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Cover sheet

Professional Ideology and the Psychological Contract: an

Analysis of the Psychological Contracts of Registered Nurses,

Research Scientists and Primary School Teachers Employed in

Public Sector Organisations.

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution nor, so far as I am aware, any material published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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Abstract

The increasingly complex world of work has prompted many individuals to search for new meaning and purpose in their work. For many employed professionals, meaning and purpose are also realised through identification with their profession and commitment to its distinctive ideology of values and beliefs about work and organizations. Published research into the psychological contract between the employee and the organization has given limited consideration to the role that occupational ideologies play in psychological contracts. This study addresses that gap in the literature.

The study has two broad themes: the relationship between the occupational ideologies of employed professionals and their psychological contracts, and the importance of that relationship for conceptualisation of the psychological contract. Using a qualitative research design, the study explores the perceptions of a sample of registered nurses, research scientists and primary teachers with regard to their occupational ideologies and the terms of their psychological contracts.

The research findings show that study participants in each sample group perceived their contributions to the organization to include professional competence, a client focus, and a service orientation, that is, delivery on core elements in their occupational ideologies. Study participants also perceived the provision of credible commitments of support as being part of the contribution by their organizations under the psychological contract. In regard to perceived

Abstract (continued)

failure by the organization to provide this support, the research findings show clear impacts on the individual in terms of commitment and job performance. In addition, the findings reveal nuances and a level of complexity in attitudinal and behavioural responses by the individual that have not hitherto been revealed in psychological contract research.

The study discusses the relevance of the research findings for the bidimensional (transactional/economic and relational/socio-emotional) interpretative framework that currently underpins the concept of the psychological contract. It supports calls in the literature for a broadening of this framework to include an ideological dimension. The study also discusses the multiplicity and interdependency of exchange that professional employees can engage in as a consequence of enacting their occupational ideologies through their psychological contract. It calls into question the emphasis on a single dyadic relationship with the organization that underpins the predominant conceptual approach used in much of the work to date on the psychological contract.

Finally, a number of possible future research directions are outlined. The study highlights the need for managers to understand the nature of the occupational ideologies operating within their organization, and how, in the case of professional employees, these ideologies can drive perceptions about what they contribute to the organization and what the organization is expected to contribute in return.

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"In research, as in conversation, we meet ourselves."
(Morgan, 1983)

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter objective

The objective of this chapter is to provide an introductory overview of this research. The chapter commences with a discussion of the rationale for the study. Next, the broad research opportunity is outlined. The chapter concludes with a description of the organisation and structure of this thesis.

Rationale for study

In Australia and elsewhere, the pursuit of increased organisational responsiveness, productivity, flexibility and innovation is occurring in both private and public sector organisations. Factors such as globalisation, technological advancements, the growth of the knowledge economy, and increased needs for specialisation and high level skills in the workforce, are challenges to which organisations have had to respond. In the light of such challenges, there is increasing recognition of the potential of human capital to make a substantial and lasting impact on organisational performance. As a consequence, organisations have implemented changes in employment arrangements aimed at realising the available potential.

Prior to these changes, the employee-organisation relationship was modelled around an individual's trust, loyalty and commitment to the organisation. The employer provided job security, career prospects, and training and development opportunities. Today, however, a different relationship operates. The individual is required to accept longer hours, more responsibility, multi-skilling and role ambiguity. In return, the organisation provides higher pay, rewards for

performance and a job rather than a career (Kabanoff, Jimmieson, & Lewis, 2000; Millward & Brewerton, 2000).

In recent years, a substantial number of researchers have examined the impacts of this transition. A frequent finding in the published research has been that the psychological effects of change upon individuals - cynicism, perceptions of increased job insecurity, reduced loyalty, and scepticism – are all on the increase (Andersson, 1996; Herriot & Pemberton, 1995; Hiltrop, 1995a, 1995b; Kabanoff et al., 2000; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Turnley & Feldman, 2000). Disillusioned and faced with the prospect of no longer having the kind of job security and career that were implicit under the old employment regime, many individuals have reassessed their relationship to their work and the organisation that employs them.

The destabilising of the employee-organisation relationship has prompted many individuals to look beyond the organisation for meaning and purpose in work, and to seek a closer alignment between themselves, their work, the organisation, and the broader social community (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Burr & Thomson, 2002). For many people, the closer alignment they seek is realised in part through identification with their occupation, particularly in the case of professions that have distinctive, complex occupational ideologies about work and organisations that members normally internalise and personalise (Bloor & Dawson, 1994; Trice, 1993). Indeed, research has identified a shift in the focus of commitment from the organisation to the profession that has been linked to the transition from the old to

the new form of employee-organisation relationship (Millward & Brewerton, 2000; Bunderson, 2001).

The increasing importance of the role that professional ideologies play in the new employee-organisation relationship, and the implications that an organisation's failure to recognise the significance of such ideologies has for the attitudes and behaviour of professional employee, have yet to be fully considered in the research literature. This gap in the current literature presents a research opportunity.

Research opportunity

Much of the recent research examining the nature of the employee-organisation relationship has used concepts that conceive it in terms of an exchange relationship. This includes concepts such as perceived organisational support, leader-member exchange, and the psychological contract (Shore, Tetrick, Taylor, Coyle-Shapiro, Liden, McLean Parks, Morrison, Porter, Robinson, Roehling, Rousseau, Schalk, Tsui & Van Dyne, 2004). It is the last of these concepts that is of interest in this study.

The majority of psychological contract research published to date defines the psychological contract in cognitive-perceptual terms, as the individual's beliefs in mutual obligations entered into with the employer (Millward & Brewerton, 2000; Coyle-Shapiro, Shore, Taylor & Tetrick, 2004). This definitional stance has been mostly operationalised using an interpretative framework drawn from social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and relational contract theory (Macneil, 1985). It

characterises the psychological contract as a dyadic exchange relationship

operating between the employee and the organisation that is either transactional

(discrete from social relations) or relational (embedded in social relations) in

nature (Rousseau, 1995).

Transactional exchange is reasonably explicit, short-term and economic

(monetisable) in nature; such exchange assumes rational and self-interested

parties, and does not result in ongoing interdependence. Relational exchange is

more complex and promotes interdependence through a commitment to the

collective interest over self-interest; its currency is socio-emotional in nature and

therefore less clear. It evolves over time, and involves long-term investments

from which withdrawal is difficult (Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993).

This interpretative framework has contributed significantly to understanding how

and why individuals respond to change in the employment relationship (Anderson

& Schalk, 1998; Coyle-Shapiro, Shore et al., 2004). However, questions have

been raised in the psychological contract literature over whether the

transactional/relational framework is too simplistic and inadequate for

understanding the psychological contracts of individuals who conceptualise work

and their relationship to the organisation from an ideological perspective (Burr &

Thomson, 2002; Thompson & Bunderson, 2003).

Burr and Thomson (2002: 7) contend that a new form of contract is emerging that

has a 'transpersonal' perspective, that is, it reflects not only an evaluation of

'what's in it for me' (transactional) and 'what's in it for us' (relational), but also

of 'what is the fit between me, us, and the rest of society'. They contend that the increasing importance to the individual of perceived value fit internal and external to organisation must be recognised. To that end, they argue that the transactional/relational framework, with its roots 'very much in the beliefs and values domain of the individual with regard to the organisation', needs to be reconfigured to allow this to happen (Burr & Thomson, 2002: 7).

Thompson and Bunderson (2003) suggest that the search by many individuals for a closer alignment of personal, organisational and societal values in their employment coincides with the adoption of cause-driven missions by organisations seeking to establish a broader explicit connection with their environments in order to induce greater employee contributions. Social exchange theory indicates that ideological rewards can be effective inducements, because 'helping to advance cherished ideals is intrinsically rewarding' (Blau, 1964: 239). Drawing on this idea, Thompson and Bunderson (2003) argue that psychological contracts may be premised on ideological rewards, and that 'ideology-infused' contracts will contain ideology-related terms that form an 'ideological currency' exchanged between the employee and the organisation.

While the proposals for the incorporation of a 'transpersonal' perspective and the introduction of 'ideological currency' have appeared separately in the literature, there is overlap in their general thrust to recognise an ideological dimension to the employee-organisation relationship. Both proposals expand the conceptual model of the psychological contract and so offer the potential for more adequately describing the increasingly complex nature of the psychological contract. They

offer the possibility of a broader understanding both of the dynamic processes through which the psychological contract operates and the consequences of contract violation. Ideology-infused, transpersonal psychological contracts may explain why some employees remain with their organisation when contemporary change has 'effectively hollowed out' the potential for those employees to identify with that organisation (Rousseau, 1998b). In the case of employees for whom professional ideology is a primary mechanism through which they align themselves with their work, organisation, and broader societal context, understanding the place of ideology in the psychological contract becomes essential to understanding the nature of nuances in the employee-organisation relationship.

This study focuses specifically on the possibility of an ideological dimension in the psychological contracts of professional employees that is separate from the transactional/economic and relational/socio-emotional dimensions. It will examine the perceptions of a sample of individuals, drawn from the nursing, scientific research, and teaching professions, regarding the terms of their psychological contracts. The conceptual implications of the study's findings for the cognitive-perceptual definition of the psychological contract, particularly with regard to its bidimensional interpretative framework (Rousseau, 1995) and current understanding of the employee-organisation relationship as a dyadic exchange, are then considered.

Organisation of thesis

Chapter 1 has provided an overview of the study and describes the organisation of this thesis. The objective of Chapter 2 is to provide a context for the study. It outlines significant changes that have occurred in the general employment context, including the transition to a new form of employee-organisation relationship, and the impact of that transition on the attitudes and behaviour of employees. The fresh impetus provided by change to the individual's search for meaning in work, as well as the increasing professionalisation of the workforce, the nature of occupational ideologies and the role of occupations as a focus for career and commitment, are also discussed. The concept of the psychological contract as a lens for examining issues associated with these changes is introduced.

The objective of Chapter 3 is to define the psychological contract, the theoretical concept at the centre of this study. It traces the development of the concept of the psychological contract from its early beginnings and describes in detail its conceptualisation as a cognitive-perceptual construct, the form in which it is currently used as an analytical and interpretative tool. This will include its definition and theoretical framework used to operationalise the concept.

Chapter 4 elaborates on those conceptual elements pertaining to the study's focus and over which debate remains in the literature. It discusses two specific proposals to broaden the interpretative framework. These proposals raise several questions: the comprehensiveness of the bidimensional interpretative framework and its utility as an explanatory tool, the appropriateness of the conceptual emphasis on a single dyadic relationship, and possible limitations in the promise-

based model of contract and its associated understanding of reciprocity. The chapter concludes with discussion of the research questions addressed in this study.

Chapter 5 provides an overview of research designs and methodologies used in psychological contract research to date, and justifies the chosen exploratory research design and qualitative methodology for this particular study.

Chapter 6 reports the results of the analysis of the primary data obtained through interviews with the study participants, supplemented with some limited questionnaire data.

Finally, the discussion of the research findings and conclusions in relations to the research questions, as well as discussion of study limitations and future research directions, appear in Chapter 7.

Chapter 2: Workplace change and the psychological contract

Chapter objective

The objective of this chapter is to outline significant changes that have occurred in the general employment context, including the transition to a new form of employee-organisation relationship, and the impact of that transition on the attitudes and behaviour of employees. The fresh impetus provided by change to the individual's search for meaning in work, as well as the increasing professionalisation of the workforce, the nature of occupational ideologies and the role of occupations as a focus for career and commitment, will also be discussed. The concept of the psychological contract as a research tool for exploring issues associated with these changes will be introduced.

Changing forms of employment and the psychological contract

In Australia and elsewhere, increased competition, market deregulation and globalization processes have led to major reorganisations, restructurings and to downsizing across the private and public sectors (Kabanoff, Jimmieson & Lewis, 2000). Organisations today are flatter with more permeable boundaries, and they exhibit a diverse array of structural characteristics underpinned by an increased emphasis on the structuring of work as projects with defined end-dates and specified deliverables. The advance of technology in information and manufacturing has also added to the level of complexity to which organisations have had to respond (Shore et al., 2004). The pursuit of increased organisational responsiveness, productivity, flexibility and innovation has led to a changed context for the employee-organisation relationship. There is increasing

recognition of the potential of human capital to make a substantial and lasting impact on organisational performance. As a consequence, organisations have implemented changes in employment arrangements aimed at realising the available potential.

Since the late 1980s, a substantial amount of research has been published into changes occurring in the employment context and the consequent impacts on the employee-organisation relationship. Much of the research reveals that the psychological effects upon individuals of these changes – disillusionment and cynicism, perceptions of increased job insecurity, reduced loyalty, and scepticism – are all on the increase (Andersson, 1996; Herriot & Pemberton, 1995; Hiltrop, 1995a, 1995b; Kabanoff et al., 2000; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Turnley & Feldman, 2000). Many concepts focussing on the exchange relationship at the heart of the employee-organisation relationship, including the psychological contract, perceived organisational support, and leader member exchange, have been developed to explore both change and effect (Shore et al., 2004).

The psychological contract, described in detail in the following chapter, is the concept of specific interest in this study. Since the late 1980s it has garnered wide support, not only from organisational scholars examining the impact of changes in employment on the individual but also from managers and employees in the workplace who see it as an important issue (Coyle-Shapiro, Shore et al., 2004; Herriot & Pemberton, 1995, Hiltrop, 1995a, 1995b; Kabanoff et al., 2000; Shore et al., 2004). Writing about the destabilisation of the relationship between

employee and employer, and the social, cultural, and economic consequences of
not addressing this problem, Kabanoff et al. (2000: 45) observed that:

> Australians – managers and employees alike – must find a way
> to develop psychological contracts that are compatible with
> both the competitive demands of the next century and the core
> national values that were shaped largely in the last century.
> Ongoing conflict between the two is not sustainable, and the
> victory of one over the other could only be Pyrrhic.

However, if such a goal is to be achieved, further research is required to clarify
and define the nature and dynamics of the psychological contract.

In general terms, the concept of the psychological contract deals with the pattern
of unwritten beliefs held by the employee and organisation about what each
should offer the other, and what each is obligated to provide in the exchange
relationship that operates between them (Anderson & Schalk, 1998). Unlike the
formal employment contract that sets out explicit terms and conditions, the
psychological contract is 'cognitive-perceptual' in nature (Millward & Brewerton,
2000: 2); that is to say it is implicit and reflects the individual's perceptions and
interpretation of organisational actions pertaining to the employee-organisation
relationship. While the organisation's recruitment and socialisation processes
affect the individual's initial interpretation of organisational actions, the
psychological contract also reflects the individual's prior life and employment
experiences with other organisations (Rousseau, 1989, 1990, 1995; Rousseau &
McLean Parks, 1993; Thomas & Anderson, 1998).

Psychological contracts are held to emphasise primarily either a transactional short-term perspective or a relational long-term perspective, reflecting the individual employee's attitudes and behaviour towards work and the organisation (Rousseau, 1995). Research has shown that a failure to deliver by the organisation on its promises and obligations, as perceived by the individual, has significant consequences for job performance, job satisfaction, absenteeism, turnover, organisational commitment and other organisational behaviour issues (Coyle-Shapiro, Shore et al., 2004; Lester, & Kickul, 2001; Millward, & Hopkins, 1998; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Sutton & Griffin, 2004; Shield, Thorpe, & Nelson, 2002; Schurer Lambert, Edwards, & Cable, 2003; Taylor & Tekleab, 2004; Turnley & Feldman, 1999a, 1999b, 2000).

The positive endorsement of the psychological contract concept by academics, managers and employees alike stems in part from its fit with the market philosophy and contract culture that has underpinned economic policy and business thinking in the last two decades. Notwithstanding this general endorsement, there remain those academics who question the viability of the concept, in its current form as a research tool (see Arnold, 1996; Coyle-Shapiro, Shore et al., 2004; Guest, 1998a, 1998b; Millward & Brewerton, 2000; Taylor & Tekleab, 2004). These reservations are based in part on a view that the rhetoric associated with the 'new' context of employment has overstated the actual extent and nature of change. In addition, there is a view that there are fundamental problems in the conceptualisation of the psychological contract as a cognitive-perceptual entity owned solely by the individual. However, both doubters and

enthusiasts agree that the concept has potential explanatory value on a number of grounds.

First, because of the broad range of theories in social psychology on which it draws (exchange – Blau, 1964; reciprocity – Gouldner, 1960; equity – Adams, 1965; and agency – Eisenhardt, 1989), the psychological contract concept offers potential for specifying the dynamics of the employee-organisation relationship. Second, it has potential as a framework for integrating key organisational concepts such as trust and equity into the relationship, as well as providing insights into motivation and organisational commitment. Third, as an organising framework, it captures the move towards the individualization of the employee-organisation relationship and draws attention to the range and complexity of contracts in organisations (Guest, 1998a; Rousseau, 1995). Finally, to these grounds can be added another: the psychological contract offers potential as a tool for revealing the system of relationships and interactions between the individual, the organisation, and events outside the organisation that potentially affect employment relations at the level of the individual (Rousseau, 1995; Taylor & Tekleab, 2004).

Transition to the new employee-organisation relationship

Faced with increased competitive pressures, organisations now utilise a range of flexible employment practices, distinguishing between core, secondary and peripheral labour needs, in order to facilitate organisational responsiveness and adaptability. In essence, these new employment practices have increased the level of complexity in the psychological contract and the old form of the employee-

organisation relationship no longer predominates. A new form that is less

relational and more transactional in nature is thought to hold sway (see Table 2.1)

Table 2.1 Changing basis of the employee-organisation relationship

'Old deal'	'New deal'
Organisation is 'parent' to employee 'child' Long term security Mutual trust and investment	Organisation and employee contract as 'adults' for mutual benefit No security Little trust, much cynicism
Employee's identity and worth defined by organisation Fair pay for good performance Income is related to experience/status	Employee's identity and worth defined by self High pay for high performance Income related to performance
Those who stay are good and loyal; others are bad and disloyal Offered promotion prospects; 'going the extra mile'	Regular turnover is healthy Inflexible attitudes – 'tit for tat' mentality Performance/results expected
Employees have job until retirement Structured, predictable employment scenario	Long-term employment unlikely; multiple positions Flexible, ambiguous employment scenario
Primary route for growth is promotion Career managed by organisation	Growth through personal accomplishment Career managed by the individual

Source: Adapted from Kissler, 1994: 338; Millward & Brewerton, 2000

Prior to the emergence of this new form of employee-organisation relationship,

organisations commonly operated internal labour markets that emphasised a long-

term perspective on employment. In this context, the psychological contract

reflected a more simple form of relational employee-organisation relationship.

This relationship was constructed around an individual's loyalty and commitment

to and trust in the firm, in return for which the organisation provided job security,

career prospects, and training and development opportunities. In today's

workplace, individuals are often required to accept longer hours, more

responsibility, multi-skilling and role ambiguity, in return for which the

organisation provides higher pay, rewards for performance and a 'job' but not

necessarily a 'career' (Millward & Brewerton, 2000). These changes in the fundamental nature of the exchange relation that underpins the psychological contract, particularly the diminished levels of trust in the organisation and the shedding of responsibility by the organisation for job security and career management, have increased the level of cynicism amongst employees.

Search for meaning in work

Prompted by these changes, many individuals have begun a new search for meaning in their work and to reassess their purpose in the workplace. As a consequence, many individuals are seeking a close alignment between themselves, their work, and their organisational and broader societal contexts (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). One implication of the expansion of the individual's search for meaning is that the psychological contract as perceived by the individual may reflect more explicitly a broader social contract. In other words, rather than merely acting as a lens through which the psychological contract is perceived, an individual's values and beliefs about the relationship of work and organisations to the community could form part of the psychological contract itself (Burr & Thomson, 2002).

This proposition is plausible if one accepts Watson's (1995) argument that work, in the most basic sense, is the activity through which all individuals expend effort in interacting with their environment, not only to survive but also to meet their other needs that go beyond mere survival. As Watson (1995: 115) states: 'the modern work ethic makes work the essential prerequisite of personal and social advancement, of prestige, of virtue and of self-fulfilment'. Even if one holds to a

Marxist perspective on the nature of work, seeing it as having the capacity to separate individuals from other people, the products of their work, their own labour, and themselves, the proposition is no less plausible. While these two philosophical positions on work and the individual reflect different worldviews, they nevertheless share the basic premise that the meaning of work is closely bound to the individual's concept of self and central to the realisation of an individual's essential nature. It is because of this connection between work and the individual's sense of self that the individual's perceptions of the psychological contract are likely to reflect the individual's perception of work as a form of self-expression.

Watson (1995) suggests that this connection between the individual and work as a form of self-expression takes two general forms. On the one hand, the individual can perceive work as an enriching experience, which provides challenges that promote development and intrinsic satisfaction leading to self-fulfilment. From this perspective, work has an expressive meaning for the individual. On the other hand, the individual can perceive work to have no intrinsic value, using it solely as an instrument for allowing the achievement of satisfaction and self-fulfilment outside the work experience. From this alternative perspective, work has an instrumental meaning for the individual. These meanings are not mutually exclusive, and the way an individual thinks and acts with regard to work will reflect a balance between the two that changes over time as the individual's perceptions, priorities and context changes (Watson, 1995).

This description of the connection between the individual and work as a form of self-expression echoes key elements in social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and relational contract theory (Macneil, 1985), both of which underpin the psychological contract. For example, if in an employment context the individual sees management's interests as being opposed to his or her own interest, the balance will tend towards an instrumental meaning. In other words, the individual will adopt a transactional perspective and give greater priority to material matters over social aspects of the work. On the other hand, when the individual's priorities are the work itself and the quality of the work experience, and there is a perception of common interests with management, the balance will tend towards work having an expressive meaning with the individual adopting a relational perspective towards the organisation.

For many people, finding meaning in work and seeing work as a form of self-expression are realised through identification with their occupation (Trice, 1993). Occupations derive their essential distinctiveness from the specialised nature of the knowledge and skills required to perform specific work roles. This distinctiveness is sustained by specific systems of collective values and beliefs about work that range from simple in nature to sophisticated and complex ideologies.

Occupations and ideologies

According to Trice (1993), occupations form distinctive and organised sub-cultures that play a crucial role in the cultural dynamics within complex organisations. Occupation-specific systems of collective values and beliefs about

work prescribe conditions of membership for a particular occupation. Therefore these systems have, by definition, the commitment of only those individuals who have acquired the occupational knowledge and skills required for membership of the occupation. In effect, occupational values and beliefs promote an individual's sense of collectiveness with all other members of their occupation.

Occupational identity is reinforced through communication of shared work values and beliefs using of an array of cultural forms, such as symbols, myths, artefacts, rituals and ceremonies, that serve to emphasise occupational boundaries and make clear who is a member of the occupation and who is not (Abbott, 1989; Bloor & Dawson, 1994, Trice, 1993). A sense of collectiveness and its co-related sense of separateness from members of other occupations are also inculcated through the educational and training processes that lead to occupational qualification.

Using Trice's (1993) typology, occupations are classifiable according to the strength of two distinct but interrelated dimensions – the grid dimension and the group dimension. The grid dimension refers to the tangible social structures that serve to constrain the behaviour of members, and the cultural forms that characterise an occupation. Occupations with a strong grid dimension stress internal distinctions in roles, authority and obligations, impersonal relations, differential rewards, compliance with formal rules, and the division of labour. The group dimension refers to the abstract sense of collectiveness that members of an occupation have, the strength of which is directly dependent on the sophistication of their occupational ideology and the complexity of its component

values and beliefs. Occupations with well-developed ideologies and sophisticated cultural forms, such as those that have the status of professions, have a strong group dimension out of which individual members can derive a self-image that integrates the professional and the personal.

Professions and ideologies

The literature on the development and nature of professions, and the process of professionalisation, is voluminous and quite varied in perspective (see for example, Abbott, 1988; Greenwood, 1966; Roth, 1974; Torstendahl & Burrage, 1990; Trice, 1993; and Wallace, 1995). It is possible, however, to identify in this literature a consensus that an occupation with the status of a profession will exhibit certain general attributes. The first of these attributes is the possession of a systematic and abstract body of specialised knowledge expressed in a language known fully only to the members of the profession. Second, the members of the profession claim autonomy in the application of their specific knowledge and resist interference in their work by those who are less qualified and who may be believed to impede effectiveness and quality of outcomes. Third, professional occupations maintain bodies that are heavily involved in the development and management of the profession, including the formulation of minimum qualification standards for entry and a set of ethical principles or codes of practice. The professional occupation itself often administers the association, the membership of which in some cases may be a state-legislated requirement for approval to practice.

Fourth, professions have a service and other-orientation that places community interests and those of the profession above self-interest. The penalties for breaching a code of ethics may include termination of both the right to practice and membership of the profession. Fifth, because of their monopoly of professional expertise, members of professional occupations claim authority over, but share responsibility with, clients who are assumed to be lesser skilled and so unable to determine their own needs or properly judge the quality of service provided by members of the professional occupation. All these attributes are referenced in the distinctive, complex occupational ideologies that professional occupations develop and sustain. In particular, the attributes of professional autonomy, client focus and an other-orientation, and commitment to the development of professional knowledge and the profession, all carry significant weight.

The occupational ideologies of professions have a greater general cogency and sophistication than do the ideologies of non-professional occupations (Abbott, 1988; Greenwood, 1966; Trice, 1993; Vollmer & Mills, 1966). The beliefs and values inherent in a profession's occupational ideology are held by group members to represent the 'oughts' of what should be, a form of common sense shared by the members of the profession. In functioning this way, a profession's occupational ideology supplies a blueprint that is intended to dispel uncertainty, simplify complexities, and resolve inevitable contradictions between organisational action and intent as perceived by the individual professional in the workplace (Trice, 1993). To make this point is not to forget, however, that all occupational ideologies are characteristically general, often vague, always

ambiguous, and can be emotionally charged. They often comprise values that are disconnected and inconsistent, and therefore are not always able to provide a completely consistent set of ranked values or action guideposts. Hence, the level of certainty an individual derives from his or her occupational ideology will always be subjective.

Membership of a profession can lead to the internalising and personalising of a profession's values and beliefs and thus engender emotions and moral obligations, significantly influencing an individual member's personality. While the degree of this influence on a member's personality and the intensity of associated emotions will be idiosyncratic, the strength of collectiveness felt by members of a professional occupation produces group cohesion and may nurture a sense of superiority over other occupational groups. A profession's occupational ideology buttresses this cohesion and sense of superiority by functioning 'to reduce internal strains and anxieties' and 'project emotional tensions on outsiders or scapegoats' (Trice, 1993: 67). This strong sense of internal cohesion associated with professional occupations has traditionally allowed these occupations to exercise greater influence over an organisation than that held by non-professional occupations within an organisation. The extent of this influence has however been weakened over the last 20 years with the emergence of a sophisticated occupational ideology embraced by management that competes for influence with other occupational ideologies within complex organisations (see for example Abbott, 1988; Bloor & Dawson, 1994; Bunderson, Lofstrom,& Van de Ven, 2000; Trice, 1993; Trice & Beyer, 1993; Wallace, Hunt & Richards, 1999).

Much of the change encapsulated in the transition to the new form of employee-organisation relationship can be attributed to the success of management in implementing many of its values and beliefs about work and organisations. Understanding the ideological differences between management and professional occupations has significance in terms of understanding the increased emphasis on professions in the search by employees for meaning and purpose in their work.

Management and professional ideologies

Management and professional occupations use fundamentally different organising principles as a basis for conceptualising work and the organisation (Trice, 1993). Professional occupations adhere to the 'occupational principle' that emphasises 'authority based on technical [professional] competence, commitment to the work, collegial decision making, and a service orientation'. All of these elements are central to the ideologies of professional occupations (Bunderson et al., 2000: 366). Management values and beliefs are derived from the 'administrative principle' which emphasises 'authority based on incumbency of a legally defined office, commitment to the organisation, hierarchical decision making, and efficiency orientation' (Bunderson et al., 2000: 366). These elements underpin management's claim to authority over the organisation and control of the work within the organisation. Bunderson et al. (2000) encapsulate the characteristic elements of each perspective in the 'bureaucratic' and 'market enterprise' schemas that are based on the administrative principle, and the 'professional group' and 'community service' schemas that are based on the occupational principle (see Table 2.2.).

Table 2.2 Professional and managerial schemas

	Management values and beliefs (Administrative principle)		Professional ideology (Occupational principle)	
Schema	Bureaucratic	Market enterprise	Professional group	Community service
View of organisation	Rational, efficient and coordinated system organised to pursue common goals	Business organised for market competitiveness, growth and wealth maximisation	Organised to achieve excellence in the work of the profession	Organised to apply professional expertise for benefit of community
Organisation design principles	Division of labour, specialization, impersonal procedures, hierarchical authority, standardised rules	Customer authority, competition for scarce resources, strategic advantage, external relationships	Professional identity and standards, collegial decisions and control, expert authority, self-defined membership	Service orientation, paternalistic / socialistic, social mission / cause, interested in 'other', public good
Role of the individual	Office-holder	Entrepreneur	Professional expert	Servant, civic activist
View of work	Work for living	Create a living	Work is living	Work for greater good
Career development	Hierarchical advancement, loyalty	Economic growth and ownership, independence	Work achievement, profession centrality	Inclusion and status in the community
Incentive	Pay, inducements, contributions	Wealth accumulation	Peer recognition and social relations	Peace of conscience, rewards of service
Failure	Loss of pay and status	Loss of profits and assets	Loss of control over work, and professional status	Loss of commitment to organisation

Source: Adapted from Bunderson, J. S. et al., 2000

In essence, the two schemas based on the administrative principle conceptualise

the organisation in two ways. First, the bureaucratic schema models the

organisation as a system structured and managed to achieve common goals in an efficient and co-ordinated way. The focus is on management of the organisation's internal operations based on principles such as the division of labour, hierarchy of authority, task performance by the most competent specialists, and clear separation of official duties from personal interests and obligations. Activity is integrated through mechanisms such as formal policies, procedures and reporting relationships. The second of the administrative-based schemas, market enterprise, models the organisation as a business with emphases on external market relations, competitiveness and wealth maximisation. The customer and the marketplace, rather than the managers and employees, are the determining elements for the organisation's products and their value, as well as its work and work processes (Bunderson et al., 2000).

The remaining two schemas are based on the occupational principle, and conceptualise the organisation in two ways. The first of these schemas, professional group, models the organisation as a collegial system organised to promote consistency and quality in the work of the organisation. The system focus is on professional excellence. Members of the professional group (that is those employees who possess the requisite technical knowledge that accords them membership of the professional group) control and direct technical work in accordance with professional standards and work values. The second schema, community service, conceives of the organisation as an institution that applies professional expertise for the benefit of the larger community or society. 'Public good' is valued more highly than organisational or personal gains that may accrue under the market enterprise and bureaucratic models. The normative orientation

of the community service schema also ranks the socio-cultural benefits of the work of professionals more highly than the utilitarian value and the efficiency outcome inherent in the market enterprise and bureaucratic schemas (Bunderson et al., 2000).

The four schemas in the typology are conceptually distinct. However, professionals who adhere to ideologies based on the occupational principle are not protected or isolated from influence by ideologies based on the administrative principle, or vice versa for management. Expectations about roles, rights, and obligations, derive from both professional and administrative work ideologies, and do shape the psychological contracts of individual professional employees (Bunderson et al., 2000).

