In terms of contract infringement, breach and violation of the psychological contract returned low mean scores, with perceptions of breach (M = 2.77, SD = 1.01) more...
prevalent than perceptions that the University has violated the contract (M = 2.20, AD = 1.17). Additionally, a paired samples t-test was conducted which revealed that the difference between perceptions of breach and violation was statistically significant (t(444) = 15.35, p < .001), emphasising a greater propensity for breaches perceptions rather than incidents of violation in their psychological contract. However, while the perception that the University has infringed the contract in some way, the degree of breach and violation experienced by academics remains low. Moreover, and possibly not surprisingly, while academics agree somewhat that their University has generally fulfilled its commitments and obligations to its academic staff (M = 3.54, SD = 1.05), they also believe that they have more than returned the favour in terms of fulfilling their commitments and obligations to the University (M = 4.73, SD = .49). Furthermore, a paired samples t-test confirmed that the difference in fulfilment perceptions based on academic interpretations was statistically significant (t(436) = -22.35, p < .001).

4.2.2 The Nature & Underlying Dimensional Patterns of an Academic’s Psychological Contract: A Cluster Analysis

Research Question 1 sought to determine the underlying nature of an academic’s psychological contract and explores the possibility that these different contract types vary according to gender and tenure characteristics of the research sample. Therefore:

**Research Question 1:** What is the underlying nature of an academic’s psychological contract?

Following on from the preliminary descriptive analysis, a series of cluster analyses were run to delve deeper into the contract structure of the research sample so as to explore the possibility that different levels and/or combinations of transactional and relational
dimensions of the psychological contract naturally exist among different groups of academics and thus reflect differing employment exchange relationships. That is, do academics exhibit different psychological contracts?

To achieve this objective, a cluster analysis was run by taking both transactional and relational dimensions for University and academic measures as the primary inputs. Cluster analysis is a multivariate technique which groups and classifies objects such that “each object is similar to others in the cluster based on a set of selected characteristics. The resulting clusters of objects should exhibit high internal (within-cluster) homogeneity and high external (between-cluster) heterogeneity”. (Hair et al., 2005, p.559). This technique assists in establishing the presence of distinct psychological contracts by “clustering individuals based on their similarities” (Kachigan, 1991, p.261). By doing so, the cluster analysis would be able to group or ‘cluster’ academics’ perceptions of both sides of the exchange relationship which exhibited similar characteristics.

Two defined clusters representing groups of academics who exhibited similar perceptions regarding their overall psychological contract were derived from the cluster analysis, with each cluster accounting for a percentage of the total research sample. Descriptive statistics for University and academic obligations along with supporting t-tests are presented in Table 4.4, Table 4.5 and Table 4.6.

---

Table 4.4
Descriptive Statistics and t-tests for University Obligation Contract Items Based on Derived Clusters
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Dimension</th>
<th>University Obligation Item</th>
<th>PC-Type</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Only-short-term employment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>8.68</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>A job for a short time only</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>8.49</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>A position limited to well specified responsibilities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Requires me to perform only a limited set of duties</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>6.72</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Concern for my personal welfare</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>-9.24</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Responsive to my personal concerns and well-being</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-7.40</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Makes decisions with my interests in mind</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>-6.41</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Concern for my long-term well-being</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>-8.73</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Secure employment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>-9.43</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Salaries, wages I can count on</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>-8.39</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Steady employment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>-9.75</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Stable benefits for employees' families</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>-6.46</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cluster 1 = Low Mutual Obligations (N = 217); Cluster 2 = High Relational Obligations (N = 228)
T = Transactional Obligation
R = Relational Obligation
Significance level < .001
Cluster 1 accounted for 48.8% (N = 217) of the overall sample of academics who participated in the study with the second cluster (N = 228) accounting for the balance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Dimension</th>
<th>Academic's Obligation Item</th>
<th>PC-Type</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Quit whenever I want</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>7.38</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Leave at any time I choose</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>6.16</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>I have no future obligation to remain with this University</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>14.32</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>I am under no obligation to remain with this University</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>9.30</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Perform only required tasks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>9.80</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Do only what I am paid to do</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Fulfil a limited number of responsibilities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Only perform specific duties I agreed to when initially employed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>6.94</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Plan to stay here at the University for a long time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>-12.06</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Continue to work here at the University</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>-12.90</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Make no plans to work anywhere else</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>-8.90</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Remain with the University indefinitely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>-10.40</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Make personal sacrifices for the University</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>-5.31</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Commit myself personally to the University</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>-9.10</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Take the University's concerns personally</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>-7.60</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cluster 1 = Low Mutual Obligations (N = 217); Cluster 2 = High Relational Obligations (N = 228)

T = Transactional Obligation
R = Relational Obligation
Significance level < .001
Examining the mean scores (Tables 4.4 and 4.5) across each of the transactional and relational items for both University and academic obligations, it is apparent the members in both clusters perceive different psychological contracts with their institution.

Across all items measuring University obligations, members in Cluster 1 returned statistically different scores for both transactional and relational components compared to those in Cluster 2. In terms of the transactional aspects of the contract, Cluster 1 members scored significantly higher regarding their employment and job situation such that they believe to have a more limited scope regarding their duties (M = 2.07, SD = 1.21) compared to Cluster 2 academics (M = 1.41, SD = .80, t = 6.72, p < .001). They also perceive to have more limited responsibilities in the University (M = 2.72, SD = 1.27) compared to their counterparts (M = 2.18, SD = 1.13, t = 4.76, p < .001). Cluster 1 academics view their University as not having their interests in mind regarding decisions that could affect them (M = 1.64, SD = .93; M = 2.25, SD = 1.05, t = -6.41, p < .001) or concern for their well-being (M = 1.63, SD = .87; M = 2.46, SD = 1.12, t = -8.73, p < .001). They also convey more uncertain, statistically different perceptions regarding security of employment (M = 3.02, SD = 1.51) compared to members of the second cluster (M = 4.18, SD = 1.00, t = -9.43, p < .001).

Considering the obligations academics perceive to exchange with their University, Cluster 1 academics exhibit statistically different opinions to Cluster 2 in this regard. For example, members of Cluster 1 display weaker levels of relational commitment to their institution compared to Cluster 2 academics. For each and all of the relational items measured, Cluster 1 academics score significantly lower regarding their intentions to remain with the University indefinitely (t = -10.40, p < .011), personally commit
themselves to the University (t = -9.10, p < .001) or be personally concerned about the University (t = -7.60, p < .001). At the same time, Cluster 1 academics scored significantly higher on each of the transactional items compared to Cluster 2 members. Table 4.6 details the descriptive statistics and associated t-test results.

Table 4.6
Psychological Type based on Summated Scores for each Contract Dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>PC-Type</th>
<th>Contract Dimension</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mutually Low T+R Obligations</td>
<td>University Transactional</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>-.56</td>
<td>.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>University Relational</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Transactional</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>-1.05</td>
<td>.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Relational</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mutually High R / Low T Obligations</td>
<td>University Transactional</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>-29.71</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>University Relational</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Transactional</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>-33.38</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Relational</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.3 Psychological Contract Type 1: Mutually Low Transactional/Relational Exchange (Weak-Balanced Exchange)

When considering employer obligations, academics returned almost identical mean scores on both the transactional (M = 2.31, SD = .92) and relational (M = 2.36, SD = .72) dimensions of the exchange relationship. Additionally, there was no statistical difference in how academics perceive employer transactional and relational obligations t(216) = -.56, p >.05. When considering academic obligations, members of this cluster perceive to exchange equal levels of transactional (M = 2.65, SD = .76) and relational obligations (M = 2.74, SD = .92) in the employment relationship. Further, there was no statistical
difference in how academics perceived their transactional or relational obligations to their University $t(216) = -1.05, p > .05)$. However, when comparing the perceptions of academics regarding the transactional dimension for both University and academics, a paired samples t-test returned a significant difference $t(216) = -4.07, p < .001$. Similarly, perceived relational obligations for University and academics were also statistically different $t(216) = -4.71, p < .001$. Figure 4.1 presents a visual representation of the derived psychological contract clusters and associated dimensions.

**Figure 4.1**
Line Graph Representing Mean Scores for Perceptions for Contract Dimensions

These results suggest that while there may be a perceived level of balance in the level of transactional and relational obligations for University and academic independently, there is
an ‘imbalance’ in the exchange of academic transactional/relational obligations for University transactional/relational obligations. That is, academics who perceive a low level exchange relationship with their employer still perceive themselves as exchanging more of both dimensions in the employment relationship. That academics rate higher their perceived obligations to their employer suggests that employees overinvest in the exchange relationship. While not strictly transactional, the underlying nature of this psychological contract reflects a mutually low level of transactional and relational exchanges.

4.2.4 Psychological Contract Type 2: High Relational Exchange Relationship

This cluster accounted for 51.2% (N = 228) of the research sample. The mean scores for both University and academic obligations offers a particular perspective as to the nature of the psychological contract experienced by members of this cluster. Firstly, the transactional dimension mean scores for both University and academics are significantly lower than those observed in Cluster 1. Additionally, the mean scores for the relational dimension associated with both parties are higher when compared to the equivalent dimension in Cluster 1. As such, the pattern of dimensions is different in this cluster.

For University obligations, the transactional dimension score (M = 150, SD = .46) is significantly lower than the relational dimension (M = 3.26, SD = .76, t(216) = -29.71, p < .001). This suggests that academics perceive their University as conveying a more relationally-focused exchange relationship. Similarly, academics themselves convey a more relationally-based exchange psychological contract with their employer such that the
The relational dimension (M = 3.81, SD = .67) is significantly stronger than the transactional dimension (M = 1.72, SD = .58, t(227) = -33.38, p < .001). Additionally, paired samples t-tests highlighted that academics perceive themselves as exchanging significantly more transactional obligations compared to those of the University, t(227) = -4.44, p < .001, as well as investing in significantly more relationally-focused exchanges t(226) = -7.96, p < .001. The underlying nature of the psychological contract for these members is that of a mutually high relational exchange such that academics reciprocate high relational resources with high University relational resources. While it could be considered an ‘imbalanced’ exchange relationship, this imbalance is of a positive nature to the extent that there is a perception of a high socio-emotional investment between employee and employer.

As an additional investigation into the nature of an academic’s psychological contract, I created two new variables which accounted for the transactional and relational dimensions. The purpose for this exercise was to further explore the dimensional qualities associated with the particular psychological contract types manifest in the sample. For example, the University and Academic transactional scores were added together and a mean taken to represent an overall ‘Transactional’ dimension associated with the psychological contract. Similarly, an overall ‘Relational’ dimension was created by the same procedure to reflect the socio-emotional attribute of the exchange relationship. The variables were then allocated to each of the psychological contract types presented in Table 4.7.

As can be observed from Table 4.7, the spread of mean scores for each contract dimension indicate that two different forms of psychological contract are present within the sample of academics. For the mutually low obligations group, the difference between the
transactional and relational dimensions for this particular psychological contract are marginally different at the 5% level (t(443) = -2.13, p < .05).

Table 4.7
Means, Standard Deviations and Significance Tests for Combined Psychological Contract Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>PC-Type</th>
<th>Contract Dimension</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mutually Low T+R Obligations</td>
<td>Transactional</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>-2.13</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mutually High R / Low T Obligations</td>
<td>Transactional</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>-50.29</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
Transactional Dimension = University Transactional + Academic Transactional
Relational Dimension = University Relational + Academic Relational

For the high relational contract group, the transactional dimension is considerably lower and significantly different to the primary, relational dimension (t(443) = -50.29, p < .001), thus emphasising the underlying socio-emotional nature of the perceived exchange relationship. Additionally, an independent t-test indicated that the transactional dimension for the mutually low obligations group is significantly higher (M = 2.47, SD = .56, t(443) = 18.99, p < .001) when compared to the same dimension for the high relational cluster (M = 1.58, SD = .33). Similarly, the relational dimensions are significantly different between the two psychological contract types t(443) = -19.51, p < .001, with the second psychological contract type reporting the higher mean score.

These results indicate that different types of psychological contracts exist among a sample of academics based on the prevalence of transactional and relational obligations found in the exchange relationship. Cluster analysis revealed two distinct groupings of employees.
who perceive different forms of the psychological contract such that one group experiences a very strong relational-based exchange relationship with their University, and the other, a more transactional-focused relationship. Additionally, statistical tests confirmed that the exchange of transactional and relational obligation is more balanced in Cluster 1 while there were clear, statistically significant differences in the balance of resources exchanged for academics perceiving a more relational psychological contract. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Extending further the profile of the psychological contract of academics, two crosstabulation analyses were generated based on the gender and tenure characteristics of the research sample. The purpose of this was to see if there was an association between the underlying nature of an academic’s psychological contract and their sex and the length of time employed in the University. The next two sections present the results of this analysis.

4.3 Psychological Contract Type, Cluster Profile & Group Differences

For reference, a full cross-section of the research sample based on the extracted psychological contract can be found in Appendix D.

Tables 4.8 and 4.9 detail gender and employment tenure membership distribution of academics respectively based on the underlying nature of the psychological contract.

Table 4.8
Gender by Psychological Contract Type
Crosstabulation
In terms of gender, males accounted for 49% of the overall research sample. Of this percentage, 51.8% of male academics exhibited a ‘mutually low obligations’ type psychological contract with 48.2% of male academics perceiving a relatively high, mutually relational contract type. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the overall sample were female of which 46% perceived a mutually low obligations type psychological contract while 54% are those who perceive to have a highly relational exchange relationship with their University. As such, slightly more females than males experience a socio-emotional exchange relationship with their employer. However, a Pearson chi-square test of independence was conducted and indicated that in general, males and females did not differ significantly in the type of psychological contract they experience with their University, $\chi^2 (1, N = 445) = 1.61, p = .204$.

Regarding the relationship between the level of University tenure and psychological contract type, a Pearson chi-square test of independence indicated that in general, the type of psychological contract experienced by academics varied according to the length of time employed at the University, $\chi^2 (4, N = 445) = 24.34, p = .000$. Table 4.9 compares the percentage breakdown of psychological contract type across five University tenure
categories. Examining the spread of percentages of tenure level for each psychological contract type, it can be observed that there is a general decrease in the percentage of academics perceiving a transactional psychological contract the longer they are tenured at the University. Similarly, there is a general rise in the number of academics experiencing a relational exchange the longer they are tenured. As such, it could be inferred that the longer an academic is employed with their University, the more relational their exchange relationship develops with their employer.

Table 4.9
University Tenure by Psychological Contract Type
Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Frequency/%</th>
<th>Mutually Low Obligations</th>
<th>Mutually high Relational</th>
<th>Row Total/%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 &lt; 5 years</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Tenure</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 &lt; 10 years</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Tenure</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 &lt; 15 years</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Tenure</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 &lt; 20 years</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Tenure</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 20 years</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Tenure</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Total/%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Tenure</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 Differences in the Level of Work Attitudes based on Psychological Contract Type
The previous section aimed at establishing whether or not different types of psychological contract are present among a sample of third level academics. It was further posited whether the nature of the psychological contract experienced by academics varied across gender and tenure categories. This section considers the relationship between the underlying nature of the psychological contract of academics with work-related attitudes and evaluation perceptions of their respective psychological contracts. Specifically, Research Question 2 focuses on the possibility that individuals perceiving different types of psychological contract with their employer, also differ with respect to levels of their work attitudes. Furthermore, it was hypothesised that employees experiencing a less relational-type psychological contract would exhibit lower levels of job satisfaction (H2i), lower levels of affective commitment (H2ii), lower normative commitment (H2iii) and less favourable perceptions of organisational support (H2iv) compared to academics experiencing a psychological contract given to greater levels of socio-emotional investment and long-term exchange. Therefore:

**Research Question 2:** Accounting for psychological type, do academics differ in their levels of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, support perceptions as well as perceptions of psychological contract breach, violation and fulfilment?

**Hypothesis 2(i):** Academics who experience a transactional-type psychological contract report lower levels of job satisfaction compared to academics perceiving a relational-type psychological contract

**Hypothesis 2(ii):** Academics who experience a transactional-type psychological contract report lower levels of affective commitment to their University compared to academics perceiving a relational-type psychological contract

**Hypothesis 2(ii):** Academics who experience a transactional-type psychological contract report lower levels of normative commitment to their University compared to academics perceiving a relational-type psychological contract
Hypothesis 2(iv): Academics who experience a transactional-type psychological contract report less favourable perceptions of organisational support from their University compared to academics perceiving a relational-type psychological contract.

Hypothesis 2(v): Academics who experience a transactional-type psychological contract report higher levels of psychological contract breach and violation compared to academics perceiving a relational-type psychological contract.

Hypothesis 2(vi): Academics who experience a transactional-type psychological contract report lower levels of psychological contract fulfilment compared to academics perceiving a relational-type psychological contract.

Figure 4.2 offers a visual graphic of the different attitudinal profiles present within the research sample. Additionally, Table 4.10 details the descriptive statistics and associated independent t-tests relating to psychological contract type and work-related attitudes. Comparing participants’ work attitudes across psychological contract types, it becomes apparent that academics experience varying levels of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and support perceptions.

For example, compared to the level of job satisfaction experienced by the ‘mutually low exchange’ group (M = 4.09, SD = .76), academics perceiving a more ‘relationally-based exchange’ relationship with their University are significantly more satisfied in their day-to-day job (M = 4.40, SD = .57, t(444) = -4.77, p < .001).
JS = Job Satisfaction, AC = Affective Commitment, NC = Normative Commitment, POS = Perceived Organisational Support
Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 4.10
Descriptive Statistics and T-Tests for Psychological Contract Type and Work Attitudes of Academics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>PC-Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>-4.77</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Commitment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>-10.66</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Commitment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>-9.23</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>-7.95</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PC-Type:
1 = Mutually Low Transactional/Relational
2 = Mutually High Relational/Low Transactional
POS = Perceived Organisational Support

Further, compared to those perceiving a low exchange relationship (M = 2.87, SD = .91), members of the relationally-focused exchange group are significantly more emotionally committed with regard to their affective attachment to their institution as indicated by the
mean score for affective commitment (M = 3.70, SD = .72, t(444) = -10.66, p < .001). Members of this group also express significantly higher levels of normative commitment to their University (M = 3.17, SD = .91, t(444) = -9.23, p < .001) and exhibit significantly more positive perceptions of organisational support from their University (M = 3.16, SD = .72) compared to their peers (M = 2.58, SD = .82, t(444) = -7.95, p < 0.001).

These results offer tentative inferences regarding the impact particular types of exchange relationship vis-à-vis the psychological contract. They further support prior empirical findings relating to the differential effects that transactionally-based and relationally-focused employment relationships impart on work attitudes. In general, academics who perceive to have a psychological contract which is guided by socio-emotional investment demonstrated significantly more positive work-related attitudes than academics perceiving a lesser relationally-based exchange relationship. Therefore, Hypotheses 2(i) through 2(iv) were supported.

In further exploring the perceptions of academics regarding their work attitudes and the perceived quality ascribed to the employment relationship, participants were asked to evaluate the state of their psychological. Previous authors have highlighted (e.g. Conway et al., 2005; George, 2009, Rousseau et al., 1998) that the evaluation of the psychological contract regarding whether or not the perceived obligations that constitute an individual’s exchange relationship have been fulfilled or not, is one of the most researched areas of psychological contract theory. As such, participants in the current study were asked to reflect on the level of perceived breach, violation and fulfilment levels of their own particular contract. A line graph detailing the mean scores for psychological contract breach, violation and fulfilment perceptions are presented in Figure 4.3.
As discussed in Chapter 2, perceptions of breach refer to the cognition that a discrepancy exists between what was supposedly promised by the organisation and what was actually met in terms of fulfilment.

**Figure 4.3**  
Line Graph Representing Cluster Scores for Breach, Violation & Fulfilment Perceptions

![Graph of Cluster Scores for Breach, Violation & Fulfilment Perceptions](image)

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Contract violation reflects the emotional reaction and affective side-effects of breach incidences. The means, standard deviation and significance tests for the evaluation of the psychological contract are presented in Table 4.11.

In terms of fulfilment, academics generally agreed that their University moderately fulfilled their perceived contractual obligations, regardless of psychological contract type. However, compared to academics experiencing a low exchange type relationship (M =
3.23, SD = 1.08), members of the relational-type exchange relationship report significantly more favourable perceptions that their University has fulfilled their obligations in the contract (M = 3.82, SD = .94, t(444) = -6.07, p < .001).

Table 4.11
Descriptive Statistics and T-Tests for Psychological Contract Type and Contract Evaluation Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>PC-Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PC- Fulfilment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>-6.07</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC- Breach</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC- Violation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PC-Type:
1 = Mutually Low Transactional/Relational
2 = Mutually High Relational/Low Transactional

Similarly, academics in the relationally-based psychological contract reported significantly fewer breaches (M = 2.50, SD = .87, t(444) = 6.09, p < .001) and infrequent feelings of violation (M = 1.89, SD = 1.02, t(444) = 5.92, p < .001) in their employment relationship. As such, these results confirm and support the associated hypotheses of (H2v) and (H2vi) respectively such that less favourable perceptions of psychological contract fulfilment, breach and violation are associated with relationships defined by more transactional exchanges.

4.5 Section Two: The Correlation between Psychological Contract Type & Work-related Attitudes
The preceding section explored differences in work attitudes and exchange relationship quality based on the underlying nature of an academic’s psychological contract. Preliminary evidence suggests that an employee’s psychological contract is an important phenomenon influencing work attitudes. Significance test results indicated that academics perceiving different types of psychological contracts in the employment relationship exhibit differing levels of job satisfaction, commitment and organisational support perceptions. Additionally, to the extent that psychological contract infringement, in terms of breach and violation, was experienced, academics perceiving a more relational-based exchange relationship scored lower on these variables compared to academics experiencing a more transactional, low level exchange relationship. Further, more favourable perceptions of psychological contract fulfilment were associated with the relationally-based contract type.

Following on with this analysis, Research Question 3 sought to investigate both the statistical relationships and explanatory effects of psychological contract type on the work attitudes of academics. As such, correlation analysis is first discussed in order to highlight the salient relationships between each and all of the measured variables. In subsequent analyses, hierarchical multiple regression was utilised to test hypotheses (H3i to H3vi) associated with this particular research question.

4.5.1 Statistical Relationships between the Measured Variables
Table 4.12 presents the means, standard deviations and the zero-order correlation coefficients for the full sample. Taking gender and tenure variables as a starting point, a number of observations regarding the relationship between these variables with psychological contract type, work attitudes and evaluation of the psychological contract can be made. Firstly, other than having a weak, negative correlation with University tenure \((r = -.187, p < .01)\), academic gender returned no significant correlations with any of the work variables, evaluation of the psychological contract variables or with the type of psychological contract experienced by the staff. This result suggests that for the present sample, more males than females represent longer tenured academics. Regardless of gender type, there was no relationship between gender and the level of job satisfaction associated with academic work \((r = .036, p > .05)\), the degree of affective \((r = .037, p > .05)\) and normative \((r = .044, p > .05)\) commitment and the perceptions of support from their University \((r = .007, p > .05)\). Similarly, there was no correlation between academic gender and the type of psychological contract experienced \((r = .06, p > .05)\), perceptions of breach \((r = -.006, p > .05)\), violation \((r = -.028, p > .05)\) and fulfilment \((r = .004, p > .05)\).

Turning to the correlations between employment tenure and work attitudes, there was no correlation between job satisfaction and tenure \((r = .022, p > .05)\). Tenure returned a relatively weak positive correlation for both affective commitment \((r = .144, p < .01)\) and normative commitment \((r = .101, p < .05)\). Further, there was a weak positive correlation between tenure and psychological contract type \((r = .183, p < .01)\) and a moderate correlation with perceptions of psychological contract fulfilment \((r = .281, p < .01)\). Interestingly, perceptions of breach \((r = .155, p < .01)\) and violation \((r = .137, p < .01)\) were significantly related to academic tenure.
Taken together, these results suggest that the employment relationship between academic and University is guided by a combination of positive and negative underpinnings wherein the quality of the relationship is in part influenced by the years of employment.

Social exchange theory asserts that to the extent an exchange relationship co-exists, the parties involved benefit from the continuance and maintenance of the relationship; mutual understanding, trust and socio-emotional commitments result in the process (Blau, 1964). The correlations between tenure and organisational commitment offer credence to this assertion. Similarly, the possibility that an exchange relationship may initially be based on instrumental and utilitarian objectives may over time, develop from a transactional-based existence into a more socio-emotional exchange relationship. Thus, the positive correlation between tenure and contract type suggests that an academic perceives to have a more socially-orientated employment relationship with their University, the longer they are employed at the institution. However, as the expression goes: ‘familiarity breeds contempt’; the longer one is employed at the organisation, the greater the likelihood that one’s employer is not living up to its side of the bargain begins to guide the interpretation of the exchange relationship. That tenure was found to be significantly correlated to perceptions of breach and violation indicates that monitoring the employment relationship becomes an important aspect for employees.

Table 4.12 Zero-order Pearson Correlation Coefficients (N = 445)
Turning to the relationships between psychological contract type and each of the work-related attitudes, a number of significant correlations were reported in this regard. There was a moderately positive and significant correlation between contract type and job
satisfaction ($r = .224, p < .01$) suggesting that the more relational the underlying exchange relationship, the more satisfied academics were with their work. Furthermore, academics exhibit stronger emotional ties and loyalty to their University such that their affective commitment is positively related to and influenced by their psychological contract ($r = .454, p < .01$) as well as their normative commitment to their institution ($r = .402, p < .01$). Additionally, the more relational the psychological contract is, the more favourable the perception that the University shows concern for employee well-being and development ($r = .353, p < .01$).

In terms of appraising the state of the psychological contract, all correlations between psychological contract type and its evaluation were in the hypothesised direction. The correlation coefficients indicate that the more relational the psychological contract, the more positive the perception that the obligations owing to them from their University have been fulfilled ($r = .281, p < .01$). Moreover, academics report lower incidences of breach ($r = -.279, p < .01$) and feelings of violation ($r = -.272, p < .01$) when they believe that they are party to a healthy, socially-effected employment relationship. As derived from the extant research, the correlations between breach, violation and fulfilment were in the anticipated direction as were the relationships between breach/violation/fulfilment with each of the work attitudes.

Perceptions that the University has fulfilled its obligations were positively related to an academic’s level of job satisfaction ($r = .269, p < .01$), affective attachment to the University ($r = .416, p < .01$) and normative commitment ($r = .469, p < .01$). The correlation between PC-fulfilment and perceptions of organisational support high ($r = .642, p < .01$), suggesting that academics strongly associate the degree of psychological
contract fulfilment with how they perceive the level of support that is conveyed, and available to them from their institution. That is, the more support academics believe is present in the employment relationship, the more positive they attribute perceptions of support with perceptions of psychological contract fulfilment.

Psychological contract breach and violation were negatively correlated with job satisfaction ($r_{PCB} = -0.245, p < .01$, $r_{PCV} = -0.327, p < .01$), affective commitment ($r_{PCB} = -0.377, p < .01$, $r_{PCV} = -0.387, p < .01$) and normative commitment ($r_{PCB} = -0.423, p < .01$, $r_{PCV} = -0.446, p < .01$). The largest correlations reported were between breach/violation and support perceptions ($r_{PCB} = -0.584, p < .01$, $r_{PCV} = -0.644, p < .01$). Academics perceiving both discrepancies in their psychological contract and emotional reaction to these discrepancies re-evaluate their job situation and question their commitment intentions to their employer. Additionally, perceiving that their employer has infringed their contractual obligations may lead academics to believe that their University cares less for them than initially thought.

Whether or not an academic is satisfied with the work that they do, is emotionally attached to their employer, conveys a sense of loyal duty to their University or perceives that their institution is committed and supportive of staff; is related to the nature of the psychological contract underpinning the employment relationship. The strongest correlation reported was between psychological contract type and affective commitment, supporting the assertion that employment relationships which reflect strong, socio-emotional understandings can have a positive impact on the degree to which an employee internalises the values of the organisation and identifies with its overall purpose. That there was a relatively strong correlation between perceived organisational support and
psychological type, further buttresses the notions that positive perceptions of organisational support adds to the sense of employee-employer bond.

Preliminary evidence indicates that academics convey more favourable evaluation perceptions regarding the state of their psychological contract when they perceive a relationally-based exchange with their University. There is a stronger sense that the perceived terms in their contract are being met and fulfilled to the extent that academics reported lower scores on breach and violation experiences. As such, the intercorrelations between psychological contract type and each of the work-related attitudes returned positive and significant coefficients and provide initial evidence of the explanatory role of the psychological contract in predicting work outcomes.

4.6 Psychological Contract Type and its Functional Relationship with Work Outcomes

In order to test the stated hypotheses associated with Research Question 3, multiple hierarchical regression was utilised to determine the explanatory power that psychological contract type has on the work attitudes of academics. Specifically, a series of hierarchical multiple regression models were generated and tested for each of H3 (i) through H3 (vi).

4.6.1 Psychological Contract Type & Job Satisfaction
**Hypothesis 3(i)** stated that Relational-type psychological contracts are positively related to, and significantly explains job satisfaction of academics.

To test this hypothesis, firstly, job satisfaction was regressed onto the control variables of gender and tenure to determine if these variables predict job satisfaction levels for academics. In the second step, psychological contract type was entered into the regression to determine the incremental effects and predictive power it had on job satisfaction. Table 4.13 details the hierarchical regression results for this test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tenure</td>
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<td>.61</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.33</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.23***</td>
<td>4.724</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.13**  
Hierarchical Regression Relating Psychological Type to Job Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td></td>
<td>.052</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ΔR²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. F Δ</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PC-Type: 1 = Mutual Low Obligations, 2 = High Relational Obligations

*** p < .001

Collectively, gender and tenure did not contribute any significant influence in explaining job satisfaction ($R^2 = .002$, $F = (2, 443) = .46$, $p > .05$). However, the addition of psychological contract type significantly contributed an additional 5% in the variance of job satisfaction over and above that accounted for by gender and tenure variables ($R^2 = .05$).
.052, ΔR² = .05, p < .001) with psychological contract type being the principal significant variable of job satisfaction (β = .23, t = 4.724, p < .001). Thus, hypothesis H3 (i) was supported.

4.6.2 Psychological Contract Type & Affective Commitment

In terms of the relationship between organisational commitment and psychological contract type, Hypotheses H3 (ii) stated that a relational-type psychological contract is positively related to, and is associated with an academic’s level of affective commitment to their University. Table 4.14 presents the hierarchical regression results for this hypothesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>PC-Type</td>
<td>.44***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10.17</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PC-Type: 1 = Mutual Low Obligations, 2 = High Relational Obligations

** p < .01

*** p < .001

In step 1, the control variables were entered to determine if gender and/or tenure were related to the level of affective commitment of academics. Combined, gender and tenure significantly explained 3% of the variance in the affective commitment levels of academics.
(R² = .03, F = (2, 443) = 5.69, p < .01) with academic tenure being the main significant variable (β = .16, t = 3.28, p < .001). In step 2, psychological contract type was entered into the equation and explained an additional 19% in the level of variance in affective commitment (R² = .19, Δ R² = .19, F = (2, 443) = 39.17, p < .001). As such, psychological contract type was both significantly and positively related to the level of affective commitment shown by academics (β = .44, t = 10.17, p < .001). Therefore, hypothesis H3 (ii) was supported such that the more relational the underlying nature of an academic’s psychological contract, the stronger the emotional bond and attachment afforded the University.

4.6.3 Psychological Contract Type & Normative Commitment

Hypothesis H3 (iii) stated that normative commitment would be significantly related to the type of psychological contract experienced by academics such that the more relational the exchange relationship between employee and institution, the stronger would be the feelings of obligation and loyalty to the University. The results of the regression analysis (Table 4.15) details the explanatory qualities of both the control variables and psychological contract type.

As can be observed from Step 1 of the regression, the gender and tenure variables accounted for a marginally significant amount of variance in normative commitment (R² = .01, F = (2, 443) = 3.20, p < .05), with tenure being as the main explanatory variable (β = .11, t = 2.35, p < .05). This would suggest that the longer academics are employed at their University, the greater the sense of loyalty they have toward their institution.
Psychological contract type was entered in Step 2 and significantly explained an additional 15% in the variance of normative commitment ($\Delta R^2 = .16$, $F (2,443) = 28.57$, $p < .001$). Additionally, psychological contract type was positively and significantly related to the degree of normative commitment ($\beta = .39$, $t = 8.84$, $p < .001$), thus supporting H3 (iii).

**Table 4.15**

Hierarchical Regression Relating Psychological Type to Normative Commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>.18</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>PC-Type</td>
<td>.39***</td>
<td>8.84</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>0.12</td>
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<td>0.40</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. F $\Delta$</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PC-Type: 1 = Mutual Low Obligations, 2 = High Relational Obligations

* $p < .05$

*** $p < .001$

### 4.6.4 Psychological Contract Type and its association with Perceptions of Organisational Support
In terms of the relationship between the nature of an academic’s psychological contract and how this may influence perceptions of organisational support, hypothesis H3 (iv) posited that there would be a significant, positive relationship between support perceptions and relational-type psychological contracts. To test this hypothesis, perceived organisational support was first regressed onto the control variables and then onto psychological contract type as per Table 4.16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.94</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-1.35</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>-.14**</td>
<td>-3.11</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>PC-Type</td>
<td>.38***</td>
<td>8.48</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PC-Type: 1 = Mutual Low Obligations, 2 = High Relational Obligations
** p < .01
*** p < .001

Neither gender (β = .00, t = -.10, p > .05) or tenure (β = -.07, t = -1.35, p > .05) significantly explained support perceptions ($R^2 = .004$, $F = (2, 443) = .397$, $p > .05$). However, the addition of psychological contract type to the regression returned a significantly extra level of explained variance in organisational support ($\Delta R^2 = .14$, $F (2, 443) = 24.67$, $p < .001$) to the extent that contract type was functionally related to support perceptions ($\beta = .38$, $t = 8.48$, $p < .001$). Further, academic tenure became a
significant, negative explanatory variable of organisational support after the inclusion of psychological contract type ($\beta = -.14$, $t = -3.11$, $p < .01$). This would suggest that while academics may experience a relational-type psychological contract with their employer, the longer one has tenured employment, the less favourable the perceptions that support is available from their University. However, these results confirm H3 (iv).

4.6.5 Psychological Contract Type and Breach & Fulfilment Perceptions

The evaluation of one’s psychological contract was explored from the perspective of breach and fulfilment perceptions. Research has indicated that the perception that an employer has infringed an employee’s psychological contract is in part, influenced by the type of exchange relationship present. It was hypothesised in this study (H3v) that the more relationally-based an academic’s psychological contract is, the lesser will be the inclination to interpret employer breach in the exchange. That is, while the occurrence of breach may be a reality in everyday work exchanges, employees who experience a more relational psychological contract would give their employer the benefit of the doubt should it be interpreted that some aspect of the employment exchange was not met. As such, there would be a negative relationship between breach perceptions and relational psychological contract.

Additionally, research has noted that perceptions of breach or violation by one’s employer should be treated differently from perceptions that one’s employer has in general, fulfilled in meeting most of their obligations as perceived by the employee. Further, it was hypothesised (H3 vi) that perceptions of psychological contract fulfilment would be
stronger for employees experiencing relationally-based exchange relationships. As such, Table 4.17, Table 4.18 and 4.19 detail the hierarchical regression results for these hypotheses respectively.

### Table 4.17
Hierarchical Regression Relating Psychological Type to Perceptions of PC-Breach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>.16***</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.22***</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 2    | PC-Type | -0.32***| -7.11 | .00 |
|      |         |         |       |     |

PC-Type: 1 = Mutual Low Obligations, 2 = High Relational Obligations

*** p < .001

In terms of contract infringement, gender and tenure accounted for 3% of the variance in the breach perceptions of academics (R² = .03, F = (2, 443) =5.58, p < .01), wherein tenure was significantly associated with psychological contract breach (β = .16, t = 3.34, p < .001). After psychological contract type was entered in Step 2, tenure became stronger in terms of its explanation of breach perceptions (β = .22, t = 4.86, p < .001). Further, psychological type was negatively and significantly related to perceptions of breach (β = - .32, t = -7.11, p < .001) and explained an extra 10% in the variance of such perceptions.
over and above the control variables (ΔR² = .10, F = (2, 443) = 20.99, p < .001). As such, hypothesis H3 (v) was confirmed.

A similar pattern of results were generated for the relationship between psychological contract type and feelings of psychological contract violation (Table 4.18).

Table 4.18
Hierarchical Regression Relating Psychological Type To Perceptions of PC-Violation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>.14***</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>0.19***</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>PC-Type</td>
<td>-0.31***</td>
<td>-6.75</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ΔR²</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>18.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. F Δ</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PC-Type: 1 = Mutual Low Obligations, 2 = High Relational Obligations
*** p < .001

Again, tenure returned as a significant variable associated with feelings of violation, indicating that longer serving academics are more attentive to departures in their employer’s contractual responsibilities. Psychological contract type was negatively and significantly associated with feelings of contract violation (β = -.31, t = -6.75, p < .001) to the extent that it contributed an additional 9% in explained variance. Similar to the breach analysis, tenure became more significant after the introduction of the psychological
contract type variable, such that the beta value for tenure significantly increased from $\beta = .14$ to $\beta = .19$.

Table 4.19
Hierarchical Regression Relating Psychological Type To Perceptions of PC-Fulfilment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.31</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-1.97</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>-.10*</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.16***</td>
<td>-3.43</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>PC-Type</td>
<td>.31***</td>
<td>6.76</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PC-Type: 1 = Mutual Low Obligations, 2 = High Relational Obligations
* $p < .05$
*** $p < .001$

Considering the relationship between fulfilment perceptions and the nature of an academic’s psychological contract (Table 4.19), when the control variables were entered into the regression equation in Step 1, tenure returned as the main (albeit marginally) significant variable of perceived psychological contract fulfilment ($\beta = -.10$, $t = 1.97$, $p < .05$) with gender having no effect. In Step 2, tenure became significantly more negatively associated with perceptions of fulfilment ($\beta = -.16$, $t = -3.43$, $p < .001$) while psychological contract type contributed an additional 9% in explained variance ($\Delta R^2 = .09$, $F = (2, 443) = 16.65$, $p < .001$) and was both positive and significantly related to perceptions of fulfilment ($\beta = .31$, $t = 6.76$, $p < .001$). Thus support was found for hypothesis H3 (vi).
This analysis demonstrates that the more relationally embedded the exchange relationship between academic and University, the more favourable will be the interpretations that one’s employer is meeting its responsibilities to employees.

### 4.7 Section Three: The Relationship between Psychological Contract Evaluation and Work Attitudes

This section considers the relationship between psychological contract infringement and work outcomes by accounting for the differential effects of psychological contract type. As such, the focus of this analysis relates to the following research question:

**Research Question 4:** Accounting for different psychological contract types, what is the relationship between psychological contract breach and violation, perceptions with the work attitudes of academics?

It has been previously demonstrated that academics who have different types of psychological contract report varying levels of job satisfaction, commitment and perceptions of organisational support in their work environment. From the perspective of psychological contract evaluation, it is asserted that the relationship between psychological contract breach and violation perceptions may equally vary in their effects on work attitudes as a result of the underlying psychological contract type.

To accomplish this, an initial discussion of the inter-correlations between these variables will be presented. Subsequently, hierarchical regressions were simultaneously generated for each psychological contract type to test a number of hypothesised relationships between breach, violation and the work attitudes of academics. The results tables are
presented such that direct comparison between each psychological contract type can be made.

4.7.1 The Relationship between Psychological Contract Breach, Violation and Work Attitudes

The distinction between perceptions of breach and feelings of violation associated with the psychological contract was previously discussed in Chapter Two. Research focusing on these distinctions indicates that the cumulative effect of breach perceptions of the psychological contract can lead to subjective interpretations of contract violation (Robinson et al., 1997; Raja et al., 2004, Suazo, 2005). Research has further hypothesised and demonstrated that the perception of breach is an important antecedent to psychological contract violation experiences and that violation in turn mediates the relationship between breach and work outcomes. Figure 4.4 presents a model indicating the hypothesised relationships between these variables.

**Figure 4.4**
Hypothesised Model Indicating Direct & Indirect Relationships of Breach, Violation & Work Attitudes
It was therefore hypothesised in the present study that psychological contract breach would be an antecedent to perceptions of contract violation [H4 (i)]. The results of the hierarchical regression for this test are presented in Table 4.20.

Table 4.20
Hierarchical Regression Relating Psychological Contract Breach to Violation Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step IV</th>
<th>PC-Type Mutual-Low Obligations</th>
<th>PC-Type High Relational Obligations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PCB</td>
<td>.73***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>R²</th>
<th>ΔR²</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig. F Δ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
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<td>.06</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>6.51</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>87.36</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender: 1 = Male, 2 = Female
PCB = Psychological Contract Breach
** p < .01
*** p < .001

By separating the research sample into respective psychological contract types, two sets of hierarchical regression results were generated to determine the predictive power of breach on feelings of violation. In Step 1, the control variables were entered, with the psychological contract breach variable entered in the second step. For both psychological contract types, tenure returned as the main control variable associated with feelings of violation. The beta values are similar for both PC-types, with tenure having a marginally
stronger effect for the mutually low obligations group ($\beta = .22$, $t = 3.27$, $p < .01$) compared to the mutually high relational obligations group ($\beta = .18$, $t = 2.75$, $p < .01$).

Psychological contract breach was a very strong positive and significant variable of feelings of violation for the mutually low obligations group ($\beta = .73$, $t = 15.32$, $p < .001$) and accounted for a significant level of additional variance in violation over and above tenure ($\Delta R^2 = .49$, $F = (2, 215) = 87.36$, $p < .001$). Similarly, for academics in the high relational obligations contract group, breach was positively related to feelings of violation ($\beta = .68$, $t = 14.07$, $p < .001$) significantly explained an additional 45% in the variance of violation ($\Delta R^2 = .45$, $F = (2, 226) = 71.90$, $p < .001$) over and above that explained by gender and tenure. Therefore, accounting for psychological contract type, Hypothesis H4 (i) was supported such that the perception of psychological contract breach precedes and is functionally related to feelings of violation.

4.7.2 Direct and Indirect Effect of Psychological Contract Breach and Violation on Work-related Outcomes

After establishing the relationship between breach and violation in the previous analysis, hierarchical regression was further applied to test the direct effects of breach and violation on job satisfaction, affective and normative commitment, and organisational support. Additionally, and in support of prior research, this study sought to investigate the possible indirect effect that psychological contract violation may have in explaining each of these same work outcomes for both psychological contract types. That is, in accordance with Affective Events Theory (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996) it was hypothesised that contract violation would represent the affective reaction to a cognitive event (breach perception)
and so would mediate the relationship between psychological contract breach and the stated work outcomes, whether one experiences a weak or strong psychological contract.

**Testing for Mediator Effects**

The procedure described by Barron and Kenny (1986) was applied to test for the mediation effects of psychological contract violation. Prior to conducting mediated regression, three conditions should be met. Firstly, the independent variable (contract breach) must be significantly correlated to the dependent variable (e.g. Job Satisfaction, Affective, Normative Commitment and Perceived Organisational Support). Second, the independent variable must be significantly correlated to the mediator variable (contract violation). Finally, the mediator variable must be significantly correlated to the dependent variable (Job Satisfaction, Affective and Normative Commitment, and Perceived Organisational Support). As per the bivariate correlations in Table 4.12, all three conditions were satisfied. Full mediation occurs when the explanatory power and statistical significance of the independent variable disappears after the introduction of the mediator variable. Partial mediation occurs when there is a reduction in both power and significance of the independent variable and no mediation is evidenced when the independent variable remains unchanged after the introduction of the mediator (Barron and Kenny, 1986).

A number of hypotheses reflecting the direct and indirect effects of breach and violation were generated in this regard. The hierarchical results for both the direct and indirect effects of breach and violation on work outcomes are presented in Tables 4.21 through 4.24. The direct effects of breach and associated hypotheses will be presented first, followed by a discussion on the direct effects of violation. Finally, the hypotheses regarding the mediation effects of violation will be highlighted.
4.7.3 The Direct and Indirect Effects of Psychological Contract Breach and Violation on Job Satisfaction

Table 4.21 details the regressions results which tested the direct effects of psychological breach and violation on an academic’s level of job satisfaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>PC-Type Mutual-Low Obligations</th>
<th>PC-Type High Relational Obligations</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>β</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>-.96</td>
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<td>Tenure</td>
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<td>Gender</td>
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<td>Tenure</td>
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<td>PCV</td>
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<td>-3.55</td>
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<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Step 3</th>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Step 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
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<td>.24</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ΔR²</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td></td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>6.44</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. F</td>
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<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.178</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender: 1 = Male, 2 = Female
PCB = Psychological Contract Breach
PCV = Psychological Contract Violation
** p < .01
*** p < .001

Hypothesis H4(ii) asserted that psychological contract breach is negatively related to an academic’s level of job satisfaction. Similarly, Hypothesis H4(iii) stated that psychological contract violation is also negatively related to an academic’s level of job satisfaction.
satisfaction. Finally, it was hypothesised that violation would mediate the relationship between breach and job satisfaction **H4(iii)**.

To test these hypotheses, the control variables were entered into the regression first. For each psychological contract type, gender and tenure did not significantly explain any variance in the level of job satisfaction for academics (Mutually Low Obligations Group: \( R^2 = .005, F = (2, 443) = .49, p > .05 \); Mutually High Relational Group: \( R^2 = .02, F = (2, 443) = 1.74, p > .05 \)). In the second step, psychological contract breach was introduced into the equation and accounted for an additional 5% in explained variance in job satisfaction for the mutually low obligations groups (\( \Delta R^2 = .05, F = (2, 443) = 4.17, p < .001 \)) and 3% additional variance for the mutually high relational group (\( R^2 = .03, F = (2, 443) = 3.33, p < .01 \)). Breach significantly and negatively explained the level of job satisfaction for both the mutually low obligations group (\( \beta = -.24, p < .001 \)) and mutually high relational obligations group (\( \beta = -.17, p < .01 \)). In the third step, the violation variable was added to the analysis. Psychological contract violation was negative and functionally associated with job satisfaction for the mutually low obligations group (\( \beta = -.35, p < .001 \)) and mutually high relational group (\( \beta = -.27, p < .01 \)). Further, the inclusion of psychological contract violation significantly contributed unique explanatory variance in job satisfaction for both psychological contract types, over and above that accounted for by perceptions of breach. Therefore, Hypothesis H4 (ii) and H4 (iii) were supported.

Finally, Hypothesis H4 (iv) asserted that psychological contract violation mediates the relationship between breach and each of job satisfaction. Keeping in mind the procedure of Baron and Kenny (1986), the results in table 4.21 offer evidence of the meditational effects of violation on the relationship between breach and job satisfaction.
Looking at the change in the beta coefficients for breach when comparing step 2 and step 3 of the regressions, feelings of violation fully mediated the relationship between breach and job satisfaction for the mutually low obligations group such that the beta value of the breach variable in step two ($\beta = -.24, p < .001$) became zero and non-significant after the introduction of the violation variable in step three ($\beta = .02, p > .05$). Similarly, violation fully mediated the breach-job satisfaction relationship wherein breach became non-significant after violation was added to the equation in step three ($\beta = -.17, p < .01$ to $\beta = .01, p > .05$). Thus, hypothesis H4(iv) was supported.

4.7.4 The Direct and Indirect Effects of Psychological Contract Breach and Violation on the Affective Commitment of Academics

Regarding the relationship between psychological contract infringement and the degree of affective commitment of academics, the following three hypotheses were generated:

**Hypothesis 4(iv):** Psychological contract breach is negatively related to affective commitment, **Hypothesis 4(v):** Psychological contract violation is negatively related to affective commitment and **Hypothesis 4(vi):** Psychological contract violation mediates the relationship between breach and affective commitment. Table 4.22 presents the regressions results for this test.
Neither gender nor tenure was significantly related to affective commitment based on the Step One coefficients. While there existed a weak positive correlation ($r = .144$, $p < .01$) between tenure and affective commitment (see Table 4.12), there was no apparent explanatory effects of tenure on affective commitment borne out from the regression analysis. It should be noted however that the beta coefficient was higher in the relational obligations group ($\beta = .11$, $t = 1.67$, $p = .096$). Further, using Cohen’s (1988) interpretative rules, a small effect size of ($r = .12$) was calculated for tenure on affective commitment suggesting that 12% of the variance in affective commitment was determined by tenure level for the relational group. In step two, the breach variable was entered into the
regression equation and was functionally associated with affective commitment for both the mutually low obligations group ($\beta = -.23, t = -2.35, p < .001$) and high relational group ($\beta = -.38, t = -6.21, p < .001$).

Interestingly, for the high relational group, academic tenure became a significant positive explanatory variable of breach perceptions ($\beta = .19, p < .01$) after the addition of the breach variable. Further, breach perceptions contributed a significantly higher level of commitment variance for the high relational group ($\Delta R^2 = .14, F = (3, 224) = 14.15, p < .001$) compared to the mutually low obligations group ($\Delta R^2 = .07, F = (3, 213) = 5.98, p < .001$). In the third step, the psychological contract violation variable was added to the analysis. Feelings of violation was negative and significantly associates with affective commitment for the mutually low obligations group ($\beta = -.23, t = -2.35, p < .05$) and marginally explained an additional 2% of commitment variance over and above breach perceptions ($\Delta R^2 = .02, F = (4, 212) = 5.96, p < .05$).

Violation was also a significant variable of affective commitment for the high relational group ($\beta = -.19, t = -2.23, p < .05$) such that the violation variable explained an identical amount of additional variance ($\Delta R^2 = .02, F = (4, 223) = 12.04, p < .05$) over and above breach perceptions. While both control variables were not significant predictors of affective commitment for the mutually low obligations group, tenure marginally increased in its functional relationship with affective commitment for the relational group ($\beta = .20, t = 3.10, p < .01$). Given these results, Hypothesis 4(iv) and Hypothesis 4(v) were supported.
Hypothesis **H4 (vi)** tested for mediation. As the results in Table 4.22 indicate, feelings of violation totally mediated the relationship between breach and affective commitment for the mutually low obligations group such that the beta coefficient for breach reduced in size and became non-significant ($\beta = -.11, p > .05$). Violation partially mediated the breach-affective commitment relationship for the high relational group. That is, while there was a decrease in the size of the beta coefficient for breach in step three, it remained a significant determiner of affective commitment ($\beta = -.26, t = -.304, p < .01$). As such, the mediational effects of violation were confirmed for both psychological contract type and H 4(vi) was supported.

### 4.7.5 The Direct and Indirect Effects of Psychological Contract Breach and Violation on the Normative Commitment of Academics

The following hypotheses were generated regarding the relationship between contract infringement and an academic’s normative commitment to their University:

**Hypothesis 4(vii):** Psychological contract breach is negatively related to normative commitment,

**Hypothesis 4(viii):** Psychological contract violation is negatively related to normative commitment, and

**Hypothesis 4(ix):** Psychological contract violation mediates the relationship between breach and normative commitment.

Table 4.23 presents the regressions results for this test.

When entered as control variables in Step 1, neither gender nor tenure were significant related to normative commitment for each psychological contract groups. For the mutually low obligations group, psychological contract breach was negatively related to normative commitment ($\beta = -.42, t = -6.48, p < .001$) and accounted for a significant amount of
additional variance over and above gender and tenure ($\Delta R^2 = .16$, $F = (3, 213) = 14.09$, $p < .001$).

### Table 4.23
Hierarchical Regression Relating Breach and Violation & Normative Commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>PC-Type</th>
<th>Step IV</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>PC-Type</th>
<th>Step IV</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mutal-Low Obligations</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>High Relational Obligations</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.45</td>
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<td>.03</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.691</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Tenure</td>
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<td>.087</td>
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<td>.016</td>
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</tr>
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<td>-0.16</td>
<td>-1.88</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender: 1 = Male, 2 = Female
PCB = Psychological Contract Breach
PCV = Psychological Contract Violation

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

For the high relational contract group, breach was also a significant ($\beta = -.33$, $t = -5.16$, $p < .001$), explaining 11% of the variance in the normative commitment of academics ($\Delta R^2 = .11$, $F = (3, 224) = 9.51$, $p < .001$). Additionally for this group, tenure became significantly related to normative commitment after the introduction of the breach variable ($\beta = .15$, $t = 2.28$, $p < .05$). As such, hypothesis H4 (vii) was supported.
In step 3, the violation variable was added to the regression and returned as a significant, negative explanatory variable of normative commitment only for the mutually low obligations psychological contract group ($\beta = -.38$, $t = -4.23$, $p < .001$). While negative, violation was not significant for the high relational group ($\beta = -.16$, $t = -1.88$, $p > .05$) and contributed no additionally significant variance in the level of normative commitment ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, $F = (4, 223) = 8.10$, $p > .05$) over and above that explained by breach perceptions. However, academic tenure remained significant and positively related to normative commitment for this group ($\beta = .16$, $p < .05$). Therefore, hypothesis H 4(viii) was partially supported.

In terms of its mediational effects, violation fully mediated the relationship between breach perceptions and normative commitment for the low obligations group given that the beta value for breach decreased significantly from ($\beta = -.42$, $p < .001$) to ($\beta = -.14$, $p > .05$) after the introduction of the violation variable. Violation did not have any noteworthy mediational effect on breach for the high relational group such that breach remained significantly and negatively related to normative commitment after the violation variable was included in the regression. Thus, H 4(ix) was partially supported.