Bunderson et al.'s (2000) generic framework illustrates the different cognitive bases management and professional employees use to perceive and interpret organisational actions and intent. It also reveals sources of tension that can arise from different perceptions of organisational goals, objectives, roles and obligations that operate in a complex organisation. Essentially, the manager may perceive the organisation as an end in itself and seek to prolong its existence through a focus on efficiency and effectiveness. On the other hand, the professional may perceive the organisation as existing primarily to meet a broader social need (Bunderson et al., 2000). It is this difference in perception that leads to tension, if not conflict between professional occupations and management (Bloor & Dawson, 1994; Trice, 1993), the implication of which is that understanding the link between occupational ideology and conceptualisation of

the organisation's purpose, goals, and design principles is crucial to understanding the psychological contract of professionals employed in organisations.

Professions, careers and commitment

Recognition of the potential of human capital as a source of sustainable competitive advantage is one significant consequence of the pursuit of increased organisational responsiveness, productivity, flexibility and innovation. This recognition has in turn enhanced the significance of highly skilled occupations, such as those having the status of professions, in the workforce (Bunderson, 2001). For example, in the US during the 1990s, professional/technical work was the fastest growing sector of the labour force (36% increase), and the largest sector at 17% (Bunderson, 2001). In Australia, government workforce projections to the year 2005 (DEST, 1995) included strong employment prospects, driven by workforce demographics, technological change and globalisation, for highly skilled occupations such as professionals. There is increasing evidence of a move in the individual professional employee's allegiance and career aspirations away from the organisation onto the profession. The capacity to contribute in both a professional and broader social sense is also assuming greater significance for the individual's self-esteem and identity in the workplace (Millward & Brewerton, 2000).

There is evidence that the decrease in employee commitment to the organisation is a deliberate response by the individual to the recognition that the basis for psychological contracting with the organisation has changed dramatically. In a

study of Canadian nurses, Meyer, Allen and Topolnytsky (1998) reported that some individuals have redirected their focus onto the nursing profession in response to perceived negative change in the psychological contract. In a study of Australian nurses and academics, Brunetto (2002) also highlights the significance of the profession as a focus for commitment and as a source of values and beliefs that shape the nature of the individual's perception of the employee-organisation relationship.

That many organisations no longer offer the kind of job security and career prospects that were implicit in the old form of employee-organisation relationship has also given impetus, in general terms, to the swing in employee commitment from organisation to profession. One of the changes in the employee-organisation relationship initiated by some organisations has been the transfer of responsibility for developing and managing a career from the organisation to the individual. It is this transfer of responsibility that underpins the distinction drawn between the old and new career paradigms operating in the workplace (Arthur, Claman, & DeFillippi, 1995; Herriot & Pemberton, 1996). In the case of employed professionals, awareness of the need to take greater control of their careers and actively develop their skills and enhance their employability fits with the emphasis on professional autonomy and personal accountability inherent in professional work ideologies. Clearly, the change in the focus of commitment from the organisation to the profession raises important issues for the understanding of the employee-organisation relationship and the psychological contract. These issues are canvassed in the following chapter.

Chapter summary

Organisational change has led to disillusionment and cynicism, perceptions of increased job insecurity, reduced loyalty, and scepticism in the workplace. The transition to a new form of employment deal between the employee and the organisation has prompted many individuals to search for new meaning and purpose in their work by creating a closer alignment between themselves, their work, the organisation, and the broader community.

For many people, meaning and self-expression in work is realised through identification with their occupation. Occupations such as those that have the status of professions have distinctive, complex occupational ideologies about work and organisations which members normally internalise and personalise. A shift in the focus of commitment from organisation to the profession has been linked to changes in the employee-organisation relationship. These changes underline the need for a better understanding of the role occupational ideologies play in the employee-organisation relationship, and of the implications that an organisation's failure to recognise the significance of such ideologies has for employee attitudes and behaviour.

There is consensus in the literature that the concept of the psychological contract has the potential to help develop that better understanding of the dynamics of the employee-organisation relationship. However, debate over the definition of key conceptual elements, and the extent to which it adds value to explanations of organisational behaviour provided by other theories or constructs, is robust and ongoing. That there has been limited discussion in the psychological contract

literature of the extent to which the occupational ideologies relate to the

individual's psychological contract is in part explained by the ongoing debate.

This study aims to contribute to that debate through an exploration of the role that

such values and beliefs play in the psychological contracts of a sample of

employed professionals.

Chapter 3: The concept of the psychological contract

Chapter objectives

The objectives of this chapter are to trace the development of the concept of the psychological contract from its early beginnings and to describe in detail its conceptualisation as a cognitive-perceptual construct, the form in which it is currently and widely used as an analytical and interpretative tool (Millward & Brewerton, 2000: 2). Specifically, the work of early theorists in the years from the 1930s to the 1980s, when the initial concept was sketched out, will be reviewed. This will be followed by a description of the cognitive-perceptual conceptualisation of the psychological contract, including its definition and the theoretical framework used to operationalise the concept, developed over the last decade and a half.

Development of the psychological contract concept

Scholarly debate over the psychological contract concept has been ongoing since the 1930s. Roehling (1997) and Millward and Brewerton (2000) trace a path through that debate, and provide a useful summary of the relevant writings of several key theorists. The *Journal of Organisational Behavior* has devoted two special issues – 'The Psychological Contract at Work' (1998, 19 [S1]) and 'Employment Relationships: Exchanges between Employees and Employers' (2003, 24 [5]) – to the matter of the psychological contract. In their editorial for the first special issue, Anderson and Schalk (1998) describe progress in the development of the psychological contract to that date and review many of the key concept-related issues that remain the subject of debate. Shore and Coyle

Shapiro (2003) provide an editorial for the second special issue that canvasses more recent developments in the employee-organisation relationship with reference to the psychological contract. Taylor and Tekleab (2004) and Shore et al. (2004) together provide the most comprehensive and thorough review of the concept's development and its current status in the literature. This significant level of academic interest reflects a consensus over the value of the concept as an important research tool in organisational studies for understanding how the employee-organisation relationship is constituted, how it develops and changes, and the consequences of a breakdown in the relationship (Taylor & Tekleab, 2004).

Early theorists

Arguably, the first reference to what has become known as the psychological contract appears in Barnard's (1938) formulation of a theory of cooperative systems and organisation. He discusses the idea that a psychological relationship develops around the explicit process of co-operative exchange that operates between an employee and employer. According to Barnard (1938), the productive and cooperative contributions that employees are induced to make by the organisation are essential for the organisation's survival; the individual is therefore the basic strategic element. Foreshadowing notions of transactional and relational exchange, Barnard (1938) held that an organisation could secure these essential contributions by offering objective material inducements such as money and desirable physical conditions, as well as personal non-material inducements such as social support and achievement of personal ideals. This view of the employee-organisation relationship as a cooperative reciprocal exchange process,

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covering implicit expectations pertaining to material and non-material needs and in which the individual is an active strategic element, was taken up by March and Simon (1958).

Building on Barnard's (1938) theories of co-operation, March and Simon (1958) articulated an inducement-contribution model of the process of dyadic exchange between the employee and the organisation. Their model highlights the importance of the individual's perception of balance in the exchange relationship, a perception that is formed from a position of power subordinate to that occupied by the organisation. This subordinate position is a consequence of the organisation making participation as an employee conditional upon the individual's acceptance of the organisation's authority to determine how its members should work and behave. However, the voluntary nature of the employment relationship means the organisation's capacity to exercise its authority is qualified. For March and Simon (1958: 91) the individual remains subordinate only when:

> It does not matter to him 'very much' what activities … the organisation will instruct him to perform, or if he is compensated in some way for the possibility that the organisation will impose unpleasant activities on him.

This view echoed Barnard's (1938) claim that the individual's acceptance of the organisation's authority is conditional on its requirements either not conflicting with the individual's interests as a whole, or falling within the individual's 'zone of indifference' where they are accepted without conscious questioning (Barnard,

1938). In highlighting the conditional and voluntary nature of the employment

relationship, by implication both Barnard (1938) and March and Simon (1958)

made the individual's subjective perception of balance central to the concept of

the psychological contract, an issue on which strong competing views still exist in

the current psychological contract literature (Guest, 1998a, 1998b; Rousseau,

1998a; Shore et al., 2004; Taylor & Tekleab, 2004).

Shortly after March and Simon (1958) published their ideas, Argyris (1960)

reported an interview-based study of factory employees and their supervisors, in

which he explained how the relationship between the two produced mutual

benefits. He described how a form of relationship, or 'psychological contract',

evolved between the employees and the supervisors based on joint agreement that

passive leadership by the supervisors would result in optimal production levels by

the employees. The employees agreed to maintain high production, low

grievances etc., as long as the supervisors left the employees alone and made

certain they were paid adequate wages and had secure jobs.

As described by Argyris (1960), the psychological contract clarified and

simplified the employee-supervisor relationship. It made clear what was expected

from each party. The contract remained in place only for as long as the desired

outcomes and mutual benefits, on which the relationship was predicated,

continued to occur. In terms of linkages to previous theorists, two aspects of the

relationship described by Argyris (1960) are held to differ from that described by

Barnard (1938) and modelled by March and Simon (1958). According to Taylor

and Tekleab (2004), what Argyris (1960) describes as a psychological contract

pertains more to the relationship between a group of employees and their supervisor, rather than to a dyadic relationship in which the individual employee and the supervisor are the contracting parties. Second, the currency of exchange described by Argyris (1960) is quite specific and material in nature. As such, the content of the psychological contract has a narrower focus than that proposed by Barnard (1938) whose idea, that personal non-material benefits such as the achievement of personal ideals could be effective inducements to cooperate, is overlooked by Argyris (1960).

Following Argyris (1960), Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl, and Solley (1962) published an empirical study into mental health issues involving a sample of more than 800 employees. The study places the implicit pre-formed expectations and mutual expectations generated through the contracting process at the heart of the employee-organisation relationship. According to Levinson et al. (1962), altered expectations arising from changes in the needs of the individual and the organisation over time, and reciprocal change occasioned by participation in the exchange process, in turn drive changes in the perception of benefits produced by the psychological contract. In essence, Levinson et al. (1962) depicted the employee-organisation relationship as involving an individual employee and the organisation (represented by its managers) in a dynamic contracting process. This process is driven by shared perceptions concerning mutuality and reciprocity and leads towards an interdependent relationship that satisfies the needs of each party.

Together these initial insights into the psychological nature of the exchange process forming the employee-organisation relationship, and in particular

Barnard's (1938) idea that the currency of exchange could be both material and non-material in nature, foreshadowed aspects of the theory of social exchange articulated by Blau (1964, 1974), Emerson (1981) and others.

In referring specifically to the exchange between the employee and employer, Blau (1964: 164) wrote:

> the great investment men have in their occupation and their job make [sic] the wage bargain fundamentally different from other economic exchanges and distinguish its significance for the employee from that which it has for the employer.

The employer exchanges commodity for commodity whereas the worker exchanges 'life for income; the transaction involves him in status, prestige, his standing in the eyes of his family and of the community, and his whole position as a man' (Boulding, 1962: cited by Blau, 1964: 164). In other words, Blau (1964) saw the employee-organisation relationship as not only dealing with the mutual exchange of material economic commodities, but also as having social and cultural dimensions that provided non-material social elements of exchange of equal importance to both parties in the employee-organisation relationship.

In conceiving social exchange in this way, Blau (1974) defined a focus on the voluntary actions of individuals seeking to realise their interests, 'be they sensual or ideal, lasting or fleeting, conscious or unconscious, casually impelling or teleologically inducing' (1974: 205). These actions were motivated by an expectation of benefits that would be gained in return through the exchange process. Far from only focussing on rational conduct oriented toward material

gain, social exchange theory embraced all attempts to obtain rewarding social experiences, including the desire to further humanitarian ideals or spiritual values as well as the pursuit of personal advantage and emotional satisfaction. In this sense, Blau's (1964, 1974) approach parallel's Barnard's (1938: 93-94) view concerning the employee-organisation relationship:

> But to me … it appears utterly contrary to the nature of men to be sufficiently induced by material or monetary considerations to contribute enough effort to a cooperative system to enable it to be productively efficient. … It is for these reasons that good organisations … devote great attention … to the non-economic inducements, because they are indispensable to fundamental efficiency, as well as to effectiveness in many cases.

Soon after publication of Blau's (1964) work, Schein (1965, 1970, 1980) suggested that the mutual expectations the employee and the employer have of each other embraced not only matters such as how much work was to be performed for how much pay, but also less explicit matters such as rights, privileges and obligations between the individual and the organisation. These latter items were powerful determinants of an individual's behaviour that were typically not written into any formal agreement between the individual and organisation. Like Blau (1964), Schein (1965, 1970, 1980) emphasised the need to recognise that the terms of the psychological contract could include not only economic and material but also non-material benefits that satisfied the needs of each party (Taylor & Tekleab, 2004). Schein's (1965, 1970) approach was paralleled in work by Kotter (1973) who used the concept of psychological

contract as developed by Argyris (1960) and Levinson et al. (1962) to explore the process of assimilating new employees into an organisation.

Kotter (1973) modelled the psychological contract as comprising matches and mismatches between four sets of expectations – what the individual and the organisation each expected to give and receive from each other. Kotter's (1973) model reflected a view of the psychological contract as a dyadic exchange relationship between employee and employer, in which each party understood their own expectations and that understanding was shared by the other party. The greater the degree to which the individual and the organisation had clearly thought out their own expectations, and the greater the degree to which each understood the other's expectations, were fundamental to the matching process on which a mutually beneficial psychological contract was based. Kotter's (1973: 92) approach to the psychological contract recognised that it may have 'literally thousands' of items which could be either material or non-material in nature, ranging from salary to a sense of meaning and purpose in the job.

Overall, while the period from Barnard (1938) to Schein (1965, 1970, 1980) saw limited empirical research published, the basic theoretical framework was laid down for understanding the psychological contract as a mutual, bilateral exchange process between employee and employer. Central to this concept was the notion that implicit, unwritten expectations, particularly regarding reciprocity and mutuality, were crucial in determining the behaviour of both parties to a psychological contract in the workplace (Anderson & Schalk, 1998).

Essentially, the early theorists saw the psychological contract as an outcome of a process of interaction that reflected interdependence between two identifiable parties in an exchange relationship, an interdependence that could only be fully understood by examining the dialectical nature of the beliefs of both parties (Taylor & Tekleab, 2004). A particular point of interest relevant to the this study is the recognition that inducements for the individual to contribute could include not only personal material gain, but also non-material benefits such as rewarding experiences arising from an individual's desire to further humanitarian ideals or spiritual values (Barnard, 1938; Blau, 1964; Kotter, 1973; Schein, 1965).

Discussion of the psychological contact in the literature tailed off during the 1970s and 1980s and, aside from Kotter's (1973) insights, no significant progress in the concept's development took place during this time (Taylor & Tekleab, 2004; Shore et al., 2004). It was not until the end of the 1980s that the next major step in the development of the psychological contract occurred when debate over the concept's definition took a major conceptual and empirical turn that arguably moved away from this so-called 'classic' approach.

The cognitive-perceptual approach

The resurgence of academic interest in the psychological aspects of the employee-organisation relationship was sparked by the publication of Rousseau's article, 'Psychological and implied contracts in organisations' (Rousseau, 1989). This article was the first in a long series of theoretical and empirical studies that brought together elements from psychology, as well as social exchange and relational contract theory (Macneil, 1985) to outline a cognitive-perceptual

definition and theoretical framework for the concept (Rousseau, 1995, 1996,

1998a, 1998b, 2000a & b, 2001, 2003, 2004a, b & c; Rousseau & Greller, 1994;

Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993; Rousseau & Schalk, 2000; Rousseau &

Tijoriwala, 1998; Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1994). Of course, other scholars

have contributed to the development of this approach, perhaps the most important

being those contributions that have challenged the cognitive-perceptual

framework and thereby in effect given added impetus and direction to its

development (for example, Arnold, 1996; Coyle Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; Guest,

1998a, 1998b; Herriot & Pemberton, 1997; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Tsui,

Pearce, Porter, & Tripoli, 1997).

Widely acknowledged as the most influential and referenced perspective in

psychological contract research published over the last decade and a half (Shore

et al., 2004; Taylor & Tekleab, 2004), the definition of the psychological contract

in cognitive-perceptual terms has acquired the status of a scientific construct, a

distinctive 'cognitive-perceptual entity … owned solely by the individual'

(Millward & Brewerton 2000: 2). The cognitive-perceptual definition has been

described as both a 'relevant extension of previous behavioural understandings of

contracting' (Phelps, 1996: 488), and as having elements that stand in 'stark

contrast to early research' (Taylor & Tekleab, 2004: 259). It links to the

organisational concepts of psychological and implied contracts as described by

Argyris (1960), Schein (1980), and others. However, as the following discussion

shows, aspects of it represent significant departures from the classic approach of

earlier theorists (Taylor & Tekleab, 2004).

Defining the psychological contract

Focussing solely on the individual, the cognitive-perceptual approach defines the psychological contract as:

> … an individual's belief in mutual obligations between that
>
> person and another party such as an employer (either a firm or
>
> another person). This belief is predicated on the perception that
>
> a promise has been made (e.g. of employment or career
>
> opportunities) and a consideration offered in exchange for it
>
> (e.g. accepting a position, foregoing other job offers), binding
>
> the parties to some set of reciprocal obligations. (Rousseau &
>
> Tijoriwala, 1998: 679)

This definition places the individual's beliefs in promises and obligations arising out of the employee-organisation relationship at the centre of the psychological contract. As Rousseau (2001: 525-527) notes, 'without promises, employment relationships as we know them could not exist', with a promise meaning 'a spoken or written assurance made to another, a commitment made to one's self, or conditions that create expectations on the part of another'. The individual perceives promissory intent through the interpretation of spoken or written words and discrete and repeated actions which are interpreted in a specific context of the situation.

A psychological contract results from an act of cognition, that is, when an individual perceives that his or her contributions obligate the organisation to reciprocate (or vice versa). It is the individual's unilateral belief in this obligation

of reciprocity that constitutes the contract (Rousseau, 1989, 1995). Because factors such as cognitive limits and different frames of reference (such as cultural values) influence an individual's perceptions, the mutuality inherent in the psychological contract is subjective and potentially unique for each person that agrees with it. Therefore, a specific emphasis on the individual's subjective experience is logical and necessary: 'the perception of mutuality, not necessarily mutuality in fact is the heart of the psychological contract' (Rousseau, 1998a: 680). In other words, the cognitive-perceptual definition does not assume that the employee and the employer have an objective understanding of, nor hold the same beliefs about their obligations to each other (Shore et al., 2004). The psychological contract is, in this way, defined as the employee's solo conceptualisation of a dyadic relationship.

At this point it is worth noting that the merit of a singular emphasis on the employee's perceptions is the subject of differing views within the literature. Critics of such an emphasis argue that the psychological contract is a shared understanding of a bilateral relationship between employee and employer, and by emphasising the individual's subjective perceptions the cognitive-perceptual approach misconstrues the nature of the psychological contract (see Guest, 1998a & 1998b; Herriot & Pemberton, 1997). Under an alternative bilateral approach, the psychological contract becomes 'the perceptions of both parties to the employment relationship, organisation and the individual, of the obligations implied in the relationship', and the psychological contracting process is 'the social process whereby these perceptions are arrived at' (Herriot & Pemberton, 1997: 45). Examples of this approach in psychological contract research

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exploring the perceptions, expectations, and obligations from the perspective of both parties, include Millward and Herriot (2000), and Tsui et al. (1997).

Underpinning criticism of an exclusive emphasis on the individual's perceptions is the idea that such an approach can at best provide only an incomplete snapshot and one-sided view of the psychological contract and related events such as a failure by either party to meet its obligations (Guest, 1998a). As the individual employee's view will be 'so uniquely personal, context-bound, and fluid', it becomes as a consequence 'impossible to envisage making statements of any generic kind' about the exchange process and the employee-organisation relationship itself (Millward & Brewerton, 2000: 21). Critics also argue that if the employee-organisation relationship is to be framed in terms of a contract, a metaphor derived from the field of contract law, then the shared nature of the mutuality inherent in, and essential, to the legal metaphor can only be properly recognised by giving equal weight to both the perspective of individual and that of the organisation (Guest, 1998a & 1998b). In other words, a sole emphasis on the individual employee, is held to be contrary to the idea that the psychological contract is concerned with mutual obligations. Thus, the inference is that such a focus obscures the true nature of mutuality, and a complete understanding of the objective nature of that mutuality is precluded.

Rousseau (1998a), the leading proponent of the cognitive-perceptual approach, acknowledges the desirability of incorporating the organisation's perspective, but highlights a fundamental weakness in the case for adopting a bilateral approach, namely the unresolved and seemingly intractable problem of capturing the

organisation's perspective. Empirical research to date indicates that individual employees quite often report very different understandings of what or who represents the organisation in the contracting process, and confirms that diverse agents of the organisation (such as line managers, senior executives, human resource departments) may be perceived as exchange partners in the making of psychological contracts (Rousseau, 2000a). Defining the psychological contract through the lens of the individual's perceptions circumvented the problem of defining the organisation objectively, and allowed psychological contract research to proceed (Millward & Brewerton, 2000).

In dealing with the employee's subjective perceptions of the organisation, researchers have generally used anthropomorphic assumptions to construct the organisation as a single unified entity. In other words, they have relied upon the individual's perceptions about the role of management acting as organisational agents to represent the organisation's perspective. The roots of this approach arguably lie in March and Simon's (1958) inducements-contributions model which dealt with the employing organisation as a single unified entity represented by 'management', that is organisational agents collectively responsible for managing the inducements-contributions balance (Coyle Shapiro & Conway, 2004).

Some researchers have adopted the approach of identifying the immediate supervisor as the primary agent acting for the organisation in the making of a psychological contract (Shore & Tetrick, 1994; Tekleab & Taylor, 2003). However, the empirical evidence shows that employees quite often distinguish

between managers acting as organisational agents and the organisation as an employer (Coyle Shapiro & Kessler, 2000). In addition, line managers often do not perceive themselves as representing the organisation, and indeed employees do not perceive them that way unless the line manager is also a senior manager (Guest & Conway, 2000).

Other researchers have used a different approach and have examined the relationship between senior managers and employees (Coyle Shapiro & Kessler, 2002; Guest & Conway, 2000; Porter, Pearce, Tripoli & Lewis, 1998). This approach recognises that decisions about the basic conditions of employment are typically made higher up the organisational hierarchy in the employment exchange process. Thus, a distinction is made in contract-making between the role of line managers, who most often are not party to decisions regarding basic aspects of the employment relationship, and the roles of other higher level agents in the exchange relationship with employees (Coyle Shapiro, Taylor, Shore, & Tetrick, 2004).

With both of these approaches, the researcher relies on the aggregated perceptions of a specific category of agents as being representative of the organisation's perspective. However, the problem with aggregation is that it may hide diverging views across different levels and functions within the organisation. Thus, while equating one category of agents, for example immediate line managers, with the organisation avoids the problem of divergence across levels and functions, it does not eliminate the possibility of divergence within a category of agents. Also, it is not evident from research to date that the perceptions of individuals can be

aggregated to create meaningful indicators of perceptions at work-unit level, let al.one organisational-level employment relationships (Shore et al., 2004).

Arguably, the debate over the exclusive emphasis on the individual's perceptions may be much ado about nothing (Roehling, 2004). There is no argument that the individual's perspective is not necessary, and there is agreement on both sides of the debate that if the origins of the perceived mutuality inherent in the psychological contract are to be fully understood, both perspectives are necessary: 'degrees of mutuality in fact cannot be determined by employee data alone' (Rousseau, 1998b: 692). Millward and Brewerton (2000: 37) express a similar view: 'it is critical to look at the interplay between employer and employee terms. … Reciprocity cannot be investigated solely from employee-derived data'. There is also consensus that more research is needed for a better understanding of the way the organisation operates as a party to the psychological contract to emerge (Guest, 1998a; Rousseau, 1998b; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998; Marks, 2001; Millward & Brewerton, 2000; Shore et al., 2004; and Taylor & Tekleab, 2004).

Schemas and the psychological contract

The cognitive-perceptual approach to the psychological contract suggests that the individual's assumptions and beliefs about the psychological contract form a schema, which serves an interpretive and inferential function by enabling individuals to cope with ambiguity, and predict likely future events. Defined in general terms, a schema is:

the cognitive organisation … of conceptually related elements

…[that represent] … a prototypical abstraction of a complex

concept, one that gradually develops from past experience, and

subsequently guides the way new information is organised'

(Rousseau 2001: 512).

In organisational settings, employees draw on schemas both cognitively and

intuitively to make meaningful interpretations of the intent of others, events, and

objects (Rousseau, 2001). These schemas derive from two general sources. First,

there is private internalised knowledge, such as the individual's personal values

and beliefs, previous and current employment experiences and understandings,

and an understanding of the values, beliefs and likely behaviours of others in the

workplace. Second, there is collectively shared knowledge, such as knowledge

and understandings of the values, beliefs and behaviour of others validated as

correct by peers and colleagues (Bloor & Dawson, 1994).

Such collectively shared knowledge develops in work groups that are

homogenous in terms of membership, such as professional groups, have higher

outcome interdependence, and which have a history of stability and cohesion.

This form of shared knowledge enables group members to predict, rely on and

trust other group members to behave in a manner consistent with shared norms.

Because they reflect the established group consensus, such schemas are highly

resistant to change even when the circumstances under which they operate alter

significantly (Rousseau, 2001). The work-related values and beliefs that lie at the

heart of a profession's distinctive ideology are one form of shared knowledge or

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schema that shapes the individual's conceptualisation of work and the organisation, and thereby may guide the development of the individual's perceptions relating to the psychological contract.

As schemas generally evolve slowly and remain reasonably stable over time, so does the psychological contract. Indeed, Rousseau (2001) suggests that the psychological contract established upon commencement with an organisation is in essence likely to be the most enduring employment-related schema for many individuals. This is not suggesting, however, that no change occurs at all. While an employee's initial psychological contract with an organisation is likely to be less complex and less relational in nature, it may in the normal course of events evolve a greater degree of complexity and become more relational in nature over time as the individual collects information about the employment relationship. That the nature of change to an individual's psychological contract is usually gradual and evolutionary reflects the individual's need for predictability in and the capacity to influence the employee-organisation relationship (Rousseau, 2001).

Breaching of the psychological contract
The gradual and slow rate at which the psychological contract changes over time has an obvious implication in organisations where operating conditions are causing instability and a need for substantial workplace change likely to impact significantly on the employment relationship. In such circumstances, individuals may be more likely to perceive a failure to deliver by the organisation on all or some aspects of the psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995, 2001). Indeed,

psychological contract research indicates that a majority of employees are likely to experience instances of non-delivery or 'breach' by the organisation, and that such events can lead to changes in an individual's psychological contract (Coyle Shapiro, & Kessler, 2000; Lester, Turnley, Bloodgood, & Bolino, 2002; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau, 1995; Taylor & Tekleab, 2004).

Idiosyncratic cognitive capacities and information processing styles mean that individuals do not always recognise a difference between their perception of the organisation's obligations and its performance as a discrepancy (Anderson & Schalk, 1998). The individual's initial and routine response to each new psychological contract-related event is to endeavour to fit the new event to their existing mental model. When a fit occurs, perhaps with some variation tolerated within limits acceptable to the individual, no discrepancy is perceived and the psychological contract remains in a steady state. It is only as a consequence of this 'fitting process' breaking down, that a breach is perceived and further consequences ensue. If the individual perceives the breach to have a positive impact, the psychological contract is fine-tuned and business-as-usual recommences. On the other hand, if the individual perceives the breach to have a negative impact falling outside the limits of acceptable change, then more substantial consequences may ensue. A strong emotional response may be engendered and this in turn can lead to significant attitudinal or behavioural change, perhaps ultimately leading to separation from the organisation (Anderson & Schalk, 1998).

The likelihood of a strong emotional response to a breach is influenced by what the individual attributes to be its cause. Where the organisation's failure to deliver is perceived by an employee as unwitting and contrary to its ability and willingness to meet its obligations, the likelihood of a strong emotional response is typically low. In such circumstances, the breach is likely to have resulted from incongruence between what the individual and the organisation each believed to be the obligation. Three primary factors can create incongruence: idiosyncratic cognitive schema, complexity or ambiguity of the contract terms, and inadequate communication (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Rousseau, 1995). On the other hand, in circumstances where the individual sees the organisation as having knowingly not met its obligations despite having the ability to do so, that is the organisation reneges on its obligation, the likelihood of a strong emotional response is greater. This likelihood may be moderated, however, if the individual perceives that circumstances beyond the organisation's control have prohibited it from meeting its obligations (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Rousseau, 1995).

The individual's response to a breach will also in part reflect the history and current state of the employee-organisation relationship. In addition, the scale of the loss experienced by the individual will in part affect the individual's perception of a breach and the response (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Rousseau, 1995; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). An employee may consider withdrawal altogether from the relationship if he/she perceives the balance between inducements and contributions in their contract has been negatively and substantially affected by a breach which another employee might perceive to be minor and inconsequential (Shore & Tetrick, 1994). Certainly, an individual's

vigilance and monitoring for possible further discrepancies has been found to increase after instances of breach and violation (Herriot & Pemberton, 1996). The negative consequences of the attitudinal and behavioural change that can arise from breach by the organisation have also been demonstrated: higher turnover (Guzzo, Noonan & Elron, 1994); lower trust and job satisfaction (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994); lower commitment (Guzzo et al., 1994); less organisational citizenship behaviour (Robinson & Morrison, 1995).

Operationalising the psychological contract

The consensus in the literature favours operationalising cognitive-perceptual approaches to the psychological contract using a bidimensional framework, first articulated by Rousseau (1995) (Millward & Brewerton, 2000). The framework has two components – a continuum of contract terms and a typology of contract types – that are depicted in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 below.

Table 3.1: A continuum of contract terms and features

Transactional Terms	Features	Relational Terms
Economic	*Focus*	Economic, emotional
Partial	*Inclusion*	Whole person
Close-ended, specific	*Time-frame*	Open-ended, indefinite
Written	*Formalization*	Written, unwritten
Static	*Stability*	Dynamic
Narrow	*Scope*	Pervasive
Public, observable	*Tangibility*	Subjective, understood

Source: Rousseau, 1995

Table 3.2: Types of psychological contracts

1. Transactional	3. Balanced (Hybrid)	2. Relational
Low ambiguity Easy exit and high turnover Freedom to enter new contracts Little learning Weak integration and identification Short term duration Performance terms specified	High member commitment High integration and identification Ongoing development Mutual support Dynamic Long term duration Performance terms specified	High member commitment High affective commitment High integration and identification Stability Long term duration Performance terms not specified
4. Transitional Ambiguity/uncertainty, High turnover/termination, Instability, Short term duration, Performance terms not specified		

Adapted from: Rousseau, 1995

Both components draw on aspects of relational contract theory, particularly

Macneil's (19858) concept of a spectrum of contractual behaviour. This is the

idea that the extent to which social relations characterise an exchange relationship

can be shown as ranging along a spectrum with certain of them intensified at one

end and others at the other end (Macneil, 1985, 2000). Macneil's (1985) concept

reflects the view that every exchange transaction is embedded in complex

relations, and that understanding any transaction requires recognition and

consideration of all essential elements of those relations that might affect the

transaction significantly. In relational contract theory, social exchange is the

essence of contract and all types of contract are considered to be relational in

nature to one degree or another (Macneil, 1985).

Rousseau's (1995) adaptation of Macneil's (1985) spectrum concept to psychological contracts entailed placing so-called 'transactional' contract terms which are considered conceptually as-if-discrete from social relations, opposite to those which are highly embedded in social relations, so-called 'relational' terms. In so doing, Rousseau (1995) simplified and clarified basic conceptual differences in the character of contract terms. For example, those terms dealing with material matters and less relationally-oriented, such as wage increases and effort required, are classified as 'transactional', and those dealing with non-material matters and more highly embedded in social relations, such as loyalty and welfare, are classified as 'relational'. Notwithstanding this conceptual distinction between transactional and relational terms, research has shown them not to be mutually exclusive and often found blended together in psychological contracts (Rousseau, 1995; Millward & Herriot, 2000).

The second component of the bidimensional framework uses the conceptual distinction between transactional and relational contract terms and features to provide a basis on which four psychological contract types can be identified: (i) transactional, (ii) relational, (iii) balanced, and (iv) transitional. The transactional and relational contract types are the basic contract types with the balanced contract representing a blend of the two basic contract types. The transitional contract represents a situation in which no psychological contract operates (Rousseau, 1995).

Content terms that are explicit, short-term and economic in nature are the currency of transactional exchange. Contracts based on transactional exchange

assume rational and self-interested parties, are likely to remain stable over time, and do not result in an ongoing interdependence of the parties. Relational exchange, on the other hand, is more complex. Its currency comprises open-ended terms that are socio-emotional in nature. Contracts based on relational exchange involve investments that are interdependent and difficult from which to withdraw. Such contracts evolve over time, create a commitment to the other party that promotes interdependence, and lessens the weight of self-interest (Rousseau, 1995).

The wide acceptance of the bidimensional framework has been reflected in its use in empirical research to help facilitate understanding of how and why individuals respond to changes in the employment relationship (Anderson & Schalk, 1998; Cavanaugh & Noe, 1999; Herriot, Manning & Kidd, 1997; Millward & Hopkins, 1998; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993; Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1995). In particular, the transactional/relational conceptual distinction at its heart has been instrumental in linking the nature of the currency exchanged to the way in which individuals respond to non-delivery by the organisation (Guzzo et al., 1994; Herriot & Pemberton, 1996; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993; Robinson & Morrison, 1995, 2000; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Turnley & Feldman, 1999).

Chapter summary

Early theorists from Barnard (1938) to Schein (1965, 1970, 1980) conceptualised the psychological contract as a mutual, dyadic exchange process between

employee and employer. Central to this concept was the notion that implicit, unwritten expectations, particularly regarding reciprocity and mutuality, were crucial in determining the behaviour of both parties to a psychological contract in the workplace. The psychological contract was conceived as a dynamic, slowly evolving process of interaction that reflected interdependence between employee and organisation. As such, it was held to be fundamental to co-operative relationships in organisations that produced benefits to both parties. Such benefits included not only personal material gain, but could also could include non-material benefits such as rewarding experiences arising from an individual's desire to further humanitarian ideals or spiritual values.

Research over the last decade and a half built on this earlier work and has resulted in definition of the psychological contract in cognitive-perceptual terms. This approach defines a psychological contract as resulting from a subjective act of cognition by the individual that his or her contributions obligate the organisation to reciprocate. The cognitive-perceptual approach does not assume that the employee and the employer have a shared objective understanding; in this way the psychological contract is defined as the employee's solo conceptualisation of a dyadic relationship. The psychological contract serves an interpretive and inferential function in enabling individuals cognitively and intuitively to make meaningful interpretations of organisational actions and intent.

Because it is an enduring schema or mental model of the employee-organisation relationship, the psychological contract forms an important aspect of the individual's self-concept. Therefore, non-delivery on promises and commitments

in the psychological contract can have a major impact on the individual's attitudes and behaviours as manifested in job performance, job satisfaction, organisational citizenship behaviour, organisational commitment, intent to leave, and turnover.

An integral component in operationalising the cognitive-perceptual definitional approach has been the bidimensional interpretative framework that links the character of contract terms – economic and socio-emotional – to two basic contract types – transactional and relational. The bidimensional classification of psychological contracts has helped facilitate understanding of how and why individuals respond to change in the employment relationship. However, while this conceptualisation of the psychological contract is parsimonious it does not allow for the possibility identified by early theorists, that the psychological contract might embrace the possibility of contributions arising out of an individual's ideological leanings that go beyond the employee-organisation relationship, to be explicitly recognised.

The following chapter argues that the simplicity of the bidimensional interpretative framework conflates ideology-related contributions with relational contributions. In so doing it masks essential differences between the three forms of contribution. It also obscures the increasingly important role that professional ideologies play in the new employee-organisation relationship, and the implications that an organisation's failure to recognise the significance of such ideologies has for the attitudes and behaviour of professional employee.

Chapter 4: Issues concerning the psychological contract

Chapter Objectives

The objectives of this chapter are basically two fold. Firstly, issues will be considered pertaining to the bidimensional interpretative framework through which the cognitive-perceptual definition of the psychological contract has been operationalised. The question of the reliability and adequacy of the bidimensional interpretative framework, for understanding the psychological contracts of individuals who conceptualise work and their relationship to the organisation from an ideological perspective, will be addressed. The chapter also explores the idea that by limiting contributions to those that are either economic or socio-emotional in nature, the bidimensional interpretative framework thereby precludes recognition of the possibility that another essentially different form of contributions, such as those that are ideology-related, may play a significant role in the psychological contract for professional employees. Secondly, the chapter presents the research opportunity and outlines the specific research questions on which the study will focus.

Bidimensional interpretative framework

As outlined earlier in Chapter 3, the cognitive-perceptual conceptual approach to the psychological contract uses a bidimensional interpretative framework to differentiate contract types on the basis of a content-based assessment. The transactional type is correlated with an emphasis on economic and material contract terms, and the relational type is correlated with an emphasis on socio-emotional and non-material contract terms. While empirical research has

supported this bidimensional interpretative framework, other scholars have raised

questions about its reliability and adequacy (Arnold, 1996; Burr & Thomson,

2002; Guest, 1998a, 1998b; Herriot & Pemberton, 1997; Millward & Brewerton,

2000; Shore & Barksdale, 1998; Taylor & Tekleab, 2004; Thomson & Bunderson,

2003).

Millward & Brewerton (1998, 2000) report empirical evidence that shows

psychological contracts quite often combine seemingly incongruous transactional

and relational contract terms. Millward and Brewerton (2000) argue this evidence

suggests that the relationship between the overall type of psychological contract

and its terms is more complex, and less clear cut than represented by the

relatively simple transactional/relational distinction. Other researchers express

similar concerns on methodological grounds. For example, Roehling (1997),

Coyle Shapiro & Kessler (2002), and Tekleab and Taylor (2003) report

inconsistent results in the use of measures for assessing contract terms that

underpin the transactional/relational distinction at the heart of the bidimensional

interpretative framework. Based on this and other evidence, a general consensus

has developed in the literature that, rather than representing the opposite ends of a

continuum as initially proposed by Rousseau (1995), the relational and

transactional concepts are conceptually distinct dimensions (Grimmer & Oddy, in

press; Taylor & Tekleab, 2004).

Alternatives to and variations on the bidimensional interpretative framework have

appeared in the literature (see Tsui et al., 1997; Shore & Barksdale, 1988; Burr &

Thomson, 2002; Thompson & Bunderson, 2003). For example, Tsui et al. (1997)

describe four employee-organisation relationship types: 'quasi-spot contracts', 'under-investment', 'over-investment', and 'mutual investment'. This typology is based on an assessment, from the employer's perspective, of the balance between inducements offered to employees and the contributions expected from employees. In the case of the 'quasi-spot contract' type, the level of inducements and contributions are perceived as low and in balance. Similarly, in the case of the 'mutual investment' type, inducements and contributions are perceived as in balance but both are at a high level. The 'under-' and 'over-investment' types reflect an imbalance, with inducements low and contributions high in the former and the reverse in the latter. Shore and Barksdale (1998) also use the notion of balance to link perceptions of individual and organisational obligations, assessed from the individual's perspective, to describe four contract types: mutually high obligations, mutually low obligations, employee high/employer low, and employee low/employer high.

While attracting some attention, the Tsui et al. (1997) and Shore and Barksdale (1998) models have not, however, been taken up by other psychological contract researchers to date (Tetrick, 2004). Also, in terms of the focus of this study on the role of professional ideologies in the psychological contract, the proposals do not explicitly recognise the possibility that ideology-related contributions may be a separate factor in the psychological contract for some employees. In this sense they are not different from the dominant approach to operationalising the psychological contract using a bidimensional interpretative framework.

Two proposed variations by Burr and Thomson (2002) and Thompson and Bunderson (2003) do, however, deal with the possibility of separate ideology-related contributions. Burr and Thomson (2002) focus on the connection between the psychological contract as made within the organisation and the external social context in which the individual and the organisation sit. Thompson and Bunderson (2003) focus on the bidimensional characterisation of the type of currency exchanged under the psychological contract. There is a significant degree of convergence and complementarity in the views expressed by both sets of researchers.

Burr and Thomson (2002) contend the bidimensional interpretative framework has led to an unacceptably narrow theoretical and empirical emphasis. This is because it neglects recent developments of significance for the concept of the psychological contract that have followed the destabilising of the employee-organisation relationship (previously discussed in Chapter 2). One such development is the growing body of research on the phenomenon of 'spirituality in the workplace' (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Barrett, 1998; Bolman & Deal, 1995; Marcic, 1997; Wilber, 1998).

In line with this research, Burr and Thomson (2002: 1) claim that 'organisations and people within them are seeking more meaning than the pursuit of material gain can provide'. They contend that this reflects an 'innate need for meaning' and a quest by individuals 'to feel that they can make a difference for the greater good or 'the all' in some way' (Burr & Thomson, 2002: 1-2). In such circumstances, individuals may be likely to make psychological contracts within

the organisational context that reflect an evaluation, not only of personal benefit

and benefits shared with the organisation, but also a coincidence of interest

between the individual, the organisation and the rest of society. Similarly,

Thompson and Bunderson (2003) argue that, accompanying this move at the level

of the individual, organisations too are seeking to establish a broader explicit

connection with their environments. Cause-driven mission statements are

becoming more common in the U.S. as organisations endeavour to induce greater

employee contributions by making employees feel that their efforts have value

beyond the organisation (Collins & Porras, 1996). There is evidence to suggest it

is also becoming commonplace for Australian organisations to represent their

activities on corporate websites with statements such as:

Our core purpose is to make the world a more sociable place

(Lion Nathan, 2006)

The communities in which we operate value our citizenship

(BHP Billiton, 2006)

By igniting the creative spirit of our people we deliver great

science and innovative solutions for industry, society and the

environment   (CSIRO, 2006)

In essence, both sets of researchers contend that the boundary demarcating the

individual and the organisation from the broader community is becoming less

clear. This is occurring as the individual's search for meaning from work shifts

beyond the organisation to incorporate social values and a concern for the greater

good, and the organisation itself tries to connect with the wider societal context as

a means to secure greater employee cooperation and contributions (Burr &

Thomson, 2002; Thompson & Bunderson, 2003).

According to Burr and Thomson (2002: 4), the roots of the bidimensional

interpretative framework with its transactional/relational distinction are 'very

much in the beliefs and values domain of the individual with regard to the

organisation'. Thus, they reason that the bidimensional interpretative approach to

the psychological contract needs rethinking to reflect the increasing

interconnectedness of the organisation and its environment, and to incorporate the

increasing significance of the external context as a direct influence on the content

and features of organisation-based psychological contracts. Burr and Thomson

(2002) propose an expansion of the interpretative framework to include a so-

called 'transpersonal' component, the content and features of which reflect a

concern for: the community; service to humanity; connectedness to the

environment; compassion and care and voluntary selfless work (see Table 4.1

below).

Table 4.1: Psychological contract dimensions

	Transactional	**Relational**	**Transpersonal**
Focus	Economic Intrinsic	Economic Socio-emotional Intrinsic	Socio-economic Psycho-social Intrinsic & Extrinsic
Time Frame	Close-ended Specific duration	Open-ended Indefinite duration	Open-ended Changing duration
Stability	Static	Dynamic	Dynamic and flexible
Scope	Narrow	Pervasive and comprehensive	Boundary less 'All' encompassing
Tangibility	Public Easily observable	Subjective Understood	Subjective Negotiable

Source: Adapted from Burr & Thomson, 2002

Burr and Thomson (2002) contend the inclusion of a transpersonal component into the interpretative framework recognises the interconnectedness of the individual, the organisation and the societal context. It acknowledges the possibility that individuals may aim to make psychological contracts that align the transactional ('what's in it for me'), and the relational ('what's in it for us'), with the transpersonal ('what fits with me, how do we work together in the organisation, and where is the fit with me, us, and the rest of society' (Burr & Thomson, 2002: 7).

While directed towards a similar goal, Thompson and Bunderson's (2003) approach to broadening the interpretative framework for the psychological contract differs from Burr and Thomson (2002), in that they focus on the interpretative framework's premise that all of the contributions exchanged in a psychological contract – the 'currency' of the contract – are either economic or socio-emotional in nature. Thompson and Bunderson (2003) contend that this premise overlooks the idea that inducements for the individual to contribute could include non-material benefits such as rewarding experiences arising from an individual's desire to further humanitarian ideals or spiritual values (Barnard, 1938; Blau, 1964).

The lack of explicit recognition in the bidimensional interpretative framework of the role of ideals and values as drivers of social exchange means that ideology-related contributions are conflated with socio-emotional contributions, thus masking any differences between such contributions. Drawing on social exchange theory (e.g., Blau, 1964), social identity theory (e.g., Dutton, Dukerich &

Harquail, 1994), work on ideology and organisations (e.g., Barnard, 1938; Collins & Porras, 1996), and social contracts and organisational commitment (e.g., Graham & Organ, 1993), Thompson and Bunderson (2003) address this perceived weakness in the bidimensional interpretative framework by proposing its expansion to incorporate the concept of an 'ideology-infused' psychological contract, in which three currencies are recognised: ideology, economic and socio-emotional (shown in diagrammatic form in Figure 4.1 below).

Thompson and Bunderson (2003: 574) define ideological currency as 'credible commitments to pursue a valued cause or principle (not limited to self-interest) that are implicitly exchanged at the nexus of the individual/organisation relationship'. These commitments, when they form part of the currency exchange in an ideology-infused contract, reflect the individual's belief that the organisation will provide a mechanism and supportive environment through which the individual can contribute to a highly valued cause. These causes might include, for example, occupational ideals such as professional autonomy and service to the community or social ideals such as the community's right to the provision of high quality education and health services.

According to Thompson and Bunderson (2003: 576) the transactional/economic and relational/socio-emotional distinction that underpins the bidimensional interpretative framework is 'likely a simplification of a continuum of subjectivity in interpretation'. The inclusion of the concept of an ideology-infused contract as part of an expanded interpretative framework introduces a higher level of complexity. This complexity occurs as a result of ideological currency having
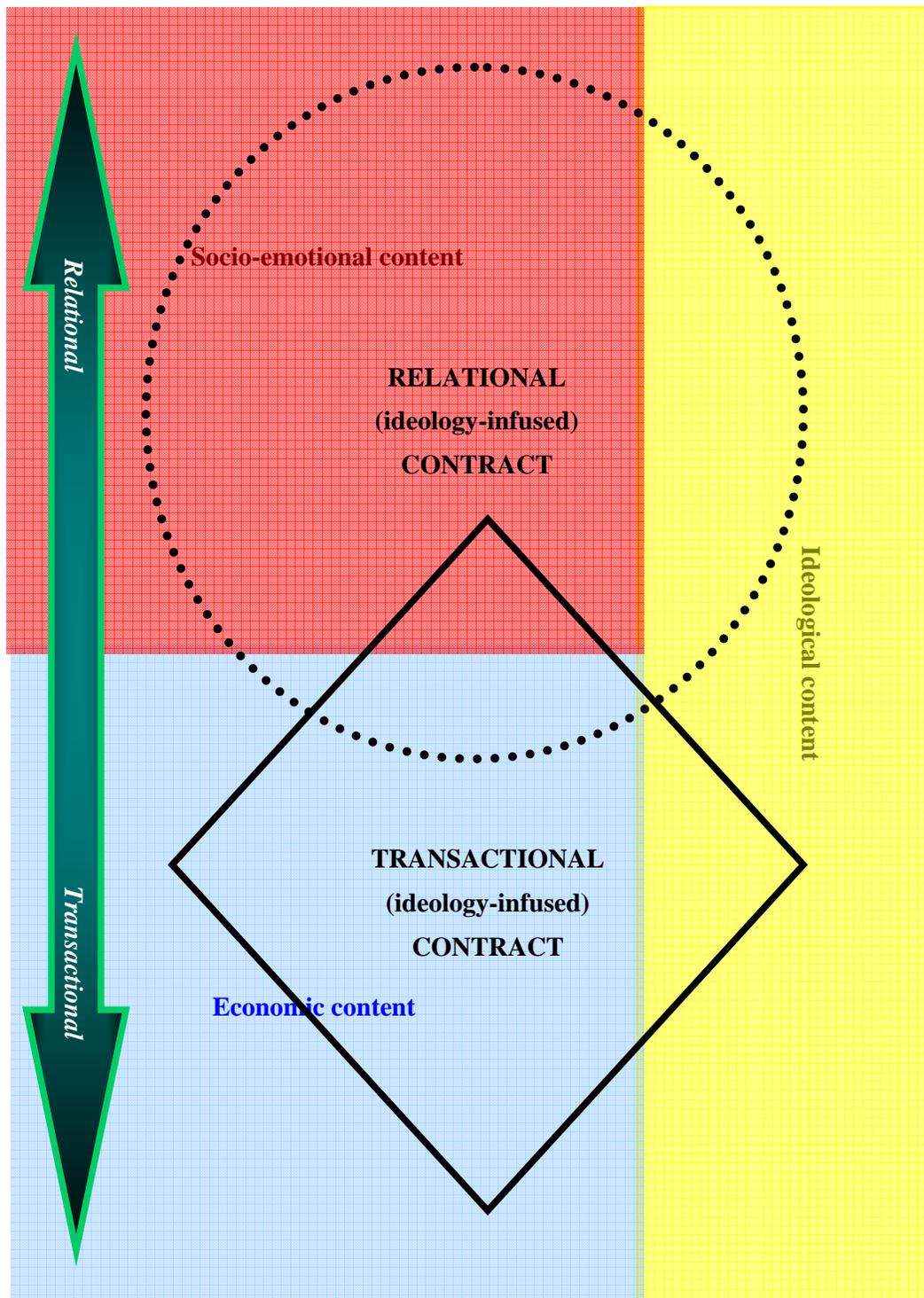
Figure 4.1: Ideology infused contract model

Source: Adapted from Thompson & Bunderson, 2003

both relational and transactional aspects. In other words, Thompson and Bunderson (2003) argue that the contributions that constitute ideological currency may be largely negotiable, that is relational and more akin to socio-emotional currency contributions in nature. On the other hand, they suggest that there may also be non-negotiable contributions in an ideology-infused contract, so-called 'hot buttons' (Thompson and Bunderson, 2003: 576), which the individual clearly perceives to be non-negotiable, that is transactional and more akin to economic currency contributions in nature.

Thompson and Bunderson (2003) contrast the three forms of currency in several other ways (see Table 4.2 below). They differentiate in terms of the nature of the individual and organisational obligations entailed in the exchange of each currency, and identify a difference in the logic behind the individual's affiliation with the organisation. They also highlight differences in the model of human nature that underpins exchange in each of the three currencies and in the salient beneficiaries they identify for each currency.

The salient beneficiary and model of human nature characteristics highlight most clearly the 'transpersonal' aspect of an ideology-infused psychological contract. In the case of economic contributions, the individual's approach is egoistic and instrumental focussing on benefits to him or her self. This is consistent with the bidimensional interpretive framework. For socio-emotional exchange, the individual approach is collectivistic focussing on benefits as flowing to both the individual and the organisation. This is also

Table 4.2 Psychological contract – currencies of exchange

	Economic currency	Socio-emotional currency	Ideological currency
Organisation's obligations	Provide continued employment, safe working environment, fair compensation	Provide training, career development, promotion opportunities, long-term job security	Demonstrate credible commitment to a valued social cause
Individual's obligations	Fulfil formally specified role requirements	Fulfil generalised role obligations; organisational commitment and involvement; OCB	Participate in the organisation's mission/cause; organisational and societal citizenship behaviour
Salient beneficiary	Self	Self and organisational community	Society, some segment thereof, or an intangible principle
Affiliation logic	'The organisation gives me a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.'	'The organisation nurtures my professional development and sense of community.'	'The organisation shares my passion, cause, and/or mission.'
Model of human nature	Egoistic, instrumental	Collectivistic, socialised	Principled, involved

Source: Abridged from Thompson & Bunderson, 2003

consistent with the bidimensional interpretive framework. In the case of

ideological currency, however, the focus is shifted beyond the individual

and the organisation to a third party beneficiary, which Thompson and

Bunderson (2003) define in general terms as society, some segment thereof,

or an intangible principle. Thus the ideology-infused psychological contract

reflects a principled and externally oriented model of human nature. One

significant consequence flowing from these transpersonal characteristics is

that a perceived failure by the organisation to deliver on its obligations involving a third party beneficiary outside of the organisation may be seen by the employee as a breach of the psychological contract even though there has been no direct personal or material impact on the employee (Thompson & Bunderson, 2003).

While bidimensional interpretative framework has been instrumental in linking the nature of the currency exchanged (economic and socio-emotional) to the way in which individuals respond to non-delivery by the organisation, the concept of an ideology-infused psychological contract implies the potential for explaining breach and violation of psychological contracts in terms broader than the economic/socio-emotional currency distinction inherent in the bidimensional interpretative framework. Thompson and Bunderson (2003) expound on this potential via a series of theoretical propositions. For example, they propose that individuals will associate intentional reneging and incongruence (Morrison and Robinson, 1997; Rousseau, 1995) with perceived breaches of ideology-infused psychological contracts by the organisation. They also suggest, in line with Blau (1964), that goal displacement (a shift in focus by the organisation away from goals expressed in ideological terms to the means intended to achieve those goals), and value interpenetration (the introduction into the organisation of values and goals, arising from engagement in relationships with other organisations that do not share the ideological goals) will also be associated with perceived breaches by the organisation.

According to Thompson and Bunderson (2003), individuals having an ideology-infused psychological contract are also more likely to have a future-oriented perspective that predisposes them to accept delayed gratification and show patience in the case of non-fulfilment of obligations by the organisation. Consequently, they hypothesise that the relationship between perceived breach and violation (Morrison & Robinson, 1997) would be weaker for ideology-related obligations than for economic and socio-emotional obligations. In addition, Thompson and Bunderson (2003) posit that those individuals who attribute a perceived breach to events in the organisation's political, social, or economic context, or who accept that other ideology-driven organisations engage in practices similar to the one that led to the perceived breach, are less likely to experience a sense of violation. Finally, they hypothesise that perceived breach of an ideological obligation is less likely to result in violation where the individual perceives continued organisational membership as providing the opportunity to contribute achieve ideological goals.

The introduction of ideology as a form of currency into the interpretative framework for the psychological contract has other implications for the conceptualisation of the psychological contract that go beyond the understanding of breach and violation. In particular, these implications concern the treatment of the psychological contract as a single dyadic form of exchange relationship, and the use of a promise-based model to comprehend the exchange of contributions between the individual and the organisation.

Single dyadic (employee–organisation) relationship

While the majority of psychological contract research to date has dealt with the psychological contract as a single dyadic (employee-organisation) relationship, this aspect of its conceptualisation has been the subject of debate in the literature (Shore et al., 2004). Some researchers (Marks, 2001; McLean Parks, Kidder, & Gallagher, 1998) have argued that maintaining such an emphasis ignores specific empirical evidence that suggests psychological contracts can encompass multiple interdependent relationships operating at a number of levels both within and outside an organisation. In more general terms, the emphasis on a single dyadic relationship does not take into account the significance of the inter-relatedness of the psychological contract and the social context (Coyle Shapiro, Taylor et al., 2004).

Early theorists (for example, Levinson et al., 1962) conjectured on the possibility that the employee-organisation relationship might encompass multiple relationships operating at a number of levels within an organisation. In this sense the organisation is seen as not one monolithic entity but rather a collective arrangement (Rousseau, 1998b). Marks (2001) updates this idea by suggesting the focus on a single relationship between the employee and employer fails to recognise that for most employees the organisation is a construct reflecting a composite of work relationships, a heterogenous collective rather than a homogenous entity. Therefore, it is possible for individuals to have multiple relationships across a number of levels in the organisation, for example, with work team members, line management, and senior management. According to Marks (2001), contemporary organisational change, with the emergence of

employment arrangements such as teleworking, contracting, and contingent work, as well as the increased emphasis on teamwork, makes this possibility more likely. Likewise, in the case of professional employees, the ideological importance of the professional-client relationship, and the relationship to other members of the profession and the profession itself, is likely to add to the multiplicity and complexity of relationships.

On this latter point, the concept of multiple agency developed by McLean Parks, Kidder, and Gallagher (1998) captures the possibility that individuals could, as a consequence of their employment arrangements, perceive themselves as holding psychological contracts not only inside an organisation but also with parties outside the organisation. McLean Parks, Kidder, and Gallagher (1998) exemplify the concept using the case of labour hire companies, where individuals could perceive themselves as simultaneously holding psychological contracts with the temporary firm that employs them in addition to the client firm for which they work. According to McLean Parks et al. (1998: 19), this form of multiple agency relationship could exist 'when an act by a [worker] simultaneously fulfils obligations to two or more entities, with full knowledge and sanction from both.' Using this reasoning it is possible to extend the concept of multiple agency relationship to include the professional employee who in undertaking professional development simultaneously fulfils obligations to their organisation, profession and client.

As a consequence of the focus on a single dyadic relationship, the majority of psychological contract research to date has paid little attention to the possibility

of multiple agency relationships, and to the importance of social context and the interdependency of exchange that multiple relationships imply. While acknowledging the importance of context as a critical influence on the employee-organisation relationship, most researchers have nevertheless treated the psychological contract as a discrete entity separate from its social context (Shore et al., 2004).

The credit for initial insights about the significance of social context lies with social exchange theorists, particularly Blau (1964) and Emerson (1981), who explored the embeddedness and interdependency of exchange relationships in social structures (Coyle Shapiro & Conway, 2004). For Blau (1964: 32), neglecting the social context and treating exchange dyads in isolation was far too simplistic: 'Crusoe and Friday were a dyad that existed in isolation, but most associations are part of a broad matrix of social relations'. The influence of the social context on the dyadic exchange process occurs, according to Blau (1964), in three ways. First, the role set of each party defines the alternatives forgone and, hence, the costs incurred to obtain the rewards from a dyadic exchange. Second, group influence limits deviation from the group standard governing dyadic exchange transactions. Third, exchanges occurring elsewhere in a group may be of greater salience and therefore have an influence on a particular dyadic exchange. For example, an employee who provides assistance to a colleague, and does not expect it to be reciprocated in any way, may as a consequence receive social approval from his or her immediate supervisor and/or peers. In this situation, the interaction with the colleague cannot be fully understood without taking into account the consequences of social approval involving other group

members. Thus, the employee does not receive a return from the colleague who received help but rather receives a return from his or her boss and/or peers who witnessed the colleague-to-colleague interaction (Coyle Shapiro & Conway, 2004).

Emerson (1981) explored this connection further with his work on the interdependency of exchange relations. Emerson (1981) maintained that any one exchange occurred as one of a set of interdependent exchanges. He defined a set as two or more connected exchange relationships where the connection may be positive (an exchange in one relationship is contingent upon an exchange in another) or negative (an exchange in one relationship is contingent upon non-exchange in another). In other words, Emerson (1981) argued that all of the interrelated relationships in which contracting parties are involved must be mapped and considered in order to understand any one dyadic exchange. By extending the idea of exchanges from the dyad to a set of interdependent relations, Emerson added an additional layer of complexity whereby the resource to be exchanged in a particular exchange may become dependent upon that resource being received from another exchange relationship embraced by the employee-organisation relationship (Coyle Shapiro & Conway, 2004).

Most recently, Shore et al. (2004) have argued that work relationships are invariably embedded in context, that is the terms and conditions that influence the connections individuals and organisations have with each other and with other entities. In this sense, context is multifaceted and multidimensional, and there is no such thing as 'one context' for an individual or for an organisation. Instead

there are multiple contexts that all can exert influence simultaneously (Shore et al., 2004: 325). Different contexts, including the social, cultural, industrial, and professional environments in which the individual employee is embedded, represent multiple interdependent interests reflecting complementary or competing demands. As such, each context can have a differential influence on the perception of obligations and fulfilment from the employee and employer perspectives.

Drawing on the ideas of Marks (2001), McLean Parks et al. (1998), and Shore et al. (2004), as well as those of earlier theorists such as Blau (1964) and Emerson (1981), the psychological contracts of professional employees can be conceived of as comprising multiple interdependent exchange relationships not only inside an organisation but also involving parties outside the organisation. That this should be the case follows as a consequence of the individual professional employee operationalising their professional ideology. By emphasising client focus and an other-orientation, and commitment to the development of the profession, professional ideologies encourage the individual professional employee to take a transpersonal perspective in regard to their work. This perspective takes the professional employee's psychological contract beyond a single dyadic relationship with the organisation and connects it directly to other parties and the broader social context. In so doing it raises questions about the understanding of the reciprocity associated with the promise-based model of contract used in the conceptualisation of the psychological contract.

The promise-based model of contract

As the principal architect of, and advocate for, the cognitive-perceptual approach to the psychological contract, Rousseau (2001) argues the individual's beliefs about promises mutually exchanged with the employer, and which form the basis of reciprocal obligations, constitute the terms of the psychological contract. Promises entail reciprocity of exchange, that is, the commitments or contributions made by one party create a complementary obligation on the part of the other party to provide an appropriate return. Reciprocity in the employee-organisation relationship is thus more targeted than generalised and entails the return of relatively similar types of contributions (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004).

According to Rousseau (1998b), the definitional focus on promises is essential, because this inherent reciprocity, means they carry a greater level of psychological force than do expectations: 'While obligations are a form of expectation, not all expectations held by a person need to be promissory or entail a belief in mutuality or reciprocity' (Rousseau, 1998a: 668). By denoting expectations to mean the outcomes of causal reasoning relating to promises, promises are distinguished from expectations in meaning. At the same time expectations are recognised as an indirect outcome of promises and of lesser order than obligation (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). Promises are distinguished from expectations by the complementarity between the rights and obligations perceived as inherent in the structure of a promise. In this way, Rousseau (2001) sets the definitional focus for contract terms more narrowly than would be possible if the comparatively broader and lesser-strength notion of expectation was used.

Empirical psychological contract research supports the need to distinguish

between a promise and an expectation (Robinson, Kraatz & Rousseau, 1994;

Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Coyle Shapiro &

Kessler, 2000; and Turnley & Feldman, 2000). Such research consistently shows

that non-delivery on promise-related obligations yields quite different responses

from those generated when expectations are not met, and that the perception of

loss resulting from reliance on unmet obligations, that is a breakdown in

complementarity or reciprocity, is the critical factor in explaining that difference.