4.7.6 The Direct and Indirect Effects of Psychological Contract Breach and Violation on Perceptions of Organisational Support

As discussed in chapter two, research has shown that when it is perceived that their employer has behaved in a manner which could be interpreted as either a breach and/or violation of the psychological contract, an employee may interpret this as an indication of their employer’s weakening support and concern for the employee and a general decline in
the quality of the exchange relationship. As such, the following hypothesis were generated and tested to determine the predictive effects of both breach and violation on perceptions of organisational support:

**Hypothesis 4(x):** Psychological contract *breach* is negatively related to perceptions of organisational support

**Hypothesis 4(xi):** Psychological contract *violation* is negatively related to perceptions of organisational support, and

**Hypothesis 4(xii):** Psychological contract *violation* mediates the relationship between breach and perceptions of organisational support

As can be observed from Table 4.24, of the two control variables entered in step one, tenure was functionally related to support perceptions for both the mutually low obligations group ($\beta = -.15, t = -2.19, p < .05$) and the high relational group ($\beta = -.16, t = -2.22, p < .05$). For the low obligations group, psychological contract breach was significantly and negatively related to perceived organisational support ($\beta = -.47, t = -7.52, p < .001$) and accounted for a significant level of variance in support perceptions over and above the control variables ($\Delta R^2 = .21, F = (3, 213) = 20.95, p < .001$). The addition of the violation variable significantly explained a further 14% of variance in perceived organisational support for the members of this group ($\Delta R^2 = .14, F = (4, 212) = 31.30, p < .001$).

For academics perceiving a relationally-based relationship, breach accounted for 39% of the variance in support perceptions and was statistically significant ($R^2 = .39, F (3, 224) = 48.28, p < .001$). Violation was significant and negatively related ($\beta = -.33, p < .001$) to support perceptions, adding a further 6% in explained variance in perceived organisational support ($\Delta R^2 = .06, F (4,223) = 45.77, p < .001$) over and above that accounted for by breach perceptions.
In order to capture a fuller picture of the effects of breach, violation and psychological contract type, Table 4.25 presents a summary account of the variance explained by breach and violation perceptions across all attitudinal domains relating to each psychological contract type.
For the weak, mutually low obligation type psychological contract, the variance in work attitudes explained by breach perceptions ranged from 6% (Job satisfaction) to 23% (Perceived Organisational Support) and an average variance of 10.8% was reported. For the high relational psychological contract group, breach explained an average of 14% variance in work attitudes, ranging from 4% (Job Satisfaction) to 39% (Perceived Organisational Support).

Psychological contract violation explained an average variance of 22% across job attitude variables for the weaker psychological contract group. The lowest explained variance was for affective commitment (10%) and the highest for perceived organisational support (37%). For academics holding a relational psychological contract, violation explained a mean variance of 16.8% in work attitudes with 8% accruing to job satisfaction and 45% explaining perceived organisational support.
Based on these results, the following inferences can be made. Firstly, perceptions of breach and feelings of violation are significantly and negatively related to academics’ perceptions that their University cares for and is concerned about their general well-being. Furthermore, breach was strongly associated with support perceptions for academics perceiving a relational type psychological contract compared to those experiencing an exchange relationship based on fewer reciprocal obligations between employee and employer. Thus, it can be concluded that the hypothesised relationships associated with breach and violation lend support for hypotheses H4 (x) and H4 (xi) respectively. The situation where the cumulative occurrences of breach perceptions leads to feelings of psychological contract violation by the University, which in turn influences perceptions of University support, holds true.

Based on the regression data, psychological contract violation fully mediated the negative relationship between breach perceptions and organisational support for the low obligation group while having partial mediating effects for the relational group. While both forms of contract infringement have deleterious effects on support perceptions, breach and violation events and reactions seem to have a greater impact for employees perceiving a relational psychological contract such that 45% of the variance in perceived organisational support relates to the high relational exchange group, compared to 37% for the low obligations group.
4.8 Section Four: The Influence of Perceived Organisational Support on the Psychological Contract of Academics

This section considers the relationship between an academic’s psychological contract and work attitudes by introducing a contextual perspective to the exchange relationship. Perceived organisational support is the central variable of interest for this analysis as it is argued in this thesis that a greater understanding of the employment relationship can be derived when integrating the nature of an employee’s psychological contract and the influence that perceptions of University support impart on the work attitudes of academics and the employment relationship in general.

For example, recent evidence suggests that employees interpret the presence and availability of organisational support as one mechanism through which perceptions of psychological contract fulfilment are experienced and thus have positive effects on affective work states (Guerrero et al., 2007). Other research points to the role that positive perceptions of organisational can mitigate the negative effects of breach on work attitudes and behaviours (Suazo et al., 2011).

Therefore, the current study extends these lines of reasoning by situating perceived organisational support as an important explanatory variable between an employee’s psychological contract experiences and work attitudes. It is asserted that perceived organisational support has both direct explanatory effects on work attitudes as well as behaving as an important intervening phenomenon which mitigates the effects of negative workplace experiences, and augments outcomes of positive workplace experiences.
The following research question was posed along with supporting hypotheses:

**Research Question 5:** Accounting for different psychological contract types, does perceived organisational support mediate the relationship between positive (PC-fulfilment) and negative (PC-breach) work experiences, and the work attitudes of academics?

**Hypothesis 5(i):** Perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract breach and job satisfaction

**Hypothesis 5(ii):** Perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract breach and the affective commitment of academics

**Hypothesis 5(iii):** Perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract breach and the normative commitment of academics

**Hypothesis 5(iv):** Perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract fulfilment and job satisfaction

**Hypothesis 5(vi):** Perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract fulfilment and affective commitment

**Hypothesis 5(vi):** Perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract fulfilment and normative commitment

Figure 4.5 presents a theoretical model of the asserted relationships between psychological contract evaluation perceptions (breach and fulfilment perspectives) and job satisfaction, affective commitment and normative commitment. Perceived organisational support is presented as an intervening mechanism through which breach/fulfilment perceptions affect the nature of the work attitudes of academics.

[Note: Psychological contract breach is taken to represent the negative workplace experience, while perception of psychological contract fulfilment represents a positive workplace experience]
4.8.1 The Mediating Effect of Perceived Organisational Support between Breach & Job Satisfaction

**Hypothesis 5(i)** stated that perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract breach and job satisfaction. Table 4.26 details the hierarchical mediated regression result to test this hypothesis.

In step one, gender and tenure were entered as control variables and did not explain any significant variance in job satisfaction for either psychological contract type. Psychological contract breach was entered in step two and returned as a significant explanatory variable for both psychological contract types.
Table 4.26
Test for the Mediation Effects of Perceived Organisational Support between Breach & Job Satisfaction

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>PC-Type Mutually Low Obligations</th>
<th>PC-Type High Relational Obligations</th>
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</table>

Gender: 1 = Male, 2 = Female
PCB = Psychological Contract Breach
POS = Perceived Organisational Support
* p < .05
** p < .01
*** p < .001

In the third step, the support variable was entered and returned functionally related to job satisfaction for the mutually low obligations group (β = .29, t = 3.94, p < .001) and significantly accounted for 12% in the variance of job satisfaction (R² = .12, F (4, 213) = 7.23, p < .001) and the high relational group (β = .20, t = 2.37, p < .05). Furthermore, perceived support fully mediated the negative relationship between breach and job satisfaction such that the beta coefficient decreased and became non-significant (β = -.10, t = -1.29, p > .05). For the high relational group, perceived support was also positively and significantly related to an academic’s job satisfaction (β = .20, t = 2.37, p < .05) and
explained 7% in the variability of satisfaction ($R^2 = .12, F (4, 224) = 3.96, p < .05$). Additionally, the negative relationship between breach and job satisfaction was fully mediated by perceptions of organisational support ($\beta = -.05, t = -.58, p > .05$). Given these results and accounting for different psychological contract types, hypothesis H 5(i) was supported to the extent that perceived organisational support mediated the negative relationship between breach and job satisfaction.

In the absence of organisational support, academics who perceive that their University has breached their psychological contract are less satisfied in their job. When employees believe that there are support structures and mechanisms available to deal with such breaches, the negative effects of infringement are considerably reduced. While the negative effects of breach are buffered by support perceptions, the impact of such perceptions differs depending on the nature of the underlying psychological contract.

An interesting result is that organisational support had a stronger effect on job satisfaction for the mutually low obligations group compared to the high relational cluster in terms of the variance explained. This would suggest that any improvement in the perceptions that the University is supportive and concerned for its staff has a stronger effect on academics that have a weaker, less relationally-based exchange relationship with their institution. This would allow for a higher relationship quality to develop and thus, improve the job satisfaction of these employees. Those already in a relational-focused employment relationship benefit to a lesser degree, given that they would already view their relationship as being of a high quality.
4.8.2 The Mediating Effect of Perceived Organisational Support between Breach & Organisational Commitment (Affective and Normative types)

The present analysis considers both the direct and indirect effects of perceived organisational support on both the organisational commitment level of academics. In particular, the relative impact POS has on the relationship between breach perceptions and each of affective commitment (Table 4.27) and normative commitment (Table 4.28) is explored. In both cases, the relevant commitment variable was initially regressed onto the control variables, with the breach variable added in step two. Perceived organisational support was included in the third step to determine if it mediated the relationship between breach and commitment. As such, the following breach-commitment hypotheses were generated:

**Hypothesis 5(ii):** Perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract breach and the affective commitment of academics,

and

**Hypothesis 5(iii):** Perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract breach and the normative commitment of academics.

In terms of predicting affective commitment, gender and tenure did not have any significant effects on this type of commitment. However, while not significant, the beta coefficient for tenure was larger for the high relational group ($\beta = .11, P > .05$). Breach was negatively related to affective commitment and accounted for a significant amount of additional variance over and above the control variables for the mutually low obligations group ($R^2 = .08, \Delta R^2 = .07, F (3, 213) = 5.98, p < .001$). The impact of breach for the high relational group was significantly larger and accounted for a greater level of explained variance in affective commitment ($R^2 = .16, \Delta R^2 = .14, F (3, 224) = 14.15, p <$
Additionally, the breach coefficient for the first group (β = -.28, p < .001) had a smaller value compared to that for the high relational group (β = -.39, p < .001).

Table 4.27
Test for the Mediation Effects
of Perceived Organisational Support
between Breach & Affective Commitment

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Gender: 1 = Male, 2 = Female
PCB = Psychological Contract Breach
POS = Perceived Organisational Support
** p < .01
*** p < .001

For both psychological contract types, perceived organisational support was significantly and positively related to affective commitment (Low Obligations Group: β = .35, p < .001; High Relational Group: β = .27, p < .01). The variance in affective commitment significantly increased for academics in both psychological contract groups with the inclusion of organisational support such that POS explained and additional 10% in commitment variance for the mutually low obligations group and an extra 20% in
commitment variance for the high relational group. For the mutually low obligations group, when the POS variable was entered in the third step, it reduced the effects of breach and fully mediated the relationship between breach and affective commitment ($\beta = -.11$, $p > .05$). For academics in the high relational psychological contract, perceived organisational support partially mediated the relationship between breach and affective commitment such that breach remained a negative and significant predictor of commitment, but at a reduced level ($\beta = -.22$, $p < .01$). Therefore, hypothesis H5 (ii) was supported.

Additional to determining the effects of perceived organisational support on affective commitment, this study extended the breach- support-commitment analysis and included academic’s ‘normative commitment’ to their University, the results of which are presented in Table 4.28.

Normative commitment was initially regressed onto the control variables in step one, followed by the inclusion of breach and then the effects of perceived organisational support were investigate in the third step. As previously discussed (see section 4.8.5), gender and tenure did not have any predictive or explanatory effects on the level of normative commitment for either group. Breach was a significant associated with normative commitment when considering both psychological contract types. Perceived organisational support was a significantly and positively related to normative commitment for both the mutually low obligations group ($\beta = .51$, $t = 8.27$, $p < .001$) and explained 37% in the variance in this form of commitment ($R^2 = .37$, $\Delta R^2 = .20$, $F (4, 213) = 31.02$, $p < .001$).
Similarly, POS positively predicted normative commitment for academics in the high relational contract group and significantly explained an additional 4% in commitment variance ($\Delta R^2 = .04$, $F (4, 224) = 9.92$, $p < .001$). Based on the change in beta coefficient for breach, POS partially mediated the negative relationship between breach and normative commitment for the mutually low obligations group such that both the beta value and significance of breach reduced from ($\beta = -.42$, $p < .001$) to ($\beta = -.18$, $p < .01$) after the introduction of POS. Similarly, for the high relational group, POS partially mediated the breach-normative commitment relationship given reduced beta coefficient in the breach
variable after POS was added to the analysis ($\beta = -.18$, $p < .05$). Therefore, Hypothesis 5(iii) which tested the assertion that perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract breach and the normative commitment of academics was supported.

4.8.3 The Relationship between Perceived Organisational Support, Psychological Contract Fulfilment & Work Attitudes

The previous section established and highlighted the role perceived organisational support can have in reducing the effects of breach in an employee’s psychological contract. POS was seen to ameliorate the negative force that perceptions of breach can bring to the employment relationship in terms of lower job satisfaction and commitment levels. As previously noted, research has argued and demonstrated (e.g. Guerrero and Herrbach, 2007) that perceived organisational support is a key attitudinal variable which arises from the positive workplace experiences associated with perceptions of psychological contract fulfilment. As suggested by Guerrero et al (2007, p.6): “perceived organisational support translates (and) captures contract fulfilment”. Therefore, the following hypotheses were generated to ‘tap’ into, and extend the notion that perceptions of organisational support mediate and augment the positive relations between psychological contract fulfilment and the work attitudes of academics:

**Hypothesis 5(iv):** Perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract fulfilment and job satisfaction,

and

**Hypothesis 5(vii):** Perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract fulfilment and affective
commitment as well as mediating the relationship between fulfilment and normative commitment

4.8.4 The Mediating Effect of Perceived Organisational Support between Psychological Contract Fulfilment & Job Satisfaction

Hierarchical regression was applied to test for the mediating effects of perceived organisational support on the relationship between perceptions of fulfilment and the job satisfaction of academics (Table 4.29).

**Table 4.29**

*Test for the Mediation Effects of Perceived Organisational Support between Fulfilment & Job Satisfaction*

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<th>PC-Type High Relational Obligations</th>
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Gender: 1 = Male, 2 = Female  
PCF = Psychological Contract Fulfilment  
POS = Perceived Organisational Support  
* p < .05  
** p < .01  
*** p < .001
In the first step, gender and tenure (the control variables) were entered into the equation and had no significant predictive or explanatory effects on the level of job satisfaction for either the mutually low obligations group ($R^2 = .002$, $f (2, 208) = .19, p > .05$) or the high relational psychological contract group ($R^2 = .013$, $f (2, 220) = 1.40, p > .05$). In step two, perception of psychological fulfilment was significantly associated with job satisfaction for both the low obligations group ($\beta = .22, t = 3.13, p < .01$) and the high relational group ($\beta = .26, t = 3.97, p < .001$). Further, fulfilment perceptions accounted for 4.5% of the variance in job satisfaction for the ‘low relational group’ and 7.9% for the ‘high relational’ cluster.

In step three, the support variable was included in the analysis and returned as a significant variable of job satisfaction for the mutually low obligations group ($\beta = .31, t = 3.95, p < .001$). Furthermore, POS significantly accounted for an additional 6.8% in job satisfaction variance for academics in this group ($R^2 = .115, \Delta R^2 = .068, F (4, 204) = 6.63, p < .001$). For the high relational group, POS was not related to job satisfaction ($\beta = .09, t = 1.05, p > .05$) nor did it explain any significant variance in satisfaction levels ($R^2 = .084, \Delta R^2 = .005, F (4, 222) = 4.97, p > .05$). Additionally, POS fully mediated the relationship between fulfilment and job satisfaction for the mutually low group such that the beta coefficient for fulfilment decreased from $\beta = .22$ to $\beta = .05$, and became non-significant ($p > .487$). POS did not manifest any such mediational effects for the high relational group given that the fulfilment variable remained significant after POS was added to the equation. Therefore, hypothesis H 5(iv) was fully supported for the mutually low obligations group but not the high relational group.
4.8.5 The Mediating Effect of Perceived Organisational Support between Psychological Contract Fulfilment & Organisational Commitment (Affective & Normative types)

The effect of perceived organisational support on the commitment levels of academics was investigated such that it was asserted that POS would act as an important intervening variable between fulfilment perceptions and each of affective and normative commitment. Table 4.30 presents the results from the hierarchical regression which tested the mediational influence of perceived organisational support on affective commitment.

Hypothesis 5(vii) stated that accounting for different psychological contract types, perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract fulfilment and affective commitment.

In the first step, affective commitment was regressed onto the control variables for both psychological contract types. Gender and tenure did not reflect any significant explanatory power in predicting the affective commitment of academics in the mutually low obligation group ($R^2 = .01$, $F (2, 209) = 1.07, p > .05$) or for members in the high relational group ($R^2 = .01$, $F (2, 223) = 1.57, p > .05$). Fulfilment perceptions (step 2) explained a significant amount of additional variance in affective commitment for both the mutually low obligations group ($R^2 = .09$, $\Delta R^2 = .08$, $F (3, 208) = 6.64, p > .001$) and high relational psychological contract academics ($R^2 = .22$, $\Delta R^2 = .21$, $F (3, 222) = 21.37, p < .001$). Additionally, contract fulfilment was positively and significantly related to affective commitment for both groups respectively ($\beta = .28, p < .001$ and $\beta = .47, p < .001$). In step 3, POS entered as a significant variable influencing affective commitment for both psychological contract types, with the beta coefficient higher for the mutually low group ($\beta = .34, p < .001$) compared to that for the high relational group ($\beta = .16, p < .05$).
Support perceptions contributed a higher level of additional variance in explaining affective commitment for the mutually low obligations group ($\Delta R^2 = .08$, $P < .001$) compared to the high relational group ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, $p < .05$). Furthermore, whereas POS fully mediated the relationship between fulfilment perceptions and affective commitment for the mutually low obligations group ($\beta = .28$ to $\beta = .10$), POS had a ‘weak’ mediating effect on fulfilment perceptions for the high relational group ($\beta = .47$ to $\beta = .35$). As such, the mediating effect of perceived organisational support as stated in hypothesis H 5(vii) was confirmed.
Hypothesis 5(viii) stated that: Accounting for different psychological contract types, perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract fulfilment and normative commitment.

Table 4.31 details the regression result for this test.

Table 4.31  
Test for the Mediation Effects  
of Perceived Organisational Support  
between Fulfilment & Normative Commitment

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<th>PC-Type High Relational Obligations</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>POS</td>
<td>.49***</td>
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As with the previous analysis regarding affective commitment, gender and tenure did not reflect any significant relationship with the normative commitment of academics. After introducing it in step 2, perceptions of psychological contract fulfilment was a significant
predictor of this commitment type for both the mutually low obligations group (β = .45, p < .001) and high relational group (β = .39, p < .001). Fulfilment perceptions accounted for a higher percentage in the variance of normative commitment for the mutually low obligations group (R² = .20, p < .001) compared to the high relational group (R² = .15, p < .001). POS explained a greater level of variance in normative commitment for the mutually low obligations group (β = .49, R² = .37, ΔR² = .17, p < .001) compared to academics perceiving a more relationally based exchange relationship (β = .17, R² = .17, ΔR² = .01, p < .05). Finally, POS partially mediated the relationship between fulfilment and normative commitment for both groups, with weaker effects associated for the high relational psychological contract group. Therefore, hypothesis H 5(viii) was supported.

Summary

Research has consistently demonstrated the negative effects that psychological contract breach can have on the job satisfaction and organisational commitment of employees. In an attempt to counter the mitigating circumstances of breach, an employee re-evaluates his/her position in, and attachment intentions to, their organisation with the consequence that lower levels of job satisfaction along with reduced levels of commitment. Research has further demonstrated the positive relationship between a person’s degree of emotional identification and commitment to the organisation as a result of the positive perceptions associated with organisational support. Perceived organisational support could be interpreted as an expression of the organisation’s commitment to its employees. The more favourable an employee believes that their employer is attentive to the well-being of its employees, the more the employees will feel obligated to reciprocate with greater effort and commitment levels. Thus, POS is viewed as a key mechanism which can buffer the
negative effects of breach on commitment levels. POS is also viewed as an important attitude which develops from the perceptions that their employer has fulfilled its side of the bargain vis-a-vis, the perceived terms of the psychological contract. Furthermore, perceptions of organisational support, fulfilment as well as breach experiences could all be considered ways in which employees interpret the quality of the employment relationship. The data presented in this section has furthered the idea that when the quality of the employment relationship is considered weak or low vis-a-vis breach and/or violation, the power of positive organisational support perceptions can buffer these negative interpretations.

4.9 Open-ended Responses

4.9.1 Analytic Strategy

Acknowledging the limitation that ‘closed-ended’ survey questions exhibit, participants were invited to complete an open-ended question at the end of the survey. Its purpose was to offer an opportunity to convey a personal, subjective interpretation of their relationship with their University by asking them to consider a particular incident/situation that occurred which may have been perceived either positively or negatively by the individual. Open-ended questions allow individuals “to respond in their own words and capture people’s own ideas about how things work...and typically produce more data and are less boring for people than their closed-ended equivalents” (Bernard and Ryan, 2010, p. 34). As such, the qualitative element was viewed as contributing a further level of ‘narrative’ depth to the quantitative findings.
Owing to the subjective nature of one’s psychological contract experience, the question
was structured in a manner so as to illicit from individuals, facets or specific issues
deemed salient to them in the employment relationship and which then could be
interpreted as representing the content of an academic’s psychological contract.

The question was posed as follows:

Think of an incident/situation that occurred where you felt that the
University ‘did’ or ‘did not’ come through in fulfilling/meeting an
obligation you believed was owing to you.

Please describe the incident/situation and how it might have affected
your feelings, thoughts or perceptions regarding your relationship with
your University.

To assist with this phase of the study, the inductive analytic strategies suggested by
Creswell (2009) and Thomas (2006) were utilised to bring structure to the qualitative data.
For this study, “inductive analysis relates to the process of detailed readings of raw data to
derive concepts, themes through interpretations made from raw data by an evaluator or
researcher (Thomas, 2006, p. 238). Creswell (2009, p. 185 – 186) proposed the following
steps when dealing with qualitative data:

1. Organise and prepare the data for analysis;
2. Read through all the data to obtain a general sense of the information and reflect on
   its overall meaning;
3. Begin detailed analysis with a coding process by organising the material into
   chunks or segments of text before bringing meaning to information;
4. Use the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as
   categories or themes for analysis...(and) use the coding to generate a small number
   of themes or categories, perhaps five to seven categories;
5. Advance how the description and themes will be represented in the qualitative
   narrative; and
6. Making an interpretation or meaning of the data.
Of the four hundred and forty-five (445) participants who completed the on-line survey, one hundred and ninety-two (192) responded to the open-ended question, representing 43% of the research sample. Once the data from the on-line survey was accessed, all written responses were initially downloaded as a file to Microsoft Word 2010 after which a number of copies were created. The primary document was checked for spelling and grammatical errors before the coding process commenced. A total of 11,190 words spread across 1,110 lines of text formed the raw data for analysis. To facilitate the coding, categorisation of text and development of emergent themes, the Atlas/ti (v.7) programme was utilised. This is computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) system used for the management and analysis of textual data (Bernard et al., 2010; Saldana, 2009).

4.9.2 Emergent Themes

In keeping with the definition and conceptual orientation of the psychological contract as applied in this research, all possible variants of the words ‘Promise’ and ‘Obligations’ were extracted from the text. As such a Key Word In Context (KWIC) analysis was run on the complete transcript of responses. The purpose of this was to generate an overall picture as to how academics perceived their employment relationship with respect to what they believed was promised to them and the nature of the obligations forming the exchange relationship with their University. Further, the coding process generated a large number of repetitive categories from the raw data which on further analysis, yielded a number of identifiable themes associated with academic interpretations of the employment relationship in general, and more specifically, elements reflective of the conceptual
underpinnings of the psychological contract. Further, what was evident from the qualitative analysis was the degree of overlap and linkages between the categories and themes. That is, each of the emergent themes was in some way interrelated with each other, owing to the subjective nature of the psychological contract.

As such, the themes extracted from the raw data related to the following:

- The nature of the promises and obligations as perceived by academics
- Ideological Differences
- Fairness & Equity in the exchange relationship
- Value & Recognition of contribution
- Teaching/Workload Demands, Support Perceptions and Erosion of the Psychological Contract.

The themes along with indicative supporting text extracted from the data attempt to explicate this element of the study. These themes will be further expanded upon in the final chapter of this thesis (Chapter 5). The purpose of placing this part of the analysis in the discussion section allows for the possibility of providing a more descriptive interpretation of the quantitative results. Merging the qualitative findings with the quantitative results thus offers an added depth of meaning to the employee-organisation relationship of academics.
Chapter 5

Discussion & Conclusions

“Research is to see what everybody else has seen and to think what nobody else has thought”

(Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, 1893-1986)
5.1 Introduction

In response to calls to expand our understanding of employee-organisation linkages (e.g. Aselage et al., 2003), the present study explored the employment relationship of University academics in the Republic of Ireland. Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) was invoked as the formative theoretical framework within which to embed the employee-employer relationship and both Psychological Contract Theory (Rousseau, 1989, 1990, 1995) and Organisational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986, Eisenberger et al., 2011) were used as exemplar representations of this framework. This chapter presents a discussion of the empirical results that were generated from the cross-sectional survey of University academics, and situates these findings in the wider context relating to research of the employee-organisational relationship. The first part of this chapter discusses in more detail the findings derived from the quantitative analysis and addresses the principal research questions and inferential conclusions regarding the employee-organisation relationship of academics are therefore highlighted. This is followed with a discussion of the personal accounts of academics as derived from the qualitative element of the study in an effort to provide an added level of subjective interpretation of the employee-organisation relationship and to further explain the quantitative results. The key contributions of this investigation are presented followed by addressing the key implications for University management. The limitations of the study along with suggestions for future research directions form the final element of the chapter.
5.2 The Psychological Contract Re-visited

5.2.1 Definitional Perspectives

A key objective for this study was to determine the type of psychological contract academics experience in their work environment in order to identify the nature of the underlying exchange relationship third level lecturers have with their University. A debate which has entrenched the conceptual and theoretical development of psychological contract theory relates to the manner by which the construct is defined and how it should be measured (Conway et al., 2005; Freese and Schalk, 2008). The literature review indicates that the definitional parameters of the psychological contract are circumscribed by two competing approaches: Unilateral and bilateral perspectives (Freese et al., 2008). These perspectives have in turn influenced the way the psychological contract has been treated in organisational research (Arnold, 1996; Roehling, 1997; Conway et al., 2005).

From a unilateral viewpoint, a psychological contract relates to the subjective beliefs of individuals regarding the mutual obligations an employee and employer exchange with each other as part of the employment relationship (Rousseau, 1995). This perspective assumes that the nature of the exchange relationship and what it constitutes in terms of the roles, responsibilities and obligations, is wholly derived in the mind of the employee. The policies, practices and human resource systems prevailing in the organisation are in the main, the fundamental channels through which these mutual expectations and beliefs are transmitted, and from which employees generate an interpretation as to the type of exchange relationship they have with their employer (Guzo, 1994; Sims, 1994; Rousseau, 1995). The bilateral approach takes the view that a psychological contract delineates the
employment relationship on the basis that both employee and employer have an understanding, whether explicit or implicit, as to their respective duties to, and expectations of, each other (Levinson et al., 1962; Schein, 1980). This perspective suggests that employee and employer have an established two-way communication relationship which guides the exchange relationship.