Notwithstanding this empirical support, the definitional focus on promises

remains too restrictive for some scholars (Taylor & Tekleab, 2004). Guest

(1998a), for example, argues that the range of terms used in various psychological

contract definitions – for example, 'perceptions', 'expectations', 'beliefs',

'promises', and 'obligations' – suggests the need for a broader focus. As each of

these terms has a quite distinctive meaning, and by inference a different approach

to reciprocity, it follows that each implies a different level of psychological

engagement by the individual. Therefore, each has a different order of

consequence in the event of perceived non-delivery. On this basis, Guest (1998a)

reasons that restricting the focus to promises risks not capturing all of the

phenomena at play in the exchange relationship. In addition, he indicates that it

limits the possibility of a proper understanding of the employment relationship in

which the currencies exchanged will include both the material (explicit) and the

non-material (implicit). Similar arguments can be found in the work of two legal

scholars, specifically Lightsey (1984) and Macneil (1985), who contributed to the early development of relational contract theory in the mid-1980s.

Macneil's (1985, 2000) development of relational contract theory contains an explicit rejection of promise-centred theories of contract as inadequate. In Macneil's view, to deal with the range of complex relationships entailed in any exchange without distortion and omission, obligations between parties could not be limited to those based on promise, as a promise could never cover more than a fragment of the total situation. He states: 'the immense intellectual barriers … particularly those created by our addiction to promise, virtually guarantee failure to understand highly relational contract behaviour' (Macneil, 1985: 525). According to Roehling (2004) this particular aspect of Macneil's relational contract theory, which in general terms was a significant influence in the conceptualisation of the psychological contract (Rousseau, 1989, 1995), has been overlooked.

Lightsey (1984) also argues the promise-based model is inadequate conceptually because of its focus on the zero-sum aspects of exchange and the pursuit of self-interest as the key driver in a contractual relationship. He states that the promise-based view of contracts is 'an atrophied model of contract – a model incapable of dealing with the issues presented by the complex relations among parties to contemporary contracts' that emphasizes 'the discreteness of a contractual transaction … [and] leads one to view the transaction separately from its surrounding social context and to ignore the identities and relations of the parties' (Lightsey, 1984: 49-50).

According to Lightsey (1984), to conceive contracts on the basis of separable promises induces a fragmented and rigid view of the obligations of contracting parties through its conception of reciprocity as only entailing complementary rights and obligations between the parties. Reciprocity defined in this way excludes the possibility that a contractual relationship can incorporate rights and obligations from sources other than the promises of the parties; it ignores the surrounding social context, and importantly the development of the contractual relationship itself. By recognising this broader set of sources, Lightsey (1984) argues it becomes possible to reveal the interaction between contract and community, and the flexibility and porosity of contractual obligation. In addition, the mutual dependence and cooperation between contracting parties, and the drivers other than self-interest that might encourage intense personal involvement, can also be revealed.

While these arguments have been made that the promise-based model is an inadequate basis on which to derive a proper understanding of relational contracting behaviour, it is another thing entirely to argue that promises have no role at all to play in shaping contracting behaviour (Roehling, 2004). Indeed, the psychological contract literature suggests, in terms of the empirical evidence gathered to date (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994; Robinson 1996; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998; Turnley & Feldman, 2000), that promises entailing complementary rights and obligations appear a more conceptually valid operationalisation of psychological contract terms than do expectations. Arguably, the evidence remains inconclusive, however, as to which – promises or

expectations – is the more powerful predictor of attitude and behaviour when not met (Taylor & Tekleab, 2004).

Research focus

Chapter 1 outlined in broad terms the research opportunity arising out of changes that have occurred in the employment context over the last two decades, and which have impacted significantly on the attitudes and behaviour of employees. Chapter 2 detailed how these changes have given fresh impetus to the search for meaning in work, which in turn has led to an increased role for occupations as a focus for career and commitment. This is most particularly so in the case of professions with their distinctive values and beliefs about work and organisations: the 'emotionally charged beliefs that organise and maintain ideologies about how to create meaning and control in work life' and which promote both the sense of personal identity members draw from a profession and the sense of collectiveness that members of a profession share (Trice, 1993: 42).

Chapter 3 traced the development of the concept of the psychological contract as a cognitive-perceptual construct used for exploring issues associated with changes in the employee-organisation relationship (Shore et al., 2004; Taylor & Tekleab, 2004). The majority of psychological contract research published to date defines the psychological contract as the individual's belief in mutual and reciprocal obligations entered into with the employer (Millward & Brewerton, 2000; Coyle Shapiro, Shore et al., 2004). This definitional stance is mostly operationalised using a bidimensional

interpretative framework (Rousseau, 1995). This interpretative framework explains the psychological contract in terms of a dyadic exchange relationship that, depending on the predominant form of currency exchanged – economic or socio-emotional, is respectively either predominantly transactional (discrete from social relations) or relational (embedded in social relations) in nature. The significant contribution this interpretative framework has made to understanding how and why individuals respond to change in the employment relationship is broadly acknowledged (Anderson & Schalk, 1998; Coyle Shapiro, Shore et al., 2004).

Notwithstanding the widespread acceptance and use of the psychological contract in its cognitive-perceptual form, there is general agreement in the literature that further development of the construct and its interpretative framework is required (Coyle Shapiro, Shore et al., 2004; Millward & Brewerton, 2000; Taylor & Tekleab, 2004). Taylor and Tekleab (2004) provide an overview of the research issues, urging researchers to give priority to developing:

- expanded conceptual models that describe more adequately the complexity of the psychological contract, its nature, antecedents, mediators and consequences;

- better understanding of the dynamic processes through which the psychological contract operates and changes over time, including the social exchange interactions between the individual employee and the organisation that shape perceptions;

- better understanding of the consequences of contract violation and change beyond the established variables of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, job performance, OCB, and work intentions (thoughts of quitting and exit); and

- alternative research designs and methodologies that address limitations arising from a perceived over-reliance on correlational (albeit longitudinal) research designs using student samples, problematic standardised measures, single sources of data, and statistical forms of analysis.

This chapter has discussed specific proposals, for the incorporation of a transpersonal perspective (Burr & Thomson, 2002) and the concept of an ideological currency (Thompson & Bunderson, 2003) into the psychological contract. There is convergence in the general thrust of both proposals as they seek to address a specific perceived shortcoming in the currently accepted conceptualisation and interpretative framework, that is, its lack of explicit recognition of the possibility that the psychological contract may be perceived by the individual to include contributions, both by the organisation and the individual, leading to the achievement of non-material, extra-organisational ideals or objectives (Blau, 1964; Thompson & Bunderson, 2003).

Each proposal (Burr & Thomson, 2002; Thompson & Bunderson, 2003) is an attempt to deal with the increasingly complex array of terms and features that psychological contracts are starting to display. Both proposals recognise

the possibility that the relationship between the contract terms and the overall type of psychological contract may therefore be more complex, and less clear-cut than represented by the transactional/economic and relational/socio-emotional distinctions that underpin the established interpretative framework. Taken together, they raise questions about the nature of ideological contributions and the relationship between ideological, economic and socio-emotional contributions. They also invite comparison of the attitudinal and behavioural responses to perceived breach and violation of ideology-related obligations compared to those arising from unfulfilled socio-emotional and economic obligations. As discussed in the preceding sections above, both proposals raise broader questions over the comprehensiveness of the bidimensional interpretative framework and its utility as an explanatory tool, the appropriateness of the conceptual emphasis on a single dyadic relationship, and possible limitations in the promise-based model of contract and its associated understanding of reciprocity.

No empirical research has yet been published that explores the expanded interpretative frameworks proposed by either Burr and Thomson (2002) or Thompson and Bunderson (2003). This therefore represents a gap in the psychological contract research literature. This is not to say there has been no research focussing specifically on the psychological contracts of professional employees. Two empirical studies of the psychological contracts of professional employees (Bunderson, 2001; Purvis & Cropley, 2003), that drew on samples of medical and nursing professionals

respectively, are germane because one of the three sample groups used in this study comprised nursing professionals.

The first of these studies to appear in the literature (Bunderson, 2001) explicitly examined professional ideologies in the context of a sample of medical professionals employed in a single U.S. health care organisation. Using the theoretical framework developed in Bunderson et al. (2000) to distinguish between professional and management ideologies, and Rousseau's (1995) conceptualisation of the psychological contract and its bidimensional interpretative framework, Bunderson (2001) reported that perceived contract breach can generate negative attitudinal and behavioural responses, with significant implications for job satisfaction, organisational commitment, turnover and organisational citizenship behaviours. These findings were generally in line with other earlier research into the psychological contracts of a range of employee types (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Turnley & Feldman, 1999).

Bunderson (2001) concluded that the psychological contracts of professional employees are shaped by work ideologies that establish *a priori* a set of roles, rights and obligations that associate with relational components and act as a normative influence. Also, the way individual professional employees respond to related perceived breaches by the organisation will differ from the response to perceived breaches of other obligations in the psychological contract. On this latter point, Bunderson's (2001) results

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specifically indicated that perceived breach in the professional domain is unrelated to thoughts of quitting and turnover, but nevertheless is still negatively associated with organisational commitment, job satisfaction, client satisfaction, and productivity.

Using Rousseau's (1995) bidimensional interpretative framework, Purvis and Cropley (2003) examined the perceptions of a sample of U.K. nurses concerning the content of their psychological contracts. The study also examined the extent to which the nurses perceived their employer, the National Health Service, to have delivered on its obligations. Purvis and Cropley (2003) reported that the perceived terms of exchange for their study sample of nurses included those previously reported in psychological contact research, such as pay, benefits, recognition and fairness (Blau, 1964; Barnard, 1938; Herriot, Manning & Kidd, 1997; Rousseau, 1995; Millward & Brewerton, 2000). In addition, profession-specific matters, such as competence, autonomy, standards of patient care, collegiality, and professional development, were also identified as a significant source of nurses' expectations (Purvis & Cropley, 2003). In this regard, Purvis and Cropley (2003) differ from Bunderson (2001) in that profession-specific matters were identified within the bidimensional interpretative framework but without the use of the separate ideology-specific survey instrument developed by Bunderson et al. (2000).

Based on their analysis of the nurses' perceptions, Purvis and Cropley (2003) developed four 'normative' profiles (or 'shared' psychological contracts) to

reflect different emphases in regard to profession-specific matters raised by the nurses. Two profiles strongly associated with the relational form of contract; one emphasised professional themes related to 'development/achievement', and the other emphasised a sense of 'belonging' to the organisation in conjunction with a lesser emphasis on professional 'development'. The other two profiles strongly associated with the transactional form; one emphasised professional themes related to 'competence/collegiality', and one emphasised 'autonomy/development' (Purvis & Cropley, 2003: 116-118). Nurses holding psychological contracts associated with the 'autonomy/development' profile evidenced the strongest leaving intentions and lowest job and organisational satisfaction. Those nurses with psychological contracts associated with the 'development/achievement' profile had the highest job and organisational satisfaction levels.

Because of differences between the two studies (Bunderson, 2001; Purvis & Cropley, 2003), methodological and otherwise, it is not possible to compare directly the findings in detail. However, on a general level, both studies point to the need for more research into the relationship between professional ideologies and the psychological contract, and its impact on the way in which professional employees respond to breach and violation. In this sense, the findings of Bunderson (2001) and Purvis and Cropley (2003) dovetail into the general thrust of the proposals by Burr and Thomson (2002) and Thompson and Bunderson (2003).

Research questions

In line with the urgings of Taylor and Tekleab (2004) for psychological contract researchers to explore expanded conceptual models that describe more adequately the complexity of the psychological contract, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of the psychological contracts of professional employees. By exploring concepts primarily related to the work of Thompson and Bunderson (2003), the study will address the following specific research questions:

(i)   What are the perceptions of professional employees regarding the content of their psychological contracts, particularly with reference to professional ideology?

(ii)   What are the responses of professional employees to failure by the organisation to meet its perceived psychological contract obligations with respect to professional ideology?

(iii)   What are the implications of the study results for the cognitive-perceptual conceptualisation of the psychological contract?

Chapter summary

This chapter argued that the cognitive-perceptual conceptual approach to the psychological contract uses a bidimensional interpretative framework which does not explicitly recognise the possibility that ideology-related contributions may be a separate factor in the psychological contract for some employees. It discussed two proposed variations by Burr and Thomson (2002) and Thompson and Bunderson (2003) that provide for this possibility. In essence, both sets of researchers contend that the boundary demarcating the individual and the

organisation from the broader community is becoming less clear as the individual's search for meaning from work shifts beyond the organisation to incorporate social values and a concern for the greater good.

The lack of explicit recognition in the bidimensional interpretative framework of an ideological or transpersonal dimension means that ideology-related contributions are conflated with socio-emotional contributions, thus masking differences between such contributions. Thompson and Bunderson (2003) address this perceived weakness in the bidimensional interpretative framework by proposing its expansion to incorporate the concept of an 'ideology-infused' psychological contract, in which three conceptually distinct currencies are recognised: ideology, economic and socio-emotional.

The introduction of a third currency into the interpretative framework takes the professional employee's psychological contract beyond a single dyadic relationship with the organisation and connects it directly to other parties and the broader social context. In so doing it raises questions about the understanding of the reciprocity associated with the promise-based model of contract used in the conceptualisation of the psychological contract.

Chapter 5: Research design and method

Chapter objectives

This chapter has two objectives:

- To provide a brief overview of research paradigms, designs and methods used in psychological contract research to date; and

- To explain and justify the research design and methodology chosen for this study.

Research paradigms and designs

All social researchers hold explicit and implicit assumptions about the nature of the social world, and the way in which it may be investigated, that underpin the way in which they articulate the research focus and research questions of interest. In other words, each individual researcher has a set of beliefs that together form a paradigm, or in simple terms 'a basic set of beliefs that guide action' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 13). Broadly speaking, the many and varied paradigms that have attracted the commitment of individual social researchers are either objectivist or subjectivist in essence. These two terms can be thought of as being the two ends of a continuum that can be distinguished one from the other with reference to the ontology- and epistemology-related characteristics (see for example, Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Briefly, objectivist paradigms in social research treat social observations as objective entities in much the same way as physical scientists treat physical phenomena. In other words, such paradigms are predicated on the assumption that

the social world is composed of relatively concrete observable artefacts and relationships which can be studied, measured, understood and explained through models and methods derived from those used in the natural sciences (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Creswell, 1998). Through appropriate method the researcher can remain separate from the objective reality being studied, and research outcomes can be made value-free. Generalisations that are timeless and independent of context are possible, and it is possible to identify the real causal connections between events. In idealised terms, the objectivist researcher aims at providing a fundamentally rational explanation of the social world through the production of knowledge that is practical and broad in application. Objectivist research is often characterised by the use of mechanical and biological analogies drawn from the natural and scientific world as explanatory devices (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

At the opposite end of the paradigmatic continuum, subjectivist paradigms view the focus of social research (the processes and products of the human mind) as fundamentally different from phenomena in the natural physical world. Time- and context-free generalizations are not possible, all social research is value-laden, cause and effect are indistinguishable, and the researcher can never be separate from the research subject (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Creswell, 1998). The subjectivist approach is predicated on the idea that historical and socio-cultural contexts shape the construction of the concepts, models and schemas by which the individual subjectively makes sense of and explains the social world. Therefore, multiple realities abound. The subjectivist approach sees this cognitive involvement of the individual as idiosyncratic by definition, thus positioning itself in opposition to the

objectivist perspective and the notion that knowledge is fixed, objective, and able to be discovered by the researcher in an unmediated fashion. (Schwandt, 1994).

In terms of research design, that is the structuring of the research study to address the focal research questions, researchers typically use one of two general approaches: experimental or ex-post facto (Babbie, 1992; Davis, 2000). Again the idea of a continuum is useful for distinguishing between the two basic approaches (see Figure 5.1 below).

Ex post facto		**Experimental**
Low,		High,
Variables unclear		Variables manipulable

Study Understanding

Exploratory	Descriptive/predictive	Causal, explanatory

Study Goal

Field studies	Surveys	Field experiments	Lab. experiments

Study Types
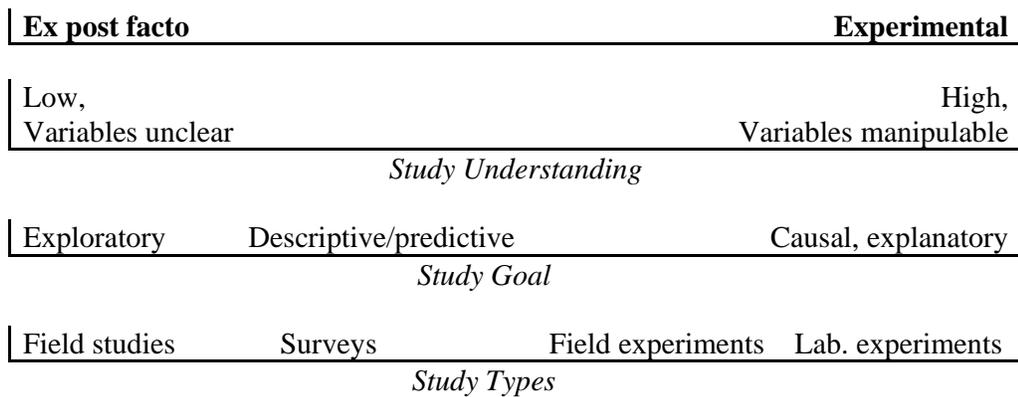
Figure 5.1 Comparison of basic research design types
Source: Adapted from Davis, 2000

The two approaches differ fundamentally. Experimental design, which fits best with an objectivist view of the world, proceeds on the basis that understanding is high, and the variables are clearly defined and therefore measurable. With this approach, the researcher seeks to create research conditions that allow for the testing of specific formal hypotheses regarding the precise causal relationship between independent and dependent variables. This is done in a controlled setting, most often either in the form of a laboratory experiment or field experiment. In contrast, ex post facto designs are those in which variables are not clearly defined, understanding is

low, and the researcher is neither able to manipulate the variables or control the research conditions. The general goal is to explore, and describe with a view to prediction, the relationships between independent and dependent variables. Ex post facto designs are compatible with both objectivist or subjectivist ontologies and epistemologies. They can be used to build possibility and flexibility into research and facilitate insights and understanding that can often lead to the development of more precise questions for future investigation. Field studies (generally a combination of literature searches, experience surveys, and single- or multiple-case studies) and surveys (using standardised questionnaires) characterise this design approach (Davis, 2000).

The conceptual development of the psychological contract, as a cognitive-perceptual entity with its bidimensional interpretative framework, has facilitated a significant expansion in the number of published theoretical and empirical studies of psychological contracts (Millward & Brewerton, 2000). Most of the research published since the late 1980s has followed the objectivist, ex post facto, hypothetico-deductive approach that has dominated modern organisational research generally (Millward & Brewerton, 2000; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). In terms of study type, survey-based research with a descriptive/predictive goal predominates in the psychological contract literature. Notwithstanding the success of this research in advancing understanding of the psychological contract, there is now an acknowledgement in the literature of the need to broaden the design approaches in order to address limitations arising from a perceived over-reliance on correlational research designs of the survey type that are based on standardised measures, single sources of data, and statistical forms of analysis (Taylor & Tekleab, 2004).

Research method

Broadly speaking, psychological contract research has focused on content or process; that is to say, the focus has been on the content of the individual's perceptions comprising psychological contract terms, or on the series of exchange actions by which contract terms are enacted (Rousseau & Tijoriwala 1998; Taylor & Tekleab, 2004). Content-focused research, which has been the main research orientation, deals with the employee's perceptions of the individual terms and reciprocal obligations that constitute the content of an individual's psychological contract. Such research has examined contract terms and their inter-relations generally at one of two levels: the level of individual items, such as 'job security' and 'career development', or the broader level involving groupings, such as 'relational' and 'transactional', representing summary characterizations of more specific individual psychological contract terms (Millward & Brewerton, 2000). Process-focused research, of which there is an increasing amount, considers the dynamic aspects of the exchange process through which the psychological contract operates rather than the inherent nature of the psychological contract itself. Evaluation of the individual's perceptions and experience of change (breach and violation, and its consequences) and overall fulfillment (or lack thereof) of the psychological contract is the concern of process-focussed research (Millward & Brewerton, 2000).

With regard to research method, content-focused research at the level of individual items has primarily been exploratory and used qualitative open-ended or semi-structured methods of data collection. Content-focused research at the broader level has primarily been descriptive/predictive and used structured quantitative methods

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to create scales, indices or nominal classifications to group content terms. Process-focussed research, which is underpinned by a view that the employment experience is characterised by features that have meaning shared across individuals and which can be objectified, has generally used structured quantitative evaluative techniques as a basis for making comparative judgements across people and settings (Rousseau & Tijoriwala 1998).

The methodological approach selected for this study is primarily qualitative supplemented by a small quantitative element. Scholars from a number of fields argue that if used appropriately together qualitative and quantitative methods can produce a level of analysis not achievable through the sole use of either approach (see for example Borg, 2004; Carter, 1999a & b; Davis, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Morgan, 1983; Neuman, 2004). The qualitative method is used to explore the perceptions of professional employees regarding the content of their psychological contracts specifically in relation to their professional ideologies. The data generated through this method is supplemented by data obtained through the use of two existing psychometric survey instruments. The aim in collecting such supplementary data is to provide possible points of comparison in the later interpretation of the qualitative interview data covering ideology-related matters.

The justification for the use of a primarily qualitative approach is two-fold. Firstly, as outlined in the preceding chapter, the specific research questions for this study focus on exploring the perceptions of individual professional employees regarding the content of their psychological contracts with reference to professional ideology, and their responses to failure by the organisation to meet its related obligations.

These questions relate to the concept of an ideology-infused psychological contract (Thompson & Bunderson, 2003), which introduces a new content variable into the interpretative framework alongside economic and socio-emotional variables. Thus, the completeness of the currently defined set of variables and relationships that underpin the cognitive-perceptual definition of the psychological contract and its interpretative framework is called into question. In other words, given the lack of published empirical investigations of the concept of an ideology-infused psychological contract, existing survey instruments reflect only the established set of independent and dependent variables and are not therefore appropriate. Survey instruments that explicitly comprehend ideology as a content variable are not yet available in the literature, and the development of such an instrument is beyond the resource scope of this study.

Secondly, qualitative methods when used in a naturalistic setting offer the possibility of capturing directly the depth and richness of the idiosyncratic perspectives that the individuals being investigated have with regard to ideology-related contract terms (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative methods also provide the flexibility needed to explore and delineate key conceptual components and relationships. This in turn helps the researcher to interpret the individual's perspectives on their psychological contracts and professional ideologies (Morgan & Smircich, 1980).

In order to ensure the development of an appropriate research methodology for this study, four measures of quality articulated by Miles and Huberman (1994) for use in the case of research using qualitative method are used. These standards or so-called

'goodness criteria' are confirmability, dependability, credibility, and transferability. Confirmability is concerned with the extent to which a study's research findings are reasonably free from unacknowledged researcher bias. In order to best demonstrate confirmability, Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that the pathway from data collection through analysis to conclusion needs to be supported with exhibits of condensed/displayed data, so that instances where the researcher's values and biases significantly influenced the direction of the research and its findings are clear. Accordingly, a qualitative study's design and methods, and ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning the study, must be made explicit. To this end, the study adopts a subjectivist approach and recognizes that individuals perceive the social world in idiosyncratic ways, and do not merely respond to the social world as an objective entity but actively contribute to its creation. These assumptions entail recognizing the possibility of multiple realities: those of the individuals being investigated and those of the researcher. To these must also be added the realities of readers interpreting the findings of this study (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Dependability means the extent to which the researcher, method and process of the study are consistent and reasonably stable over the duration of the project. Evidence of dependability can be found, according to Miles and Huberman (1994), in the clarity of the research questions and the closeness of fit between the questions and the research design and method chosen to address them. In order to ensure the current study's dependability, qualitative methods have been chosen as the primary approach because of their flexibility and congruence with the exploratory emphasis

in the research questions. These questions in turn serve as anchor points and as guides for all researcher activity over the duration of the study.

Credibility is an assessment of the extent to which the research findings from a qualitative study are perceived by the subjects of study and readers to make sense (Miles & Huberman, 1994). It is derived from context rich and 'thick' (meaningful) data drawn from multiple sources that are used to provide comprehensive descriptions that underpin generally coherent conclusions and which are directly related to the focal research questions. The choice of appropriate sampling and data collection strategies for this study facilitates data triangulation, by type and source, which enhances meaning, coherence, and comprehensiveness in the data and conclusions.

The final criterion – transferability – is a measure of the extent to which qualitative research findings have importance beyond the immediate study setting. While the concepts of generalisability and transferability are not mutually exclusive, transferability recognises the significance of context while generalisability assumes context is neutral. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), transferability derives from several sources. It derives from findings that are 'thick' and generic enough to enable readers to assess appropriateness for their own context; it also derives from data collection strategies and techniques that encourage broader applicability. Importantly, transferability is reflected in the extent to which findings extend prior theory and suggest further research questions pursuable in other research settings. The transferability of the current study is bolstered by the use of multiple sources and organisational settings to provide 'thick' data that are synthesised to produce

findings for others to compare with their work. Transferability is also reflected in the future research directions suggested by the study's research findings (see Chapter 7).

Major components

The research methodology used in this study has three components undertaken in the following order: firstly, the completion of two questionnaires by each study participant prior to interview; secondly, the completion by the researcher of a face to face interview with each study participant; and thirdly, the analysis of qualitative data in the interview transcripts using manual and computer-based analytical techniques, and descriptive analysis of the questionnaire data.

Completion of questionnaires

The first component undertaken in the research methodology involved the completion of two questionnaires prior to interview by each participant. These were the 17 item shortened version of the Psychological Contract Survey (PCS) developed by Millward and Hopkins (1998), and a questionnaire (IPQ) developed by Bunderson et al. (2000) to measure an individual's ideological perspective.

The PCS (Millward & Hopkins, 1998) reflects the currently established cognitive perceptual conceptualisation and bidimensional interpretative framework of the psychological contract, and provides information on the individual's perceptions of the psychological contract in those terms. The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) required the study participants to indicate the degree to which they agreed with 17 statements. It is important to note, that while the results of the PCS can be analysed

inferentially for the purpose of generalising results given a sample base sufficiently high in number, the small number of participants in this study meant that analysis was limited to simple descriptive statistics. The purpose of such analysis was to gain a picture of each interviewee's perceptions in terms of the established bidimensional interpretative framework. As discussed above, the PCS survey instrument does not explicitly comprehend the possibility of ideological drivers.

The IPQ (Bunderson et al., 2000) reflects the literature related to occupational ideologies and the development of professions, and was used to gain an insight into the ideological perspective each individual participant uses to conceptualise the organisation. The questionnaire (see Appendix 2) required the study participants to indicate the degree to which they felt their organisation exhibited, and the extent to which it should exhibit 12 specific attributes. The 12 attributes included six reflective of a management/administrative perspective and six reflective of a professional perspective. As in the case of the PCS, analysis of the IPQ results was limited to simple descriptive statistics to gain a general understanding of the ideological framework each interviewee uses to interpret organisational actions and intentions.

Interviews

The second stage of the research methodology was the major data collection exercise comprising a separate face-to-face interview by the researcher with each participant. The choice of interviews as the primary data collection method provided flexibility for salient responses to be followed up and meanings to be probed immediately (May, 1997). Each interview was audiotaped with the consent of the

interviewee, and subsequently transcribed for analysis. Individual interviewees were provided with a copy of the written record of the interview transcription, and invited to edit the document if they so wished. Any such changes were incorporated at the data analysis stage. The interviews were conducted at a location and at a time chosen by the interviewees.

The format of the interviews was as follows. Each began with an outline of the objectives of the research and an assurance that procedures (see Appendix 3), approved by the relevant university ethics committee, had been put in place to protect the confidentiality and the privacy of participants. Rather than a highly structured question and answer session guided only by the researcher, the intention was that the interviews would take the form of a conversation in which the participant as well as the researcher was free to raise issues and direct the course of the conversation. However, as a consequence of reflection on pilot interview experiences, it was deemed necessary to ensure that interviews remained focused and were time-effective. To that end a semi-structured approach was adopted and discussion was centred on the interviewee's:

- values and beliefs about what being a professional meant;
- beliefs regarding the professional dimension of his/her psychological contract and related obligations the organisation had,
- views regarding the match in practice regarding the professional dimension of his/her psychological contract and actions taken by the employer to meet related obligations; and,
- responses in instances where his/her expectations and the employer's actions did or did not match.

Sample details

As part of the interview, all interviewees were asked to provide a number of basic demographic details (see Table 5.1 below). Overall, the study sample comprised 24 professional employees, of whom 15 were female and nine were male. Seven participants were in each of the age ranges 30-39 and over 50, and 10 participants were in the age range 40-49. In regard to employment status, 18 were full-time employees and six held part-time positions. A total of 23 participants were employed on a permanent basis and three were employed on a contract-basis. Five participants had been with their current employer for less than five years, eight for between five and 14 years, and 11 had more than 15 years of service. All participants had tertiary level educational qualifications with 19 having also completed postgraduate qualifications. Six of these19 participants held a PhD. In terms of time spent in their current professional role, seven participants had been active for less than five years, with the remaining 17 having been active for more than five years. Finally, 20 of the 24 participants were members of an industrial union and 12 held memberships of professional associations.

The varied sample comprised professionals drawn from three professions – nursing, scientific research, and teaching. The range of professions allowed for sufficient data to be gathered and for the possibility of different perspectives on professional ideologies and the psychological contract to emerge.

Table 5.1: Demographic data

Variable	RN (n = 10)	RS (n = 8)	PT (n = 6)
Age			
30-39	5	2	0
40-49	2	3	5
50+	3	3	1
Gender			
Male	1	8	0
Female	9	0	6
Employment tenure			
Permanent	8	8	5
Contract	2	0	1
Employment status			
Full-time	7	8	3
Part-time	3	0	3
Years of service with employer			
0-4	3	1	1
5-9	2	2	0
10-14	3	1	0
15+	2	4	5
Years of employment in current professional role			
0-4	4	1	2
5-9	5	3	4
10-14	1	0	0
15+	0	4	0
Educational qualifications			
Undergrad (or equivalent)	2	0	3
Undergrad + postgrad (or equiv't)	8	2	3
PhD	0	6	0
Memberships			
Union	10	5	5
Professional	7	5	0

(RN = Registered nurse; RS = Research scientist; PT = Primary teacher)

Given the exploratory nature of the study, the professions were selected not for

generic or instrumental reasons but rather because each was considered an

intrinsically interesting subject in its own right. Public sector organisations only

were selected because their size and complexity ensured a large enough pool of prospective participants, and the impact of organisational variation as an explanatory variable could be at least partially circumvented. For logistical reasons and in light of resource constraints the study was limited to organisations operating in Hobart, the capital city of Tasmania, an island state of Australia. This had the added benefit of eliminating any difference between industrial and professional regulatory mechanisms across Australian states as a potentially confounding variable.

- *Registered nurses*

Registered nurses were selected as the specific type of professional nursing employee (thereby excluding paraprofessional employees such as enrolled nurses), because they are required to have completed a bachelor's degree in nursing at university level or hold equivalent qualifications such as those acquired through hospital-based training. Specialization in a particular field of nursing, such as critical care nursing and midwifery, entails completion of specialized training and qualifications.

The nursing profession has a substantial proportion of nurses working as paid employees, rather than as self-employed professionals, within the public health system. It is highly organized with a number of peak professional bodies such as the Australian Nursing Council Inc., the Royal College of Nursing, Australia, and specialist associations such as the Australian College of Critical Care Nurses and the Australian College of Emergency Nursing. Approval to practice as a nurse is subject to registration through state legislated registration bodies such as the Nursing Board of Tasmania. The nursing profession is highly codified with formal regulatory

statements such as the 'Code of Ethics for Nurses in Australia' (Australian Nursing Council Inc., 2002), 'Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in Australia' (Australian Nursing Council Inc., 2003), 'Guidelines for the scope of nursing practice' (Nursing Board of Tasmania, 2001a), and 'Professional Boundaries Guidelines for Nurses in Tasmania' (Nursing Board of Tasmania, 2001a).

- *Research scientists*

While not as highly structured as nursing, scientific research has long held the status of a profession and been the subject of many academic studies in that light (for example, see Gibbons & Wittrock, 1985; Kornhauser, 1962; Merton, 1942; Polyani, 1962; Storer, 1973). Research scientists were selected as the specific type of professional employee in this profession (thereby excluding paraprofessionals such as laboratory technicians) because it is usual for them to have completed a research higher degree at doctoral level, and to have an established record of scientific achievement demonstrated by publication in refereed scientific and academic journals. It is through the process of university-based training and education that the principles and values underpinning science as a professional activity are learned. However, unlike the nursing and teaching professions, registration by a government body is not required to gain employment as a research scientist.

Similar to the case of the nursing profession, there are a variety of professional associations for research scientists, some with international memberships, based around scientific disciplines or fields of scientific study, such as the Institute of Physics, the American Geophysical Union, and the Australian Marine Sciences Association. Election as a Fellow to either of the two peak national professional

associations – the Australian Academy of Science and the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering Election – is a highly prized sign of scientific achievement and professional recognition. In Australia, the resource intensive nature of much scientific research means its performance is restricted mostly public sector organisations. Therefore, and as in the case of registered nurses, self-employment is not a viable option for research scientists wishing to practice in many of the highly expensive and knowledge-intensive scientific specialties.

- *Primary teachers*

The third type of professional sampled in the study was teachers employed in the public education primary (Years 1-7) school system in Tasmania. Primary teachers were selected specifically (thereby excluding paraprofessionals such as teachers aides and specialist tutors) because they are required to have completed a university level teaching qualification and be registered by the state legislated Teachers Registration Board.

Of the three professions involved in this study, teaching is the least highly organised in terms of professional associations. The Australian Education Union is the peak body for teachers, but its primary role is that of an industrial association. The Tasmanian Department of Education, the employing organisation for all public sector teachers, predominates in discussion of and initiatives for the development of the teaching profession. For example, it is the Department, rather than the teaching profession itself, which is taking the lead in the development of a formal code of conduct for the teaching profession in Tasmania (Department of Education, 2005).

Sampling method and data collection

The interview component involving participants from each profession was conducted separately, commencing with members of the nursing profession followed by members of the science and teaching professions. The staging of the fieldwork in this way offered the researcher the opportunity to apply the chosen sampling strategy and data collection techniques and procedures, and allowed necessary modifications to be made in the light of progress in the study.

Initially in the case of the nursing profession, a purposive sampling strategy using a homogenous group sampling method was followed (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). The objective of sampling in qualitative research is fundamentally different from that in quantitative research which typically uses samples that are statistically representative with the aim of producing results that are generalizable. Qualitative research does not have the same nomothetic aim and sampling is not concerned with representativeness in a statistical sense. Representativeness is foregone in a homogenous group sampling method which aims to minimize variation across the sample in order to simplify the range of explanatory variables. In this way, purposive sampling aligns with the aim of understanding of the experiences of each individual at a level of depth and complexity that goes beyond that achievable with only the quantitative measurement of factors such as distribution, frequency and quantity (Neuman, 2004; Rice & Ezzy, 1999).

Registered nurses undertaking clinical duties in critical care wards were the first sample group approached. The critical care nursing specialty is practiced only within a hospital setting and the selected hospital employs registered nurses

sufficient in numbers enough to provide a satisfactory sample of participants. The Tasmanian branches of the Australian Nurses Federation and the Australian College of Critical Care Nursing were approached to include an invitation to participate in a mailout to their members. Registered nurses working in the focus area were asked to express interest in participating in the study. However, insufficient responses were received. It was then decided to broaden the focus specialty from critical care wards to include registered nurses performing clinical and other nursing duties generally; in other words the homogenous group sampling method was replaced with a snowball sampling method.

In line with the qualitative approach, snowball sampling provides a means by which the researcher is able to involve participants more actively in the study, and consequently enhance the richness of the data gathered (Neuman, 2004). It involves asking participants in a study for suggestions of others who might participate in the study. Snowball sampling is a multistage method that begins with one or a few people and spreads out on the basis of an underlying network of connections which in the case of this study revolve around a participant's profession. The researcher used personal contacts, some of which were made in the preceding stage of sampling, to gain access to members of the nursing profession after which the snowball sampling method was applied. Momentum was sustained in the snowball sampling method by further use of personal contacts, as well as by the semi-structured interview format which had a positive effect in aiding with effective time management of the interviews. This in turn helped offset any reluctance some interviewees may have felt to involve others if the value or relevance of the research to themselves or their fellow professionals had been masked by inefficient use of

time at interview (Robson, 1993). This sampling strategy, combined with the use of

personal contacts, proved effective and was followed in the second and third phases

of fieldwork covering interview components with the two other professions –

scientific research and teaching – selected for the study.

Data analysis and interpretation

The third component undertaken in the research methodology was the analysis and

interpretation of the data. The supplementary data obtained from the two

questionnaires were analysed first to identify each participant's general

psychological and ideological orientations to the organisation. Because of the small

sample size, and with the limited aim behind the use of the questionnaires,

sophisticated statistical techniques commonly used in the analysis of psychometric

data, such as factor analysis, correlation studies, regression analyses and so forth,

were not used in this study.

With regard to the primary qualitative interview data, as each interview was

completed the audiotape was transcribed and prepared for analysis. The first step in

the analytical process was to build an indexing system in line with the research

questions for the study. This required the researcher to develop a number of initially

broad themes to classify and organise the interview data. Once these broad themes

were established, categories and then sub-categories were developed within each

theme to allow more specific coding and organisation of the content of each

interview.

In qualitative research, coding entails important theoretical decisions relating to the research questions of interest, including which items of data to code, which items to ignore and so on. The codes used for categorisation were derived from the interview material and the literatures concerned with the psychological contract and the development of professions. While such a coding approach is inherently subjective and selective it is appropriate to the qualitative method. The data analysis process which characterises all qualitative research, invariably involves selection, focussing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming of data. Researchers also make choices based on perceived relevance about which data will not be coded and thereby ignored. These features are an unavoidable part of an analytical process in which the researcher chooses how data will be clustered, organised and coded. (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The process of building the indexing system was also not as linear a process as the above description might seem to suggest. Rather, it was iterative in nature reflecting the exploratory nature of the research and the lengthy time period over which the interview program was undertaken. Figure 5.2 below provides an example of one element in the indexing system for classifying data (which is detailed in full in Figures 6.1 and 6.2 in Chapter 6) related to one aspect of interviewee perceptions regarding ideology-related content in their psychological contract.

The use of both the interview material and the literatures concerned with the psychological contract and the development of professions, as the basis for code development, means that a combination of emic and etic interpretative approaches were used in the data analysis.

Level	Code
1	Substance
1.1	Professional competence
1.1.1	Expertise
1.1.2	Autonomy
1.1.3	Excellence
1.1.4	Development

Figure 5.2: Data coding structure by theme, category and sub-category

Typically associated with exploratory research, the emic approach aims to reflect study participants' mental models directly, using interpretative frameworks generated from the data provided by the individuals themselves (Morey & Luthans, 1984). When used in psychological contract research, the emic approach has been used mainly to gain an understanding of psychological contract content terms and their interrelations as perceived by the individual using the individual's own words as the primary qualitative data source (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). The emic approach used in this way has, however, been less common than the etic approach that has underpinned the hypothetic/deductive approach used widely in psychological contract research to date. The etic interpretative approach entails the researcher bringing to the data an analytical framework that uses general constructs meaningful to individuals across a variety of settings which have been derived not from the data but from theory (Morey & Luthans, 1984).

In the case of the current study, the adoption of an emic approach fits with the emphasis in the research questions on exploring issues at the level of the individual. It recognises that direct interaction with the particular and unique experience of the individual is essential for the researcher to interpret and thereby develop an

understanding of the social phenomena under scrutiny (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). An emic approach with its emphasis on the idiosyncratic and the qualitative is also considered better able to accommodate the data complexity and richness exploratory qualitative research generates, and circumvents the problem of needing to deal with changing meanings that reliance on established standardized quantitative measures may mask (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998).

An emic approach does not necessarily imply, however, that the qualitative researcher cannot use theory in the process of data analysis and interpretation. In line with the earlier discussion of 'goodness criteria' (Miles & Huberman, 1994) for qualitative research, emic research findings need at some point to be fitted to etic concepts in order to demonstrate the transferability and credibility of those findings. Accordingly, for the current study the emic approach used in analyzing the qualitative interview data is complemented with the etic approach entailed in the use of concepts drawn from the literatures concerned with the psychological contract and the development of professions and which underpin the IPQ (Bunderson et al., 2000) and PCS (Millward & Hopkins, 1998) questionnaires.

The indexing and coding in this study were mainly done in a manual fashion supported by computer assisted data analysis techniques increasingly recognised as valuable in the management of qualitative data. Computer software specifically designed for use in analysing text data extends the researcher's capacity for data coding, search and retrieval, making displays and building concepts (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The extent to which the benefits of computer assisted data analysis techniques can be accessed is partially dependent on the size of a research

project. Generally, computerised data management systems can be very useful in organising and managing large and complicated data sets. However, for projects such as this study, where the focus is on exploring small data sets, the tasks of coding, sorting, and retrieving may be done effectively using a combination of manual and computer assisted techniques (Hong Tak et al., 1999b).

In this instance, the software application known as NUD*IST, an acronym for Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorising, was used because of its sophistication, general capabilities, and the level of technical support available in Australia. Essentially a text data management system, NUD*IST was developed by Qualitative Solutions and Research Pty Ltd at La Trobe University, Australia (Richards & Richards, 1994).

NUD*IST allows the researcher to record descriptive information about text data, such as interview transcriptions, in a document management system (Hong Tak et al., 1999a, 1999b; MacLaren & Catterall, 2002; Richards & Richards, 1994). The flexible data management functions within NUD*IST make it possible to examine each transcription closely, and select, code, store, and retrieve text segments (e.g. page, paragraph, sentence, etc.) under multiple themes and categories or nodes, while at the same time developing ideas about the data. The analysis process followed in this study built on an underlying assumption in qualitative research, that everything is relational and that the nature of the links that exist between data can be identified. It involved the repeated reviewing of interview transcripts, and the use of reading, induction, and interpretation to generate content-related themes and categories. As this process evolved, the NUD*IST indexing and coding system

supported the identification and creation of sub-categories which were then represented visually in a tree structure also showing the broader themes and categories developed by the researcher.

Commonalities in the qualitative data, relationships and patterns were identified and explored by using the data management functions in NUD*IST (Dembkowski & Hanmer-Lloyd, 1995). For example, by coding text into groups according to the nature of the sample, say interviews with registered nurses, research scientists and primary teachers, it was possible to retrieve a group-specific list of text segments that contained quotes pertaining to specific aspects of professional ideologies by group members. This meant the researcher could explore the data at a very fine level of detail and discern any complicated patterns inherent to its 'richness'. The tree structured indexing system supported complex and multiple coding of text segments. In this way, the researcher was able to work 'up' from the data, as well as 'down' from theory, to develop 'thick' descriptions and new understandings. By making the analytical process more transparent, and the logic in the development of the researcher's interpretation and conclusions more easy to follow (MacLaren & Catterall, 2002), NUD*IST assisted in satisfying the 'goodness criteria' (Miles & Huberman, 1994) discussed earlier in this section.

The challenge in undertaking the computer assisted analysis was how to ensure the dialectic process of qualitative data analysis was maintained, and not overwhelmed by the mechanistic aspects of data management functions of indexing, sorting and filing. Computers cannot perform any of the conceptual and creative tasks associated with the development of understanding. Qualitative data analysis is

'holistic, interpretative, tentative, conditional, contingent, and dependent on the human brain as an instrument' (Hong Tak et al., 1999b: 437). While NUD*IST has iterative capabilities that can facilitate the interpretative process, overuse of the software's mechanistic capabilities can lead to a mere mechanical sorting of data with the researcher becoming alienated from the data and losing sight of the focus of the research (MacLaren & Catterall, 2002). This possible danger is heightened in projects where the amount of qualitative data is such that sole use of manual analytical techniques is not feasible. Given that the amount of data involved in this study was marginally sufficient enough to warrant the use of computer assisted data analysis techniques, care was taken to ensure that NUD*IST was only used to complement and support rather than substitute for manual involvement in data analysis and interpretation.

Chapter summary

This study focuses on exploring the perceptions of individual professional employees regarding the content of their psychological contracts with reference to professional ideology, and their responses to failure by the organisation to meet its related obligations. These questions relate to the concept of an ideology-infused psychological contract (Thompson & Bunderson, 2003), a concept which raises questions about the completeness of the currently defined set of variables and relationships that underpin the cognitive-perceptual definition of the psychological contract and its bidimensional interpretative framework. The research in this study was ex-post facto in design, and exploratory in emphasis. Qualitative methods were used in a naturalistic setting to capture the depth and richness of the idiosyncratic perspective of individuals directly. The primary qualitative data set was collected

through face to face interviews and supplemented with limited quantitative data

collected using two survey instruments. Both manual and computer-based analytical

techniques were used.

Chapter 6: Results and analysis of data[1]

Chapter objectives

The objective of this chapter is to report on the analysis of the research data

gathered from the sample of professional employees, drawn from the nursing,

science, and teaching professions, participating in this study. The research

method, as described in Chapter 5, entailed the use of one-to-one interviews with

each of the study participants as the primary data collection means. Each study

participant also completed two questionnaires as a preliminary to interview. The

reporting of the limited descriptive analysis of the questionnaire data occurs first,

followed by more extensive reporting of the primary qualitative interview data.

Psychological contract and ideological orientations

Descriptive data was obtained from each individual about their

psychological contract as a preliminary to each interview. The 17 item

shortened version of the Psychological Contract Scale (PCS) developed by

Millward and Hopkins (1998), was used to gather data on each individual's

perceptions of the nature of their psychological contract on the two

dimensions – relational and transactional – that are at the heart of the

established interpretative framework for the cognitive-perceptual model of

the psychological contract. This instrument, like all psychological contract

survey instruments published to date, does not comprehend ideology as a

content variable. The PCS (see Appendix 1) required the study participants

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[1] Some of the results reported in this chapter and the following chapter have been published in refereed conference proceedings and journal papers (see Appendix 6).

to indicate the degree to which they agreed with 17 statements. The aim behind the collection of data was limited to obtaining possible points of comparison for the later interpretation of qualitative data covering ideology-related matters at the level of each individual.

In order to establish whether professional values and beliefs generally played a role in the cognitive base used by each participant to interpret and evaluate their psychological contract, descriptive data was also obtained on the ideological orientation of each participant. Using the ideological perspective questionnaire (IPQ) developed by Bunderson et al. (2000) the orientation of each participant towards the organisation was measured in terms of the professional and administrative models of organising (described in detail in Chapter 2) that are frequently considered in discussions about the organisation of professional work. The instrument (see Appendix 2) required the study participants to indicate the degree to which they felt their organisation exhibited, and the extent to which it should exhibit, 12 specific attributes.

As stated in Chapter 5, because of the limited aims behind the use of the questionnaires, and the small sample sizes, sophisticated statistical techniques commonly used in the analysis of psychometric data were neither appropriate or necessary for the analysis of the questionnaire data. What follows is a short account of the conclusions arrived at from the analysis of descriptive statistics derived from the questionnaire data. It is organized by professional group.

Registered Nurse (RN)

The responses from the 10 RN interviewees to the PCS (Appendix 4.1) indicated that each perceived their psychological contract as comprising both relational and transactional components, with a predominant orientation towards relational over transactional.

Specifically, in terms of the relational component, nine RN interviewees agreed they expected to grow within the organisation, while only two saw themselves as working for the organisation indefinitely. That six RN interviewees were heavily involved in his/her place of work contrasts with just two agreeing that the organisation reciprocated the effort put in by employees. Five of the RN interviewees felt part of a team in the organisation, five felt they had a reasonable chance of promotion, and five expected to gain promotion.

In terms of the transactional component, seven RN interviewees agreed they expected to be paid overtime, and four preferred a strictly defined set of working hours. On the other hand, none agreed they did the job just for the money, none went to work purely to get the job done, and none did only what was necessary to get the job done. Similarly, only two RN interviewees agreed it was important not to get too involved in your job, and two agreed they worked to achieve only the short-term goals of the job. Just three RN interviewees agreed they were motivated to contribute to the organisation in return for future benefits, and only one agreed that his/her loyalty to the organisation was defined by the terms of

his/her employment contract. Four RN interviewees felt their career paths were clearly mapped out in the organisation.

The responses from the 10 RN interviewees to the IPQ (Appendix 5.1) showed a unanimous view that the organisation should be characterised most by the attributes comprising the professional group dimension – professionally competent medical staff, clinical excellence, and high quality health care.

Research scientist (RS)

The responses from the eight RS interviewees to the PCS (Appendix 4.2) indicated that each perceived their psychological contract as comprising both relational and transactional components, with a predominant orientation towards relational over transactional.

Specifically, in terms of the relational component, seven of the eight RS interviewees indicated they expected to grow within the organisation, and five saw themselves as likely to work for the organisation indefinitely. Six RS interviewees agreed that that the organisation reciprocated the effort put in by its employees. All but one of the eight RS interviewees felt they had a reasonable chance of promotion, and five had an expectation that they would gain promotion. Six RS interviewees felt part of a team in the organisation, and six felt heavily involved in their place of work.

With regard to the transactional component, only four of the eight RS interviewees agreed it was important not too get too involved in the job. None of the RS interviewees agreed with the notions that they do the job just for the money, expect to be paid overtime, prefer to work a strictly defined set of hours, work to achieve the purely short term goals of their job, or do only what is necessary to get the job done. One RS interviewee came to work purely to get the job done. Similarly, the loyalty of only one interviewee was defined by the terms of his/her employment contract. Four RS interviewees felt their career paths were clearly mapped out in the organisation, and only four indicated they were motivated to contribute to the organisation by the prospect of future employment benefits.

The responses from the eight RS interviewees to the IPQ (Appendix 5.2) showed a unanimous view that the organisation should be characterised most by the attributes comprising the professional group dimension – professionally competent scientific staff, scientific excellence, and high quality scientific

Primary Teacher (PT)

The responses from the six PT interviewees to the PCS (Appendix 4.3) indicated that each perceived their psychological contract as comprising both relational and transactional components, with five of the six PT interviewees having a predominant orientation towards relational over transactional.

Specifically, in terms of the relational component, only two of the six PT interviewees indicated that he/she expected to grow within the organisation, while four saw themselves as likely to work for the organisation indefinitely. Only one PT interviewee agreed that that the organisation reciprocated the efforts put in by its employees. Similarly, only one PT interviewee felt he/she had a reasonable chance of promotion if they worked hard, and only one had an expectation that he/she would gain promotion. One interviewee felt part of a team in the organisation, and only two felt heavily involved in their place of work.

With regard to the transactional component, none of the six PT interviewees agreed it was important not to get too involved in your job. Two PT interviewees agreed they did the job just for the money, and two agreed they expected to be paid overtime. None of the interviewees preferred to work a strictly defined set of hours. Two PT interviewees worked to achieve the purely short term goals of their job, and one did only what was necessary to get the job done. Two interviewees came to work purely to get the job done, and the loyalty of one interviewee was defined by the terms of the employment contract. Two of the PT interviewees felt their career paths were clearly mapped out in the organisation, and only two indicated they were motivated to contribute to the organisation by the prospect of future employment benefits.

The responses from the six PT interviewees to the IPQ (Appendix 5.3) showed all six PT interviewees as ranking the attributes comprising the professional group dimension – professionally competent teaching staff, teaching excellence, and

high quality educational outcomes – as most important for the organisation to exhibit. However, two PT interviewees ranked the bureaucratic dimension – system-wide goals, integration and co-ordination – and two ranked the community service dimension – concern with the education of the community, accessible education for the community, and a general community orientation – as equally most important.

Summary

Data from the PCS showed that each interviewee perceived themselves as having psychological contracts comprising both relational/socio-emotional and transactional/economic components. All but one interviewee had a predominant orientation towards relational over transactional. Analysis of the IPQ data showed responses for each of the interviewees consistent with a predominant emphasis on a professional ideological orientation towards the organisation. Each indicated a cognitive framework and conceptualisation of the organisation's goals, objectives and operations consistent with the values and beliefs of their profession.

Professional ideologies and the psychological contract

The framework for analysis of the interview data was based on two elements. Firstly, it used the concept of an 'ideology-infused' psychological contract (Thompson & Bunderson, 2003) discussed in Chapter 4. This concept draws on the literature pertaining to the cognitive-perceptual definition of the psychological contract, particularly Rousseau (1989, 1995) and Morrison and Robinson (1997), as well as earlier work by Bunderson et al. (2000) and Bunderson (2001) into the

role of professional occupational ideologies in shaping the individual's perspective of the organisation. Secondly, the framework for analysis of the interview data also drew on the literature covering the development and nature of professions and the process of professionalisation (see Abbott, 1988; Bloor & Dawson, 1994; Greenwood, 1966; Roth, 1974; Torstendahl & Burrage, 1990; Trice, 1993; and Wallace, 1995).

Data analysis of the interview transcriptions (see Appendix 7) using manual and computer-based techniques (NUD*IST) revealed two broad themes, called here 'Substance' and 'Strength'. The Substance theme related directly to the perceptions of the study participants with regard to their professional ideology and the terms of their psychological contracts. Within the Substance theme, two groupings named 'Professional competence' and 'Client and other-orientation' emerged, and which together covered a total of seven sub-groupings or nodes. The Strength theme related directly to how study participants responded to a perceived failure of the organisation[2] to deliver on its ideology-related, psychological contract contributions. Within the Strength theme, two groupings called 'Organisational and professional commitment' and 'Job Performance' also emerged, and which together covered a total of seven sub-groupings or nodes.

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[2] Unless otherwise indicated, 'organisation' in the case of the RN interviewees referred to the hospital in which they worked, and not to the government Department that had responsibility for the management of the public sector health system in Tasmania. For RS interviewees, the term 'organisation' referred to the corporate entity and not the organisational unit to which they were attached at the time. In the case of PT interviewees, 'organisation' referred to the government Department that formally employed them, and not the school in which they were teaching at the time.

Theme 1: Substance

Each of the seven nodes within the Substance theme (see Figure 6.1 below) represents an issue found in the literature pertaining to the nature of professions, and in components of the model underpinning the IPQ (Bunderson et al., 2000) used at interview in this study (as discussed in Chapter 2).

In some cases the seven nodes covered by the 'Professional competence' and 'Client and other-orientation' groupings overlap and none have completely distinct boundaries. For example, an emphasis on high quality outcomes has its roots in aspects of professional competence, such as high-level expertise and excellence, as well aspects of client focus and other-orientation. The Substance nodes are illustrated and explained in the following analysis using examples of interview comments from each of the three interview groups focussing on perceptions of the ideology-related contributions made by the individual and the organisation as part of the employment exchange.

Substance – contribution by the individual

The concept of an ideology-infused psychological contract (Thompson & Bunderson, 2003) requires that the terms of an individual professional employee's psychological contract will include some that reflect the ideological values pertaining to that profession. As discussed in Chapter 4, according to Thompson and Bunderson (2003) this ideological currency will be distinguishable from economic and socio-emotional currencies in several ways, including that it will in regard to the individual:
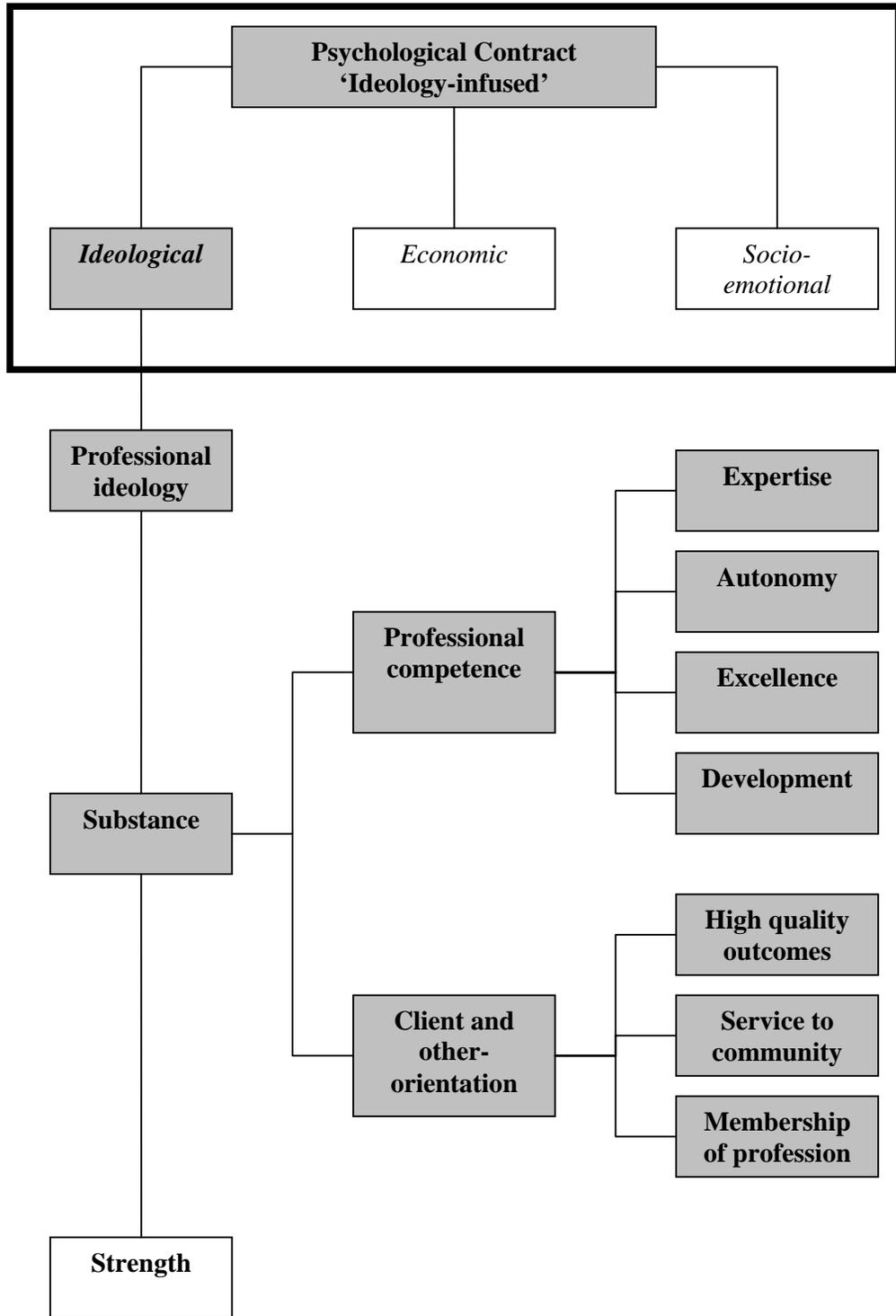
Figure 6.1: Substance theme for Professional Ideology

- demonstrate the individual's commitment to professional values and

  beliefs which serve as the basis for participation in the organisation;

- have a beneficiary which is extra-organisational such as the client and/or

  the broader community, or an intangible principle; and,

- reflect a principled and involved model of human behaviour.

The quotes below are representative of the views expressed by study participants at interview, all of which illustrate one or more of these three characteristics.

- *Registered Nurse (RN)*

Professional competence (expertise, autonomy and the need for excellence) is a core professional value. Perceptions of and a commitment to high level professional competence underpin the professional roles identified by members of the RN interview group: 'a nurse is a carer, someone who carries out medical direction … through experience and knowledge, and also an advocate for patients, for staff, for visitors, for doctors sometimes' *(RN Interviewee A1).*

> Professional competence – expertise: 'I've got a sort of a more modern view of a nurse. I look at them as being a clinical specialist … having a minimum of a bachelor's degree, and then perhaps postgraduate qualifications, … reasonable human values, … and that they're competent clinicians.' *RN Interviewee A5.*

> Professional competence – autonomy: 'Yes you're following guidelines … but people have to come outside of the box to do the best for a patient. So,

it may be that the nurse, … based on their experiences and understanding

of the situation, … [is] able to see more than the 'recipe card' calls for. In

lots of situations, … you very much want to act autonomously … because

you've got the knowledge and skills to do that.' *RN Interviewee A2.*

Professional competence – excellence: 'I believe our main goal is to

provide care for people, whether that is in a community setting or a

hospital setting, which needs to be of the highest standard. To become that

level you need to have appropriate education and meet certain standards

and adhere to certain things. In clinical settings, you need to be adhering

to guidelines and making sure they're up-to-date as best practice for

patients.' *RN Interviewee A3.*

Membership of any profession entails a commitment by the individual to the

ongoing development of professional skills and knowledge. Members of the RN

interview group evidenced this commitment, stressing the importance of an

ongoing personal obligation on the individual to maintain and enhance their

professional competence.

Professional competence – development: 'You build a foundation with

your training or your university degree, and then you probably spend 2

years working out what you want to do and using all of the resources that

you have – your senior staff, your patients, … medical staff, hospital

resources, reading, internet – and then you slowly build by utilising that

all the time, keeping an open mind and practising. You just absorb; if you

really love what you do you just absorb everything.' *RN Interviewee A4.*

RN interviewees indicated that high quality care for the patient (client) was the primary outcome to which their contribution to the hospital – the application of professional competence – was directed. The essence of high quality care was defined in holistic terms, with equal emphasis being placed on the human and technical aspects of a nurse's role. RN interviewees also expressed views about the role of public sector healthcare organisations consistent with a service to the community value orientation.