The current study applied the unilateral definitional perspective. Given that an organisation (in this case a University) constitutes a multitude of agents (senior level management, heads of departments, supervisors, human resource officers, colleagues), determining the specific psychological contract relationship an employee has with each agent is methodologically problematic. Each of these agents in their own way communicates a set of obligations and expectations to employees which may overlap and/or contradict each other. This makes it empirically difficult to determine and measure each and every particular type of psychological contract which exists within the organisation. As Kotter (1974) emphasised, a psychological contract can encompass a wide range of different obligations and expectations that it is almost impossible to derive a specific set of items which accurately reflect an employee’s psychological contract. Given that the very essence of a psychological contract is perceptual in nature (Rousseau, 1990; Rousseau et al., 1993), measuring the contract from a unilateral, subjective perspective emphasises the ‘psychological’ aspect of the construct.
5.3 The Psychological Contract of Academics: Initial Inferences

Given the inherent subjectivity underpinning the concept of the phenomenon, prescribing a ‘one size fits all’ approach does not sufficiently capture the variations which can exist between individuals regarding the content and structure of the psychological contract. Taking the research sample in its totality, the results of the descriptive analyses for the Psychological Contract Inventory suggest that the psychological contract of academics is guided more by relationally embedded commitments rather than transactionally-focused obligations. Compared to the level of transactional obligations for both employer and employee, as perceived by the academic; the mean scores on the relational measures were larger and statistically different from transactional items. While not discounting the importance of the more explicit obligations present in the exchange such as those items contained within the actual written contract, the sample of academics in the present study place a greater emphasis on the more socio-emotional and enduring aspects of the employment relationship.

Considering the mean scores on the PCI-University Obligations measure, the distribution of scores for both transactional and relational type items reflects this observation. There were consistently lower ratings among academics for the transactional aspects of the contract. For example, perceptions relating to the University’s promise to provide only short-term employment, a position of limited and specifically defined responsibilities and duties ranged from not at all, to only slightly, while the relational items focusing on the security and stability of employment, salaries and benefits being as somewhat to moderately promised to academics. However, certain items on the relational side of University obligations did not rate as highly as others. Academics perceiving their
University as having concern for their long-term well-being and personal well fare returned low mean scores suggesting that the University was perceived to be only slightly obligated in fulfilling these needs. Additionally, academics do not have much faith in their University regarding the integrity of decision-making processes. Of the relational items measured, the item ‘makes decisions with my interests in mind’ returned to lowest mean score (M = 1.96, SD = 1.04) of the relational contract elements listed.

In terms of the perceptions academics have regarding their obligations and commitments to their University, the majority of the relational contract items returned higher mean scores compared to the transactional items, thus emphasising a more enduring and long-term social exchange relationship. For example, academics are somewhat to moderately committed to their University by perceiving themselves as going above and beyond what is expected of them in their job role. They see themselves as making personal sacrifices for their institution and also fulfil a wider spectrum of duties outside those which form their basic employment contract. They also do not see themselves as leaving their employer in the near future given that they are personally invested in the institution.

Based on this initial analyses of the dimensions associated with an academic’s psychological contract, it can be inferred that the underlying nature of the relationship is one guided more by relational exchanges. Further, the data reveal variations in response levels regarding the extent to which a University is seen to be providing both transactional and relational obligations to academics. While the relational aspect of the contract is viewed as an important determiner of the underlying employee-organisation relationship for academics in general, concerns arise relating to the messages about this relationship as perceived by academics.
These results support and contradict prior research. For example, in a study of the psychological contract of academic and non-academic staff in Turkish Universities, Aydin and Oguz (2008) argued that academic staff reported as having a stronger, more relational exchange relationship compared to other, non-academic staff members. However, Shen (2010) found that the psychological contract of Australian academics was based more on the salience of the University promising and fulfilling transactional obligations. Given that there are few existing studies that directly measure and evaluate the psychological contract of academics, it cannot be generalised that academic staff in every third level institution place the same emphasis on a particular exchange relationship given that Universities vary according to structure, size and cultural orientations.

5.4 Evidence of Different Types of Psychological Contract

In order to delve deeper into the nature of the exchange relationship between academic and University, a Two-Step cluster analysis was applied to the research sample. For this study, two distinct clusters or groups of academics were derived from the research sample, with each cluster characterised by varying levels of transactional and relational contract dimensions and associated levels of work attitudes. The first cluster represents an academic’s psychological contract defined by low, almost equally balanced levels of transactional and relational obligations. The second cluster emphasises a more relationally-embedded exchange relationship with both University and academic relational dimensions taking precedent over transactional items. Therefore, the results of this study are consistent with the extant literature which posits that the employment relationship can be conceptualised as a social exchange whereby the obligations of both employee and employer constitute the form of the exchange relationship.
5.4.1 The Weak Form Psychological Contract

The exchange relationship of Cluster 1 is characterised by low to moderate levels of transactional and relational obligations and is in line with previous research (e.g. Tsui et al., 1997; Shore et al, 1998; De Cuyper et al., 2008). For this cluster, academics exhibit a balanced perception regarding the type and level of University obligations they believe have been promised (or not) to academics. Members of this cluster also appear to reciprocate their University with equally (low) levels of transactional and relational commitments in exchange. That is to say, the type and level of obligations academics perceive to be promised from their University is closely matched and reciprocated by almost equal levels contributed by academics. A paired samples t-test revealed no significant difference in the level of transactional and relational obligations academics’ perceive to receive and exchange with their institution, thus suggesting that academics take a balanced view of their and their employer’s contractual obligations.

This is an interesting finding for a number of reasons. Firstly, it draws attention to the type of reciprocity behaviour delineating this particular employment relationship. From a social exchange perceptive (Blau, 1964), the concepts of ‘equivalence’ (Gouldner, 1960) and balanced reciprocity (Sahlins, 1974, 2004) appear to be features of cluster one’s psychological contract. Equivalence is the extent to which one person reciprocates a resource of similar type and amount to that which was received (Uhl-Bien and Maslyn, 2003). Gouldner (1960) distinguished between heteromorphic reciprocity and homeomorphic reciprocity. The former type refers to the reciprocal exchange of resources which may have different characteristics and forms, but are valued in the eyes of the
exchange parties. The latter type relates to the exchange of resources which are similar in nature. As Gouldner (1960, p. 172) elucidates:

“Equivalence may have at least two forms, the sociological and psychodynamic significance of which are apt to be quite distinct. In the first case, heteromorphic reciprocity, equivalence may mean that the things exchanged may be concretely different but should be equal in value, as defined by the actors in the situation. In the second case, homeomorphic reciprocity, equivalence may mean that exchanges should be concretely alike or identical in form, either with respect to the things exchanged or to the circumstances under which they are exchanged”.

Similarly, ‘balanced reciprocity’ (Sahlins, 1974, p.194-195) delineates a relationship where “reciprocation is the customary equivalent of the thing received and is without delay”. This type of reciprocity is “applied to transactions which stipulate returns of commensurate worth or utility within a finite and narrow period.. (is) less “personal” ..(and) more “economic” in nature.

Secondly, the structure and form of the exchange relationship between employee and employer is similar in nature to that found in the work of Tsui et al (1997), Shore et al (1998), De Cuyper et al (2008) and McDermott et al (2012). In terms of the balance of obligations exchanged between academics and University, Shore et al (1998) argue that: “the employee with a mutual low obligations exchange feels that with limited effort they can maintain the employment relationship and they expect a limited amount in return from the organisation” (p.734). It is a weak type of exchange relationship as very few of the
contractual obligations are strong in terms of the commitments between employee and employer (De Cuyper et al, 2008). As such, the strength of the socio-emotional ties that bind the two parties in the employment relationship is tenuous at best. The nature of the type of exchange relationship for Cluster One can also be described as a ‘quasi spot contract’ type relationship. Consistent with social exchange theory, Tsui et al (1997) suggest that some employee-employer relationships are guided more by economic type transactions which emphasise specific, well-defined obligations. For this type of exchange relationship, Tsui et al (1997) go on to state that: “the employer offers short-term, purely economic inducements in exchange for well-specified contributions by the employee...neither party expects contributions or inducements beyond those specified”.

Cluster 1 also reveals similar dimensional characteristics to those unearthed in the McDermott et al (2012) study. McDermott et al (2012) derived three underlying types of exchange relationships based on the perceptions of employees across a range of permanent, part-time and temporary job roles in a large non-profit organisation in Ireland regarding their beliefs that transactional, relational and training obligations were part of the employment relationship, and whether or not these obligations were fulfilled by their employer. The three relationship groupings were: High-delivered, High-breach and Low-delivered (McDermott et al., 2012). Specifically, the ‘low-delivered’ type psychological contract cluster related to employees who perceived their employer as conveying low levels of obligation to employees and low expectations regarding their fulfilment. Consistent with McDermott et al (2012), the present study found evidence that academics holding a weaker, more balanced exchange relationship with their University had significantly lower perceptions that their institution was fulfilling their side of the bargain.
5.4.2 The Strong Form Psychological Contract

Turning then to Cluster 2, academics in this cluster exhibit a greater amount of variability in the underlying dimensions of their exchange relationship with their University. Compared to members of cluster 1, these academics score well below the average in terms of the perceived transactional commitments related to their institution’s obligations to academics, and what academics reciprocate to their University. Additionally, a greater emphasis is placed on the relational underpinnings of the employment relationship for this group such that both University and academic relational obligations are above the average mean score and significantly different to the comparable relational obligations associated with both parties in cluster 1.

The emphasis on the relational dimension of the contract is borne out by the statistically significant differences which were observed within the cluster when comparing University and academic transactional and relational obligations. Additionally, academics rated higher, their exchange of transactional and relational obligations to the University to the extent that there were statistical differences at the p < .001 level for these perceptions. Again, an element of perceptual bias exists within this type of exchange relationship. It could be inferred that the exchange relationship is unbalanced in nature and one of ‘Employee Over-obligation (Shore et al., 1998; DeCuyper et al., 2008) such that there is a significant difference in dimension focus (relational over transactional) as well as the level of exchange occurring (academics exchanging higher levels of transactional and relational obligations compared to the University). This would indicate that the exchange relationship is also characterised as one of employee over-investment as explicated by the Shore et al. (1998) and De Cuyper et al (2008) studies. According to Shore et al (1998)
Employee Over-obligation is characterised by exchange relations where employees feel indebted to the organisation for past favourable treatment and want to convey an attachment to their employer by the level of commitment and effort they make at work. Further, given the emphasis on the relational dimension, the nature of the psychological contract could be described as being strong, loyal and mutually investing (Tsui et al., 1997; Janssens, Sels and Van den Brande, 2003).

Regardless of the description one ascribes to this cluster, the underlying nature of the psychological contract is guided by the socio-emotional, enduring qualities between employee and employer. Academics in experiencing this type of exchange relationship present more favourable work attitudes in terms of their level of job satisfaction and commitment levels. Concomitantly, they also present more positive attitudes regarding the support they receive from their University. Consistent with social exchange theory, employees benefitting from positive workplace social exchanges are inclined to reciprocate with more positive work attitudes and behaviours.

Therefore, this study unearthed the presence of two contrasting employee-organisation relationships as explicated through the type of psychological contract academics perceive to hold with their University. Each relationship type reflect distinct reciprocity inclinations in terms of the type and level of obligations exchanged.
5.5 The Differential Effects of Psychological Contract Type on Work Attitudes & Psychological Contract Evaluations

The research discussed in Chapter Two not only draws a distinction between the types of psychological contracts employees experience, but also highlights the variances in work related attitudes and behaviours as a result of these underlying distinctions. Having established the existence of two different exchange relationships among a sample of University academics, the second research question sought to establish whether or not academics manifest different profiles in the levels of work-related attitudes and interpretations regarding the state of their psychological contract.

For each of the measured variables, significant differences were reported for job satisfaction, affective commitment, normative commitment and organisational support perceptions for academics holding a strong relational type exchange relationship over academics displaying a weaker, more transactional based EOR. In line with previous research, academics displaying a relational psychological contract scored significantly higher on each of these work-related variables. The results of the t-test analysis confirmed that academics exhibiting a weak exchange relationship reported significantly lower levels of job satisfaction, organisational commitment (affective and normative) and more negative appraisals regarding University support. Shore et al (1998) found that employees experiencing weak, low exchange relationships were more likely to exhibit lower levels of affective commitment, more negative perceptions of organisational support and convey higher turnover intentions. The results of the De Cuyper et al (2008) study reported that employees experiencing mutual low obligation type exchange relationships were less satisfied with their job, displayed low organisational commitment and were more likely to report stronger perceptions of breach within the contract. Similarly, McDermott et al
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(2012) reported that employees, who perceive to have an employment relationship that is considered positive in terms of the obligations promised and delivered, are more loyal to their employer, make a greater effort in their job and have values which are more closely aligned with those of their organisation.

The results of this study indicate that academics holding a weaker psychological contract reported significantly higher levels of breach and violation perceptions, and significantly lower levels of fulfilment perceptions compared to academics in the relational contract cluster. Owing to the weak nature of the employment relationship characterising Cluster 1, academics report significantly more negative perceptions regarding the occurrence of breach in their psychological contract. Similarly, academics perceiving that their University has violated the exchange relationship between them is further reflected in the negative perceptions academics have regarding fulfilment of their psychological contract. Academics holding a relational contract believe that their University has met and delivered on many or all of the commitments perceived to have been promised by the institution. T-tests confirmed that perceptions of breach and feelings of violation are significantly lower for this group compared to the experiences of academics in cluster 1.

Therefore, in line with the extant literature on social exchange theory and the theory of psychological contract, the results of this study support the contention that academics holding disparate employee-organisation relationships report different levels of work attitudes. Compared to strong, socio-emotional type exchange relations, academics perceiving to hold weaker, less relationally guided exchange relationships with their University report more negative attitudes regarding the state of their psychological contract in terms of breach, violation and fulfilment. As a consequence, these academics believing
that they have a somewhat constrained relationship with their institution are less inclined to display strong levels of emotional attachment in terms of affective commitment.

5.6 The Explanatory Power of Psychological Contract Type on the Work Attitudes of Academics

Research Question Three focused on the statistical relationships between an employee’s psychological contract and a number of work attitudes in an attempt to draw initial inferences regarding the linkages and consequences of the exchange relationship. Correlation analysis was conducted to explore relationships between each of the measured variables and an academic’s psychological contract and work attitudes. This analysis served as a pre-cursor to the multiple regression tests that were used to explore the explanatory power of an academic’s psychological contract.

Consistent with prior studies, the results of this research linked employee psychological contracts with work attitudes. Statistically significant positive correlations were reported between academics holding a relational psychological contract with job satisfaction, affective commitment, and normative commitment as well as the level of perceived support from the University. In terms of overall job satisfaction, when academics perceive they have a high quality exchange relationship with their University to the extent that both employee and employer emphasise the more socio-emotional and intrinsic features of the psychological contract; they are inclined to be more satisfied in their job. Moderate but significant correlations were reported for the relationship between contract type and affective commitment, normative commitment and perceived organisational support. Academics perceiving a strong relational bond with their institution are more emotionally
connected to the University and have a greater sense of loyalty and obligation to remain with their employer. The positive correlation between perceived organisational support and the relational psychological contract provides evidence of the quality of the employment relationship via the role POS has in establishing and maintaining high quality social exchanges (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2000; Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2005; Shore, Bommer, Rao and Seo, 2009; Eisenberger et al., 2011).

The results of the correlation analysis further revealed that perceptions of University support were significantly related to job satisfaction and the commitment levels of academics. That POS was positively related to both affective and normative commitment offers additional evidence of the underlying tenets of social exchange theory and the concept of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). When employees perceive they are treated fairly by their employer, they are more satisfied in their job and feel obligated to return this favourable treatment by demonstrating more positive attitudes and behaviours in the workplace (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rousseau, 1989, 1990; Robinson et al., 2000; Pate, Martin, & McGoldrick, 2003; George, 2009; Meyer, 2009; Suazo et al., 2011). Thus, academics holding a relational psychological contract display more positive work attitudes and evaluatory interpretations of their employment exchange relationship.

Multiple regression analyses demonstrated that psychological contract type was indeed a significant determiner of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and University support perceptions. Furthermore, the percentage of variance explained by psychological contract type on each of these attitudes ranged from 5.2% for job satisfaction to 21% for affective organisational commitment. The average explained variance across all work
attitudes was approximately 14% at the p < .001 level. Thus the results confirm that the type of psychological contract exhibited by academics significantly predicts work-related attitudes. The more relational the exchange relationship, academics will be more satisfied with their work, committed to their University and view their employer as providing a supportive environment.

5.7 The Relationship between Psychological Contract Type with Positive & Negative Evaluations of the Psychological Contract

The results here point to a negative correlation between psychological contract type and perceptions of psychological contract breach and violation. This is in line with previous empirical studies (e.g. Rousseau 1990, Millward et al., 1998; Zhao et al., 2007; Suazo, 2005, 2008). In terms of academics’ overall evaluation of the psychological contract (breach, violation and fulfilment perceptions), and thus, one’s appraisal of the quality of the employee-organisation relationship, a number of interesting results were derived from both the correlation and regression analysis.

The moderate correlation between psychological contract type and breach indicates that academics experiencing a relational psychological contract perceive fewer incidences of contract infringement with their University. At the same time, they report more positive interpretations of psychological contract fulfilment. Given that these employees are part of a high quality exchange relationship as evidenced in higher levels of organisational commitment and perceived organisational support, the occurrence of breach and violation, (real, everyday phenomena for all employees) appear to be less fractious for high relational psychological contract holders.
Regression analyses indicate that the nature of an employee’s psychological contract has a significant functional relationship with work attitudes. Psychological contract type was a negatively associated with both breach and violation, and positively explained psychological contract fulfilment perceptions.

It can be inferred that for both positive and negative evaluations of the psychological contract, tenure, when considered independently, is an important variable in understanding the breach and fulfilment perceptions of academics. The longer one is employed at the University, the greater the likelihood that academics will experience circumstances where it is perceived that their employer has, has not or is not meeting their obligations in the exchange relationship. This inference is further evidenced when incorporating psychological contract type into the analysis. The beta values derived from the regression analyses supports the notion that employees experiencing relationally-based psychological contracts have less negative interpretations of breach and more positive evaluations of fulfilment. Yet, given the link between tenure and the evaluation perceptions, the nature of the contract adds a greater impetus on the role of tenure to the extent that longer tenured academics are more attuned to changes in their exchange relationship which in turn influences the overall evaluation of the psychological contract. Therefore, consistent with prior research, this study shows that relationally-based psychological contracts confer more positive evaluations of the exchange relationship in terms of breach and fulfilment perceptions.
5.8 Psychological Contract Breach, Violation, Fulfilment and the Work Attitudes of Academics

The literature distinguishes between the cognitive appraisal (Perceived Breach) that one’s employer has failed to meet one or more obligations perceived to be part of the exchange relationship, and the emotional reaction (Violation of the Psychological Contract) produced by the sense of injustice and inequity associated with unfair treatment in the employment relationship (Rousseau, 1989, 1990; Morrison et al., 1997; Robinson et al., 2000; Raja et al., 2004; Zhao et al., 2007; Suazo, 2009). Additionally, it has been argued that theoretically and empirically distinguishing between breach and fulfilment of one’s psychological contract serves to extend our understanding regarding the manner in which employees interpret their employment exchange relationship (Conway et al., 2005; Dulac et al., 2008). Rather than assuming that breach and or violation of the psychological contract represents the ‘non-fulfilment’ of the contract; the literature suggests that an employee distinguishes between the two psychological contract evaluation concepts. That is, while it may be perceived that the employer has breached certain elements of the contract, it may also be perceived that the employer has fulfilled other aspects of the exchange relationship.

The extant research on psychological contract infringement has continuously demonstrated the adverse attitudinal and behavioural consequences breach and violation bring to bear on the employee-organisation relationship in terms of reduced job satisfaction, organisational commitment, trust in management and organisational citizenship behaviours (Montes et al., 2008; Zhao et al., 2007; Johnson and O’Leary-Kelly, 2003). Antithetically, a positive evaluation that one’s employer is fulfilling its obligations has positive implications on both
work attitudes and behaviours (Rousseau, 1995; Millward et al., 1998; Flood, Turner, Ramamoorthy and Pearson, 2001).

5.8.1 Breach, Violation and Fulfilment Evaluations: Quantitative Findings

In line with the extant research, the present investigation found evidence of both the negative and positive effects an academic’s psychological contract brings to bear on their work attitudes. This study established that job satisfaction, affective commitment, normative commitment and perceptions of organisational support were significantly correlated at the p < .01 level of significance with each of the psychological contract evaluation variables. Job satisfaction was negatively correlated with both psychological contract breach and violation and there was a positive correlation between job satisfaction and perceptions that the University fulfils its obligations to academics. Similarly, both affective and normative forms of organisational commitment were significantly negatively related to breach and violation experiences, and positively related to fulfilment perceptions. POS was negatively related to both psychological breach and violation, and was positively correlated to perceptions of contract fulfilment. Further, perceptions of psychological contract breach returned as a strong, positive and significant correlation with contract violation. In line with psychological contract theory, these results support the findings from previous studies and provide evidence of the social exchange mechanisms associated with the employee-organisation relationship in general and the psychological contract in particular.
Psychological contract theory posits that breach of the contract as perceived by the individual leads to the erosion of the foundation of the relationship between employee and employer (Rousseau, 1989, Robinson et al., 1994). Consistent with the theory, when breach or violation is believed to have occurred, academics are compelled to re-evaluate the status of their work relationship by altering their work attitudes. Given that social exchange relationships are founded on a basis of trust between parties that obligations which are due will be dispensed (Blau, 1964; Morrison et al., 1997), academics who perceive that the actions of their University which are construed as breaches of their psychological contract are less satisfied in their work. Depending on the nature and salience of the breach, academics re-adjust their affective attachment to their University and feel less obligated to demonstrate their commitment therein. Furthermore, academics who are less disposed to perceptions that their University is supportive of them, may interpret this lack of support as an infringement of their psychological contract. Perceiving that their University has contravened their contractual obligations, academics would interpret this as a message that their employer is less concerned about employee well-being (Cassar, 2000; Aselage et al., 2003; Kiewitz, Restubog, Zagenczyk and Hochwarter, 2009).

Closer scrutiny of the correlation matrix reveals a number of interesting patterns between the work attitudes of academics and the psychological contract evaluation variables. Notably, when comparing the effect size of breach and violation on job satisfaction, affective commitment, normative commitment and perceived organisational support, violation returns the larger correlation coefficient of the two infringement variables. This is a similar pattern to that reported in Raja et al (2004), Dulac et al (2008) and Suazo (2009) studies. Additionally, psychological contract breach and feelings of violation were highly
statistically significant, and positively correlated with each other at the p < .01 significance level, suggesting that continuous occurrences of breach by the University may escalate into feelings of violation (Morrison et al., 1997). The results offer an insight into the differential effects breach and violation have on work attitudes and draws attention to the potential mediating effect of violation experiences.

For example, extending this line of analysis to an academic’s level of job satisfaction using the reasoning afforded by Affective Events Theory (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996), it could be argued that the effects of breach and violation in one’s psychological contract have different consequences whether the focus is on the cognitive or affective dimensions of the job. Affective job satisfaction relates to the feelings and emotions an employee derives from the job and the environment within which it is pursued, while cognitive job satisfaction relates to an employee’s satisfaction with particular aspects or facets of their job (Loke, 1976; Spector, 1997; Weiss et al., 1996; Riggio, 2003; Meyer, 2009; Levy, 2013). It could be inferred from these results that breach in one’s psychological contract relates to the infringement of the more immediate economic/tangible facets of the job which are important to employees’ day-to-day work. Violation of the psychological contract on the other hand, may affect the feelings one derives from the job if the employee believes that they have been mistreated in a way as to manifest negative emotion which reduces the level of satisfaction associated with the job.

Additionally, previous empirical studies have established the ‘breach as antecedent’ to psychological contract violation hypothesis with strong support found for this assertion (e.g. Morrison et al., 1997; Raja et al., 2004; Suazo, 2005; Raja et al., 2011). Additionally, a number of these works have utilised the reasoning prescribed by Affective Events
Theory (Weiss et al., 1996) to justify this claim and AET was utilised here to test for this mediation effect.

As illustrated in Chapter 2, Affective Events Theory investigates the consequences of and outcomes to some workplace event which either positively or negatively affects the behaviours and attitudes of employees (Weiss et al., 1996; Judge, et al., 2006). The theory as applied to the workplace centres on events as proximal causes of emotional reactions to the extent that an employee’s job-related attitude and behaviour can be attributed to a range of cumulative affective experiences and events at work (Thoresen et al., 2003) and implies some form of event-mediation process (Zhao et al., 2007). The current study found that psychological contract breach significantly predicts perceptions of contract violation, thus confirming prior studies. What is interesting is that the beta coefficient for breach in the weaker psychological contract group was larger than for the relational psychological contract group. Furthermore, breach explained a higher percentage in violation variance (55% versus 49%) for the mutually low obligation group. While breach and violation are negative situations for employees in general, the results of this study indicate that academics holding a weak type psychological contract are more susceptible to developing stronger feelings of injustice in the employment relationship and thus, feel that their University has in some way violated their exchange agreement. This point will be discussed further in a later section.

In terms of their effects on job attitudes, breach and violation were each significant predictors of academics’ job satisfaction, affective commitment, normative commitment and University support perceptions. The results additionally support the hypothesis that psychological contract violation mediates the relationship between breach and each of the
work-related attitudes. From an Affective Events Theory perspective, violation in one psychological contract reflects the attitudinal and emotional consequence of successive breach occurrences. Breach, if unattended to from a managerial intervention perspective, will ultimately lead to the erosion of an employee’s mental and physical well-being (Rousseau, 1995; Parzefall and Hakanen, 2008) which has deleterious consequences on work attitudes. What is interesting is the varying mediational effects violation exhibited between the two contract types (Table 5.1).

For the weaker, low obligation type psychological contract, violation fully mediated the effects of breach on each of job satisfaction, affective commitment, normative commitment and organisational support.

Table 5.1  
_Mediation Results of Violation for Each Psychological Contract Type_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contract Type</th>
<th>Mediated Variable</th>
<th>Job Satisfaction</th>
<th>Affective Commitment</th>
<th>Normative Commitment</th>
<th>Perceived Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weak/Mutually Low Obligations PC</td>
<td>Perceived Breach</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Relational PC</td>
<td>Perceived Breach</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, perceived breach was fully mediated by violation in terms of its effects on job satisfaction for the high relational group. However, violation only partially mediated the relation between breach and all remaining work variables. These results suggest that the quality of the social exchange relationship between employee and employer influences feelings of violation which in turn impact work outcomes.
Consistent with previous research, the findings of this study indicate that academics experiencing a weaker, more balanced psychological contract with their University are more inclined to develop feelings of violation as a result of unfulfilled employer obligations. According to Dulac et al (2008, p. 1092): “individuals with lower-quality social exchange relationships respond with stronger feelings of violation following perceived breach than do individuals with higher-quality relationships”. Similarly, Shore et al (1998) refer to this low-quality exchange relationship as being of a ‘weak form’ such that the employee perceives to offer few or at least limited, contributions to the organisation on the belief that few (or limited) inducements will be reciprocated from the organisation. This finding is also consistent with the employee-employer exchange models offered by Tsui et al (1997), De Cuyper et al (2008) and McDermott et al (2012). Employees holding a weak exchange relationship to the extent that they are indifference regarding their own and employer’s *quid pro quo* obligations are at the same time more sensitive to discrepancies occurring in their psychological contract should their employer breach the exchange relationship.