> <u>Client and other-orientation – high quality outcomes</u>: 'My central focus is my patient and my relationship with him [sic], first and foremost.' *RN Interviewee A4.*
>
> <u>Client and other-orientation – high quality outcomes</u>: 'It's no good just having the 'interpersonals' and killing them, and you can't say its good quality care if you're doing all the technical stuff but you're completely ignoring the other side, so it is a complex mix.' *RN Interviewee A9.*
>
> <u>Client and other-orientation – service to community</u>: 'I guess we have to think what does a hospital do? A hospital provides a service to its community.' *RN Interviewee A2.*

- *Research Scientist (RS)*

As in the case of the RN interview group, perceptions of and commitment to high level professional competence (expertise, autonomy and the need for excellence) underpin the perceived roles and responsibilities of a research scientist: 'I see sort of a search for truth, … really trying to gain an understanding, … to gather

information, … interpret it, and feed it back to the other scientists and … the general population, … to improve understanding' *(RS Interviewee S4).*

> Professional competence – expertise & autonomy: 'I am entrusted by the community to understand and to pursue ideas that the general community have a lot of trouble coming to terms with. … In a way … the people who can't do the science have to trust the people who can do it to do it properly.' *RS interviewee S5.*

> Professional competence – autonomy & excellence: 'I think you have a responsibility to achieve … honesty and producing the best possible result within the resources you have … and a free exchange of ideas. I don't like anything that impinges on that.' *RS Interviewee S4.*

As in the case of the members of the RN interview group, RS interviewees also accepted the importance of the ongoing personal obligation on the individual to maintain and enhance their professional competence. Generally, this occurred for members of the RS interview group through exchange with professional colleagues and active participation in the scientific community, for example through conference and seminar attendance.

> Professional competence – development: 'The scientific support comes predominantly through my colleagues who …know my work area and where I could potentially further develop or where they see opportunities for me.' *RS Interviewee S2.*

Membership of the scientific profession entails a sense of commitment to and recognition of the responsibilities incumbent on the individual scientist in regard to the collective scientific community.

> Client and other-orientation – membership of profession: 'I definitely do see myself as part of a scientific community. … I have a responsibility to the science community in the sense of helping represent them, helping organise international activities etc, sort of community service for the science community.' *RS Interviewee S7.*

For members of the RS interview group, high quality outcomes were defined not only in terms of scientific excellence but also in terms of the delivery of both tangible and intangible benefits to others in the community, including not only industry and business who had commercial economic interests but also society in its broadest sense. This strong other-orientation was encapsulated in the notion of 'public good' and was a key component in RS interviewees' conceptualisation of their organisation's goals and purposes. The general view was that 'public good' should override narrow commercial interest whenever conflict between those two interests arose in the performance of their work.

> Client and other-orientation – service to community: 'I'm a publicly funded scientist and so I think I have a responsibility to the public and the public good.' *RS Interviewee S8.*
>
> Client and other-orientation – service to community: 'I think when it comes to a conflict say between the concerns of an industry and the more

public good, then I guess generally the public good in my mind would win out in those situations.' *RS Interviewee S1.*

- *Primary Teacher (PT)*

In general terms, PT interviewees described their contribution as professionals as being focussed on the teaching of literacy, numeracy and social skills, attitudes and behaviours: 'I guess the … [role] is to educate students, meet certain standards of literacy, numeracy, and social skills are really an important part of teaching these days. …You are … trying to educate them to foster a love of learning, something that will go beyond the classroom' *(PT Interviewee T1).* In terms of professional competence, members of the PT interview group emphasised the high level of autonomy they exercised in the performance of their work.

Professional competence – expertise: 'It shouldn't be … that I'm the expert and you know nothing. Maybe our training makes us an expert in the field in terms of the academic side of it, but I think for the personal relationships which are so important in the classroom you need to know as much as possible about that child, about their background, where they're coming from. Without that knowledge … you can't do the best for the child.' *PT Interviewee T3.*

Professional competence – autonomy: 'Once you enter your classroom and you close the door you're on your own as a professional the whole day. You don't have anybody telling you what to do, how to do it. That also is a significant attribute of being a professional, that is you are the

expert and you will determine how and when and why you will do things and you won't be told by non professionals.' *PT Interviewee T2.*

Professional competence – excellence: 'To try and do the best for every single child in the room is one of the most important things that I hold dearly as a teacher; … to make sure that their schooling is really a worthwhile experience for them.' *PT Interviewee T3.*

Members of the PT interview group generally perceived there to be significant workload obstacles impeding them from accessing professional development opportunities. Consequently, professional development was perceived as occurring most often as part of the on-the-job experience and day-to-day exchange with professional colleagues in the school. This reflected a view of teaching, that it is primarily a practice-based profession with a significant high level of tacit knowledge acquired through experience, expressed by several PT interviewees. Also, as in the case of the RN and RS interviewees, PT interviewees valued professional relationships with their peers and recognised a commonality of interest with fellow members of the profession.

Professional competence – development: 'You're constantly developing as a teacher. You don't ever do the same thing the same way twice, because you've got different clientele. You're always … looking at ways to improve what you're doing and presenting it in different ways. … It's not something that you just do the same way every day. There's a lot of flexibility in teaching as well which is what I like. … I like to be more

autonomous. … and … you plan your day according to what you know has to get done.' *PT Interviewee T1*.

Client and other-orientation – membership of profession: 'I think teachers are pretty supportive of one another. … If you're not sure about something you might ask them do they have any good work sheets. You often do it to get ideas, and bounce ideas off one another.' *PT Interviewee T6.*

As was the case with the RS and RN interviewees, members of the PT interview group evidenced a strong client focus: 'You feel responsible towards the children and their parents really. I know the ultimate responsibility I suppose is to the [Department], but at the forefront of your mind you're thinking of the kids and the parent expectations' *(PT Interviewee T1).* This strong emphasis was complemented by an other-orientation in PT interviewee views pertaining to the value of public education in society.

Client and other-orientation – high quality outcomes: 'I think that public education should be funded as much as possible. ... If you look at [a particular public school], … they've managed to achieve an incredibly high standard.' *PT Interviewee T6.*

Client and other-orientation – service to community: 'I believe education is a right for all people and I don't believe it should be brought for X amount of dollars. I feel strongly about all the resources that are poured into our private schools at the expense of public schools.' *PT Interviewee T1.*

Substance – contribution by the organisation

Thompson and Bunderson (2003) suggest that if ideological currency forms part of the individual's contribution then the individual will perceive the provision of a credible commitment by the organisation as part of its contributions under the psychological contract. According to Thompson and Bunderson (2003), these contributions will be distinguishable from the organisation's economic and socio-emotional contributions in several ways, including that they will:

- indicate to the individual that the organisation is a mechanism and supportive environment through which the individual can further a highly valued cause;

- have a beneficiary which is extra-organisational; and,

- be consistent with the organisation's mission/cause and its behaviour as a member of the community in which it operates.

Comments made by members of all three interviewee groups about the extent to which the organisation was supporting their contribution of professional competence, and a client focus and other-orientation in their work are set out below.

- *Registered Nurse (RN)*

In the case of the RN interview group, interviewees expressed views that indicate the hospital's contribution was perceived as failing to indicate a credible commitment to supporting their contribution of professional competence, particularly in regard to recognising the professional nature of their expertise and the importance of professional development. According to RN interviewees,

nursing generally was not perceived as receiving adequate acknowledgement or status by the hospital as a core professional group, the high level professional competence of which was essential to the hospital's delivery of high quality health outcomes.

> Professional competence – expertise: 'There have also been changes in the management structure. … There's an increased business side. … When we had one [nursing] figurehead, that person … had more of a role in promoting professional collegiality and initiatives. ... I think we now lack a professional focus in our nursing leadership in this hospital.' *RN Interviewee A9.*
>
> Professional competence – expertise: 'They treat nurses as a commodity. … Now it's not inconceivable that I can be asked to go to from my speciality to a psychiatry ward. … I can't name another profession that would make the people do that. Do they grab trial lawyers out of court to do some will work or conveyancing? It just doesn't happen. It comes down to a numbers thing … so nurses are treated like absolute commodities.' *RN Interviewee A6.*
>
> Professional competence – development: 'I would say that [professional] education has not been … significantly valued in this hospital. I think that goes back to the period of economic rationalism and significant cuts in hospital budgets and 'slash and burn' priorities, … that management approach of cutting budgets and just not having enough money – efficiencies but not effectiveness.' *RN Interviewee A9.*

These perceptions, shared by members of the RN interviewee group, incorporated a focus on a perceived failure by the hospital to contribute to and support nursing's client focus and commitment to service to the community. The importance of the patient and service to the community via the contribution of professional values and beliefs was revealed.

Client and other-orientation – high quality outcomes: 'I think the non nursing values in this organisation, at this time with this current CEO, aren't patient centred.' *RN Interviewee A9.*

Client and other-orientation – high quality outcomes: 'Sometimes we have patients that we feel are unsafe to go home. It often happens because of the lack of service provided by the hospital and that's where I feel there's a bit of a gap.' *RN Interviewee A3.*

Client and other-orientation – service to community: 'They've [management] opened up some of the medical wards, but they've closed other medical wards and made them into offices. … We've got less beds within the main structure of the hospital than we had. How can they say that we've got the beds and the structure to incorporate our community?' *RN Interviewee A4.*

- *Research Scientist (RS)*

In the case of the RS interview group, interviewees questioned the level of organisational support for the individual research scientist's contribution of professional competence. There was a general feeling that management ideology had supplanted the professional ideology of science as the dominant cultural force

within the organisation, which in turn constrained the individual scientist's professional autonomy, de-emphasised scientific excellence and meant insufficient weight was given to the development of the organisation's stock of scientific human capital.

> Professional competence – expertise: 'Management say a lot of nice words about how important the science is, but I don't see that in their actions. I think they are driven by management things.' *RS Interviewee S5*.
>
> Professional competence – excellence: 'I would have said scientific excellence 23 years ago but I'm not sure that's it's one of the aims now. It's sort of more a research business now and science is often lacking, almost a minor player in the whole thing.' *RS Interviewee S4*.
>
> Professional competence – development: 'The limitation on professional development … is the time pressure of ending up doing quite a lot of contract work without the time to write up papers. That's where it falls down, where you don't get the professional development that you should.' *RS Interviewee S6*.

RS interviewees commented on the potential conflict of interest between commercial, community and organisational interests, and were critical of the values base on which organisational interest was managed. Interviewees expressed the view that, as a government funded body, the organisation's bottom-line obligation was to serve the 'public good' while at the same time managing its commercial arrangements to deliver acceptable outcomes to commercial clients and the community. The importance of service to the community via the

contribution of professional values and beliefs was revealed. The organisation was perceived as failing to deliver in this regard.

Client and other-orientation – high quality outcomes: 'I think at corporate level it [the organisation] is entirely driven by meeting the needs of the government and providing the right kind of face for government. … I think there's a real split between the corporate culture and the scientific culture.' *RS Interviewee S8.*

Client and other-orientation – high quality outcomes: 'The unfortunate thing is that … there will always be compromises involved because of the limits of the funding, and the limits of the extent to which the agencies are prepared to take risks in terms of research outcomes. I would like to see [the organisation] more adamant in terms of its own contribution to those projects and its expectations of those contributions. I think we're too malleable.' *RS Interviewee S8.*

Client and other-orientation – service to community: 'We are less able now to act as an honest broker in scientific issues because we have a requirement to get external dollars and we are under contract to companies. We therefore can't then go ahead and criticise those companies. So, we are compromised.' *RS Interviewee S5.*

- *Primary Teacher (PT)*

Members of the PT interview group generally expressed a high level of scepticism and dissatisfaction in terms of the level of support provided by the Department to teachers in the performance of their professional duties. The

Department's objectives were perceived to be disconnected from the realities of the classroom and not directly informed by the professional expertise and understanding of practicing primary teachers. There was general comment on the Department's lack of consultation with and its perceived poor treatment of professional staff, as well as a perceived lack of support for professional development that was impeding the interviewees' delivery of high quality teaching outcomes. The centrality of the client (student) and other-orientation in the contribution of professional values and beliefs was made apparent. As in the case of the other two interview groups, PT interviewees also expressed strong views about weaknesses in the client focus of the Department, as well as its neglect of responsibilities to the community it was perceived as failing to serve adequately.

Professional competence – expertise & excellence: 'It certainly has become more important, the managing issue. I have sort of wondered sometimes … whether you'd be better off having a manager and an education leader. … Sometimes … with the management stuff … the education stuff goes by the board.' *PT Interviewee T5.*

Professional competence – development: 'PD [professional development] costs money and schools have to find that money out of their budget. … So, some schools do a lot of PD, whereas other schools would use their money in other ways. … Finding money for PD shouldn't be up to schools to try and find out of their budgets.' *PT Interviewee T1.*

Client and other-orientation – high quality outcomes: 'I think if you ask the [Department] I'm sure they would say we're there to get the best for

the children, but to get the best children need time, and teachers need time to devote their attention to the children in reasonable sized classes. I think basically they're not listening to what people at the coalface need.' *PT Interviewee T3.*

Client and other-orientation – service to community: 'I think in terms of standards of buildings that many teachers have to work in, and the general facilities of many schools, many of which present as occupational health and safety hazards … you feel disappointed. You feel for the kids, that they're in such cramped low grade buildings. … It's not really good enough. … The community and the kids deserve better.' *PT Interviewee T1.*

Client and other-orientation – membership of profession: 'Well they can't really [participate in public debate about education] because they want to keep their job. I think to a certain extent a lot of teachers are opposed to the [planned] system. They … don't say it in public, because they know that there would be a backlash against them. … I think teachers are constrained … by the [Department].' *PT Interviewee 6.*

Summary – Theme 1: Substance

On the matter of whether professional values and beliefs form part of the individual's contribution to the organisation, the analysis of the interview data showed such to be the case. It also showed contributions of ideological currency were distinctive in the terms posited by Thompson and Bunderson (2003), that is they reflected a principled and involved model of human behaviour and the salience of the client and the broader community as beneficiaries of such

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contributions. The individual's professional values and beliefs served along with socio-emotional and economic considerations as part of the basis for participation in the organisation.

Specifically, members of the three interview groups perceived professional competence as underpinning the roles and responsibilities embraced in their job performance. RN and RS interviewees highlighted the high level of specialised expertise, autonomy and excellence, while PT interviewees emphasised autonomy. Professional growth and development, particularly through learning opportunities presented by professional interaction, was perceived essential to high job performance.

The way in which all interviewees spoke of the need to achieve high quality outcomes reflected the centrality of the client and the other-orientation in defining high quality. Interviewees expressed this in terms of a self-generated obligation. In other words, the importance of the client and the other-orientation was linked to other elements in professional values and beliefs; that is to say, for example the right to practice professional autonomy entailed an obligation to exercise that right in an ethical and proper fashion in regard to clients, and colleagues. RN and PT interviewees focussed primarily on the nurse-patient and teacher-student-parent links respectively, with a secondary focus on benefits to the broader social community. The focus of the client and other-orientation was different for RS interviewees who focussed primarily on benefits to the broader community and 'public good' concept.

In regard to ideology-related contributions by the organisation, the analysis showed that interviewees distinguished ideology-related contributions by the organisation as indicative of an environment supportive of professional values and beliefs. Specifically, interviewees from the three groups perceived recognition of and respect for professional competence, and support of professional development, as indicative of a credible commitment by the organisation. RN interviewees and PT interviewees spoke of a lack of professional respect being accorded to them by their organisation. RS interviewees commented on the organisation's attempts to constrain rather than support professional autonomy and a diminished concern to support scientific excellence in the face of financial pressures on the organisation. In the case of some PT interviewees, they went as far as describing a feeling of being intimidated by the organisation's attempts to limit their capacity to comment publicly as professionals about educational issues of concern to the broader community.

Members of the three interview groups perceived their contribution of professional values and beliefs to the organisation as also being a contribution to their clients, professional peers and their profession more generally. In other words a contribution of professional values and beliefs was not made simply through one direct exchange relation with the organisation but also involved multiple exchange relations with other parties who were beneficiaries of that contribution.

All interviewees commented on a reduction in the organisation's focus on the client and service to the community occasioned by the increasing dominance of management values. RN interviewees commented negatively on non-nursing values having displaced patient centred values. RS interviewees were critical of management values supplanting professional values and in turn engendering a conflict of interest and a diminution in the importance of 'public good' as an organisational goal. PT interviewees lamented the perceived disconnect between day-to-day classroom activities and the organisation's objectives and supporting management processes.

Theme 2: Strength

As outlined at the beginning of this chapter, data analysis of the interview transcriptions revealed two broad themes, one of which – 'Strength' – related directly to how study participants responded to a perceived failure of the organisation to deliver its ideology-related psychological contract contributions. Within the Strength theme, two groupings called 'Organisational and professional commitment' and 'Job Performance' emerged, and which together covered a total of seven sub-groupings or nodes.

Each of the seven nodes within the Strength theme (See Figure 6.2 below) represents an issue found in Chapter 4 in the discussion of the literature pertaining to the psychological contract and the ideology-infused contract model (Thompson & Bunderson, 2003). As with nodes in the two groupings in the Substance theme, the seven nodes covered by the two Strength groupings overlap in some cases and none have completely distinct boundaries.
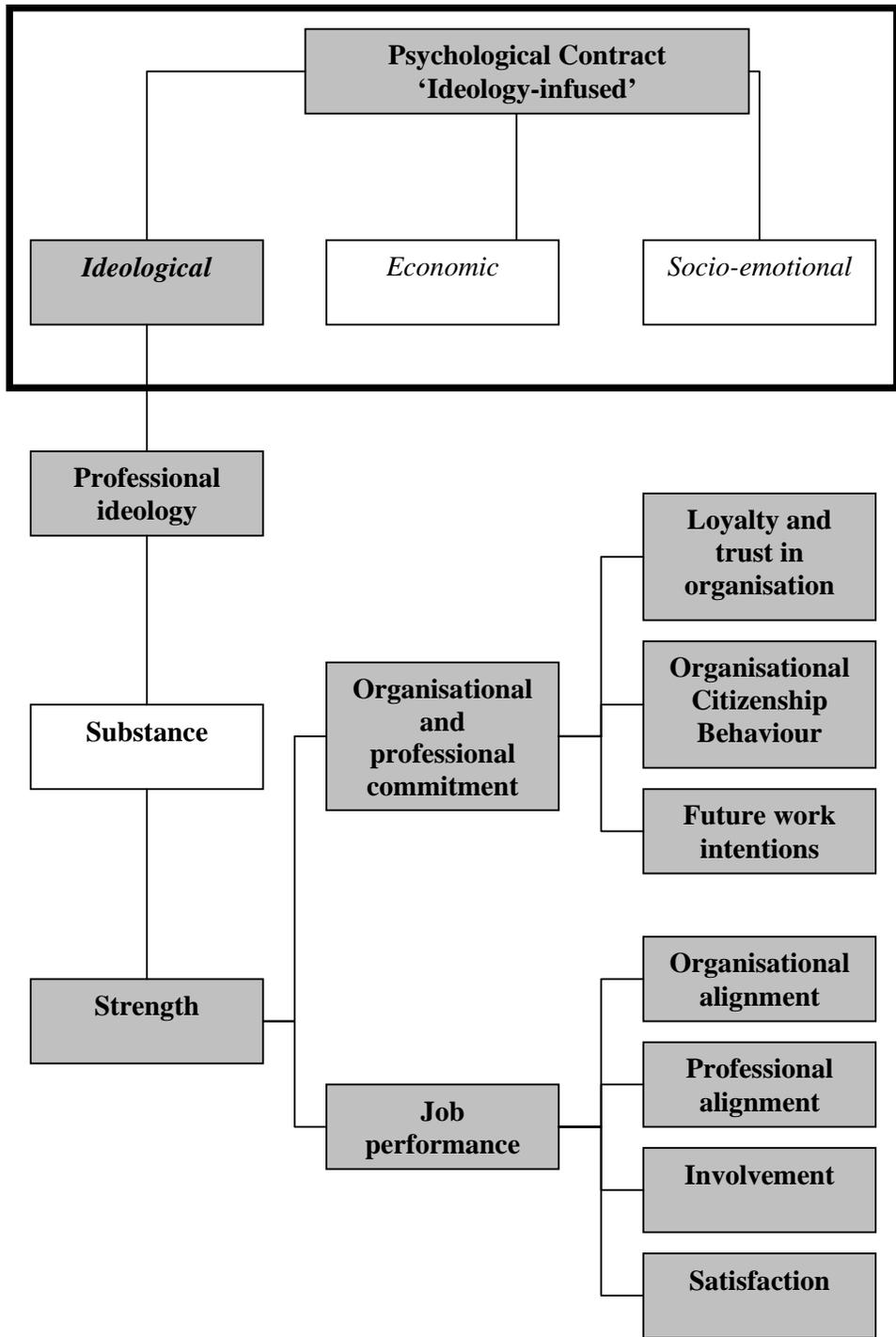
Figure 6.2: Strength theme for Professional Ideology

The Strength nodes are illustrated and explained in the following analysis using examples of interview comments from each of the three interview groups, focussing on professional values and beliefs as drivers of organisational and professional commitment and of job performance.

Strength – organisational and professional commitment

The preceding section on the Substance theme presented data showing that study participants had a commitment to professional values and beliefs that served as the basis of contributions to the organisation in the form of an ideological currency. The data also showed study participants perceived the organisation as being required to provide supporting contributions, and to behave in a way that was consistent with the values and beliefs underpinning the ideological currency.

Thompson and Bunderson (2003) contend that failure by the organisation to show a credible commitment will results in negative attitudinal and behavioural change. The findings of the two empirical studies of the psychological contracts of professional employees (Bunderson, 2001; Purvis & Cropley, 2003) discussed in Chapter 4 also indicated negative impacts related to non-delivery by the organisation in regard to contract terms reflecting professional values and beliefs. The quotes below describe the impact on the organisational and professional commitment of study participants in the light of non-delivery of supportive contributions by the organisation.

- *Registered Nurse (RN)*

Members of the RN interviewee group expressed views that suggest a perceived failure by the hospital to provide credible support for their professional ideological beliefs has impacted negatively on their loyalty to the organisation and trust in the hospital's management. While all RN interviewees expressed a commitment to the role and purpose of public sector health care organisations in the community, the majority did not identify with the hospital's strategic goals nor see the organisation itself as the focus of their commitment. Loyalty and professional commitment was not directed towards the hospital but rather towards patients, the nursing profession and professional colleagues.

> Organisational and professional commitment – loyalty and trust: 'I don't have any loyalty to the organisation at all. I have a loyalty to the people that I work with, my peers and the patients that I care for.' *RN Interviewee A4.*
>
> Organisational and professional commitment – loyalty and trust: 'I certainly think that the predominant vibe is mostly a negative. … I don't feel like that there's an upper level management that are all working together for the best. … I don't feel like it's an environment that inspires people to want to commit to the organisation.' RN Interviewee A8.

A diminished emphasis on the hospital as a focus of commitment was reflected in the views expressed by RN interviewees with regard to their willingness to engage in organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB). Comments by *RN*

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Interviewee A7, a long serving nurse, captured the shared sentiment of the RN interview group.

> Organisational and professional commitment – OCB: 'They [management] expect more, more, more and more of the staff. People are just not prepared to give anymore. … I've just decided now that I'm going to walk … that 15, 20 minutes of a morning rather than come here and start work as soon as you walk through the door. I think that's probably a better thing for me. I used to always like to get here early and get things started for the day. … Even though you're not starting till 8.00 a.m., if you get through this door at 7.35 a.m. … you're effectively at work.' *RN Interviewee A7.*

While one RN interviewee expressed a level of disillusionment with the hospital sufficient to give rise to an intention to leave, the future work intentions of the other nine RN interviewees entailed no such clear aim. However, that the intention to remain was contingent upon the hospital not impinging significantly upon the individual's core professional values and beliefs was clear.

> Organisational and professional commitment – future work intentions: 'If they said I couldn't do this, this and this, and that would impinge on professional things, then I think I would [leave]. If I chose to stay I think it would mean that my own set of values would be affected, and it wouldn't sit very comfortably with me.' *RN Interviewee A3.*

Organisational and professional commitment – future work intentions: 'If I found that I was in an area where I wasn't being challenged, … and all I was doing was very task orientated and mundane … like taking a few 'obs' and doing washes, … I would look at moving into one of the areas where they were specialising. I would look at external options as well, but I wouldn't necessarily leave the hospital.' *RN Interviewee A8.*

- *Research Scientist (RS)*

Members of the RS interview group expressed views that indicated a higher level of commitment to their professional values and beliefs than to the organisation, and what commitment they have to the organisation is contingent upon it supporting professional values and beliefs. Comments also revealed that in assessing their relationship to the organisation, RS interviewees also considered relationships with colleagues and to the broader community as significant moderating factors. Dissatisfaction with changes in the organisation's goals, perceived as too non-science-driven, was evident. However, at the same time RS interviewees were willing to acknowledge that the organisation's scale and resources, but more so the scientific culture shared by the organisation's research scientists, were necessary to the achievement of their professional goals.

Organisational and professional commitment – loyalty and trust: 'My commitment is to science!'; 'Science, no doubt about that. If [the organisation] goes too far in the wrong direction, I'm out!' *RS Interviewees S5, S6, S8.*

Organisational and professional commitment – loyalty and trust: 'It's the community of scientists that keeps me in [the organisation]. … The buzz that I get … everyday is the people that I work with, the motivation, the dedication, and the intellectual satisfaction of working with a group like that.' *RS Interviewee S8.*

Organisational and professional commitment – loyalty and trust: 'I guess the strength of [the organisation] is its size and its resources, the fact that it can put together reasonably sized teams at least on an Australian standard. … Probably its biggest strength is its staff and the culture that goes with those staff.' *RS Interviewee S7.*

Notwithstanding the positive acknowledgement of particular organisational qualities, RS interviewees commented negatively on the internal tension and the lack of trust that was perceived to exist between a strong scientific culture and the organisation's management culture.

Organisational and professional commitment – loyalty and trust: 'I … get the feeling that [the organisation] doesn't trust the scientists anymore. So they put a lot of rules in place … that ends up with a lot of bureaucracy.' *RS Interviewee S5.*

Organisational and professional commitment – loyalty and trust: 'I think the unifying culture within [the organisation] is without doubt the scientific culture. I think that corporate [the organisation] has worked to undermine that for almost as long as I've been in [the organisation].' *RS Interviewee S8.*

There was, however, a willingness on the part of RS interviewees to accept that good management was in effect a necessary condition for the effectiveness of the organisation and thus the achievement of high quality scientific outcomes.

> Organisational and professional commitment – loyalty and trust: 'These people [management] do have other imperatives, which are to keep a predatory government off their backs, to keep a sometimes fickle media and public on side, to maintain the interests of politicians. … I don't like those things myself. They're nothing to do with why I would be doing science. It seems clear to me that those imperatives are operating, but as long as people can manage to do those things without losing sight of some of the more lofty and abstract goals that I'm talking about I think that's ok. In a sense, that managerial world is an essential part of the full package.'
> *RS Interviewee S6.*

As in the case of the RN interview group, a lesser emphasis on the organisation as a focus of commitment and its connection to professional ideology was reflected in the views expressed by RS interviewees with regard to their willingness to engage in organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB). For example, comments by *RS Interviewee S7* showed a connection to the organisation's perceived failure to support core professional values and beliefs concerning service to the scientific and general communities.

Organisational and professional commitment – OCB: Recently … people here were asked … whether we would go out to the press and say no we hadn't been [gagged from talking]. A number of us replied essentially saying 'no we wouldn't do that'. My feeling was well I could … if you allowed me to speak honestly, which would have immediately come out that 'yes I think we have been gagged'. *RS Interviewee S7.*

Organisational and professional commitment – OCB: 'A couple of years ago … there was a senior position coming up and I was asked would I apply for this position for [the organisation], and I just laughed. I said … I might do it for myself, but not for [the organisation], and that's a complete change in how I treated my organisation.' *RS Interviewee S7.*

RS interviewees indicated an absence of any future intention to leave the organisation, acknowledging the limited alternative opportunities for employment elsewhere within their profession. However, it was clear that at some future point continued failure by the organisation to deliver on its perceived obligations regarding core professional values and beliefs would cause individuals to review their intentions.

Organisational and professional commitment – future work intentions: 'I mean there's a finite number of opportunities and outcomes out there. The hassle and overhead of working for yourself is quite considerable and, as I said before, there will be avenues that are closed off to me if I did that.' *RS Interviewee S6.*

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Organisational and professional commitment – future work intentions: 'If the government and [the organisation] cooperatively decided that [the organisation] was purely about helping industry, and helping industry in the sense of turning over dollars, then maybe that's justifiable. … [But] no I don't [stay in the organisation]. … It wouldn't satisfy my needs as an individual and as a professional.' *RS Interviewee S8.*

- *Primary Teacher (PT)*

Of the three interview groups, the PT interview group indicated the least level of commitment to, and seemingly the strongest feelings of separation from, the Department. PT interviewees did express a strong commitment and loyalty towards colleagues and the specific primary school in which they practiced their profession, which contrasted with very negative attitudes towards the Department generally.

Organisational and professional commitment – loyalty and trust: 'Because I don't really have any contact with them [the Department]. … I don't feel that they have any loyalty towards me.' *PT Interviewee A4.*

Organisational and professional commitment – loyalty and trust: 'You feel responsible towards the principal and your other colleagues within your school. You can't let them down, … you've got to pull your weight and that kind of thing. You don't feel directly responsible to the [Department] at all.' *PT Interviewee A1.*

The goals of the Department, and the capacity of management to do the 'right thing', also occasioned negative feelings. These were manifested in negative comment about current major curriculum change which PT interviewees felt would not serve the educational interests of students and their parents.

> Organisational and professional commitment – loyalty and trust: 'I don't trust the [Department] to make the right decisions on many issues because it is far removed from many of the day to day issues that affect teachers.' *PT Interviewee A1*.

As in the cases of the RN and RS interview groups, the lesser emphasis by the PT interviewees on the Department as a focus of commitment was reflected in a reduced willingness to engage in organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB); however, the commitment to professional values and beliefs limits this reduced willingness to OCB outside of that which impacts positively and directly on colleagues and students. Commitments to students and colleagues were important moderating factors of behaviour.

> Organisational and professional commitment – OCB: 'I think a … lot of people would feel, 'right well I'm going there because I have to go there, I will do what I just have to do, and I will leave as soon as I can possibly leave'. You never feel valued by the [Department], ever. I think there are an awful lot of disillusioned people who have felt 'I've done a good job and this, that and the other', and in the long run 'I couldn't give a stuff'.' *PT Interviewee A2*.

Organisational and professional commitment – OCB: 'Yes [you can withdraw effort] but nobody who is a professional would. I think that's the conflict. … You can't go to a classroom unplanned because the children are going to suffer, and you can't say well I'm not going out to do that duty, it's not part of what I have to do. So, there's a huge conflict. *PT Interviewee T3.*

As in the case of the RS interviewees, PT interviewees generally indicated no future intention to leave the Department. However, this did not reflect a positive view about the Department, nor necessarily an over-riding positive commitment to the profession, but rather a view that attractive alternative employment opportunities outside the public education system were limited.

Organisational and professional commitment – future work intentions: 'I guess after doing it … all this length of time it would be hard to turn around and do something different.' *PT Interviewee T1.*

Organisational and professional commitment – future work intentions: 'I don't see that it [teaching] would be any better there [in the private education system]. I think there would be less money for resources depending on the private school.' *PT Interviewee T4.*

Strength – job performance

The quotes below describe the impact on the job performance of study participants in the light of non-delivery of supportive contributions by the organisation.

- *Registered Nurse (RN)*

All RN interviewees expressed views that indicated the extent to which job performance lessened as a consequence of a perceived breach by the hospital was limited by their personal commitment to professional values and beliefs. Indeed, professional values and beliefs, for example client and other-orientation, appeared to engender effort aimed at ensuring that the patient's needs continued to be the primary focus. Professional commitment also positively influenced behaviour towards hospital management. While there was a negative impact in terms of the individual's commitment to the hospital, strong professional commitment still provided an indirect benefit to the hospital as a performance motivation.

> Job performance – organisational alignment: 'I don't feel like I'm doing it for the organisation. The organisation is the bottom of the list.' *RN Interviewee A8.*
>
> Job performance – organisational alignment: 'I think that whilst I have to be accountable … I find every way that I can to bypass the system. I just do it, and know that you can probably get away with it because it's such a big organisation.' *RN Interviewee A7.*
>
> Job performance – professional alignment: 'I feel I'm doing it for the patient and the family. … They are a main focus. Also I guess there is a certain amount of doing it for your peers, … to achieve an outcome by the end of your shift that is going to make it easier for your colleagues to do their job.' *RN Interviewee A8.*

Job performance – professional alignment: 'No [reducing effort is not an option], because it wouldn't hurt the people that you were trying to get at. It would hurt the people that you are caring for.' *RN Interviewee A1*.

All RN interviewees expressed a clear sense of involvement in their job, that is to say they identified strongly with the job and they identified a direct link between performance and feelings of self-worth.

Job performance – involvement: 'I guess that comes back to thinking why I became a nurse in the first place. … I wanted to do something that made me feel like I was having a positive impact on someone's life. … A lot of days I can go to work and think that patient … had a better day because I looked after them as part of my job.' *RN Interviewee A8*.

Job performance – involvement: 'You know, when you actually defibrillate someone, and they could be dead in a few seconds but you've defibrillated them, and they suddenly go into sinus rhythm, you go 'oh gawd we've just saved his life!' It's very exciting, and that sort of stuff is very rewarding as well.' *RN Interviewee A5*.

Job performance – involvement: 'One of the things I like about nursing is that there are so many avenues to direct yourself in. … I feel that if I'm not challenged professionally, … that initial reason I did it in the first place, for that sense of community and sense of doing something for other people, I wouldn't be able to fulfil.' *RN Interviewee A8*.

While interview data suggest that job involvement for RN interviewees was high, other comments suggested that this did not correlate with a high level of job satisfaction. On the contrary, frustration and anger with the organisation's perceived lack of commitment to core values and beliefs, and inadequate recognition and support for nursing's professional status by hospital management, was revealed.

Job performance – satisfaction: 'One of the important things about a nurse is that … after an 8 or 10-hour shift … you don't want to go off feeling like you've been abused by relatives and patients because the organisation has let you down. That happens quite a lot.' *RN Interviewee A4.*

Job performance – satisfaction: 'I get angry but it [hospital management] is a continuous problem that we have. … There's no point in just getting angry. … It's not going to get you anywhere.' *RN Interviewee A5.*

Job performance – satisfaction: 'I think we could be doing a lot more as a hospital for the community. … I mean that's why there's frustration.' *RN Interviewee A3.*

Job performance – satisfaction: 'I don't feel that they [hospital management] … particularly care whether I'm a good nurse, or I'm a bad nurse.' *RN Interviewee A10.*

In terms of changes that might be made to improve the level of satisfaction, *RN Interviewee A8* expressed aspirations both personal and for the hospital that in part reflected professional values and beliefs, and which also mirrored the views of other members of the RN interview group.

Job performance – satisfaction: 'I [want] an organisation that has an air of confidence, an air of positiveness, where employees feel valued and therefore have more job satisfaction. Things like professional development and … dynamic and forward thinking individuals, ... so that … people can see that it's a growing and forward moving establishment.' *RN Interviewee A8.*

- *Research Scientist (RS)*

Comments by members of the RS interview group suggest that overall, as in the case of the RN interview group, the negative consequences of failure by the organisation to provide credible support for the individual's professional values and beliefs were moderated by the individual's commitment to professional values and beliefs. However, RS interviewees appeared less antagonistic towards the organisation and were more willing to work with management despite its perceived flaws.

Job performance – organisational alignment: 'As a manager I actually saw myself as the interface between the corporate and scientific cultures. To a large extent for the sake of productivity, and for the sake of well being of my workforce, I saw my role largely as protecting the scientists. … Creating an environment in which they could be productive within the project framework of [the organisation]. … It's a shame … but I don't think that [the organisation] is naturally conducive to creativity and it's up

to the creativity of the scientists to generate that environment.' *RS Interviewee S8.*

On the other hand, where the organisation took action that constrained the exercise of professional competence, particularly in regard to professional autonomy, a number of RS interviewees were less positive in their attitude to what they perceived to be an unsupportive organisation. However, even in these instances such tensions were perceived as inevitable given the nature of a scientist's professional training.

Job performance – organisational alignment: 'I think there are more and more efforts to control individual scientists … [which] I treat with very little respect. I just manipulate them, I have to be honest, and so mostly still do the work I want to do.' *RS Interviewee S4.*

Job performance – organisational alignment: 'It does provide … a number of hurdles and hoops to jump through etc. … My attitude these days is that if there is a hoop right in front of me and I have to jump through it I will, but … I do not divert my attention to do things, which I don't think that are all that important.' *RS Interviewee S7.*

Job performance – professional alignment: 'I think … scientists are actually professional anarchists, … people who have been trained to be … sceptical, … not to accept what appears in front of them and to interpret the data in their own way. It's always going to be a difficult group of people to manage, particularly if you're trying to manage outside of their culture and outside of their way of thinking. … Unless you do it in the

way the scientists want you to do it, they're going to spend a lot of time
working out how to get around it.' *RS Interviewee S7.*

Job involvement for all RS interviewees was high, and as in the case of the RN
interview group, involvement did not correlate with a high level of job
satisfaction nor was it contingent on remaining with the current employing
organisation.

Job performance – involvement: 'A person like me got into science
because of the excitement of doing things that nobody else had done,
getting it out there so that people could see it, and in the end getting
acknowledgement for it. So, there's an element of ego.' *RS Interviewee S8.*

Job performance – involvement: 'At university, I got this impression of
doing science for the good of mankind. … You get this enormous jolt of
joy from discovering something new, and it's even better if it is going to
be really immediately useful to someone.' *RS Interviewee S5.*

Job performance – involvement: 'I actually think even if I wasn't paid I'd
do some of this. There are intellectual issues associated with it that I find
fascinating, and before I 'kark it' I'd like to figure out some of the
answers.' *RS Interviewee S6.*

Job performance – involvement: 'I think as … you become more mature
there's also that element of wanting to contribute, make a difference, and
have an impact on how things are done. … In a sense it wouldn't matter
who you were working for, just ensuring that you're working for
somebody who allows you to make that contribution.' *RS Interviewee S1.*

The organisation's apparent lack of commitment to core professional values and beliefs, particularly in regard to professional autonomy and service to the community and 'public good', was a major source of frustration and feelings of anger for some RS interviewees.

> Job performance – satisfaction: 'It's a bloody frustrating non-science organisation at the moment. I mean that's too extreme – it's partly a measure of my frustration with the place. But … it no longer fulfils my dream of science and my expectations of science. *RS Interviewee S5.*
>
> Job performance – satisfaction: 'We're forced to live in a world where everything has to be planned and focused. We have to have aims and objectives. I mean there's nothing wrong with all of those things. … We have to fit in … but I just think it's gone much too far.' *RS Interviewee S4.*
>
> Job performance – satisfaction: 'The process of either being able to talk to or write for the wider community, or to comment on social issues has been greatly reduced in [the organisation] … unless we get permission. … I get pretty angry at that actually.' *RS Interviewee S5.*

- *Primary Teacher (PT)*

Of the three interview groups, members of the PT interview expressed greatest disenchantment with the Department and its management processes. Many felt that their professional values, beliefs and opinions were not treated with due regard by the Department. Negative past experiences with management actions (and inaction) had led to the development of a negative and passive stance in

regard to involvement in the Department's activities beyond that which was required to perform their professional teaching functions. Similar to RN interviewees, PT interviewee commitment to their professional values and beliefs, particularly the focus on students and colleagues, appeared as the main positive driver of job performance behaviours.

Job performance – organisational alignment: 'I think most of us do [turn our back]. I think that's how most of us survive. You just say, oh well another silly idea, they'll change all of that in a couple of years, give them a few years it will all change. *PT Interviewee T1.*

Job performance – organisational alignment: 'With some of these curriculum innovations … I'm just a bit reticent about taking it all on board until it's all proven to me that it's a benefit to the kids.' *PT Interviewee T5.*

Job performance – organisational alignment: 'When the union has been called they've been wonderful but then you … almost get branded and the [Department] doesn't like you to bring in the union for anything.' *PT Interviewee T3.*

Job performance – organisational alignment: 'I do what I'm told. I … just get on with it basically, … but you bad mouth the [Department] on the way. You know that nothing that you say or do will matter.' *PT Interviewee T4.*

Job involvement for some PT interviewees was high and, as in the case of the RN and RS interview groups, identification with the job did not correlate with job

satisfaction, which for all PT interviewees was low. For those PT interviewees for whom job involvement was high, it appeared to centre round intrinsic elements of the work related to professional competence and the client and other-orientation of the teaching profession.

Job performance – involvement: 'It's something that you can put a bit of yourself into. … You're always learning as a teacher, how you can do it better. … It's stimulating. … You just want to do the best job that you can so that the student achieves what they need to achieve.' *PT Interviewee T6.*

Job performance – involvement: 'As I say, it [teaching] is really worthwhile and it's wonderful, you get so much personal satisfaction from what you're doing for the children.' *PT Interviewee T3.*

Job performance – involvement: 'I would feel guilty if I didn't do my best, that I wasn't doing my job properly.' *PT Interviewee T1.*

The limited job satisfaction that all PT interviewees expressed reflected negative perceptions of the manner in which the Department failed to provide a credible commitment and support to the core professional values of teaching. The consequence of the Department's failure to provide a supportive environment was a heightened focus on quality outcomes for students, peers and the community as drivers of job performance.

Job performance – satisfaction: 'I think … you need to get satisfaction and you don't get it from the way the [Department] runs things. So, definitely the relationship you have with the children, and the satisfaction from other

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colleagues who are in the same boat … really makes you feel good. … We're battling but we're achieving in spite of it.' *PT Interviewee T3.*

Job performance – satisfaction: 'You feel disappointed. … It's not really good enough. … You think that the community and the kids deserve better.' *PT Interviewee T1.*

Job performance – satisfaction: 'It's a very frustrating job as well, and there are many times where you've just come away feeling completely rung out. You really think what am I doing here, and there are times when you look at the clock and you just see dollar signs instead of numbers. ... [But] I go back.' *PT Interviewee T2.*

Summary – Theme 2: Strength

Building on data showing that study participants perceived the organisation's contributions under the psychological contract to include a credible commitment to professional values and beliefs, the above analysis showed that failure by the organisation to contribute such a commitment impacted on organisational and professional commitment and job performance.

Commitment, loyalty and trust were directed towards clients, peers and the profession. Failure by the organisation to contribute support for professional values and beliefs reduced job satisfaction and weakened levels of commitment to the organisation. The individual's commitment to professional values and beliefs and the contributions they received from their clients and colleagues limited the

extent to which job performance lessened. The individual's identification with and involvement in the job appeared to be strengthened.

Specifically, RN and PT interviewees did not identify with their organisation's strategic goals. RS interviewees indicated similar but lesser concerns over the appropriateness of their organisation's goals, with their loyalty to and trust in the organisation contingent on its continued support for scientists' professional values and beliefs and the principle of 'public good'. RS interviewees were unequivocal in stating their primary commitment was to 'science', as were RN interviewees in regard to nursing. Professional commitment appeared weakest, though it remained higher than organisational commitment, in the case of PT interviewees.

RN and PT interviewees evidenced strong negative feelings towards the organisation and its management. At the same time, RS interviewees were more willing to acknowledge the positive importance of aspects of their organisation such as scale and availability of resources to achieving their professional goals. All three interview groups indicated that their future intentions with regard to continued employment with the organisation were contingent upon the organisation contributing a credible commitment to support their professional values and beliefs. RS interviewees and PT interviewees recognised the limited alternative equivalent employment opportunities available to them as professionals outside their current organisation. RN interviewees did not perceive such limitations.

In relation to job performance, the analysis showed that across the three interview groups professional values and beliefs were a significant factor in limiting the extent to which job performance lessened as a consequence of a failure by the organisation to contribute support. In the case of RN and PT interviewees, and to a lesser extent with RS interviewees, professional commitment appeared to stimulate increased work effort aimed at ensuring high quality work outcomes were achieved despite the perceived lack of organisational support.

Professional commitment also positively influenced behaviour towards management. RS interviewees appeared less antagonistic towards the organisation, and more willing to work with management despite its perceived flaws, than did RN and PT interviewees. PT interviewees in particular displayed a markedly negative and passive stance in regard to interaction with the Department's management beyond that which was required in their job.

Members of the three interview groups expressed a heightened sense of involvement in their job, and made a direct link between job performance and feelings of self-worth. However, frustration and anger were experienced as a consequence of a perceived lack of organisational commitment to and management support for core professional values and beliefs. In the case of all three interview groups, high job involvement appeared to centre round intrinsic elements of the work related to professional competence and the client and other-orientation, and did not directly correspond with a high level of expressed job satisfaction.

Chapter summary

In summary, the PCS data showed that each participant perceived themselves as having psychological contracts comprising both relational/socio-emotional and transactional/economic components. All but one participant had a predominant orientation towards relational over transactional. The IPQ data showed that each participant used a cognitive framework and conceptualisation of the organisation's goals, objectives and operations consistent with the values and beliefs of their profession.

Consistent with these results, analysis of the interview data showed that specific professional values and beliefs were indeed perceived by the study participants to form part of their contributions to their organisations. It showed that such ideological contributions were distinctive in that they reflected a principled and involved model of human behaviour and the salience of the client and the broader community as beneficiaries. It also showed that failure by the organisation to contribute support for professional values and beliefs impacted on the organisational and professional commitment and job performance of the study participants. Failure by the organisation to contribute support for professional values and beliefs reduced job satisfaction and weakened levels of commitment to the organisation. The individual's commitment to professional values and beliefs limited the extent to which job performance lessened, and identification with and involvement in their job appeared to be strengthened.

Chapter 7: Discussion and conclusion

Chapter objective

The objective of this chapter is to discuss the research results in relation to the three research questions. A brief overview of the preceding chapters in the study is provided first. This is followed by a discussion of the findings concerning the perceptions of the study participants regarding the content of their psychological contracts with reference to professional ideology. This will in turn be followed by a discussion of the findings concerning responses by the study participants to the organisation's non-contribution of a credible commitment and supportive environment for such contributions. The theoretical implications of these findings for the concept of the psychological contract will be considered. Finally, limitations in the research and possible future directions will be canvassed, prior to concluding comments.

Overview of thesis

Chapter 1 provided an introductory overview and rationale for the study. Chapter 2 canvassed significant changes that have shaped the current employment context, including the fresh impetus provided by change to the individual's search for meaning in work. The increasing role of occupations, particularly those that claim the status of professions, as a focus for career and commitment was considered. The need for a better understanding of the role professional ideologies play in the employee-organisation relationship, and of the implications that organisational failure to recognise the significance of such ideologies has for the attitudes and behaviour of professional employees, was explained.

Chapter 3 traced the development of the psychological contract concept from its early origins in the 1930s to the cognitive-perceptual definition that underpins most present day psychological contract research. An integral component in operationalising the cognitive-perceptual definitional approach has been the bidimensional interpretative framework that links the character of contract terms, economic and socio-emotional, to two basic contract types – transactional and relational respectively. Because it is an enduring schema, the psychological contract forms an important aspect of the individual's self-concept. Therefore, non-delivery on promises and commitments concerning the psychological contract can have a major impact on the individual's attitudes and behaviours as manifested in such outcomes as job performance, job satisfaction, organisational citizenship behaviour, organisational commitment, intent to leave, and turnover.

Chapter 4 elaborated on elements of the cognitive-perceptual definition over which debate remains in the literature. It was argued that the bidimensional interpretative framework does not explicitly recognise the possibility of ideology-related contributions and, as a consequence, ideology-related and socio-emotional contributions are often conflated. Various proposals to broaden the interpretative framework to recognise ideology-related contributions, as a third currency of exchange separate from economic and socio-emotional currencies, were discussed. The research questions addressed in the study were distilled from this discussion.

Chapter 5 provided an overview of research designs and methodologies used in psychological contract research to date, and justified the research design and method chosen for this particular study. Chapter 6 provided detailed information on the analysis of data obtained from individual study participants within each of the three sample groups – registered nurses, research scientists and primary teachers. Primary data were gathered through face to face interviews with each study participant focused on discussion of each study participant's beliefs regarding his/her contributions to the organisation, and their responses in instances where the organisation's contributions were perceived as not supportive or credible. Supplementary data were gathered through the completion of two questionnaires by study participants.

Discussion

As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, discussion of professional ideologies in the psychological contract literature has been limited to date (Bunderson et al., 2000; Bunderson, 2001; Purvis & Cropley, 2003; Thompson & Bunderson, 2003). However, the importance of understanding the relationship of occupation-specific beliefs regarding work and organisations to the psychological contract has been acknowledged (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004; Taylor & Tekleab, 2004). This study focused specifically on exploring issues concerning professional ideologies and psychological contracts, and the conceptual implications for the cognitive-perceptual definition of the psychological contract. Each of the three research questions posed in this study is addressed separately below across the three sample groups.

Research question 1 (RQ1):

What are the perceptions of professional employees regarding the content of their psychological contracts, particularly with reference to professional ideology?

RQ1 was investigated using the primary data derived from interviews conducted with each of the study participants. Data gathered from the administration of a psychological contract survey instrument (PCS) (Millward & Hopkins, 1998), an ideological perspective questionnaire (IPQ) (Bunderson et al., 2000) supplemented the analysis of the interview data. The PCS data provided information on the study participants' perceptions of their psychological contracts in terms of the established cognitive-perceptual conceptualisation and bidimensional interpretative framework of the psychological contract. Analysis indicated that the study participants in each sample group perceived themselves as having a psychological contract comprising both relational and transactional components and, with one exception in the primary teaching group, a predominantly relational/socio-emotional orientation. In line with this orientation, the PCS data indicated most participants in each sample group were heavily involved in their work, and were motivated by more than economic considerations and future employment benefits. Professional development was a clear expectation in this regard. The study participants generally perceived their contribution to the organisation as being over and above what was necessary merely to get the job done, and that this was not reciprocated by the organisation.

Because of limitations in the survey instrument, the PCS data beg several questions, such as:

- why were study participants heavily involved in their work, and why did they do more than necessary to get the job done?

- what was the additional contribution study participants perceived as being over and above what was necessary to get the job done?

- if not economic considerations and future employment benefits, what was it that motivated study participants?

The IPQ data showed study participants in each sample group to have an ideological orientation towards their organisation consistent with professional values and beliefs. Study participants were of the view that the organisation's goals, objectives and structure should emphasise most strongly those attributes associated with a professional orientation, such as professional competence, fostering professional excellence, and stressing high quality outcomes with a client service and other-orientation. Considered in the light of the PCS data, these results suggested the possibility that professional values and beliefs may be significant in the perceptions of the study participants in each sample group regarding the content of contributions under the psychological contracts.

This possibility was confirmed in the analysis of the primary interview data for study participants in each of the sample groups. Professional values and beliefs pertaining to professional competence (specialised expertise, autonomy, excellence, and a commitment to professional development) were perceived as

underpinning roles, responsibilities and effective high job performance. Similarly, enhanced client service focus and other-orientation (high quality outcomes, service to the community, membership of the profession), were also seen in this way. Each of these elements of a professional ideology was perceived by study participants as essential to the contributions they made through work performance. With regard to the organisation's contributions, study participants in each sample group identified recognition of, and respect for, professional competence and support for professional development, as indicative of credible support for their contributions. Organisational goals, policies and decision-making processes consistent with and in support of the professional's focus on the client and service to the community were also similarly regarded.

These results are in line with the established view that values and beliefs can serve as the basis for an individual's participation in an organisation (see, for example: Barnard, 1938; Blau, 1964; and Schein, 1965, 1970, 1980). They are also consistent with the suggestion by Burr and Thomson (2002) of an emerging transpersonal dimension in the psychological contract. Individuals are seeking to make psychological contracts within the organisational context that deliver not only personal benefit and benefits shared with the organisation, but also benefits that go beyond the organisation to specific members of the community as clients, or to the community more broadly. The emphasis of professional ideologies on the client service and other-orientation fits comfortably with this transpersonal notion. The results for each sample group also fit with the idea an ideological currency (Thompson & Bunderson, 2003) which reflects a principled and involved model of human behaviour, as well as the salience of the client and the

broader community as extra-organisational beneficiaries of ideology-related contributions.

Research question 2 (RQ2):

What are the responses of professional employees to failure by the organisation to meet its perceived psychological contract obligations with respect to professional ideology?

RQ2 was investigated using data derived from interviews conducted with each of the study participants. As noted earlier, the IPQ responses revealed that the study participants in each sample group perceived the organisation from an ideological perspective consistent with professional values and beliefs. Analysis of the interview data showed that study participants identified deficiencies in the alignment of organisational goals, objectives and management processes with their professional ideological values and beliefs concerning professional competence, client service focus and an other-orientation.

The lack of alignment impacted negatively across the three sample groups on levels of organisational commitment. Study participants expressed feelings ranging from disengagement and detachment from the organisation to anger, frustration and cynicism in relation to management. The organisation itself was not seen as the primary focus for commitment, and any organisational commitment that did exist was contingent upon the organisation not falling below an acceptable level of support (as determined by each individual) for core

professional values and beliefs. The lack of strong organisational commitment contrasted with a strong commitment and loyalty towards colleagues and profession shown by the members of each sample group.

Interview data also showed that non-delivery by the organisation of credible contributions which may have indicated a commitment to professional values and beliefs was a significant influence in regard to the involvement and satisfaction elements of the job performance of study participants in each sample group. While failure by the organisation to support professional values and beliefs had a negative impact upon job satisfaction, it reinforced rather than lessened the commitment of study participants to their professions and their values and beliefs. This in turn had positive flow-on effects in terms of job involvement, and moderated negative job behaviours such as reduction in effort. Study participants in each sample group expressed a clear and strong sense of involvement in their job, and made a direct link between job performance and feelings of self-worth. In this way, strong professional commitment provided an indirect benefit to the organisation as a performance motivator, and acted as a positive moderating influence on behaviour towards management and the organisation.

Overall, these results are in line with those reported by Bunderson (2001), and Purvis and Cropley (2003), with regard to job performance, organisational and professional commitment, in the case of psychological contracts involving medical and nursing professionals. They are also broadly in line with the results of previous research into the psychological contracts of a broader range of employee types (Morrison and Robinson, 1997; Robinson, 1996; Robinson &

Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993; Robinson and Morrison, 1995; Turnley & Feldman, 1999).

However, analysis of the interview data for each sample group highlighted a level of complexity of response in instances of the organisation's non-delivery of contributions hitherto not revealed in previous psychological contract research. Specifically, while the data showed the expected negative impact on study participants' job satisfaction and level of commitment to the organisation, they revealed a positive impact on levels of job involvement and identification with, and commitment to, the profession and its values and beliefs. The analysis for each sample group also revealed that this positive impact flowed through as a positive moderating effect on attitudinal and behavioural responses by study participants towards management and the organisation in instances of non-delivery of ideology-related contributions by the organisation.

As discussed in Chapter 4, Thompson and Bunderson (2003) proposed a series of propositions relating to the breach and violation of ideology-infused psychological contracts. While testing of the propositions was not an objective of the analysis, the interview data revealed points of interest in regard to several of the propositions. For example, Thompson and Bunderson (2003) suggested that intentional reneging and incongruence (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Rousseau, 1995), and goal displacement (Blau, 1964), would be associated with the organisation's non-delivery of ideology-related contributions. The interview data showed such to be the case generally for study participants in each sample group.

Thompson and Bunderson (2003) also proposed that holders of an ideology-infused psychological contract would have a future-oriented perspective that predisposed them to view non-delivery as being temporary and to show patience toward the organisation. This predisposition would be reflected in a willingness to attribute the cause of non-delivery to events in the organisation's external (political, social, or economic) context. If absence of an intention to seek alternative employment elsewhere is accepted as an indicator of patience, then the interview data provided by the research scientists and primary teachers overall align with the proposition and those provided by the registered nurses overall do not.

Analysis of the interview data showed that for some of the research scientists and registered nurses their continued participation in the organisation was clearly contingent on the organisation's continued delivery of ideology-related contributions. In other words, notwithstanding the predominantly relational orientation to their ideology-infused psychological contracts, there was a non-negotiable element that centred on the organisation supporting core professional values and beliefs. This aligns with the proposition posited by Thompson and Bunderson (2003) that some individuals may treat ideological values and beliefs in a transactional way; that is, such contract terms might be regarded as non-negotiable, and non-delivery by the organisation of its related obligation would not be tolerated.

The final proposition on which the analysis of interview data for each sample group throws some light deals with the relationship between breach and violation

of the ideology-infused psychological contract. Thompson and Bunderson (2003) suggest that breach of ideology-related contract terms by the organisation will be less likely to result in a sense of violation (a strong affective response) when the individual perceives continuing organisational membership as providing an ongoing opportunity to achieve ideological goals. Clearly, the data showed some study participants across the three sample groups expressed feelings associated with violation, such as anger and frustration, arising from non-delivery by the organisation of credible support for their professional values and beliefs. Also, the data showed clear intentions to leave the organisation only in the case of some registered nurses. However, with regard to the likelihood of ideology-related breach escalating to violation status, or to the connection between feelings of violation and expressed intentions to leave, the data was unclear.

Research question 3 (RQ3):

What are the implications of the study results for the cognitive-perceptual conceptualisation of the psychological contract?

The cognitive-perceptual conceptual approach to the psychological contract uses a bidimensional interpretative framework that enables assessment of contract terms in either transactional/economic or relational/socio-emotional terms. While a body of empirical research supports the framework, questions have been raised in the psychological contract research literature about its reliability and adequacy as an interpretative and analytical tool (Taylor & Tekleab, 2004). The findings of the study have implications for several aspects of the bidimensional interpretative framework.

The results and analysis in regard to RQ1 showed that the psychological contract for the study participants in each sample group did incorporate the contribution of professional values and beliefs separate from economic and socio-emotional contributions. These ideology-related contributions were in addition to satisfying formally specified job requirements and generalised role obligations. The data analysis also showed that study participants in each sample group believed the organisation should provide a credible commitment to and support for the realisation of their professional values and beliefs. In other words, in addition to the provision of such factors as continued employment, fair compensation, promotion opportunities, and a safe working environment, the organisation's contributions should include actions that indicate recognition and respect for professional values and beliefs pertaining to professional competence, client service and an other-orientation.

The data and analysis in regard to RQ2 also indicated the strength of feelings held by study participants in each sample group concerning the ideological component of their psychological contracts. The analysis revealed a complexity and interdependence of response by study participants in regard to non-contribution of support by the organisation. Differential impacts were apparent with regard to commitment to the organisation and profession and aspects of job performance. While the data showed the expected negative impact on levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment, it also showed positive impacts with regard to levels of job involvement and professional commitment that in turn acted as moderators of the negative impacts.

The findings are consistent with the general thrust of the two proposed variations to the bidimensional interpretative framework (Burr & Thomson, 2002; Thompson & Bunderson, 2003) that were discussed in Chapter 4. Based on the study findings, the bidimensional interpretative framework can be seen as too narrow, simplistic, and limited for a detailed understanding of the psychological contracts of the sample of professional employees who participated in this study. In short, the bidimensional interpretative framework cannot properly comprehend those ideology-infused psychological contracts that have a transpersonal dimension derived from contributions based on values and beliefs pertaining to professional competence, client service and other-orientation.

The study findings regarding the breadth and complexity of an ideology-infused psychological contract also have implications in regard to the focus on a single dyadic relationship between an individual and an organisation that underpins the bidimensional interpretative framework. Generally, psychological contract researchers have relied upon the notion of a single dyadic relationship, and have used the individual's perceptions about the role and actions of management to operationalise the organisation's perspective (Coyle-Shapiro, Taylor et al., 2004). However, the failure to capture and comprehend the organisation's singular perspective directly is seen by some researchers to be a significant limitation. Added to this concern, is the failure of the focus on a single dyadic relationship to recognise the likelihood of multiple psychological contracts that can derive from the possibility of organisations, particularly large complex ones, being heterogenous collectives rather than homogenous entities (Guest, 1998a;

Rousseau, 1998b; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998; Marks, 2001; Millward & Brewerton, 2000; Shore et al., 2004; and Taylor & Tekleab, 2004). In addition, by not accounting for interdependent exchanges that can arise in multiple psychological contracts, the single dyadic focus does not comprehend the embeddedness of exchange relationships in social structures (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1981). In other words, the contexts in which psychological contracts operate need to be considered, a need that according to some has either been ignored or treated as peripheral in much empirical psychological contract research to date (Shore et al., 2004).

Debate over this issue in the literature has to date led to general agreement about the need for more research that not only considers the impact of context, but also that links the concept of the psychological contract to the multi-faceted nature of complex organisations and the attendant possibility of multiple interdependent exchanges forming the employee-organisation relationship (Taylor & Tekleab, 2004). What the current study reveals about the flow of contributions in the ideology-infused psychological contract of the study participants is relevant to this debate.

In line with the bidimensional interpretative framework with its notion of only two currencies, the contribution flow in a psychological contract that reflects a single dyadic exchange relationship can be represented schematically (see Figure 7.1 below). In this arrangement, there are basically two parties, the individual and the organisation as represented collectively by its agents. The contribution flow entails economic and socio-emotional exchange in both directions.

| Line manager, Senior management, Organisation | *Economic + Socio-emotional* ←——————→ | Employee |
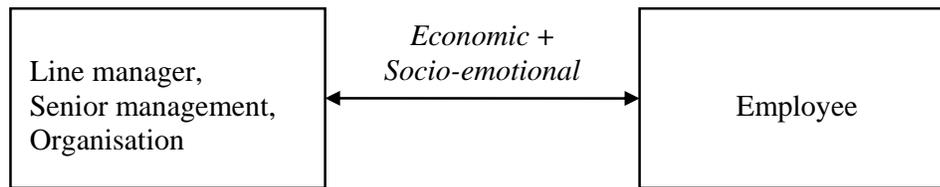
Figure 7.1: Dyadic exchange relationship with contribution flow

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and psychological contract research into breach and violation (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Rousseau, 1995) indicate that within this framework, for the individual to perceive the psychological contract as balanced and having positive value, the individual's socio-emotional and economic contributions must be approximately equal to but not significantly greater than the organisation's socio-emotional and economic contributions. The individual's perception of balance, and therefore of value, alters when a change in the organisation's contribution occurs. A negative change will result in the individual's socio-emotional and economic contributions becoming greater than the organisation's contributions, thus giving rise to a perception of imbalance in favour of the organisation. This in turn can lead to a lesser value being attributed by the individual to the psychological contract.

Not surprisingly, given that the PCS survey instrument used in this study reflects the bidimensional interpretative framework, the PCS data for the study participants in each sample group fit this model. However, when the model is also applied to interview data collected in this study, limitations in the degree of fit can be seen.