Employees holding a high quality exchange relationship exhibit a type of ‘cognitive bias’ to the extent that even though breach incidents occur in the relationship, these employees are more likely to account for such breaches in the context of the past history of the relationship (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2005). That is, favourable past treatment by the University will act as a mental benchmark by which employees evaluate the present situation of breach and as such, the employer is given the ‘benefit of the doubt’ in this regard.
5.8.2 Breach, Violation and Fulfilment Evaluations: Subjective Accounts

While the results of the quantitative findings tell a particular story regarding the effects of breach on a number of work-related outcomes, they do not, however, offer a more personal account as to the type of infringements experienced on a day-to-day basis, and the resultant consequences therein. Responses to an open-ended question provide a subjective insight regarding the types of psychological contract infringement perceived by academics. The qualitative data reveal that the majority of breaches/violations, as well as perceptions of fulfilment are evident in almost every area of human resource management.

In terms of promises perceived to have been conveyed, academics alluded to the issue of ‘resources’ to facilitate their research obligations which was expected of them in their position. A number of participants criticised their University as ‘not coming through’ in fulfilling their obligation in providing time, financial and administrative resources to support with academic research responsibilities, ‘even though they were promised’. Three participants conveyed these sentiments as follows:

‘I was promised research support which has been slashed’

‘Start-up money for research that was promised was much lower than expected’

‘Promised time out to complete research work was not fully given’

Promises relating to career progression, promotion opportunities and contract stability were specifically cited by many participants as falling short of expectations. A number of academics expressed vehement and negative opinions regarding the way in which their University managed the system by which progression and development decisions arose, and the fact that such opportunities while initially promised, did not manifest. Such sentiments are captured by the following quotes:
‘The promotions process creates a bottleneck and causes resentment, as many people are denied promotion when they have fulfilled all their obligations and worked to a very high standard. It seems like an artificial barrier and a blunt instrument to wring more productivity out of staff’

‘A full time position was promised once the programme ran its full four years, no full time position has materialised, though I do the full load of work’

‘Promotions process from lecturer below the bar to above the bar has been stopped. I expected to be at a high grade at this point’

Closely related to these interpretations are the issues of fairness and equity and the negative connotations ascribed. Many academics perceive that their University has not acted in a fair or equitable manner relating to issues of promotion/progression policies, decision-making procedures and the imbalanced allocation of resources. These perceptions have resulted in feelings of disillusionment with their institution and a mistrust of the relevant individuals within, a sense of disappointment with the way they have been treated and view their University with a considerable level of disparagement. Such issues are perceived to have ‘disenfranchised’ the role and status of academics in Universities as exemplified in the following responses:

‘When the university sets out criteria or rules to govern appointments and much needed resources for example and then does not apply them equally to everyone’.

‘ Possibility of advancement/promotion denied, while others of significantly lower calibre were advanced. Inequitable treatment created feelings of resentment, injustice, mistrust, lack of faith that hard work pays off’.

Promotions- Feel very disheartened and not rewarded for accomplishments and hard work. Feel that these processes are not entirely fair or based on merit

‘Documents and decisions have materialised from "on high" to be presented to academics as more or less faits accomplis’

‘Promotions are for under-performers and no openness, honesty or transparency in decisions taken by university leaders/managers’.
The expectation of academics to pursue and produce research output in the face of ‘ever increasing teaching and administrative duties’ presents employees with a certain degree of strain in their day-to-day work lives. The research perogative which accompanies the role of lecturer in Universities, and which operates as a criterion for promotion is seemingly outweighed by the teaching and administrative requirements set down by both institution and faculty structures. This is perceived as a breach of the psychological contract upon which academic freedom and autonomy facilitate such pursuits.

‘I left a permanent job in another institution to join the current institution where I was promised more time to spend on research and more PhDs to supervise. Since I am only on a 3 year contract I cannot supervise any PhDs or research students. And I am teaching more modules to bigger class sizes than I had in my previous institution, leaving very little time (apart from my own time) to do research. I feel very let down’.

‘I seem to spend my days prepping for teaching and completing admin with very little time to do research! I find this very frustrating, particularly when I'm employed to do both. It leaves me vulnerable when my role and output is reviewed’.

‘In my job role I have limited freedom of scope to change my teaching commitments to a significant extent’.

Therefore, the results indicate that breach and violation, treated as negative evaluations of the psychological contract significantly reduce an academic’s job satisfaction and organisational commitment to their University. Similarly, both forms of contract infringement were also significant negative predictors of perceived organisation support suggesting perceptions of breach and or violation are translated into lower perceptions that their University is supportive of their needs. The degree of influence breach and violation
perceptions have on work attitudes is also a function of the quality of the exchange relationship as derived from the underlying psychological contract. The results demonstrate that academics holding weaker psychological contracts are more sensitive to infringement events compared to those holding a stronger relational exchange relationship. As a consequence of the underlying exchange relationship, this study shows that feelings of violation are more likely to manifest in weaker psychological contract holders and thus have more deleterious effects on employee attitudes.

5.9 The Influence of Organisational Support on the Psychological Contract & Work Attitudes of Academics

As previously discussed in Chapter Two, organisational support is a global perception an employee develops regarding how their employer expresses concern for employee well-being (Rhodes et al., 2002; Levy, 2013). It is an interpretation derived from the actions, policies and procedures which prevail in the company, and from which an employee distils the organisation’s general orientation toward him or her (Eisenberger et al., 1986, Rhodes et al., 2002). As a consequence of these interpretations, “employees evidently believe that the organisation has a general positive or negative orientation toward them that encompasses both their contribution and their welfare” (Eisenberger, Jones, Aselage and Sucharski, 2004, p.207).

The extant research is replete with studies demonstrating the positive effects of organisational support on a variety of work-related attitudes and behaviours (e.g. Settoon et al., 1996; Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli and Lynch, 1997; Wayne et al., 1997;
More recently, efforts to extend the theoretical implications of support perceptions relating to the employment psychological contract have argued for the integration of both social exchange perspectives to further our knowledge of the underlying mechanisms driving the employee-organisation relationship (e.g. Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2000; Aselage et al., 2003; Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2005; Guerro et al., 2007; Suazo, 2008; Kiewitz, Restubog, Zagenczyk and Hochwarter, 2009; Eisenberger et al., 2011; Zagenczyk, Gibney, Few and Scott, 2011).

5.9.1 The Direct Effects of Perceived Organisational/University Support on Work Attitudes

Research Question 5 sought to examine the role and influence perceptions of organisational support imparts on an academic’s general work attitudes and evaluations of their psychological contract. This study found evidence of the beneficial effects that organisational support perceptions bring to the employment relationship of academics. Consistent with previous studies, perceived organisational/University support was significantly and positively correlated with an academic’s job satisfaction, affective commitment and normative commitment. Additionally, there was a significant relationship between perceived organisational support and psychological contract type, suggesting that employees holding a more relational-based psychological contract with their organisation are more likely to perceive a supportive environment in their organisation.
Regression analysis was carried out on both of the psychological contract type clusters to test the differential predictive effect of organisational support on the work attitudes of academics. The results indicated that regardless of the type of psychological contract experienced, perceived organisational support significantly predicts academics’ job satisfaction, affective commitment and normative commitment. That is, regardless of the underlying nature of the exchange relationship, an academic’s level of job satisfaction and commitment propensities were significantly determined by the level of organisational support perceived.

These results corroborate other studies which emphasise the positive effects that strong, socially-orientated exchange relationships impart on employee attitudes. Employees holding such social exchange relationships are imbued with more positive affirmations regarding the favourable treatment they receive from their organisation with the effect that they are more satisfied with their work and feel obligated to reciprocate this favourable treatment through stronger affective identification with their employer (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2000; Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2005; Guerro et al., 2007; Suazo, 2008; Eisenberger et al., 2011).

The analysis further shows that perceptions of University support have varying effects on employee attitudes as a consequence of the nature of the exchange relationship. For example, perceived organisational support had the strongest predictive effect on job satisfaction and organisational commitment for academics holding a weaker psychological contract exchange relationship. The average size of the beta coefficient predicting job satisfaction and both commitment variables for the weak, mutually low obligations group was larger than the beta values for the high-relational group. Additionally, the mean
variance in these attitudes that was explained by the support variable was greater for the weaker psychological contract group than for the high relational type contract. Given that academics holding a relational-type contract with their University are already benefiting from a strong, relatively healthy social exchange relationship (more satisfied and more committed), any improvement in the level of support perceptions, whilst welcomed, has marginal effects on the quality of the employment relationship and attitudinal outcomes for these individuals. The descriptive analysis discussed earlier highlighted that academics embedded in a weak, mutually low exchange relationship already report more negative interpretations regarding the level of perceived support from their University.

5.9.2 The Mediating Role of Organisational Support

It was argued earlier that perceived organisational support not only has a direct predictive influence on employee attitudes, but that it operates as salient intervening variable between positive and negative workplace experiences and attitudinal outcomes. That is, if an employee experiences a breach or breaches in their psychological contract, proper access and recourse to relevant organisational support systems and procedures may alleviate the negative consequences accompanying the infringement.

As argued by Guerrero et al (2007), the empirical distinction between the cognitive evaluation that one’s employer has failed or is failing to meet its obligations (breach perceptions) and the potential affective consequences which derive from these breaches (Feelings of Violation), can also be extrapolated by distinguishing between a positive evaluation that one’s employer has or is fulfilling its responsibilities (Perceived Fulfilment) and the resultant affective interpretations this draws out in terms of perceptions of organisational support. That is, perceived organisational support can be viewed as a
“key attitudinal mind-set that reflects how individuals experience psychological contract fulfilment” (Guerrero et al., 2007, p.7). This line of reasoning is consistent with the tenets of Affective Events Theory (Weiss et al., 1996) discussed previously and which was applied to the breach/violation/attitudes mediation analysis conducted earlier. The mediational properties of organisational support are evidenced in a number of recent studies.

For example, perceived organisational support has been found to mediate the relationship between the individual differences of positive affectivity, reciprocation wariness, equity sensitivity, and perceptions of breach (Suazo and Turnley, 2009). Further, Zagenczyk et al (2011) confirmed that perceived organisational support fully mediated the relationship between psychological contract breach and organisational identification, whereby the more positive evaluations employees held about their employer’s support, the stronger they identified with the values and mission of the organisation.

In general, the results indicate that perceived organisational support has differential mediational effects on academic work attitudes for both psychological contract groups. To the extent that support perceptions had stronger direct and indirect effects on the work attitudes of academics holding weaker psychological contracts. Efforts taken by the University to improve relations with its employees by conveying a more supportive environment, will have a greater effect in strengthening employee-employer relations holding weaker psychological contracts to the extent that academics will respond by being more committed, loyal and satisfied in their workplace. Table 5.2 presents a snapshot of the mediation/indirect effects for perceived organisational support on work attitudes for each psychological contract type.
Table 5.2
Mediation Results of POS for Each Psychological Contract Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contract Type</th>
<th>Mediated Variable</th>
<th>Job Satisfaction</th>
<th>Affective Commitment</th>
<th>Normative Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weak/Mutually Low Obligations PC</td>
<td>Perceived Breach</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perceived Fulfilment</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Relational PC</td>
<td>Perceived Breach</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perceived Fulfilment</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For academics holding a weak-type psychological contract, POS fully mediated the relationship between psychological contract breach and job satisfaction and affective organisational commitment. Partial mediation was reported for normative commitment. Similarly, POS fully mediated the relationship between psychological contract fulfilment and job satisfaction and the affective component of commitment, and partially mediated the fulfilment/normative commitment relation. For the stronger, relational-type psychological contract, POS fully mediated the relationship between breach and job satisfaction and partially mediated the relation between breach and each of affective and normative forms of organisational commitment. While POS did not mediate the relationship between fulfilment and job satisfaction, it partially mediated the relationship for each of affective commitment and normative commitment.

These findings suggest that organisational support operates as a dual mechanism that mitigates the negative effects of psychological contract breach while at the same time channelling, and even augmenting the effects of psychological contract fulfilment into more satisfied and committed employees. In particular, this result supports the findings of the Guerrero et al (2007) and Zagenczyk et al (2011) studies which demonstrated that perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between psychological contract...
fulfilment and positive workplace affect among employees and between breach and organisational identification.

Related to this, the results suggest that perceived organisational support offers different implicit functions for employees exhibiting different exchange relationships. For weak psychological contract relationships, perceived organisational support imparts equal influencing effects on perceptions of breach and fulfilment of the psychological contract in terms of an academic’s level of job satisfaction and affective organisational commitment. Given that perceived organisational support incorporates both tangible (economic inducements) and intangible (socio-emotional inducements), it could be argued that academics with weak, less relationally orientated social exchange relationships interpret the lack of such inducements as representing a breach and non-fulfilment of the psychological contract. By extension, any improvement in the manner by which the University communicates a culture of employee support would thus serve the dual functions of ameliorating the negative perceptions of breach while at the same time interpreting the presence of organisational support as fulfilling their psychological contract. That is, breach and fulfilment of the psychological contract in terms of organisational support system are ascribed equal meaning for these academics.

One could apply a different interpretation regarding the effects of perceived organisational support for academics holding a strong relational psychological contract. While breach of psychological contract was fully mediated by the support variable, POS had no such effects on the relationship between fulfilment perceptions and job satisfaction. This would suggest that employees in high quality exchange relationships differentiate between actions that constitute a breach of contract and actions that represent contract fulfilment.
Given that psychological contract and organisational support constructs include economic and non-economic exchange resources, these results indicate that the policies and procedures implemented by Universities can foster both negative and positive evaluations of organisational support on the part of the employee (Eisenberger et al., 1986, Masterson, Lewis, Goldman and Taylor, 2000; Rhodes et al., 2002; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Aselage et al., 2003).

5.9.3 Perceived Organisational/University Support: Subjective Accounts

The nature and type of support available to employees serves as an important mechanism through which individuals evaluate their psychological contract specifically, and the employee-organisation relationship in general (Settoon et al., 1996; Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2000; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Kiewit et al., 2009; Zagenczyk et al., 2009; Eisenberger et al., 2011; Kraimer, Seibert, Wayne, Linden and Bravo, 2011).

Of the themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis, the issue of ‘support’ returned as the most cited aspect of the employment relationship for participants. A detailed reading of the raw data revealed a wide variety of different, yet repetitive, forms of ‘support perceptions’ as expressed by academics. This is some way compliments and confirms the perceptions that academics have regarding the low level of organisational/university support as discussed in the quantitative findings. The issue of support seemed to translate itself across many levels and act as an underlying conduit between the aforementioned themes. Additionally, respondents differentiated between support from their University
and the support derived from immediate faculty/school/department/colleagues, the latter being the more tangible sources of support perceptions.

A principal tenet of Organisational Support Theory is the belief that one’s employer values the contribution of its employees and has concern for their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). The theory suggests that such positive perceptions would motivate employees to reciprocate this favourable treatment by showing more positive work attitudes and behaviours (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2005).

In general, the level of organisational support perceived by academics is tenuous. The qualitative data in this study indicate that academics have the perception that the efforts put forward by staff are either ignored or undervalued by their institution. While there were some examples where the University and or immediate supervisors in faculty schools conveyed appreciation toward employees, the majority of respondents were negative in their opinion regarding due recognition for their contribution to the University. Academics believe that while in some cases they ‘go beyond the call of duty’ for their institution, the lack of acknowledgement causes bitter emotions among them. For example:

‘I feel frustrated and taken advantage of as I know of people who do less and get paid more. I have worked very hard for my university and I feel my value is not appreciated’.

‘Despite securing hundreds of thousands of euro in research monies, producing high quality peer reviewed publications senior management in the Department I am has passed over my teaching and research area’.

‘the school have uneven distribution of workload between colleagues (not university fault) but it can make one feel undervalued and reluctant to constantly give’.

‘Most of us work extremely hard on all fronts teaching, research and admin, but there seems little sense of acknowledgement of that’.
Additionally, the types of support cited by participants included references to both tangible and non-tangible examples. Many academics expressed low support perceptions relating to the ‘discretionary’ actions of senior management, human resource policies and poor communications with staff, professional development opportunities, financial resource support for research and poor moral support associated with the lack or absence of recognition for their efforts in a stressful work environment and the support services available in cases of bullying. Academics also feel that they have no recourse when looking for support when needed and feel isolated in this regard with the effect that ‘quality of life’ has become a concern. The following quotes exemplify academics’ perceptions of University support:

‘I feel that for those working at a lecturer level there is no nowhere to get support if you need to go outside you're department. It's too concerned with policy and procedures, rather than supporting employees ’.

‘While direct superiors may be supportive, this does not always mean that the University is. I think that loyalty nowadays is more to students than to colleagues Some great stresses are experienced and support for individual academics is thin on the ground. It is up to each one to cope’.

‘I would distinguish between the strong level departmental level of support and commitment I have felt, while the institutional and human resources structures of the university have remained more distant’. ‘Senior colleagues routinely bully junior colleagues; reports made about this to human resources are ignored and filed away. Clear message is sent to junior staff that the university is not interested in supporting staff ’.

This deplorable state of affairs has adversely affected people's health, has reduced the service which committed individuals can make once their self confidence has been damaged, has created a general scepticism regarding all utterances by management and has general led to a considerable fall in the quality of life at the University.

‘Very little support or 'mentoring' in developing a career path’
The final theme to emerge from the qualitative analysis relates to the consequences expressed and experienced by academics through their relationship with the University and the state of their psychological contract therein. While each of the aforementioned themes contained within them emotional references to the feelings of individuals in terms of their sense of value, disappointment and frustrations in their dealings with the University, without doubt, the main outcomes that were consistently cited as being affected by and a consequence of the employment relationship related to issues of trust and loyalty. Psychological contract literature is replete with findings indicating that breaches of the psychological contract affects the basis of trust between employee and employer, and diminishes the degree of loyalty and commitment one has with their organisation.

Many of the participants emphasised that situations and or incidents experienced in their University eroded their level of trust in the institution and with particular individuals within this faculties and schools. In this study, much of the deleterious effects of the employment relationship were explained by the sense of mistrust academics conveyed about the overall support system operating in the institution. As two participants stated:

‘I used to trust the structures of the university until a bad thing happened to me. The university did nothing about it and since then I feel very little trust in the institution’.

‘I feel that the university (as distinct from colleagues) has become more demanding, less trusting, less collegial, less democratic over the course of my long career’.

Others cited the issues of inequity and lack of fair and transparent promotion polices as badly affecting their ‘faith’ in and loyalty to their employer. For example:

‘The possibility of advancement/promotion was denied, while others of significantly lower calibre were advanced. Inequitable treatment created feelings of resentment, injustice, mistrust, lack of faith that hard work pays off’.
The University cancelled a promotion process that was almost complete. I had applied for promotion under a benchmarked system. I felt the university should have completed the promotion round and provided feedback on applications. The ease with which the University cancelled this, thus reneging - I felt - on its obligations to staff, made me question any loyalty I had to the University as an institution.

The results of this study demonstrate that perceived organisational support is as an important and defining feature of the employee-organisation relationship of academics. In particular, the close linkage between an academic’s psychological contract and support perceptions is evidenced in the quantitative data. Perceived organisational support has both a direct influence on the nature of the exchange relationship as well as functioning as a barometer with which to gauge its quality. It operates as a dependent variable such that how one interprets the support one receives or has access to, is determined by the perceived nature of the psychological contract held by individuals. It also functions as a mediating variable, albeit to varying degrees, to the extent that for some academics, the lack or absence of support is interpreted as a breach of the psychological contract. For others, being exposed to support structures reflects a strong indication that their psychological contract is being fulfilled. Figure 5.1 presents the final theoretical model of the employee-organisation relationship as conceived in this study.
Figure 5.1
Theoretical Model of the Psychological Contract
Exchange Relationship and Work Attitudes of University Academics
5.10 Contributions of the Investigation

The analysis of the employee-organisation relationship (EOR) has gained considerable currency over that past couple of decades among organisational experts (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Shore, Tetrick, Taylor, Coyle-Shapiro, Linden, McLean Parks, Morrison, Porter, Robinson, Roehling, Rousseau, Schalk, Tsui and Van Dyne, 2004) with increasing emphasis placed not only on the legislative aspects of work agreements, but also concerning the social-psychological underpinnings of employment exchange processes. Situating itself within the broad theoretical framework of social exchange (Blau, 1964, Emerson, 1976; Gouldner, 1960), the EOR is an overarching term which describes the relationship an employee has with his/her employer, and encompasses micro-level (individual), meso-level (group) and macro-level (societal) analytical perspectives (Shore et al, 2004; Coyle-Shapiro and Shore, 2007). This study followed the micro-level path by exploring the perceptions third level academics have regarding the nature of the relationship they have with their University.

5.10.1 Theoretical Contribution

From a theoretical perspective, this research supports the efficacy of Social Exchange Theory as a justifiable framework upon which to analyse the exchange relationship of employees. In particular, the application and integration of Psychological Contract Theory and Organisational Support Theory as cornerstone exemplars of the social exchange approach further evidences the framework’s analytical utility. As attested by the findings, the present study makes a number of theoretical additions and contributions to the study of
the employee-organisation relationship in general, and to the nature and consequences of the psychological contract of academics in particular.

**Unearthing Distinct Social Exchange Relationships**

Using the theory of psychological contract with which to gauge the nature and type of the employment exchange relationship as prescribed by transactional and relational contract dimensions, this study unearthed the presence of two significantly distinct exchange relationships among a sample of third level University lecturers. Social exchange theory makes the distinction between exchange interactions guided by time-bound impersonal motives from exchanges based on more long-term, socio-emotional footings. While both forms of exchange involve an elemental drive of self-interest, the level and nature of resources exchanged to achieve this personal gain is disparate between the two relationship types. Each type of exchange relationship carries with it, a profile of the perceptions individuals convey and desire from the social interaction with their University. Therefore, compared to weaker, more impersonal exchange relationships, employees holding relationally-based exchanges manifest stronger and more positive attitudinal outcomes derived from the relationship and thus, is characterised by a ‘high quality’ employee-organisation exchange.

By establishing that employee-organisation relationships (EOR) differ according to their underlying dimensional characteristics, the present study highlighted the effects different relationship types have on employee attitudes in terms of their attitudes on the job and how
they favourably or unfavourably interpret the state of their exchange relationship in terms of breach, violation and fulfilment perceptions.

When evaluated on the basis of attitudinal outcomes; academics holding a high quality relational type exchange relationship with their employer reported more favourable work-related attitudes in terms of job satisfaction, affective and normative commitment as well as perceptions that they are supported by their University. Extending this analysis to how academics evaluate the state of their psychological contract in terms of breach, violation and fulfilment, this study demonstrated that each form of contract evaluation had different effects on academics’ work attitudes as a consequence of the nature of the psychological contract.

**Identifying Balance & Reciprocity in the Exchange Relationship**

Closely associated with social exchange theory are the issues of exchange balance (Blau, 1964) and reciprocity (Glouldner, 1960, Sahlins, 1974). According to social exchange, employees seek balance in their employment relationship and reciprocate according to their perceptions related to the degree of this balance (Sonnenberg et al., 2011). This relates not only to the nature of resources exchanged between parties (relational and/or transactional), but also concerns itself with the degree to which these resources are exchanged (Shore et al., 1998).

This study extends both notions of ‘exchange balance’ and ‘reciprocity’ by showing that academics exchange different levels of transactional and relational resources with their
employer to the extent that some exchange more relational than transactional type resources. Similar to the typological models of social exchange developed by Tsui et al (1997), Shore et al (1998), De Cuyper et al (2008) and McDermott et al (2012), the current investigation compliments and extends these studies. However, unlike these reports where between three and four categories of exchange relationships were derived, the present study extracted two, yet very different employment relationships based on the perceived level of obligation balance. While one exchange relationship is characterised by a mutually low exchange balance vis-a-vis transactional and relational commitments, the other reflected an ‘imbalanced’ type, emphasising a relational exchange dynamic. In particular, the mutually low obligation-type exchange contract reflected a relationship based on ‘homeomorphic reciprocity’. Social exchange theory suggests that relationships imbued with this form of reciprocal understanding represent guarded, highly monitored exchange relationship (Sahlins, 1974). As such, this study draws attention to the principle of reciprocity as a socio-psychological mechanism underlying and reflecting the employment relationship.

**Linking Psychological Contract Theory & Workplace Attitudes**

In linking psychological contract theory to employee attitudes, it was found that the underlying dimensional nature of an academic’s psychological contract (also reflecting the general employee-organisation relationship) had significant and differential influences on levels of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and support perceptions. Perceiving higher levels of psychological contract breach and violation, academics holding weak, mutually low obligation psychological contracts with their University report lower levels of job satisfaction and attachment to their institution, and thus reciprocate with lower
levels of affective commitment. On the other hand, academics perceiving that they have a relational psychological contract with their University, reciprocate this perception by conveying higher levels of organisational commitment in order to assist the institution in achieving its goals and objectives.

This study adds to the knowledge base linking psychological contract theory to normative commitment. Recall, normative commitment refers to a sense and obligation that one should stay with their employer based on past (and present) treatment by the organisation (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Citing Wiener (1982), Allen et al (1990, p.3) explicate normative commitment as the “totality of internalised normative pressures to act in a way which meets organisational goals and interests and suggests that individuals exhibit behaviours solely because they believe it is the right and moral thing to do”. Empirical results from this study show that there are clear linkages between the type of psychological contract held by academics and their felt obligation (normative commitment) to maintain their ties with the institution. Consistent with social exchange theory, the results show that strong, relationally guided exchange relationships re-enforces an individual’s sense of loyal and duty-bound obligation in meeting the needs of the other party (Blau, 1964, Meyer and Allen, 1997). Further, perceiving that their employer has fulfilled (or is fulfilling) its obligations to employees, such positive evaluations by an employee instils a sense of loyalty and indebtedness to the University and thus, in order to restore balance in the exchange relationship, the employee reciprocates by demonstrating stronger normative attitudes.
Breach Perceptions as Antecedent to Violation Experiences

From an ‘psychological contract evaluation perspective’, the present study separated perceptions of breach from violation and perceptions of fulfilment on the grounds that these evaluatory interpretations co-exist in one’s psychological contract and each have their own explanatory significance. For example, early psychological contract research treated breach and violation as one and the same in terms of psychological contract infringement, however more recently (e.g. Zhao et al., 2007; Suazo; 2008) empirical research has shown that they reflect distinct responses to contract infringement. Factor analysis demonstrated that breach; violation and perceptions of psychological contract fulfilment were psychometrically distinct suggesting that they conceptually and empirically reflect different interpretations of an individual’s psychological contract. In terms of the effects of negative psychological contract evaluations, it was shown that breach and violation of the contract were significantly and positively related to each other, suggesting that perceived breach is an antecendent to feelings of violation. As hypothesised, breach was a significant predictor of contract violation such that continued occurrences of psychological contract breach leads to emotional responses to negative workplace events.

The Utility of Affective Events Theory as Complimentary Framework

This study extends further the value of using Affective Events Theory (Wiess et al., 1996) as a valid framework with which to explain the psycho-dynamic consequences associated with positive and negative evaluations of the psychological contract. It can be inferred that the cumulative effects of persistent contract breach lead to feelings of violation. In turn, perceived violation mediates the negative relationship between breach and an academic’s
job satisfaction, affective commitment, normative commitment and organisational support perceptions.

**Integrating Psychological & Organisational Support Theories**

While conceptually similar in that both PCT and OST theories are grounded in the fundamental tenets of Social exchange Theory, it was found that each perspective makes its own contribution to comprehending the exchange relationship of University academics. There was a strong link between the underlying nature of an academic’s psychological contract and perceptions that academics were supported by their University. Academics perceiving their University as communicating a socio-emotional exchange relationship viewed this as an indication of the University’s concern for their welfare. Antithetically, academics holding a weak, mutually low obligation exchange relationship reported negative perceptions of University support. Affective events Theory also proved useful by integrating and exploring the effects of perceived organisational support with an academic’s psychological contract. This study demonstrated that perceived organisational support operates as an evaluative channel through which perceptions of psychological contract breach and fulfilment are translated. Further, the degree to which perceived organisational support operates as a salient mediating variable was a function of the underlying nature of the exchange relationship. That is, in terms of breach and fulfilment perceptions, organisational support had stronger direct and indirect/mediational effects on work outcomes for employees holding weaker exchange relationships compared to those experiencing a strong relational-type EOR. This has important practical and managerial implications and further demonstrates the efficacy of integrating Organisational Support Theory with Psychological Contract Theory.
5.10.2 Empirical Contribution

The international Higher Education sector has over the years undergone dramatic system-wide rationalisation changes as a result of the increased level of global competition in third level education. In an economic environment where public sector budgets are severely challenged, the pressures associated with greater accountability relating to quality assurance demands on teaching and research output have undoubtedly filtered down to the level of the employment relationship. As such, this study aspires to provide an insight into the perceptions academics have regarding the type and quality of the employment relationship with their University in the context of this changed and changing environment.

Considering the overall scope of the investigation, this study contributes to the study of the employee-organisation relationship by integrating a number of theoretical perspectives to further our understanding and appreciation of workplace interactions and resultant attitudinal outcomes associated with these exchanges. Recent developments in the application of Social Exchange Theory and Psychological Contract Theory have occurred in Australia, Malaysia and Turkey. As far as I am aware of, this is the first study to apply and integrate these same theoretical perspectives to the study of the employee-organisation relationship of University academics in the Republic of Ireland. The findings presented in this study provide an insight into the nature of the employment relationship of University academics as explicated through psychological contract theory. It demonstrates that even within a homogenous group of professionals, different interpretations exist among the cohort regarding the nature of this exchange relationship, the perceived obligations which constitute it, and the attitudinal consequences derived from it. It is hoped therefore that this study adds to existing EOR investigations which focus on other academic environs
and which may offer a useful starting point from where to ‘dig deeper’ into the socio-
psychological underpinnings of the EOR of Third Level academics in Ireland.

5.10.3 Methodological Contribution

In response to combine different research philosophies to explore the employment
relationship, this study applied both ‘etic’ and ‘emic’ perspectives relating to an
employee’s psychological contract (Rousseau et al., 1998). While mostly quantitative in
structure, the efficacy of supporting quantitative data with the subjective, qualitative
accounts from participants offered a more fruitful interpretation of the EOR of academics.
While the quantitative data establishes the theoretical relationships between variables,
qualitative data provides personal meaning to these relationships.

From a metric viewpoint, the overall integrity of the quantitative research instrument
proved to be psychometrically sound. Each of the variables included in the study returned
strong, reliable internal consistencies. In particular, the Psychological Contract Inventory
developed by Rousseau (2000) proved to be a highly reliable instrument with which to
measure the construct. Only a few studies currently exist which have utilised the PCI as
the primary measure of the psychological contract. The results reported here contribute to
these studies and serve to further its utility as a standardised, ‘etic’ approach on which to
generalise about the employment exchange relationship. Finally, the application of Cluster
Analysis served as a powerful multivariate technique with which to ‘dig deeper’ and
unearth the underlying nature of exchange relationships held by academics. Rather than
treating the research sample as a ‘one size fits all’ approach, the derivation of separate
psychological contract types through the use of clustering affords the opportunity to analyse the differential effects these exchange types impart on work outcomes.

5.11 Implications for University Management

Some commentators have acknowledged that psychological contract research is subject to criticism when it comes to making practicable recommendations and guidelines for management. Conway et al (2005) note that the suggestions proffered to managers are at best cursory and “often appear to be made as afterthoughts to articles in the form of speculative ideas inferred from empirical findings” (p.157). Referring to a lack of concerted effort in the scientist-practitioner model of organisational science, Coyle-Shapiro and Shore (2007, p.30) submit that “more research needs to focus on solid principles based on our knowledge of HR, OB, and I/O, to address fundamental management concerns about the effective administration of the employee-organisation relationship”. In light of these sentiments and bearing in mind this study’s quantitative and qualitative findings, a number of recommendations are put forward for a University’s managerial hierarchy as possible issues to consider in the management and maintenance of the EOR. Two potential overarching recommendations are presented with the first offering a theoretical yet practical perspective, and from which the second recommendation is derived and discussed.

Measuring & Evaluating the Employee-Organisation Relationship

To begin, research indicates that employees experiencing different exchange relationships with their employer “hold different expectations for how they are to be managed as well as
what they owe their organisation” (Lepak and Boswell, 2012: 460). Similarly, Guzo et al (1994) further argue that messages imparted through HR practices can be interpreted quite differently and idiosyncratically by different individuals or groups of individuals in organisations. Expectations, according to Guzo and Noonan (1994) are communicated through human resource policies and practices which subsequently influence work attitudes and behaviours. To effect desirable attitudes, behaviours and performance among employees, organisations, and more specifically, the system of policies and procedures linked to human resource management and development practices; knowledge of the underlying characteristics of the EOR is vital (D’annunzio-Green and Francis, 2005) and from which the outcomes of such policies can be evaluated. Lepak et al (2012: 459) further assert: “the implementation of an HR practice should have a direct impact on all exposed to it” and consideration should be given as to the possible outcomes various HR policies and programmes have when individuals experience different employment relationships. This was evident from the two, very different employment relationships represented by the underlying psychological contract of academics unearthed in the present study. Therefore, it is important that the powers that be in a University organisation are familiar with the concept of the employee-organisation relationship and the constituent elements which define it.

This may seem a redundant recommendation given that management, and in particular the Human Resource function, is by its very nature, the purveyor of the employment relationship within an organisation and as such, understands the mechanisms which foster or mitigate exchange relations between employee and employer (Freese and Schalk, 1999). However, this study highlighted the benefit gained from applying a number of theoretical approaches to the measurement of the employee-organisation relationship. Additionally,
by integrating these perspectives vis-a-vis psychological and organisational support theories; as well as applying a series of multivariate statistical techniques, it was possible to partition out EOR profiles in order to have a fuller appreciation of the range of employment relationships employees perceive to have with their employer. Recall that a psychological contract based on relational obligations and socio-emotional exchanges as perceived by academics, had a strong positive explanatory effect on their job satisfaction and organisational commitment to the University.

This requires the development of an employee-organisation relationship barometer system which regularly measures and monitors the changes in the underlying dimensions characterising and driving the exchange relationship. Given that an employee can have multiple exchange relationships within the same company (Brandes et al., 2004; Cropanzano et al., 2005), such a system can be implemented to account for the whole organisation (University), a school or faculty within the University and possibly used to gauge the type of exchange relationship employees have with immediate heads of departments and co-workers. This study utilised a standardised measure of the employment psychological contract in order to generate a profile of the employment relationship of academics. It is recommended that a more particularistic measure representative of the ‘academic psychological contract’ be developed and administered on a regular basis which would offer a comparative measure of the employee-organisation relationship within and between institutions. Additionally, the use of open-ended survey questions that elicit employee interpretations of HR (or other) policies and practices should be used to provide useful insights into employee opinion (Paul, Niehoff and Turnley, 2000). Therefore, the capacity to determine the relative explanatory power different exchange relationship types impart on the workplace attitudes and behaviours of
academics, the utility of charting the changing nature of the EOR over time, and the opportunity to identify sources and causes of misunderstandings relating to beliefs and expectations can be noted to better inform policy development and revision. The results generated would need to be disseminated in open meetings with relevant employee groups and managers for the purpose open and transparent communication. Therefore, there is a responsibility on the part of management to get a sense as to the structural characteristics of the employment relationship present within a particular group so as to gauge the underlying nature of the exchange associated with it. The intentions of this would need to be properly communicated to all parties involved.

Creating a Culture of Organisational Support

A fundamental recommendation in the management of the employee-organisation relationship is the provision and maintenance of a supportive organisational environment. While this recommendation may appear aspirational and possibly unrealistic given the operational pressures Universities are exposed to, there is a strong argument for the creation and maintenance of a supportive employee culture.

Perceived organisational support is beneficial for organisations, managers, and employees (Eisenberger et al., 2011). Organisational support, as an all-inclusive construct relating to the necessary instrumental and socio-emotional resources to motivate staff, is the cornerstone of the theory. As Eisenberger et al (2011, p.211) further state that: “employees who feel supported experience greater well-being, are more positively orientated to the organisation, and behave in various ways to foster the interests of
managers and the organisation”. Recall the results of the quantitative element of this investigation demonstrated these sentiments to the extent that perceived organisational support operated as a salient variable in mitigating the negative effects of psychological contract breach. It was also shown that perceived organisational support was related to, and a manifestation of, psychological contract fulfilment. There is a strong evidence to show that how one feels in the work environment and the level and type of support that they receive, is related to the nature of relationship they hold with their employer. The question arises as to how this can be accomplished.

The qualitative results relayed a generally negative opinion of support perceived to be present in Universities, and participant responses pointed to many of the key areas where perceived organisational support is sourced and lacking. As perceived by the participants in this study, organisational support related to both tangible and non-tangible features of their work environment. Examples include insufficient research funding, poor communication from HR regarding the renewal of employment contracts, lack of support from immediate managers/heads of departments in dealing with personal issues, absence of recognition for research publications and research grant approval, the conflicting demands between producing high quality research and lecturing responsibilities and a general sense of inequity in the University system of policies and procedures. The meta-analysis conducted by Rhodes et al (2002) emphasised three salient antecedent factors which contribute to the establishment and maintenance of organisational support: 1. the role of fairness in terms of procedural and distributive justice, 2. support from management and immediate supervisors, and 3. organisational rewards and job conditions. Each of these factors came across from the qualitative accounts of academics and thus need review by University management.
5.12 Research Limitations

As is typical for most research, the present investigation is not exempt from certain limiting factors. The principle limitation lies with the cross-sectional nature of the investigation. While such surveys are advantageous in that a snapshot of large population of interest can be sampled and the relationships between variables quantified allowing for a certain degree of generalisability (Creswell, 2009), there are shortcomings with this approach.

Firstly, a cross-sectional study fails to capture changes in the variables of interest (Conway et al., 2005). Given that economic and organisational environments are in a constant state of flux (Rousseau, 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998), a cross-sectional survey fails to capture the impact such changes bring to bear on the nature and contents of the psychological contract and the employment relationship in general. A psychological contract is a dynamic construct and as needs and external forces change, so do the expectations and needs of employees (Schein, 1980). This study does not account for temporal changes in the EOR of psychological contract.

A second limitation associated with cross-sectional studies relates to the issue of self-report bias, otherwise referred to as social desirability. This occurs when individuals tend to under-report attitudes and behaviours deemed inappropriate by researchers or other observers (such as employers/managers), and are inclined to over-estimate such opinions viewed as acceptable (Donaldson and Grant-Vallone, 2002). Social desirability according to Donaldson et al (2002, p. 247): “is particularly likely in organisational behaviour.
research because employees often believe there is at least a remote possibility that their employer could gain access to their responses”. Given the focus of this investigation, academics reporting their personal opinions on the salient and somewhat emotive aspects of their relationship with their University may be consciously or unconsciously aware of this effect and thus incorporate it into their responses.

Closely related to the issue of self-report bias is the problem of common method variance which is a side effect generated by applying the same data collection/data analysis methods to a set of responses (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee and Podsakoff, 2002). It refers to the sources of variance or measurement error that is a result of the content of survey items, the measurement scales and response format used to as well as the general context of the survey. Taken together, both self-report bias and method variance issues can dilute the accuracy of relationships between variables and thus lead to questionable conclusions. However, it is hoped that the incorporation of a qualitative element to the analysis goes some way to reducing such measurement effects.

### 5.13 Directions for Future Research

A number of interesting avenues for furthering research into the psychological contract experiences of academics arose from this study.

**The Infused Ideological Psychological Contract**

A line of research has developed in the past decade which extends the traditional bi-dimensional interpretative framework of psychological contract theory relating to the role
that ‘professional ideology’ plays in explaining the employment relationship (e.g. Bunderson, 2001; Burr and Thomson, 2002; Thompson and Bunderson, 2003). Burr and Thomson (2002) assert that while the transactional and relational forms of employment exchange relate to the particular beliefs about exchange obligations within the dyadic relationship between employee and employer, this approach takes no account of emerging employment relationships and thus, emerging psychological contracts, which incorporates a transpersonal component linking the employee, employer and the wider society. Bunderson (2001) asserts that professional employees reflect a pluralistic community such that they have at the same time both professional and administrative role obligations within organisations. Beyond the transactional-relational dimension of exchange, Bunderson (2001) and Thompson and Bunderson (2003) argue that ‘ideological currency’ offers a third dimension to the employment relationship of professional. As Thompson et al (2003, p. 574) assert: “ideological currency takes the form of perceived organisational obligations to support the cause or principle and, thus, to give employees legitimate claim to participate in the cause. These commitments are implicitly exchanged at the nexus of the individual-organisation relationship”. For these authors, psychological contract violations need not originate solely from perceptions of direct personal mistreatment by an employer, but also through the perceptions that one’s employer has abandoned its original mission and purpose.

This was evident in the responses from a number of participants who alluded to the fact that the ‘honour and integrity’ of their University had been sacrificed in the face of market system pressures and as such, they felt ‘let down’ by their University. Many feel that the environment within which they work had altered dramatically over the past twenty years and has created adverse outcomes for both staff and institution to the degree that conflict
exists between ‘professional’ and ‘administrative’ ideologies (Bunderson, 2001). Academics ascribe the changing structure of academic life and hence, a ‘changed institutional environment’ within which they work as having a deleterious effect on the nature of their work and job satisfaction, the level of trust in their University and the sense of ‘justice’ in the employment relationship. The embracement of bureaucratic-focused systems and performance-related management structures and polices in third level institutions has had a negative impact on the perceptions of academics so much so that the idealised essence of a University seems to be at odds with the demands of a rationalised organisational system. Issues related to promotion, managerial prerogatives and the sense that the academic profession has been ‘diluted’ were salient concerns for individuals. Such sentiments are cogently captured in the following observations:

‘As Universities become more market driven and students become more clientelistic, academic staff are increasingly undermined. and is a fundamental change in the implied contract between the university and its academics This is demoralising to morale’.

‘You have no idea how destructive the ethos in my University is to any real belief in the value of education. We are not educators, but cogs in a machine, driven by a bloated managerial structure that adheres to management textbooks and ideas that are inapplicable to education’.

Early empirical evidence supports the contention that an ideological psychological contract dimension explains additional variance over and above that explained by transactional and relational contract obligations (e.g. Bal and Vink, 2011). Therefore, further research into the nature and explanatory power of University employee psychological contracts should incorporate an ideological dimension.
The Network of Employee Exchange Relationships

Another potential area worth investigating is the network of exchange relationships an employee experiences in an organisation. As discussed previously, employees do not operate in a relationship vacuum. Different professional and social relationships evolve between individuals, groups and departments within an organisational structure and as such multiple exchange relationships arise (Brandes et al., 2004; Cropanzano et al., 2005). Each of these exchange relationships are characterised by their own particular sets of beliefs, obligations and expectations which define and guide the relationship. The qualitative data included in this study provides a useful insight into the various exchange relationships a sample of academics perceive to hold in a University setting. In fact, many of the participants criticised the fact that the survey only focused on the overall organisation/University and excluded any reference to faculties, schools and departments, to which they had various loyalties and allegiances over and above University support.

Therefore, the possibility for multiple psychological contracts to develop as a result of this multiple exchange reality is worth exploring. For example, Cole, Schaninger and Harris (2002) developed a conceptual, multi-level representation of the various exchange relationships employees’ potentially experience within an organisation. These include exchange relationships with co-workers (Co-worker/Team-member exchange), with immediate supervisors/managers (Leader-member Exchange) and with the total organisation (Organisation-Member Exchange/Perceived Organisational Support). Each of these exchange types have been researched at one time or another, however there is an opportunity to apply this conceptual model to real-world settings to disseminate a wider spectrum of exchange relationship forms and psychological contract types. This would
complement the aforementioned recommendation regarding the measurement and evaluation of the exchange relationship.

*Multiple Support Perspectives*

An interesting focus for future research relates to the issue of organisational support itself. The quantitative results supported the hypothesis that the perception of organisational/University support operates as an important intervening variable in the exchange relationship. But what of the potential effects of other sources of support? Analysis of the qualitative data revealed that organisational support is all but one form of support in a work environment. Many participants emotively distinguished between support from their university, support from their head of department and support from their peers in the same department or from other faculties. Each form and source of support will have varying particular levels of transactional and socio-emotional qualities (Eisenberger et al., 2011). What would be interesting is to describe the particular elements which are perceived to define departmental, supervisor and co-worker/peer support and determine their relative explanatory power on the attitudes and behaviours of employees. For example, a recent study by Simosi (2012) of new employees at a service company demonstrated that all three forms of support independently contributed to explaining newcomers’ level of affective and normative commitment. Furthermore, the quality of perceived organisational support moderated the relationship between supervisor and peer support referents on commitment and training transfer.
The present study uncovered the existence of two different psychological contract relationships. The analysis further confirmed the differential relationship each exchange relationship type had with a number of work-related attitudes. However, the analysis did not reveal why there are two distinct EORs among a sample of University lecturers. This highlights both a limitation of the study and offers an impetus to delve deeper as to why this is the case. Two potential areas which could shed some light on this would be to explore the role of individual differences.

The first individual difference approach is concerned with the influence of ‘exchange ideology’ (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Associated with the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), and derived from perceived organisational support, exchange ideology according to Eisenberger et al (2011) “refers to employees’ belief that it is appropriate and useful to base their concern with the organisation’s welfare and work effort on how favourably they have been treated by the organisation” (p.56). In effect, the theory suggests that individuals with strong exchange ideologies are more inclined to invoke the reciprocity norm and thus contribute more to assist their organisation in achieving its goals. A strong employee exchange ideology is likely to result in greater job satisfaction, effort and organisational commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Redmand and Snape, 2005; Eisenberger et al., 2011). In contrast, those with a weak exchange ideology provide more or less the same level of commitment and effort regardless (Redman et al., 2005). For example, in a study of postal workers in the United States, Eisenberger et al (2001) found that the strength of a postal worker’s exchange ideology moderated the relationship between perceived organisational support with affective
commitment and in-role performance. That is, compared to weak exchange ideology employees, individuals perceiving to be treated favourably by their employer resulted in a stronger exchange ideology and thus reported positive attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. By extension, it could be inferred that past (or current) experiences of breach or fulfilment in one’s psychological contract influences the strength of exchange ideology, which in turn determines the type of exchange relationship one holds.

The second individual difference perspective focuses on the role of personality, and in particular the influence of Locus of Control. It has been suggested that the personality and attribution process of an employee, and more specifically an employee’s Locus of Control, may be a determinant of many work variables such as organisational commitment, job performance and job satisfaction (Coleman, Irving and Cooper, 1999; Luthans, Baak and Taylor, 1987; Spector, 1997). Locus of Control theory, developed by Julian Rotter (1966) concerns people’s generalised expectancies that they can or cannot control reinforcements and events in their lives (Spector and O’Connell, 1994). It refers to the tendency to believe that environmental events are within one’s own control, as opposed to being controlled by luck or fate” (Keenan and McBain, 1979) or under the control of powerful others (Rotter, 1990). Those who control their own reinforcements and environments are referred to as “Internals” while those who see their environment and personal outcomes determined under the auspices of others are called “Externals” (Selart, 2005).

Previous research has highlighted the significant correlation between locus of control and many work variables (Luthans, et a., 1987; Spector, 1988; Furnham & Drakeley, 1993; Coleman, Irving and Cooper, 1999). Given that an important function of a psychological
contract is the capacity for employees to monitor and exert a level of control in the exchange relationship, it would be interesting to explore the relationship between an individual’s psychological contract and Work Locus of Control. As far as I am aware, only one study exists (e.g. Raja et al., 2004) which integrated both theories. In that study, Raja et al (2004) found that compared to internals, employees exhibiting an external locus demonstrated lower levels of commitment to their organisational and were less inclined to hold a relational psychological. Further, Raja et al (2004) also found that perceptions of breach and violation in one’s psychological contract were significantly correlated with the type of LOC such that externals reported higher levels of breach and violation perceptions. It is possible that the nature of one’s sense of control in the workplace influences the type of exchange relationship held with the employer. Further exploratory research is needed in the area linking employee personalities to their psychological contracts.

A final recommendation relates to a suitable measurement of the employment psychological contract. As noted in the research limitations section, closed-ended, a priori guided surveys represent the most common approach for measuring the construct, but not the most representative medium for such investigations and is prone to measurement error issues. Further, the psychological contract is a ‘personal’ experience, based on subjective interpretations. Such insights cannot be garnered from quantitative perspectives alone. The single, open-ended response question included on the survey instrument administered proved to be very beneficial in providing insightful, subjective opinions academics have regarding their experiences of the employment relationship.
5.14 Conclusion

The landscape of the third level sector in Ireland is at a crossroads with new forms of institutional structures emerging on the horizon. Responding to the need to provide and maintain a more manageable and efficient public sector, the Higher Education (HE) sector in Ireland is undergoing a dramatic process of system re-alignment and institutional rationalisation with aspirations of making the provision of further education more competitive, inclusive, internationally focused and ultimately more economically viable (The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, 2011). The vocabulary of the market-driven system as expressed in terms of mergers, alliances and incorporations are words not normally associated with academia, but have now become commonly applied expressions to a changing organisational language in educational settings. These system changes are undoubtedly impacting the work environment of the academic profession which requires exploration.

The findings of this study add to and extend our knowledge of the linkages between psychological contracts and employee attitudes. In particular, the investigation draws attention to the general work environment of University academics in the Republic of Ireland and the state of the academic-university relationship. In terms of psychological contract theory, this study demonstrated the explanatory power a psychological contract imparts on work attitudes in academic environs, and highlighted the role of reciprocity as an important underlying mechanism facilitating the employee-organisation exchange relationship. Understanding the underlying dimensional nature of an academic’s PC as well as evaluating how well the University is perceived to be fulfilling or breaching the terms of the contract provides a useful insight. Further, this investigation demonstrated
that how one is supported by their employer remains a significant determinant of workplace satisfaction, commitment, general well-being.

The evolving relationship between third level institutions and the national government brings with it new expectations that need to be met and new pressures that require sufficient support systems to effectively manage and fulfil these expectations. Concomitantly, these obligations translate down to the individual level of the employment relationship. To sufficiently fulfil the emerging expectations placed on their shoulders by their University; academics need to believe that they too have the necessary support with which to fulfil their responsibilities. In effect, there exists a psychological contract of University support.
References


Appendix A

Copy of Invitation E-mail to Participate in Study
Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Finian O’Driscoll and I am a PhD student at the Department of Personnel and Employment Relations, Kemmy Business School, University of Limerick.

I am also a lecturer in Management and Economics at the Shannon College of Hotel Management, Shannon, Co. Clare.

I would greatly appreciate it if you could take a few moments to read the following:

**Study Focus:**
- The focus of my research is that of the employment relationship of academic staff at each of the seven Universities in Ireland.
- Specifically, I am interested in exploring the nature and function of an employee’s (academic) Psychological Contract with their employer, the University.
- I would like to find out how an academic’s psychological contract impacts and influences certain aspects of the employment relationship with their University. (See link to survey at bottom of this e-mail.)

This research is important given the changing/changed social, economic and political environment within which Ireland’s Third Level sector currently operates. It hopes to explore the nature of the employment contract through the ‘lens of the psychological contract’ in an environment of constrained resources which has impacted all sections of society, not least Higher Education.

Additionally, this study and research serves as an opportunity for academic staff to offer their own opinions and perceptions regarding their employment relationship and to voluntarily participate in a large-scale study unique to this sector of the public sector.

[This research has been granted ‘Ethical Approval’ by the Research Ethics Council at the University of Limerick]

**What is a Psychological Contract?**

*The Psychological Contract Defined:*
In our work lives, we have certain beliefs and expectations regarding our employer's obligations to each one of us. Likewise, we may feel that our employer has expectations regarding our obligations to the organisation. These perceived mutual obligations can take many different forms and types that we may believe are important for a healthy and successful employment relationship. Such beliefs, expectations and obligations can be implicitly present or explicitly known between one or the other or both parties in the
employment relationship. As such, I am interested in the nature of the ‘Psychological Contract’. The following two descriptions explicate the essence of the contract:

a. A Psychological Contract refers to an individual’s belief regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between the focal person and another party. Key issues here include the belief that a promise or commitment has been made and a consideration offered in exchange for it, binding the parties to some set of reciprocal obligations (Rousseau, 1989)

b. A Psychological Contract can also be explained in terms of the idiosyncratic set of reciprocal expectations held by employees concerning their obligations (i.e. what they will do for the employer) and their entitlements i.e. what they expect to receive in return (McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998)

Note:

- This survey will be available to you online throughout the month of February, 2012
- The survey should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.
- All information contained in this survey will be treated with the utmost level of confidentiality and highest ethical research standards.
- There are no personal or other identifiers/trackers linked to this survey. This is a completely 'blind survey' on the part of the researcher.
- Total Anonymity is guaranteed.
- Your voluntary participation is greatly appreciated

THE SURVEY
Please click the following link to open the survey:

http://freeonlinesurveys.com/rendersurvey.asp?sid=5riixuc38x3se1i1022898

Thank you very much for your time and contribution. It is greatly appreciated.

Mise le mèas,

Finian O’Driscoll
Appendix B

Copy of Research Instrument
A Study of the Employee-Organisation Relationship Experienced by Academic Staff in Ireland’s Universities

A Psychological Contract-Based Analysis

The survey should take no longer than **15 minutes to complete**.

All information contained in this survey will be treated with the utmost level of confidentiality and highest ethical research standards

**Study Purpose:** To investigate aspects of the employment relationship between academic staff and their employing institution focusing on the role of the ‘psychological contract’.

**Study Context:** In our work lives, we have certain beliefs and expectations regarding our employer's obligations to each one of us. Likewise, we may feel that our employer has expectations regarding our obligations to the organisation. These perceived mutual obligations can take many different forms and types that we may believe are important for a healthy and successful employment relationship. Such beliefs, expectations and obligations can be implicitly present or explicitly known between **one or the other or both** parties in the employment relationship.

**Psychological Contract Defined:**
A Psychological Contract refers to an individual’s belief regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between the focal person and another party. Key issues here include the belief that a promise or commitment has been made and a consideration offered in exchange for it, binding the parties to some set of reciprocal obligations.
(Source: Rousseau, 1989)

A Psychological Contract can also be explained in terms of the idiosyncratic set of reciprocal expectations held by employees concerning their obligations (i.e. what they will do for the employer) and their entitlements (i.e. what they expect to receive in return).
(Source: McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher, 1998)

**Structure of the Survey:**
This survey is divided into four sections denoted by the letters A, B, C and D

- **Section A** relates to general background and demographic information about you
- **Section B** focuses on perceived obligations made by the University to you
- **Section C** focuses on perceived obligations you have made to the University
- **Section D** focuses on a range of attitudes held by the academic staff member towards the University institution, the job, and aspects of the employment exchange relationship.
- **There is an optional open-ended question for further comments from you**
- **When complete please click the ‘submit’ link.**

  **Thank you very much for your time and contribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section A: General Background Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Please indicate from the following categories which best describes your current role at the University:

   Academic (Managerial Only Role)   O
   Academic (Lecturing & Research Role)   O
   Academic (Lecturing Only Role)    O
   Academic (Research Only Role)    O
   Other Position                    O

   Please Specify:________________________

2. Employment Status: (Please choose one of the following):

   Permanent Whole time    O
   Temporary Contract     O
   Part-time              O
   Other                  O

   Please Specify:________________________

3. How long have worked at your University? (Please choose one of the following):

   1 < 5 years          O
   5 < 10 years         O
   10 < 15 years        O
   15 < 20 years        O
   Over 20 years        O

4. **Gender:**  Male O     Female O
5. Age Profile
Please indicate your age from one of the following categories:

20 - 29   O
30 – 39   O
40 – 49   O
50 – 59   O
60 +      O

**Section B: University’s Commitments and Obligations offered to you**

In an employment relationship, it can happen that we believe that our employer has made certain commitments to us. This understanding can come about for various reasons and from various sources.

Consider your relationship with the University. To what extent has your University made the following promises, commitments or obligations to you? Please answer each of the following items using the following rating scale: Not at all, Slightly, Somewhat, Moderately and To a great extent

**Q1. A job only as long as the University needs me**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>To a great extent</th>
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</table>

**Q2. Makes no commitments to retain me in the future**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>To a great extent</th>
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**Q3. Short-term employment**

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<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>To a great extent</th>
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</table>
Q4. A job for a short-time only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>To a great extent</th>
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Q5. Limited involvement in the University

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<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>To a great extent</th>
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Q6. Training me only for my current position

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<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
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<th>Moderately</th>
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Q7. A position limited to specific, well-defined responsibilities

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<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
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<th>Moderately</th>
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Q8. Require me to perform only a limited set of duties

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<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
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<th>Moderately</th>
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Q9. Concern for my personal welfare

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<thead>
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<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>To a great extent</th>
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Q10. Be responsive to my personal concerns and well-being

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<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
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Q11. Make decisions with my interests in mind

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<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
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<th>Moderately</th>
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</table>

Q12. Concern for my long-term well-being

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
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Q13. Secure employment

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<th>Not at all</th>
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<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>To a great extent</th>
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Q14. Salaries, wages and benefits I can count on

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<th>Not at all</th>
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<th>Moderately</th>
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Q15. Steady employment

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Q16. Stable benefits for employees' families

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Section C: Employee Commitments and Obligations offered to the University

As an employee of the University, you may feel that you make certain commitments to the University. Consider your relationship with the University. To what extent have you made the following promises, commitments or obligations to your University? Please answer each of the following items using the following rating scale:
Not at all, Slightly, Somewhat, Moderately and To a great extent

Q1. Leave at any time I choose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
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<th>Moderately</th>
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Q2. I have no future obligations to this University

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Not at all</th>
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<th>Moderately</th>
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Q3. Quit whenever I want

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Q4. I have no future obligations to this University

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<th>Not at all</th>
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Q5. I am under no obligation to remain with this University

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Q6. Perform only required tasks

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Q7. Do only what I am paid to do

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Q8. Fulfill limited number of responsibilities

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Q9. Only perform specific duties I agreed to when I was initially employed

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<th>Not at all</th>
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Q10. Make personal sacrifices for this University

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<th>Not at all</th>
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<th>Moderately</th>
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Q11. Take the University's concerns personally

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<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
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<th>Moderately</th>
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Q12. Commit myself personally to this University

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</table>
**Section D: Work Attitudes**

The following list details a range of attitudes and feelings you may have toward the University, your job and the general employment relationship with the institution. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each question.

### Your Commitment to the University

**Q1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my professional career with this University**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</table>

**Q2. This University has a great deal of personal meaning for me**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</table>
Q3. I feel a strong sense of 'belonging' to my University

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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Q4. I feel 'emotionally attached' to this University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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Q5. I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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Q6. I really feel as if this University's problems are my own

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
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Q7. I feel an obligation to remain with the University

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
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Q8. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave the University now

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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Q9. I would feel guilty if I left this University now

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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Q10. This University deserves my loyalty

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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</table>

Q11. I would not leave the University now as I have a sense of obligation to the people in it

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q12. I owe a great deal to this University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Perceptions of University Support

Q1. My University is willing to help me if ever I need a special favour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2. If given the opportunity, my University would take advantage of me

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q3. My University would forgive an honest mistake on my part

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q4. Help is available from my University when I have a problem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q5. My University strongly considers my goals and values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q6. My University really cares about my wellbeing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q7. My University shows very little concern for me®

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q8. My University cares about my opinions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My University</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Satisfaction with your Job

Q1. In general, I like the job that I do

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like the job</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2. All in all, I am satisfied with my job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q3. In general, I am not satisfied with my job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am not satisfied</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q4. My job gives a great sense of personal satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This job gives</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation of Your Psychological Contract

Q1. Almost all the promises made by my University during recruitment have been kept so far

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promises kept</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2. I feel that my University has come through in fulfilling the promises made to me when I was hired

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promises fulfilled</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q3. So far my University has done an excellent job of fulfilling its promises to me

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q4. I have not received everything promised to me in exchange for my work contributions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q5. My University has broken many of its promises to me even though I've upheld my side of the deal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q6. I feel a great deal of anger toward my University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q7. I feel betrayed by this University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q8. I feel that this University has violated the contract between us

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q9. I feel extremely frustrated by how I have been treated by this University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Disagree or Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q10. Overall, how well does your University fulfill its commitments to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>To a great extent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q11. In general, how well does your University live up to its promises to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>To a great extent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q12. Overall, how well have you fulfilled your commitments to your University?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>To a great extent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q13. In general, how well do you live up to your promises to your University?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>To a great extent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Open-Ended Question

If there is anything else you would like to comment on or describe with regard to your employment relationship with the University, please consider the following question. Use the space given on the next page to input your thoughts and feelings or type your response and attach it with this survey in the envelope supplied.

Question:

Think of an incident or situation that you experienced where you felt that the University ‘did’ or ‘did not’ come through in fulfilling or meeting an obligation you believed was owing to you.

Please describe the incident/situation and how it might have affected your feelings, thoughts or perceptions regarding your relationship with your University.

Thank you very much for taking the time and effort to complete this survey. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

Finian O’Driscoll
Phd Student
Dept. Of Personnel and Employment Relations
Kemmy Business School
University of Limerick

February, 2012
Appendix C

Probability Plots of Variables

JOB SATISFACTION

AFFECTIVE ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT
NORMATIVE ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

NORMAL P-P Plot of NC

PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

NORMAL P-P Plot of POS

368
PERCEPTION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT BREACH

PERCEPTIONS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT VIOLATION
UNIVERSITY PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT FULFILMENT:

UNIVERSITY TRANSACTIONAL OBLIGATIONS
UNIVERSITY RELATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

Normal P-P Plot of UniRelational

ACADEMIC TRANSACTIONAL OBLIGATIONS

Normal P-P Plot of AcademicTransactional
ACADEMIC RELATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

Normal P-P Plot of AcademicRelational

Expected Cum Prob

Observed Cum Prob

0.0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1.0
## Appendix D

### Percentage Breakdown of Research Sample based on Extracted Clusters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background Variable</th>
<th>Mutually Low/Weak Obligations</th>
<th>Mutually High/Strong Relational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (218)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (227)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 &lt; 5 years (95)</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 &lt; 10 years (132)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 &lt; 15 years (97)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 &lt; 20 years (52)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 20 years (69)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Status</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent/Whole Time (344)</td>
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<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary Contract (68)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Time (26)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (3)</td>
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<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Role/Position</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial (41)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturing &amp; Research (360)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturing-only (18)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research-only (8)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Position (18)</td>
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<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age Profile</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 29 years (14)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 39 years (114)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 49 years (168)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 59 years (125)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 60 years (23)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Values in parentheses relate to individual category sample size.
Appendix E

Qualitative Written Responses to Open-ended Question

1. Continuing on an Occasional pay basis after having a contract. My teaching load is 2-3x that of the rest of the staff, significant difficulties would arise for this department if I left. While the department has been very good to me the college had made no effort to recongise me and the work that is done. This leaves me poorly disposed to needs or wants of the college.

2. I was promised a review of my contractual situation on the appointment of a new college president. On the new president being appointed last year, I contacted HR with a query. They have yet to even respond. At the same time, my work load keeps increasing. Various programmes in this college only function because contract and occasional staff go above and beyond the call of duty for the sake of a college that doesn't even show them a basic level of courtesy and professionalism.

3. I was promised a specific teaching load which is now 50% higher. I was promised research support which has been slashed. Pay cuts, other staff ducking work leaving more for those that do the job, the list goes on. UCD is a joke institution now.

4. My Head of Department has been incredibly helpful in terms of career advice. I received a number of offers from other universities outside Ireland and am leaving because of the economic climate here (not because I am unhappy with my current role); when I asked for advice my Head of Department helped me to clarify which of the options might be best for me at this time. I have been at my current post only a short time,however I was at another post in Higher Education for a number of years before that. If I had filled in this survey at that time I would have given a radically different (and far more negative response). In my current role, concerns about job security are largely as the result of the current economic climate, rather than the way the department is run.

5. on-going financial support for the completion of research (PhD) project

6. Perception was given of more freedom for outside contract work, this was pulled back on when entered 3 year fixed term contract

7. The cronyism in Ireland is something a lot of international faculty are not used to. The overall system is more tribal and devoid of meritocracy than anywhere I have experienced previously.
Whether it is about getting research grants, awards or promotions, the system here is dishonest and ethically corrupt. My trust in the Irish system is very low and this might explain why most international faculty or people with any level of career mobility decide not to stay for more than a few years. Additionally, I question the value or robustness of your survey findings since it is not the university per se to me but the Irish culture and system.

8. The University and colleagues tried to take advantage of my lack of knowledge and lack of experience of how things worked when I came here first, despite being given a senior role. This was not very pleasant. I suppose I was in a senior enough position to be able to deal with it and the University did support me when I needed it. Although many of the commitments made to me were filled eventually, there was some lack of clarity in areas and it was more work to get this sorted out than it needed to be. Also I find that my role is a thankless task. I enjoy many aspects of my work but because of duties find it difficult to focus on these. This is a pity because these are real strengths and could strongly help my employer and were the main reason I was hired in the first place.

9. time and resources promised for developing a research portfolio

10. I had a contract with all annual salaries specified exactly; they broke that promise when all salaries were reduced, without any discussion. In the contract I have annual salary increments; they forget them ever year, and I have to ask for them and then get them a few months too late.

11. As a young Lecturer my University has exceeded expectations in terms of support for my new role as lecturer and researcher.

12. At times, basic communication skills and understanding of different roles and priorities in different units or sectors of the university can be lacking, which can lead to people working in silos or at cross purposes, and the frustrations that that can produce. In general the organisation operates in a top-down mode, which is not always conducive to identifying and tapping the wide range of experience and talents that are present throughout the organisation.

13. By enlarge the university is supportive. There are anomalies such as not funding H Dip in University Teaching for the first three years which acts as a barrier to full filling my education role within the university. The university engages in PMDS (performance goal setting) but it is just a paper exercise with little real interest in improving staff performance. Having said that I think it is up to the individual to identify and pursue their own objectives for development through their individual schools.
14. By giving me a 5 year contract this year, after inferring that I would be in line for it, the university 'came through' in terms of meeting an expectation that I believe was owing to me given the number of years I have been involved with the university in terms of research. To be honest my expectations were not great. Ultimately, because of its public service nature I don't think fairness necessarily works here. In my previous career in the private sector hard work usually resulted in reward in terms of promotion, salary etc... In this environment I think you work hard because you care about what you do and not because you expect anything particular in return. Because my experience to date tells me that people who work extremely hard and those who don't work so hard, in this environment 

15. Changes to expectations and collegiate environments - especially regarding aspects such as sabbatical leave and (currently) performance management procedures - in which I have not only strongly disagreed with university management's approach, but have also felt left down and excluded from the decision-making process. Documents and decisions have materialised from "on high" to be presented to academics as more or less fait accomplis, and immense effort is required to change or protest any of these decisions even when they are impractical, inefficient, damaging, or simply not implementable.

16. Did - PhD funding
Did not - another department administrator has proved difficult for all in the department to deal with (she can be quite aggressive) and due to my lack of job security I find it harder to handle.

17. I am not being paid at the correct point on the scale due to the requirement embargo despite being appropriately qualified. I feel frustrated and taken advantage of as I know of people who do less and get paid more. I have worked very hard for my university and I feel my value is not appreciated.

18. I can't think of any particular incident. I have only worked in this university for the past five months but it has been a thoroughly positive experience overall. My immediate team and head are highly collegial and supportive. Perhaps, at times I am under a lot of pressure with the sheer volume of the workload but that was made clear at the selection stage. Overall, I would say that my school within the university has made me feel at the heart of what we do since I started. It has also lived up to its promises/expectations regarding work life here. Sorry that I cannot be more specific!

19. I have no personal issue but I have seen an ex-colleague being unfairly treated and has since left and is a great loss to the Research area involved......i wonder does it pay to ask hard questions???

20. I understand that the 'summer' period is supposed to provide us with time for research. However, aside from graduate teaching, some of which is to be expected over this period, the university generates an awful lot of time-consuming non-academic work which requires attention for much of
this period. First makes me believe that the university does not understand either what it is supposed to be doing or what academic staff are can reasonably be expected to do. Second it makes me believe that the university is not concerned to meet its obligations around things like annual leave, and thirdly, because there is still significant pressure to produce research, and career development depends on it, if feels as if the job is too big and unreasonable demands are being made, with academic staff being a

21. I was not contracted for two months one summer but because one of my roles involved being involved in recruitment of students I ended up having to deal with these issues over the summer at my own cost. This left me feeling as if I was taken for granted but also as if I was asked to go over and above what fulltime permanent staff were asked to do.

22. It is not so much the university but my head of department/school who hired me. I left a permanent job in another institution to join the current institution where I was promised more time to spend on research and more PhDs to supervise. Since I am only on a 3 year contract I cannot supervise any PhDs or research students. And I am teaching more modules to bigger class sizes than I had in my previous institution, leaving very little time (apart from my own time) to do research. I feel very let down. There is no mention of whether my contract will be continued after the 3 years are up, leaving me quite insecure in the job and unable to voice my concerns openly - quite stressful!

23. Motivation is effected negatively by the unknown-ness of job security - I have been here for 4 yrs but never know from year to year if I will be re-employed - this causes a unsettledness in looking for something more stable at times....

24. My senior colleagues have been very happy to meet me to see how I'm getting on and how my plans are going, even though they are very busy - supportive.

25. poor office equipment (for example a computer 5 years old). Poor support sturctures - for example getting to know colleagues in other dept.s Very poor administrative support - I seem to spend my days preping for teaching and completing admin with very little time to do research! I find this very frustrating, particularly when I'm employed to do both. It leaves me vulnerable when my role and output is reviewed - it results in me having to work 13 - 14 hour days just to cover all basis. It's really not sustainable!

26. Promotions process from lecturer below the bar to above the bar has been stopped. I expected to be at a high grade at this point.

27. release of details to media
28. Start-up money for research that was promised was much lower than expected and had to spend within a year. However, the first year was heavily loaded with teaching obligations with almost no time for setting up a research group.

29. Teaching allocation - not unique to me: we are all over extended Research and sabbatical - it upset me that because I am the last in it appears that I will always be on the bottom rung within my discipline, irrespective of comparative performance and eligibility to apply. Also, as Universities become more market driven and students become more clientelistic, academic staff are increasingly undermined. This is demoralising. I'm not sure about the use of the term University in this survey as the University as an institution appears to be becoming increasingly disconnected from staff at all levels, including some of the lower management staff. While direct superiors may be supportive, this does not always mean that the University is. I think that loyalty nowadays is more to students than to colleagues.

30. The incident I have in mind is a personal effort at head of school level to seek funding to retain my services in a new position following restructuring. Not legally obliged at all but a measure of the value of my prior and potential contribution. Too often good staff in temporary or fixed term contracts are neglected in the University whilst some on very secure contracts underperform or do not collaborate with colleagues. The incident described above was an effort by an individual manager to do what a good HR system should do - retain talent and reward performance. This individual 'intervention' to remedy a bad HR system succeeded in making me feel valued. However, for the University it succeeds in increasing my commitment to the individual manager rather than to the institution.

31. The University cancelled a promotion process that was almost complete. I had applied for promotion under a benchmarked system. I felt the university should have completed the promotion round and provided feedback on applications. The ease with which the University cancelled this, thus reneging - I felt - on its obligations to staff, made me question any loyalty I had to the University as an institution.

32. This comment may not be relevant for this particular section but I would like to note that even though many early-career lecturers/researchers are on short-term contracts with little or no future job security, they still work extremely hard securing funding/taking on extra responsibilities/writing and researching above and beyond what their contract expects them to do. This will, of course, benefit their CV but all this hard work largely goes unnoticed and is unlikely to have any impact on their contract being extended due to the employment moratorium. Also, the very hefty pension-levy payments by short-term contract staff who will never see a state pension is a disgrace. Personally, seeing money disappear from my account each month to tax me for having a pension that I will never get to use.
33. This is not quite the answer you're looking for (as it is in response to a question that wasn't asked), but in all of answers above I would distinguish between the strong level departmental level of support and commitment I have felt, while the institutional and human resources structures of the university have remained more distant due to my contract status.

34. Was promised a permanent contract after my 3-year fixed-term contract position finishes. This didn't happen due to the HEA employment stop. Now on another fixed-term contract.

35. We had a shaky start. I have been offered the position I am having now, but one of the other candidates appealed this - and I was left in the dark about the nature, the possible outcomes and the situation in general for full 4 months, while I had already had to sign off the contract with my former university.

36. A mistake was made with my contract at the HR level that had adverse financial implications for me; the university asked me to take lower pay due to an issue in their own management. Though I successfully contested this, the event stunned me and caused me to re-evaluate the employee approach that I had assumed any employer would have.

37. A situation had been developing for some time within my 'unit'. My line management had consistently stated in three previous reviews (over almost three years) that I was the busiest researcher in the unit, along with a set of additional teaching and supervision responsibilities for the department to which we were attached. However, if making this assessment, they never seemed to allow for this to impact negatively on my pursuit of a PhD. My regular weekend work for the unit was rarely if ever acknowledged, yet my lack of PhD output was always questioned. Towards the end of the third year of my contract, my mental health began to suffer significantly. Despite medical assessments of the need to take some time off, I continued in work but exploded one day, at my manager. Nothing profane.

38. As a fixed term worker on a COID, I had to fight to get the same rights as a permanent employee (in this case fees paid for further studies in the University). However, the fees were paid and I felt appreciative of that. Generally, fixed term workers are treated as second class citizens and little different from postgraduates.

39. Despite securing hundreds of thousands of euro in research monies, producing high quality peer reviewed publications senior management in the Department I am has passed over my teaching and research area on 2 occasions in decisions about future hiring. I now see that my top-quality high performance research (and teaching in this department) are not recognised or valued by this senior management.

40. Failure to protect staff (not me but known to me) from known bullies Attempts to unilaterally block increments Stopping of standard career progression.
41. Given the current level of funding at third level it is probable that my current situation is not at all unusual. I teach (both lectures and tutorials) almost twice as many hours as permanent staff members in my Department. For these I am paid a flat hourly rate. In addition, I spend several hours a week on administrative tasks as well as being available for student consultation: I do not receive any payment for this time. Although I have been teaching here for seven years, and despite several 'promises' that my position would be regularised, I do not, nor ever have had, a written contract. Without the experience, goodwill and commitment of part time lecturers like myself this university would immediately cease to be a teaching institution; while there is personal appreciation for this com

42. Has not provided recognition and necessary support for large grant and highly successful new course that I established. This has resulted in a significant higher work load that has had a negative impact on ability to follow own research and development

43. I am concerned at the increasing drive toward 'applied' research that is coming downstream from funding bodies and threatens academic freedom / devalues the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake which, in my opinion, is the very essence of an university

44. I asked the HR department for help in dealing with pension rights. I got no reply.

45. I got arrested for a personal misdemeanor due to a mental health problem I had not address. The university were really great in helping me through the issues that needed to addressed.

46. I studied for my PhD while working full time. The University was very helpful in paying the fees and allowing several sabbaticals in order to complete the course.

47. I'm not sure that your survey properly captures the nature of my particular experience. In large part 'the university' is an abstract as far as I'm concerned. There is an administration with which I have little contact most of the time. My day-to-day dealings are entirely within a specific school. That school is currently run by a ruthless, self-serving head of school whom I wouldn't trust as far as I can throw him - and, as somebody else once said of himself, I'm an old man now, so that isn't very far. What are referred to as consultations about important decisions are nothing of the sort. Decisions have been made (within the school) before these matters are ever raised. To take a specific example, it was recently decided that new staff would be employed at a level higher than that

48. In my job role I have limited freedom of scope to change my teaching commitments to a significant extent, although it would be possible for my teaching portfolio to be distributed among colleagues and for me to take on other duties instead, this is not on the agenda as a possibility. This occurs at
School level, but I am interpreting your view of the university as operating at different levels from local unit to institution. So after a number of years being responsible for the same job responsibilities (while taking on additional responsibilities myself because they are interesting) there is no scope to radically reshape what I do in terms of teaching. This suits other colleagues, so ultimately there isn't a sense of fairness in my mind. I think it will be important in considering the

49. My university is plagued with academic snobbery and cronyism. Promotions are for under-performers and no openness, honesty or transparency in decisions taken by university leaders/managers. Because the psychological contract is based on unvoiced expectations, it serves the interests of managers over employees and undermines collective organisation and mobilisation against unilateral managerial decisions.

50. On obtaining a new post within the University (moving from a fixed-term contract to a full-time contract) the University did not upgrade my pay and conditions to the level a comparable, external candidate would have achieved. I found this, and the manner in which HR dealt with me (dismissive, hostile) to be a violation of the psychological contract between us

51. On this survey: I found that there were a lot of aspects in regard to how the questions were phrased and the scales were presented which were Psychometrically unsound. I would retract it and do some work with an expert on survey construction to improve it, if I were you. Interesting topic and worth while, though!

52. Possibility of advancement/promotion denied, while others of significantly lower caliber were advanced. Inequitable treatment created feelings of resentment, injustice, mistrust, lack of faith that hard work pays off.

53. Promotion opportunities are non existent, this is very frustrating and I am now considering emigrating for better promotional opportunities.

54. Refused to adjust timetable to relieve pressure in anticipation of known upcoming personal upheaval. This was a minor change which could have been acceded to but which was dismissed, showing little or no sensitivity.

55. Statement that core facilities which are essential for compete research existed within the University, whereas they do not exist.

56. The course I work on had problems with accreditation by the profesional body, the university was very supportive in helping to resolve the problem without pointing the finger at individual staff.
The last five years have seen administrators gain power and academics lose power, which is a fundamental change in the implied contract between the university and its academics. This is strongly felt by many academics and does not seem to be captured in this survey.

These are somewhat leading questions as they assume a short-term contact, which I would have had in the past, contains 'promises' by a HEI to a contract employee. The questions should balance with positive aspects of this so-called bond? I guess my first let-down was after my first 4 year contract, the realisation that a HEI does not owe you anything. When your contract is finished, you are finished, unless you try hard to 'get back in'. Unlike the private sector, where I have worked, you do not build up an 'emotional capital' with your employer. Your 'line manager' might like you, but until you get tenure - btw and increasingly worthless concept in the modern world - then you have to continually justify your existence at the HEI, and any future position will have public procurement/rectr

They have made an effort to get my contract situation organised but they do not seem to understand that even a written commitment saying that I will be made permanent at some stage in the future is not that same as saying I am permanent now. I can not ask for a loan or mortgage in my current position. This is very frustrating. In general the university do pull through on almost all items, the endless repeated sending of materials and requests to certain administration departments is distracting and frustrating and the time taken to repeatedly do all these things can impact on my job.

university as employer (e.g. the university president, and his people etc ...) is not equal to the university as a community of student and scholars

Upon recruitment, retirement benefits were discussed. Upon arrival, the retirement benefit scheme was completely unintelligible - my first contract was not permanent. I understood at that time that the University had no specific concern for my personal circumstances. I have been at this University for 6 years and that belief has been reinforced very strongly.

very low annual leave possible due to ongoing work and a work load that requires higher level of time commitment than corresponds with my part time salary.

A disgruntled student wrote with a fabricated complaint. The university knew it was unfounded and this particular individual had personal issues. The University choose to ignore him but no action was taken against him to protect my good name.

A student committed plagiarism with my name as second author on the paper. The university knew I was not a fault as the student admitted what happened. I was subjected to a 8 month investigation (where the university kept telling me that they knew I was innocent but had to "followt the rules"),
I was given no help or support throughout the whole matter. I was completely exonerated but the student got off scot free. When I asked why I was told that they were worried the student might sue, despite having admitted the fault nad they didn't want to create an awkward situation. He was given support, counselling and help. I was told not to stress so much as it wa obvious the whole thing was going to be fine, so why was I so upset? I found the whole thing very stressful and it lead me to wanting to leave!

65. An important point in the incident is that the University as an institution is comprised of individuals with roles and responsibilities. For me it was the failure of a member of the university with responsibilities for a department to respond to my concerns regarding mis-treatment by a colleague and being told to 'ignore' it and 'move on'.

66. Applied for contract of indefinite duration. Had to go to Labour Commissioners to get it granted even though I felt the university did owe it to me as I had been loyal for so long.

67. Authoritarian head of school is given complete control over decision in our area/department. This has impacted negatively on many staff and the University has not intervened or supported the staff. I would go so far to say that bullying tactics are not addressed which has a very demotivting effect on the staff in the department.

68. Being unfairly treated. This was not well dealt with, but this was down to the individual not the university.

69. Free counselling offered on one occasion and advise given re family circumstances on another.

70. Having worked in a full time capacity from 2005-2008 I was entitled to a full time contract. Instead the university cut my hours by 60% and after much hassle reluctantly gave me a CID

71. I am being bullied in my department and I went to university HR and effectively received no help though they were very nice There was nothing they could do to help.

72. I applied for a higher position within my Department, however did not get the job and somebody from the outside received the job. I felt that the Department did not value my contribution and my hard work for it and did not reward me appropriately. I decided to less work hard for genral departmental management (mainly voluntary contributions not within my role).

73. I don't have an example but rather a comment. I would differentiate my opinions depending on whether thinking about my dept/immediate work group or the university as a whole. Overall I have a high level of commitment to my dept and feel supported by them but not the university 'centre' where major decisions are made
74. I had a manager who was very lazy and fostered conflict. It didn't affect me personally to a great extent but it really damaged my unit. I know that it was known about but nothing was done. That made me very angry and it means I query whether I would get support in future.

75. I have concerns re. the reissuing of contracts under the Croke Park Agreement and thus far do not believe that my uni has not met Faculty expectations on this matter.

76. I received considerable support from the university when i was seriously ill some years ago.

77. I student to me reported a serious case of sexual harassment by a senior male colleague. I followed procedures and reported it through the appropriate channels. This colleague had already harassed two female colleagues, both of whom had reported it and neither of whom was adequately supported. Both suffered considerably in work as a result. The damaged student ending up leaving and forfeiting her fees, and the harasser was allowed to continue in contact roles with students.

78. I was a little disappointed when I was trying to submit my PhD that there was no offer to reduce my teaching hours even at a very slight level. While this was never explicitly promised to me, I had hoped for a little support in terms of study time when trying to complete the thesis.

79. I was verbally told i would be hired above the bar due to previous level of experience and input to the uni as a consultant, this didn't happen and i was in fact hired on a fixed term contract at a low pay. now on permanent contract but below bar

80. in my experience it is my head of discipline that shows an interest in my wellbeing. She is the face of the university for me. In my dealings with HR in the uni in for example probationary interviews. The university did not give feedback until they were asked for it. I have regular support from my academic team and we have a great sense of team spirit and we have regular meetings and we have an away day every year to support us and celebrate our achievements as a team working with students in the uni.

81. In previous contracts with the university i have been kept so busy teaching that research is not an option. However each time I have applied a fulltime permanent position within the university I been overlooked because of my lack of current research and the position has always gone to outsiders who have current research but little teaching. I thus feel that although i have worked hard and my students have been enspired by my efforts, my dedication and practical expertise goes unappreciated when the 'real jobs' are on offer.

82. Just as a general remark, people in our institution are getting very disillusioned by the constant requirements to have new commitments, restructuring and activities foisted on us with a total lack of coherence. One year everything is X (create MA programme, get PHDs), the next year
everything is Y (forget MA programmes, do BA programmes, oh, and do online programmes, but we only count the face to face teaching hours for workload rather than the time it actually takes to run courses) and we keep having to jump through hoops that not only seem pointless when we do it, but also turn out to be revised again next year, for some other spurious exercise. Most of us work extremely hard on all fronts teaching, research and admin, but there seems little sense of acknowledgement of that, if it doesn’t

83. no conference funding even when promised

84. One thing to note is that there is a general division in my perception between my school (department) and the institution named the university. My school is my first obligation. An example of support would have been the following incident. A very erratic and belligerent student complained about my asking him to leave my office after failing to submit a piece of work on time. The student whose behaviour had been erratic all term began to get aggressive and I asked him to leave since I was genuinely concerned he would get violent. The student complained to the head of school at the time and made a complaint through the student union. My head was extremely supportive and recognised that this was a troubled student with a long history of leave and readmission to the degree programme. I also r

85. overloaded with admin, and teaching. Possibility of engaging in research, but only in my own time and at personal cost.

86. Promotion Feel very disheartened and not rewarded for accomplishments and hard work. Feel that these processes are not entirely fair or based on merit

87. promotions freeze - feels like its a dead end; had many publications and would have got promoted, but now they are not to be assessed because 3 years ago. In the meantime have done tons of admin, which is not considered strongly in promotions - feel cheated.

88. refused to recognise my discipline. Was deeply irritated and annoyed at the insular attitude. Believe it demonstrated a backwardness unbecoming of a HEI

89. Restructuring was illegal in process and disastrous in consequence. Barriers to my own advancement have been illegal in process and disastrous in consequence.

90. Senior colleagues routinely bully junior colleagues; reports made about this to human resources are ignored and filed away. Clear message is sent to junior staff that the university is not interested in supporting staff

91. Since 2006, I was on a series of temporary contracts, and everytime the contract came up for renewal, the university would give an excuse as to why a permanent contract was not being offered, even though I was carrying out all my duties within the university. It was only after the 5th
contract was offered, that I sought to claim a CID, and for this I had to take the university to the Labour court. The university, does not look at the individual talents of people, but seeks to get the most out of people when on this contracts. My work ethic has not changed since I received CID through the courts, on the contrary I have taken a bigger role in my school. The university made me feel not worthy, inferior to others, and I was constantly worried about my future. The issue of rolling contracts, sh

92. Tenure application goalpost keep changing! support not evident from management upwards

93. The understanding that one works over a long period on short term temp contracts which will eventually lead to a long term or more permanent position is still dangled but no longer fulfilled

94. the university was delayed in paying the salary increase associated with promotion- Government issue not university directly.the school have uneven distribution of workload between colleagues (not university fault) but it can make one feel undervalued and reluctant to constantly give.

95. The use of fixed-term contracts on a continuous basis is not the way to promote a sense of loyalty or support staff with their career development. Nor is it a way of building third level education for the future. Staff with no job security or possibility of true career development who are paid barely above the minimum wage does not make for a happy or fulfilling working environment and impacts in the long term on the education that students receive.

96. This is my 8th year at the university yet I now bring home less pay than when I started. The promotion system has been suspended and the benchmark system has been abandoned. The sabbatical programme was also cancelled (without even notifying the staff) These are in direct conflict to the terms to which I was hired. The IP split for researchers bring in patent related money has also been monkeyed with. Most of my top collaborators have left, and I am in the process of doing the same.

97. When I was due CID

98. While on a casula contract, I was left unpaid for a number of months, despite doing all work asked of me, and admin work which was unpaid. Forms were returned from HR with varying issues, and staff were very unhelpful. For a finish I had to attend the office with theform to ask them to claim as I had been a number of months with the UL wages, and needed them badly. I was very embarrassed to have to explain my situation, then have to sit in a waiting area while they all reverted back to what they were doing on their PCs, with noone willing (or able as it turned out) to deal with my issue. It was very embarrassing to have to tell the college I would not have money for petrol for work on Monday if something was not done, and the staff were not very sympathetic, but I think at the time there w
99. work-life balance is not a major concern of the university, a great number of my co-workers are stressed from work.

100. Ever-increasing workloads; conservative staff/co-workers (as a university we should be leading change not reluctantly following it). I could go on...

101. Failure to promote me when others less qualified were promoted

102. Failure to protect me personally when implementing university policy as an employee of the university.

103. I am one of the most productive members of academic staff in my department as is evidenced by my research outputs however the university continues to not promote me to the next level which is Senior Lecturer and seems to reward those who put more time into political connections instead.

104. I did not really get to grips with sections B & C of your questionnaire. I felt the items and the way they were phrased and measured were not compatible as in other sections of the questionnaire. The other section of the questionnaire were more coherent and better related to extracting more valid information. I would say the information I provide to sections B & C is not valid owing to the poor compatibility between the item and the responses.

105. I had a serious illness in 2006 and the university was most supportive. I felt that I was valued, that my welfare was of greater consideration than timetable commitments (replacements were found). Since returning following the illness, I have continued to feel valued, encouraged and supported.

106. I have an issue with my current contract which is half-time permanent. It was my understanding that this would become full-time permanent - but this has been a slow drawn-out process despite my working full time hours for 10 years. Recently-hired junior staff members are in a more secure contractual position with the University than I am despite my significant contribution in terms of raising research funding.

107. I was once turned down for promotion on the grounds that my research income was deemed by some panel members to be below average. I knew that my research income was in fact significantly above average. This promotion panel decision dampened my enthusiasm. Interesting research topic - best of luck with it

108. Incident of bullying - the university supported me and dealt with the situation in an appropriate manner. This did improve my relationship with the university as I saw that they were interested in my well-being and were willing to help.

109. Lack of career progression (promotion) despite promises made.

110. Promised a promotion. Did not happen.
promised time out to complete research work was not fully given

Promotions procedure of 2008-2009 involved getting the inside story on how to deviate from the application procedure for good effect. Following my failure to find out what the inside line was on how to prepare an application without regard for official instructions, a moratorium on promotions was introduced which has lasted until 2011-2012. Also, academic freedom constraints experienced by direct instruction to avoid embarrassing the University with certain associations I was making between them and a positive view of academic freedom in public. I was informed that they the University privately took a dim view of those most vociferous about academic freedom. I was told by someone close to management that it was management's private view that team players pay only lip service to academics.

The promotions process creates a bottleneck and causes resentment, as many people are denied promotion when they have fulfilled all their obligations and worked to a very high standard. It seems like an artificial barrier, and a blunt instrument to wring more productivity out of staff. This makes me feel cynical about a lot of what senior management have to say.

The University has heedlessly allowed the Exams Office to set results-submission deadlines for academic staff, which are impossible to meet without constantly "burning the midnight oil" in the "exams season". This makes a mockery of the "standard working week" mentioned in my contract, family life, etc. This is not an "incident" but a perennial situation during the past several years.

Want us to do too much without consultation.

We were a small department, and went from five members of academic staff to just three, thanks to retirements without replacement, and we still felt committed to teach the whole range of our discipline. Modern Continental Languages was the area, and other Depts were overstaffed. The three of us were angry and disappointed at the institutional response, but we pulled together and fought the hard battle. Thank the Lord that a new régime has rectified the situation to a certain extent.

When I worked more than my 'normal' workload for one year, it was acknowledged in a later year, and 'paid back'

A recent, high-profile event, that needed the official support from my university that was not forthcoming. In this instance, as a member of management of the university, I felt let down - not personally or emotionally - but professionally.
A series of incidents at work have illustrated that there is no actual protection from bullying and aggressive behaviour on the part of immediate managers. Senior academics with no training or appropriate 'people skills' tend to be allocated management roles.

After working for the university for several years as a part time tutor, I became a PhD student and had to give up my contract. However, the university has made every effort since then to help me with travel expenses for conferences, etc., which I feel is a good show of faith for someone who was a loyal employee for so many years.

Conditions of work substantially changed without discussion

Excuses were given rather than reasons for not promoting me in the last round even though I met the benchmarks.

Generally find that if I have an issue it is responded to as far as possible. However, the university is also impacted by the current economic constraints, so the wider context needs to be considered.

I can think of no such incident, my university routinely inadvertently messes up my life, but never directly and not intentionally.

I don't want to site a specific incident. But I feel that for those working at a lecturer level there is nowhere to get support if you need to go outside your department. It's too concerned with policy and procedures, rather than supporting employees.

I feel that the university and the third level sector in general has become a business and within that environment has no time for people anymore. I question the integrity of the university and feel uncomfortable with many of its policies and procedures. It has become a capitalist machine with no regard for students or staff.

I had built up a strong research and publication record and thought I was for sure in line for promotion to senior lecturer but it was not to be. I was really angry for about two years and although my strong work ethic did not alter, I stopped putting myself forward to get involved in projects etc. and stopped working so hard. Now, the anger has gone and my outputs are very high and I'm just waiting for the opportunity to try for promotion again (but with a more realistic outlook and prepared if it does not happen because I know there are so many other really strong candidates in the university also waiting for the chance to get promoted too).

I was attempting to take a leave of absence for personal reasons. I felt particularly aggrieved by the way this was handled by HR and my department manager. I was very gratified by the way it was managed by the Dean and an other senior management members. It definitely influences my view of HR is a very negative way.
129. In past was on repeated temporary contracts. Felt that no value placed on efforts and commitment. Eventually permanent employment secured.

130. Institution is trying to cut staff numbers by letting go staff on indefinite duration contracts even though belief was that it equated to permanency. Staff who give trouble are given greater consideration than those who have performed consistently. Don't feel that this is necessarily same in all institutions or indeed departments.

131. My comments relate to being bullied by two different line managers and not to the university as such but I had little or no support when I tried to get help and although I enjoy my job very much I don't feel my or other colleagues' complaints in similar situations are dealt with or even heard

132. My Pension has still not been sorted!!!

133. One might expect that permanent, hardworking staff are supported and protected by the 'system' but this is not the case. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between 'the university' and individual in certain offices. Personal support from individuals can be good, but this is based on trust and knowing individuals personally, rather than 'the system'. Policies and procedures do not protect staff in trouble (even if not by their own wrong-doing) but will 'hunt them down'. I would not be able to rely on support offices if I didn't know people in these offices.

134. Payment for attending a conference in a timely fashion. I had to wait 4 months for payment when a new electronic system was introduced. It did not do what it said it would do on the tin!

135. PMDS is farcical! A complete waste of the time and effort of staff genuinely committed to the jobs, implemented by administrators, interested only in 'box ticking', with no intention nor resource to deliver.

136. PMDS process and how the HOS confused roles between HOS and this process....it was in fact bullying particularly when the HOS did not bother to familiarise himself with past agreements between me and the university re courses of action and work priorities....

137. Promotion opportunity arose and support was provided. I feel very well supported within our team and school, if required however I enjoy the autonomy of my role.

138. The HR department behaves to individualism working in the University as though they are merely numbers and not human beings with emotions and needs. I feel the hierarchy within the institution has no conception what it is like for researchers who work hard on short term contracts with no security of tenure nor pension rights etc. The issue of pension rights for researchers is I feel an area where the university fails dismally to live up to its obligations to its employees. The well-being of
those lower down in the hierarchy is so far removed from those in power at the top that it suffers by comparison - similar to the Wilkinson theory of the health and well being of nations.

139. The process of tenure, which was clearly set out in my employment contract has not been mentioned since I took up my permanent part-time contract 4 years ago. Also although research was understood to be part of the employment role, the full hourly commitment to teaching allows no time for research and hence no possibility of promotion within the University system. This makes me feel that the research aspect of work, as opposed to my day-to-day teaching is undervalued within the university structure. Despite the above, the day to day culture of teaching and learning, within the university is highly fulfilling.

140. the issue of indefinite contracts has never been clarified - what does this actually mean in real terms? Can I be made redundant despite all my efforts here and someone on a permanent contract be kept who makes a much smaller contribution to the university?

141. Though I began in a part-time capacity at the university, it was in a position of acting as a director of a new degree programme. A full time position was promised once the programme ran its full four years, no full time position has materialised, though I do the full load of work.

142. Very little support or ‘mentoring’ in developing a career path. Deduction of 20% of pay for one day’s strike action (as opposed to 1/7 of pay or none at all in other areas of the public sector)

143. When I changed from a full-time to part-time contract, despite having worked for years in the university and having payroll number etc, it was three months before I was paid. I had not been informed that there would be any delay in my monthly salary and although I was paid retrospectively and was given an emergency payment for those two months (when I went looking for it), I felt they handled it very badly. My years of service meant nothing, the new contract might as well have been my first contact with the university. I had been expected to start the job immediately but they did not expedite the paperwork so that I would be paid.

144. When it failed to promote me and included only one woman in a group of 17 individuals who were promoted

145. When the university sets out criteria or rules to govern appointments for example and then does not apply them equally to everyone.

146. After being offered a permanent post after a number of years on contract, I was offered a point on the payscale 11,000 euro less than where I was at on the contract. After much argument, they "conceded" and I ended up being "just" 2,000 less paid. It's also infuriating to come out of office
after working long hours and the carpark clampers fine you 80 euro because the edge of your tyre is on a footpath, if they were concerned about us as employees why couldn't they just make a phone call to my office if my car is causing an obstruction?

147. It was more of a group impact: an academic position we had been promised in return for starting a successful new degree programme was suddenly disallowed, leaving all of us with considerably more work.

148. Most admin and other day-to-day activities go unmentioned, despite being very time consuming.

149. My initial job offer. Department offered position at a certain grade but HR lowered the grade of the final offer.

150. PMDS is a farce, requiring you to set 'goals' that are unachievable given the freeze on promotion and constantly review performance in a moribund system. It is a foolish relic of a bygone era in management culture. I have found it a waste of time on every occasion, and yet the University insists on it. As for the rest... don't get me started. You have no idea how destructive the ethos in my University is to any real belief in the value of education. We are not educators, but cogs in a machine, driven by a bloated managerial structure that adheres to management textbooks and ideas that are inapplicable to education. Honestly, we were better off with Hedge Schools.

151. Promotion - this University seems to hire too many internal staff who have spent all/most of their undergraduate, postgraduate and postdoctoral lives at this institution. This is unhealthy and a doubling up of research and teaching potential. It also leads to a perceived bias in promotions with 'needless to say' the internal candidates getting promoted more quickly. This leads to divisions with departments/Faculties. I would expect that the University and senior management would behave with more equality in mind BUT they always resort to looking after their personal interests and own students (now their fellow staff and underlings!). The University wants to promote like-minded people who have similar and convergent viewpoints - they don't appreciate different viewpoints and opinions to the

152. UCD placed me on enforced sick leave without any prior medical consultation. I was subsequently docked six weeks salary when more recently I was seriously ill and needed to spend time in hospital.

153. Was at one stage disappointed to be somewhat 'edged out' of a position of responsibility by a colleague. I perceived this situation as being one in which I stood in the way of this other person's ambitions, and feel a little aggrieved I wasn't more actively supported. But these are never straightforward situations: it was probably right for me to have moved on anyways, even if it the way it happened wasn't the best. Best wishes for your research.
154. Fulfilled all publishing and national/international profile in subject area, yet turned down for senior promotions twice then scheme frozen.

155. I used to trust the structures of the university until a bad thing happened to me. The university did nothing about it and since then I feel very little trust in the institution. I like my work but would leave for another university very soon if the economic climate was more favourable. My university does not reflect on its greatest asset, the lecturing staff. We are at the coal face but often ignored.

156. The only real issue is added years for pension, this is an issue for me in that these were expected and will not happen.

157. The university fulfilled my expectation of providing a family-friendly workplace by providing the opportunity to job-share for 5 years when our children were young.

158. This survey was very difficult to fill in because of the difference between University/College and Department and because of commitments to the students which are a big part of the job. I really wasn't sure what you were focusing on a lot of the time.

159. Two applications for promotion unsuccessful, feedback given unhelpful, strong perception of gender bias.

160. (not an answer to question) I think the questions are hard to answer because I feel a lot of loyalty to and support from my immediate colleagues but not to/from the university. I think it could be hard for you to interpret your results in light of not distinguishing these relationships clearly enough. But best of luck. (answer to question:) I feel that the university (as distinct from colleagues) has become more demanding, less trusting, less collegial, less democratic over the course of my long career. One particular case was abuse I suffered from a more senior academic in relation to a trade union dispute.

161. A graduate student complained about lack of supervision on a project. The situation was defused by the department head. I thought that until then only one point of view - the graduate student's - had been heard. I thought at the time there was a lack of balance on the University's part.

162. After I wrote a 130 page report on the department and also had externs' reports on it it was agreed between the University and the Department that substantial support should be given to the department in terms of posts and annual budget. Nothing happened but the stick and carrot method of making us work remained.

163. An intention to undertake study leave to complete a book was planned. There was no financial support for this at university level; and this made it very difficult for the leave period to be planned in advance. It made me realise that this university (TCD) lives up to its international reputation of
generally giving individual academics and departments unusual levels of individual freedom, but that the freedom tends to be on the basis of "over to you", rather than on the basis of formally organised arrangements to ensure that freedom is handled productively. It makes me feel that this university is a bit like a cranky relative who often drives you mad; but you still love them and put with a lot from them because they are part of your family, and because that's the way they are.

164. Because of sudden and serious illness in my family I had to give up a major leadership post shortly after coming into office. Generally the university reacted well to this awkward situation.

165. Failure to adhere to documented criterion when considering promotion (i.e. research is only criterion used in practice despite stated policy that teaching and other contributions are also of equal importance)

166. I applied for and was short-listed for a faculty position (no extra pay but it was something I believed in and felt well-qualified to do). The interview was a nightmare and a much less well-qualified individual was appointed. Since then, nothing much has been done with this role. I felt quite betrayed by this as it was clear that the university must not have valued this role as highly as I did and had no compunction about stitching me up for other reasons (to do with helping the appointed individual up the career ladder). This taught me 1. Interview boards are where the insiders keep out the outsiders. 2. If other appointments are on this basis (which they are I have no doubt), this explains why there is so much groupthink and mediocrity in strategic leadership and thinking. 3.

167. I suffer from chronic, severe depression and am overdue for a sabbatical, but my head of school refuses to discuss it. This is despite me taking on additional lecturing duties to cover for a colleague who has retired but has not been replaced.

168. In the promotion round after I turned down a chair in another university I believe less deserving colleagues were promoted ahead of me.

169. It took many years for the University to honour a contract of indefinite duration - the status of which, in contrast to "permanent" lecturers, is still ambiguous

170. My University is more concerned to meet government expectations than employee welfare

171. NUIG is an autocratic anti-collegiate institution that imposes its will on its staff and does not respect the fact that I and others are self-motivated professionals
172. Pressured into taking over as Head of Department again despite knowing that it had caused immense strain and a minor stroke during my previous 3-year term. This was, again, detrimental to my health but was viewed as my own problem.

173. Problem keeping research space

174. PROMOTION CRITERIA

175. The University attempted to take a liberal approach to the Universities act specifically that our contract of employment could be terminated at 3 months notice by either party for no given reason. This is not what I interpret as security of tenure, and violates the psychological contract. I don't see a lectureship as a job, but as a vocation. I and my colleagues work hours well in excess of our contracted hours and volunteer without any material reward for many of the administrative jobs that are necessary for the smooth running and development of the University. If the University wants us to commit to it, then it should commit to us.

176. The University has not provided a good research environment, especially by failing to resource the library properly and also by failing to establish a properly-functioning system of research leave.

177. UCD failed to adequately take the views of staff on board when it underwent a major restructuring under the then new President, Dr Hugh Brady.

178. When I joined the University, I was treated as a member of the University. Although only a young academic, I was consulted on important matters and I was listened to. Now those who control budgets believe that they alone are the university and I am not consulted or listened to any more. The majority of academics are now in my situation. As a result many ridiculous and embarrassing decisions have been made. When backtracking on these decisions has to be done, no admission of error is ever made. This is far more upsetting than reductions in pay.

179. I am in receipt of a pension (and am re-employed part-time). I made a contract with the University concerning my contract. They broke it by reducing all pensions. OK, not altogether their fault, BUT I do feel aggrieved by this.

180. I had an incident where a colleague went a bit crazy and I was very frightened of him at the time and very rattled by the experience for a number of days after. This university were brilliant at dealing with it - both formally and informally. When answering some of the questions above I found the range of answers too limited for example some questions assume a tight specific contract. These are hard to answer and there were others with similar problems.

181. I was threatened with a criminal charge in the past year and my university and head of department supported me with tangible and emotional support.
182. In general, I believe that the university is only interested in outward appearances and falls short in terms of valuing what it is we are paid to do - educate our students. I feel the students get a shoddy deal from some who are more committed to publishing and grant writing who cancel lectures. Commitment to lecturing and educational standards is very much tokenism.

183. Made moving to a part-time position (for a short period of time) very difficult a number of years ago. Left me feeling fairly jaundiced.

184. Obligation towards payment of monies an employee is legally entitled to was only met when requested by the employee, and not as a matter of course. Automatic reduction in the purchase of missing pension years. Constant request of additional 'duties' by the employer outside of working hours. A strong commitment of the employer to quantity rather than quality causes disillusionment and a rift while the relation and commitment to the student community has remained stable throughout.

185. Promotion denied, granted on appeal. Preparing the appeal (19,000 words) wasted a whole academic year and had an invidious long-term effect on my trust for the institution/my University as an employer.

186. Some great stresses are experienced and support for individual academics is thin on the ground. It is up to each one to cope.

187. Some of the questions were very difficult to answer as they referred to the University as a whole. My views on commitment and support and belonging would be very positive if the question was about my School within the University this means I have answered some questions negatively when it seem to address the whole organisation. Again the first question was not clear because it was open to interpretation and I probably answered it according to my own interpretation not yours. To really understand how the University continues to function you may need to look at the more personally significant loyalty to ones school or department rather than the organisation as a whole.

188. The university have downgraded my predicted disability benefit on the basis of a temporary illness; I am not in any way disabled, but should I become so for any reason, the benefit has been lowered.

189. The university provides little support in the area of bullying. When I approached HR about serious and ongoing bullying that I was experiencing from a senior colleague (which was interfering with my ability to perform my duties, and causing me considerable emotional distress), it was suggested to me that perhaps I should go for constructive dismissal.
190. two: 1) failure to get promoted after 20 years and 4 attempts 2) it took 2 1/2 years to set up a job
share situation that met my needs, rather than the university's - and this was by default, not design!

191. When I applied for promotion on two occasions I was successful. I took that as a measure of the
esteem in which I was held by my colleagues and the management of the University. I particularly
appreciated receiving a letter of congratulations from the President of the University. On another
occasion when I had to take a period of sick leave due to a short term anxiety/depression problem a
senior manager at the university called me at home. At a time when I was feeling very low, I will
always remember that he took the time to console me and assure me that I would be fine. It was an
extremely generous gesture on his part, and one that I will never forget.

192. Several cases of bullying and harassment of several individuals show that this University chooses
not to notice what is going on; when politically or personally motivated harassment takes
place the University has chosen regularly to ignore natural justice and equity, has pursued the
targets of the bullying, has failed to respect the University's own protocols and grievance
procedures, has supported the perpetrators of the harassment and by sweeping these matters under
the carpet, hoping they will disappear spontaneously, is choosing to ignore the consequences of
its own inaction. The latter refusal to take appropriate leadership and action goes right to the
top of the institution, and this has been the case for decades. There is now a general sense of
unease among academic staff, including fear for their welfare and professional future among the
targets of condoned bullying, and a general sense of quiet outrage among administrative staff
that such aggressive behaviour is permitted in the case of colleagues who are perceived
to positively contribute to what was once referred to as the "academic community" of all staff and
students. This deplorable state of affairs has adversely affected people's health, has reduced the
service which committed individuals can make once their self-confidence has been damaged,
has created a general scepticism regarding all utterances by management and has general
led to a considerable fall in the quality of life at the University.