Analysis of the interview transcripts revealed that study participants across the three sample groups perceived themselves as being involved in a set of multiple direct exchanges not only involving line managers and senior managers, but also clients, community, colleagues, and profession. These exchanges involved a complex flow of economic, socio-emotional, and ideological contributions (see Figure 7.2 below).

All three currencies were identified as flowing between study participants, their organisations and agents. Study participants in each sample group perceived their own contributions to the organisation to include economic, socio-emotional and ideological elements. Line and senior management were perceived as making economic and socio- emotional contributions. The contribution by line and senior management of managerial values and beliefs was recognised by study participants in each sample group. While not generally regarded as supportive of professional values and beliefs, such contributions were perceived, most particularly in the case of the research scientists, as potentially supportive of professional values and beliefs. Exchange between study participants and their colleagues and their profession was perceived across the three sample groups in terms of ideological and socio-emotional contributions, and between study participants and clients in terms of ideological and socio-emotional contributions.
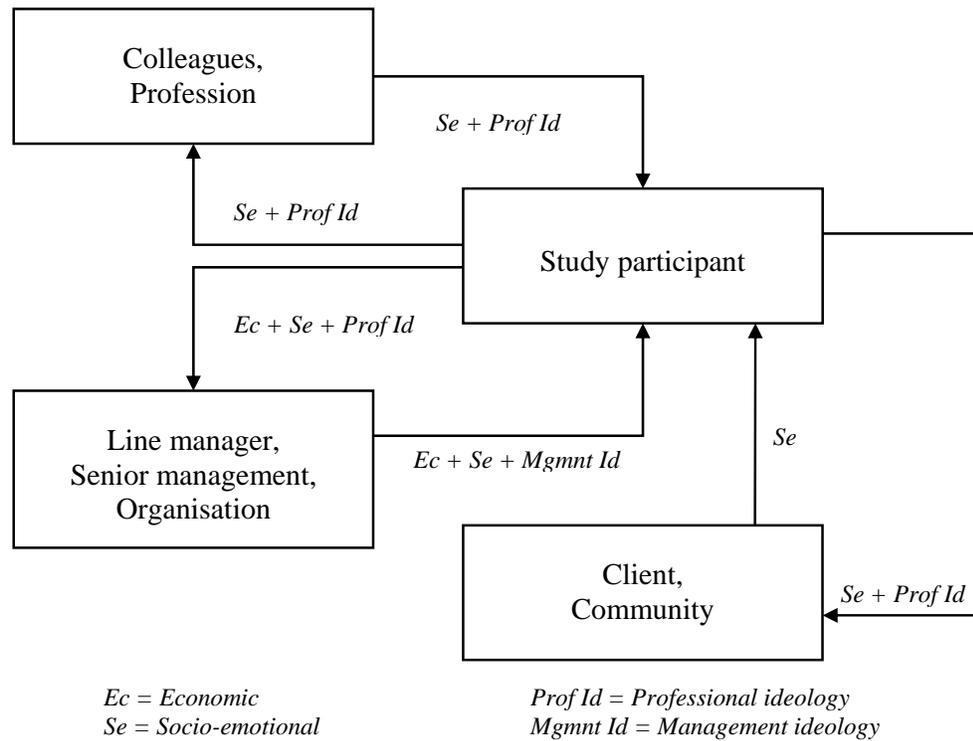
Figure 7.2: Contribution flows from study participants' perspective

This complexity in the flow of contributions raises the question of how a change in contribution level in one exchange relationship interacts with other exchange relationships, and ultimately affects the employee's perceptions of the psychological contract's balance and value. Data analysis for each of the sample groups suggested that the psychological contract was perceived by study participants to have positive value and balance when the individual's ideological, socio-emotional and economic contributions were approximately equal to, but not significantly greater than, the sum total of the contributions made by the other exchange partners. In other words, study participants factored in contributions from outside the organisation in assessing the state of their psychological contract.

Failure by the organisation to provide credible support for professional values and beliefs was perceived as negatively altering the value and balance of the psychological contract. The data showed that study participants in each sample group responded by reducing economic and socio-emotional contributions to the organisation, but not ideological contributions because of the flow-on effect such a reduction would have on other exchange partners, particularly the client. The data indicated that the negative impact on the assessment of value and balance in the psychological contract was moderated by a perception that contributions by the other exchange partners (clients, community, colleagues and profession) were sufficient to compensate for negative change in contributions by the organisation. However, if negative change in contributions by the organisation was accompanied by a negative change in contributions by the other exchange partners, and this latter change was of sustained duration and sufficient magnitude, departure from the organisation and perhaps from the profession was foreshadowed by study participants in each sample group. In the reverse situation, that is, when a reduction in contributions by the other exchange partners was perceived as being fully offset by contributions from the organisation, the data showed that departure from the organisation was less likely.

The data pertaining to multiple exchange partners and complex interdependent flows of ideological, economic and socio-emotional contributions, has implications for the promise-based model of contract and its attendant notion of reciprocity which underpins the conceptualisation of the psychological contract as a single dyadic relationship.

As discussed in Chapter 4, some researchers (for example, Macneil, 1985; Lightsey, 1984) have argued for the rejection of the promise-based model as a basis for conceptualising contracts. This has been based on its focus on separable promises discrete from their surrounding social context, the zero-sum aspects of exchange, and the pursuit of self interest as the key driver in a contractual relationship. According to Lightsey (1984), the promise-based model with its emphasis on rights and obligations between the contracting parties is too narrow and rigid. It excludes the possibility that a contractual relationship can incorporate rights and obligations from sources other than the promises of the parties, and it ignores the surrounding social context as a possible source of contractual obligations. Lightsey (1984) argued that because of its limited concept of reciprocity, the promise-based model hides the interaction between contract and community, the mutual dependence and cooperation between contracting parties, and drivers other than self-interest that might encourage intense personal involvement.

The data analysis for each sample group revealed interdependence and cooperation between multiple exchange partners. It also revealed an extra-organisational (transpersonal) dimension to the psychological contract that derived from professional values and beliefs, particularly those relating to the client and other-orientation, which encouraged intense personal involvement by study participants in their work. The level of complexity, variety, flexibility and connectedness of contributions suggested a broad concept of reciprocity along the lines suggested by Lightsey (1984:60) was in operation in the psychological contracts of the study participants. For example, study participants in each sample

group expressed a sense of self-generated obligation that they felt under the psychological contract; that is to say, something like the right to professional autonomy entailed an obligation to exercise that right in an ethical and proper fashion in regard to the other perceived exchange partners. The obligation appeared to be self-imposed, as much as perceived by study participants as being expected by the other partners. Ignoring the possibility of a notion of reciprocity that goes beyond the professional employee-organisation dyad, in the case of ideology-infused psychological contracts, may well invite the consequences foreseen by Macneil (1985, 2000), that is, an inadequate and distorted understanding of the range of complex relations entailed in any exchange transaction.

Limitations of the research

The findings of this study in relation to the three research questions need to be assessed in the light of limitations in the chosen research design and method. Chapter 5 detailed the rationale for the research design and method in terms of fit with the study's focus on the role of professional ideologies in the psychological contract, and against the different approaches used to date in psychological contract research.

Briefly, the exploratory qualitative approach was chosen because it provided the flexibility needed to identify and clarify key definitional components and relationships in the psychological contract. Face-to-face interviews were used as the primary means of data collection. Interviews enabled the researcher to establish direct contact with the study participants and provide the flexibility for

interesting responses to be explored immediately. Individuals participating in this study were drawn from three professions, each of which was chosen not for generic reasons but because each was intrinsically interesting in its own right. Public sector organisations were selected because their size and complexity ensured an adequate source of study participants, and to minimize the impact of inter-organisational variation as a confounding variable.

As in all research, the very reasons why a particular research design and method is chosen can also be the source of limitations on the way the findings are viewed. The following discussion of limitations is framed using the four standards – confirmability, dependability, credibility, and transferability – developed specifically for the evaluation of qualitative research (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Confirmability is concerned with the extent to which a study's research findings are reasonably free from unacknowledged researcher biases. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that confirmability is best demonstrated through method and procedures that are described explicitly and in sufficient detail so that, for example, the actual sequence of how data were collected, processed, condensed and transformed, is clear to the reader. The pathway from data collection through analysis to conclusion needs to be marked with data exhibits, so that instances where the researcher's values and biases significantly influenced the direction of the research and its findings are clear.

Given that this was an exploratory approach using qualitative methods, the value-laden nature of the study's findings must be recognised. The relationship between

the researcher and what was studied, as well as the specific situational constraints on this study, influenced all decision-making, from setting the boundaries to the research topic to each stage of the data analysis process. However, in accord with Miles & Huberman's (1994) suggestions concerning confirmability, the study's design and methods have been detailed, and the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin this study were made explicit in Chapter 5. The data collection and analytical procedures were also described in detail in Chapters 5 and 6; for example, the use of the NUD*IST data management software was discussed in Chapter 5, and the coding framework was detailed in Chapter 6 prior to presentation of the condensed/transformed data in the form of quotations by study participants. The linkages between the data presented and the conclusions derived from that data were detailed in discussion across Chapters 6 and 7.

Dependability means the extent to which the researcher, method and process of the study were consistent and reasonably stable over the duration of the project. Evidence of dependability can be found, according to Miles and Huberman (1994), in the clarity of the research questions and the closeness of fit between the questions and the research design and method chosen to address them. The basic paradigms, analytic constructs and theoretical framework within which the study has been conducted need also to be clearly specified if dependability is to be achieved. Finally, dependability relies on a system of peer or colleague review to inform and provide feedback to the researcher with regard to project decisions and outcomes.

Of course it is in the nature of research conducted over a long period of time, as has been the case in this study, that unavoidable changes will occur in the context for study and consequently the direction of the study. In order to ensure the study's dependability, the three research questions identified in Chapter 5 acted as anchor points and as guides for all researcher activity over the duration of the study. The exploratory design, sampling and data collection strategies described in Chapter 5 were chosen for their congruency with the research questions. Any changes made to these over the duration of the study were explained in Chapter 5; for example, the rationale for the change from a purposive homogenous group sampling approach to a snowball method as a consequence of field experience was made clear. Peer review, in the form of publication of two refereed conference papers and a journal paper (in press) reporting preliminary findings (see Appendix 6), and ongoing consultation with the researcher's supervisors over the duration of the study, contributed to quality control. The requirement to abide by protocols pre-approved by the appropriate ethics committee, covering data collection and the handling of participant contributions, also assisted in ensuring consistency of method and procedure over the duration of this study (see Appendix 3).

Unlike the concept of validity, which is seen by Miles and Huberman (1994) as a measure of truth value, the third of criteria – credibility – is an assessment of the extent to which the research findings from qualitative analysis are perceived by the subjects of study and readers to make sense. Credibility is bolstered by context rich and meaningful ('thick') data drawn from multiple sources that are used to provide comprehensive descriptions that underpin generally coherent

conclusions. It is also bolstered by the connectedness of data measures and data exhibits to prior and emerging theoretical constructs and frameworks, along with explicit acknowledgement of any areas of uncertainty.

The rationale for the qualitative data collection and analytical methods used in this study was detailed in Chapter 5. It made clear that context-rich, 'thick' data were purposely collected with the aim of understanding in qualitative terms the nature of psychological contract terms and their interrelations, as perceived by the individual study participants and reflected in their own words. Thus, consistent with the emphasis on the individual's perceptions, face-to-face interviews were the primary data collection tool. Chapter 6 presented the interview data in a way that makes sense to the researcher and at a level of depth and complexity that went beyond that possible using only quantitative analytical techniques to measure factors such as distribution, frequency and quantity.

This leads to the last of Miles and Huberman's (1994) criteria to be considered here – transferability – a measure of the extent to which research findings facilitate the development of a broader understanding applicable to a range of contexts. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), transferability derives from several sources. It derives from rich and meaningful data that underpin descriptions 'thick' and generic enough to enable readers to assess appropriateness for their own settings. It also derives from sampling strategies and data collection methods that encourage broader applicability. Importantly, transferability is reflected in the extent to which findings extend prior theory and suggest further research questions pursuable in other research settings.

Transferability was bolstered by the use of multiple sources, professions and organisational settings to derive rich, meaningful descriptions, to support the synthesis of multiple perspectives across several organisational settings, and to produce findings for others to compare with their work. Several features of the data sampling strategy and collection techniques deployed in this study need, however, to be borne in mind. Firstly, the shift from a purposive homogenous group sampling approach to a snowball method, and the small size of the samples of employees interviewed for each profession, as explained in Chapter 4, mean that the findings are not representative of all members of the sampled professions. Similarly, the selection of the sampled professions on the basis of their intrinsic interest rather than for generic reasons also means that the findings as they relate to those professions themselves are not representative of all professions. In addition, the restriction of participants to employees in public sector organisations may have resulted in a possible bias in the nature of views expressed by participants. In other words, notwithstanding its lesser contemporary significance, the principle of 'public service' that historically has underpinned and shaped public sector organisational goals and objectives may have shaped the perceptions of the study participants.

Future directions

The study findings suggest several directions for future research. The data analysis and interpretation (RQ1) showed that the study participants in each sample group perceived their contributions to the organisation not only in economic and socio-emotional terms but also in ideological terms pertaining to

professional competence, client service and an other-orientation. While this is

consistent with the concept of an ideology-infused psychological contract

(Thompson & Bunderson, 2003), the study examined only ideology-related

values and beliefs relevant to professional employees. Future studies examining

the concept of an ideology-infused psychological contract could consider a

broader array of ideological values and beliefs, for example, religious and

environmental beliefs, to add to the results reported here.

The study findings (RQ2) showed that in circumstances of non-delivery of

organisational contributions in support of professional values and beliefs, there

was a negative impact on job satisfaction and organisational commitment. At the

same time, however, there was a positive impact on levels of job involvement and

identification with and commitment to the profession and its values and beliefs.

By revealing a level of complexity hitherto not shown, the study findings differ

from those of previous psychological contract research which indicated non-

delivery by the organisation of its contributions is more likely to lead to reduced

commitment and job performance by the individual. Hence, in explicitly

considering an ideological currency of exchange, the study findings extend

previous psychological contract research. Further research on this complexity of

response would contribute to the debate about the usefulness of the distinction

between the concepts of breach and violation (Morrison & Robinson, 1997;

Rousseau, 1995).

Discussion of the inadequacy of the bidimensional interpretative framework for

understanding the psychological contract contributions of the professional

employees who participated in this study (RQ3) suggests more research is needed into interpretative frameworks that are capable of recognising a greater variety of contract terms, including ideological values and beliefs that are focussed outside of the organisation. However, given that in theory a psychological contract can embrace an infinite variety of contract terms (Kotter, 1973), the task of defining a generic range of terms and therefore a range of possible content-related dimensions applicable to all types of employees presents substantial challenges.

The need for a more viable interpretative framework is reinforced by the study findings that the incorporation of professional values and beliefs extends the psychological contract beyond the traditional employee-organisation dyad. When viewed from the individual's perspective, the ideology-infused psychological contract is inherently transpersonal in orientation, that is to say, concerned with the 'all' and not just the 'me' and the 'we' (Burr & Thomson, 2002). Complexity and interdependence characterise the interactions between a multiple set of exchange partners both inside and outside the organisation. This suggests that the appropriateness of an emphasis in the bidimensional interpretative framework on a single dyadic relationship between the employee and the organisation requires further examination. This is consistent with a call by Shore et al. (2004) for psychological contract researchers to look at the employee-organisation relationship as being comprised of multiple relationships, so giving greater emphasis to context in understanding the nature of and changes in the employee-organisation relationship. At the same time, the focus needs to be broader than the organisation in order for the interdependent nature of ideology-related contributions by multiple exchange partners to be explored.

Of course, the difficulty and complexity of the task of integrating the possibility of multiple parties into the psychological contract concept should not be understated. For example, while there has long been a widespread consensus in the literature about the need to integrate the employer perspective into psychological contract research (Guest, 1998a; Rousseau, 1998b; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998; Marks, 2001; Millward & Brewerton, 2000; Shore et al., 2004; Taylor & Tekleab, 2004), this has proved difficult because of conceptual and methodological issues, such as those discussed in Chapter 4. Needing to consider extra-organisational exchange partners such as clients, the profession and the community, further complicates these conceptual and methodological issues.

The majority of psychological contract research using the bidimensional interpretative framework has to date viewed the contributions of the employee and the organisation as clearly demarcated and separate (Shore et al., 2004). In line with Gouldner's (1960) norm of reciprocity, such research has examined the extent to which the individual perceives his or her contribution to be matched by the organisation. The factors of interest have included how equivalence in value of contributions is measured, the length of time over which the individual is prepared to wait before a reciprocal contribution by the organisation is received, and the dependent relationship between reciprocation and perceived mutual interest operating between the individual and the organisation. By revealing a set of inter-related exchange relationships that connects the individual and the organisation to other exchange partners outside the organisation, the study findings raise questions about the treatment of contributions as separate and

clearly demarcated. The role of equivalence of contribution, immediacy of exchange, and self- and mutual interest in the psychological contract are also brought into view.

The interdependent nature of contributions under an ideology-infused psychological contract revealed by this study also raises the question of how the commensurability of contributions is evaluated by the individual. With few exceptions, there has been little research into this issue (Shore et al., 2004). With multiple and distinct forms of currency – ideological, economic and socio-emotional – flowing through a set of interdependent exchange relationships involving multiple partners, the task of understanding how commensurability of exchange is determined by the individual becomes more complex. Also, that exchanges may occur simultaneously and have consequences for other exchanges further complicates the task. On this point, in line with the notion of simultaneity developed by McLean Parks et al. (1998), study participants in each sample group perceived their ideological contributions as simultaneously benefiting not just the organisation and its agents, but also clients, colleagues, and the broader community. This also fits with the notion of interdependency in social exchange theory (Emerson, 1981), which says that exchange cannot be conceptualised as a discrete and isolated event. Understanding how commensurability and simultaneity operate in a set of a set of inter-related exchange relationships has important implications for understanding how individuals evaluate the state of the psychological contract. It might also lead to a better understanding of the affective and behavioural consequences for the individual in instances of non-

delivery by the organisation of support for the individual's ideology-related psychological contract contributions.

Another set of future research directions derives from limitations in the chosen research design and methods. Examining ideology-infused contracts with a broader sample of professional employees across and within a greater range of professions would throw light on the ways in which differences in professional cultures, structures, and histories might influence the transferability of the study findings.

Second, the research settings selected for this analysis were limited to public sector organisations. Recent efforts to reform public sector funding in healthcare, science and education, leading to major organisational and staffing changes, have challenged longstanding assumptions about the roles of the professional and of management in these organisations. All three organisations examined in this study are experiencing or have experienced major funding and organisational crises that may, as a consequence, have led to the study participants being more sensitive to ideological breaches than professionals working in organisations that have not been the target of major reform efforts. Research into ideology-infused contracts across a broader sample of organisations would shed further light on the transferability of the study findings to other contexts.

Third, while demographic data was gathered from all study participants, the limited sample size for each profession meant the analysis could not be meaningfully controlled for demographic variables that previous psychological

contract research has shown may attenuate reactions to psychological contract breach. Nevertheless, the qualitative interview data gathered for this study suggests there is merit in exploring ideology-infused psychological contracts in light of factors such as age, gender, employment tenure (permanent/contract) and status (full-time/part-time), years of service with current employing organisation, and years of employment as a qualified professional.

Fourth, although an exploratory research design and qualitative method were considered most appropriate for examining subjectively experienced phenomena such as individuals' perceptions of their professional work values and beliefs and their employment experiences, future research should also seek to explore these issues using alternative research designs, sampling strategies and sophisticated quantitative data collection and analysis techniques.

Finally, in addition to the research implications discussed above, the practical implications of the study's findings warrant some comment. Employee attitudes are impacted on by the attitudes of those around them. Consequently, as discussed in Chapter 2, the increasing diversity of employment arrangements and increasing professionalisation of the workforce can be expected to produce attitudinal and behavioural change. Study participants in the research scientist and primary teacher sample groups, and a proportion of the registered nurse sample group, had entered their organisations having already been socialized into their profession's ideological values and beliefs through the education and training process. These values and beliefs remained a fundamental part of the mental models from which they derived perceptions about the organisation's intentions and actions,

particularly values and beliefs relating to professional competence, client focus and an other-orientation. A perceived lack of support by the organisation and its agents for professional values and beliefs impacted negatively on attitudes and behaviour important to the organisation, such as commitment, trust, and extra-role behaviours. From a practical viewpoint, this suggests that managers should attempt to understand the nature of professional ideologies operating within their organisation, and how such values and beliefs affect employee perceptions about what they contribute to the organisation and what the organisation is expected to contribute in return.

Conclusion

The increasingly complex world of work has prompted many individuals to search for new meaning and purpose in their work. For many employed professionals, meaning and purpose are also realised through identification with their profession and commitment to its values and beliefs about work and organizations. Despite recent research into the psychological contract between the employee and the organization, there has been limited discussion in the literature to date of the role that occupational ideologies play in psychological contracts. This study addressed that gap in the literature.

The study had two broad themes: the relationship between the occupational ideologies of employed professionals and their psychological contracts, and the importance of that relationship for conceptualisation of the psychological contract. Using a predominantly qualitative research design, the study explored the

perceptions of a sample of nurses, scientists and teachers with regard to their occupational ideologies and the terms of their psychological contracts.

The research findings showed that the study participants perceived delivery on core elements in their professional ideologies – professional competence, a client focus, and a service orientation – as part of their contribution to the organization. The study participants also perceived the provision of credible commitments of support as being part of the contribution by their organizations under the psychological contract. In regard to perceived failure by the organization to provide this support, the research findings showed clear impacts on the individual in terms of commitment and job performance. In addition, the findings revealed nuances and a level of complexity in responses by the individual which had not hitherto been revealed in psychological contract research.

The study discussed the relevance of the research findings for the bidimensional (transactional/economic and relational/socio-emotional) interpretative framework associated with the psychological contract. It supports calls in the literature for a broadening of this framework to include an ideological dimension. The study also discussed the multiplicity and interdependency of exchange that professional employees can engage in as a consequence of enacting their professional ideologies through their psychological contract. It raises questions about the emphasis on a single dyadic relationship with the organization that underpins much of the work to date on the psychological contract.

Finally, a number of possible future research directions were outlined. The study highlights the need for managers to understand the nature of the occupational ideologies operating within their organization, and how, in the case of professional employees, these ideologies can drive perceptions about what they contribute to the organization and what the organization is expected to contribute in return.

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APPENDIX 1

Appendix 1: Psychological Contract Scale (PCS)

(Source: Millward & Hopkins, 1998)

Item	Strongly disagree					Strongly agree	Don't know	
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*0*
I do this job just for the money								
I prefer to work a strictly defined set of working hours								
I expect to gain promotion in this organization with length of service and effort to achieve goals								
It is important not to get too involved in your job								
I expect to grow in this organization								
I expect to be paid for any overtime I do								
I come to work purely to get the job done								
I feel part of a team in this organization								
My loyalty to the organisation is defined by the terms of my contract								
I feel this organization reciprocates the effort put in by its employees								
I only do what is necessary to get the job done								
I am motivated to contribute 100% to this organization in return for future employment benefits								
I have a reasonable chance of promotion if I work hard								
My career path in the organisation is clearly mapped out								
I work to achieve the purely short term goals of my job								
I will work for this organization indefinitely								
I am heavily involved in my place of work								

APPENDIX 2

Appendix 2: Ideological Perspective Questionnaire (IPQ)

(Source: Bunderson et al, 2000)

A. To what extent <u>DO</u> each of the following attributes describe your hospital today?

Attribute	Not at all *1*	Limited extent *2*	Some extent *3*	Considerable extent *4*	Great extent *5*
1. Integrated system					
2. Entrepreneurial					
3. Competent medical staff					
4. Concerned with the health of the community					
5. Emphasises system-wide goals					
6. Business-oriented					
7. Fosters clinical excellence					
8. Accessible health care for the community					
9. Achieves system-wide co-ordination					
10. Stresses high quality health care					
11. Community oriented					
12. Competitive with other systems					

B. In your opinion, to what extent <u>SHOULD</u> each of the following be an attribute of your hospital?

Attribute	Not at all *1*	Limited extent *2*	Some extent *3*	Considerable extent *4*	Great extent *5*
1. Integrated system					
2. Entrepreneurial					
3. Competent medical staff					
4. Concerned with the health of the community					
5. Emphasises system-wide goals					
6. Business-oriented					
7. Fosters clinical excellence					
8. Accessible health care for the community					
9. Achieves system-wide co-ordination					
10. Stresses high quality health care					
11. Community oriented					
12. Competitive with other systems					

Note: The above questionnaire was used for the nursing sample. The wording was amended to tailor the questionnaire for use with the teaching and research scientist sample groups.

APPENDIX 3

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INFORMATION SHEET

Provisional Title: **'Work ideologies and the psychological contract'**

Date:

Chief Investigator: Dr Lindsay Nelson   PhD Candidate: Wayne O'Donohue
_____

Thank you for expressing interest in this research project being undertaken by Wayne O'Donohue to fulfil the requirements for a PhD in the School of Management. We would like to invite you to read the following information before deciding if you wish to participate in a project which we believe has the potential to provide important benefits the community.

Purpose of the Research
At the heart of the employment relationship is the psychological contract; i.e. an individual's beliefs about an exchange agreement comprising the promises made, accepted and relied on by each of the individuals party to the agreement, and which define the employment relationship. Over the last two decades, rapid and ongoing organizational change has had a significant influence on the workforce and the nature of the employment relationship, and substantially altered existing patterns of expectations and the ground rules that shape the creation of psychological contracts.

A current research topic is the role of work ideologies, which comprise the values and beliefs individuals have about work and their relationship to it, in the psychological contracts of many employees particularly in professional occupations. Further development of our understanding of the role of work ideologies as formative influence on psychological contracts is essential to understanding the employment expectations of professionals in the workplace.

This study, which commenced in September 2002 with a projected completion date of September 2006, will explore the role that professional work ideologies play in the shaping and enactment of the psychological contracts of professionals in Tasmania working in the public hospital, education and scientific research sectors. The public sector context for the study has been chosen because of its significance to Tasmania's social and economic well-being. Nursing, teaching, and scientific research have been chosen as the empirical focus of the study because of their professional status and because a substantial proportion of nurses, teachers and scientists work as paid employees, rather than as self-employed professionals, in the public sector.

Study Procedure
If you agree to become involved in this study, your participation would take the form of being interviewed (of about one hour's duration) at a time and location convenient to you. Given the

exploratory nature of this research, the interview would be of a semi-structured nature. A list of key topics that may be covered is described below. Please note that this list of topics is not definitive and that there will be opportunity for you to raise issues you believe are relevant to the study.

Also subject to your agreement, some demographic information will be collected. This will cover matters such as age, gender, employment status (FT/PT), employment tenure (permanent/contract), years of service with current employing organization, years practicing professional specialty, educational qualifications and membership of professional associations. The information will be included as part of your interview transcript and will be covered by the coding procedures designed to protect your confidentiality and preserve your anonymity.

To aid in accuracy, and subject to your agreement, the interview would be tape recorded on a dictaphone machine. At the conclusion of the interview the recording will be transcribed as soon as possible and a written copy of the interview transcription will provided to you as soon as is practicable. You will then have the opportunity to confirm that the transcript complies with your recollections of the interview, to amend the record if you feel it does not represent your views fairly, or to provide additional or clarifying information if you wish.

Criteria for Participation
The intention is to interview a sample of 10 registered nurses (RNs) employed in the Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH). 10 registered teachers employed by the State Department of Education, and 10 scientists employed as 'research scientists' in the CSIRO.

Key Interview Topics
During the interview, discussion will focus on the following topics:
- the study and its aims;
- the values and beliefs that you believe define what being a professional in your occupation means;
- your beliefs regarding the professional dimension of your psychological contract and the related obligations you and your employer have;
- your views regarding the match in practice between your expectations regarding the professional dimension of your psychological contract and actions taken by your employer to meet its obligations; and,
- how you responded in instances where your expectations and your employer's actions did or did not match.

Confidentiality
Specific procedures have been designed to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. You will be allocated a unique alphanumeric code, where the alpha character will denote the employing organization, and the numeric character will identify the participant e.g. 'A1', 'B1', 'A2', 'B2', etc. The written interview transcripts will refer only to this code and will not include either your name or that of the organization where you work. Your employer will not be informed of the your participation in the project.

A confidential master list identifying all interviewees by their alphanumeric codes will be kept secure and physically separate from the interview transcripts. The ability to re-identify interviewees from transcripts is needed in order to allow us to make contact for clarification and follow-up discussion purposes if necessary. Please be assured no personal information will be collected about you from sources other than yourself. At no stage will you be identified by name in my thesis or any publication arising from the research. However, if your comments are reported in my thesis or a publication, you will be identified simply by your alphanumeric code and the type of professional role you perform (e.g. 'Nurse interviewee A1', 'TeacherB1', etc.).

All research information (tapes of interviews, secondary information, file notes) will be stored under lock and key at the School of Management, University of Tasmania. Electronic copies will be stored on a secure computer system in a secure office. All information gathered during the research will be retained for a period of five years after completion of the project, at which time the information will be destroyed.

Freedom to Refuse or Withdraw

Should you agree to participate in this research project, please be aware that you are not bound to remain a part of it and that you are free to withdraw at any time without effect. If you withdraw and so choose, any information supplied by you to the date will be withdrawn.

Ethical Approval

Please also note that ethical approval from the Southern Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee has been granted to this project.

Concerns or Complaints

If you have any concerns of an ethical nature or complaints about the manner in which the project is conducted, please feel free to contact the Chair or Executive Officer of the Southern Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee:

- Chair: A/Professor Gino Dal Pont – (03) 6226 2078
- Executive Officer: Amanda McAully – (03) 6226 2763

Further information about ethical research and the Southern Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee can be found at the following URL.

http://www.research.utas.edu.au/rdo/ethics/index.htm

Results of Investigation

All of the research project results as they appear in papers for journal publications or the doctoral thesis itself, will be available. Participants may request an outline of summary of the findings of the study.

Contact Persons

Should you require any more information concerning the research project, please feel free to contact either myself, or my supervisor Dr Lindsay Nelson as per below.

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Appendix 3.2: Statement of Consent

UNIVERSITY
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STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

Chapter 2:

Project Title: 'Work ideologies and the psychological contract'.

1.   I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this study.

2.   The nature of the study has been explained to me.

3.   I understand that the study involves a tape-recorded interview, and that a type-written copy of the interview transcript will be provided to me.

4.   I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for a period of 5 years. The data will be destroyed at the end of 5 years.

5.   Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

6.   I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published.

7.*   I agree to participate in this research study and understand that I may withdraw at any time without any effect.

       Name of participant:

       Signature of participant ....…………..Date ....…

_____

8.*   I have explained this project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

       Name of investigator: Wayne O'Donohue

       Signature of investigator ....…………..Date ....…

APPENDIX 4

Item	Scale *	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree	Don't know
		1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*0*
I do this job just for the money	Tr	A2 A5 A8	A3 A4	A1 A7 A9	A6 A10				
I prefer to work a strictly defined set of working hours	Tr	A2 A6	A7	A3 A9	A5	A8	A4 A10	A1	
I expect to gain promotion in this organization with length of service and effort to achieve goals	R	A6		A2 A7 A10	A9	A3 A4 A5 A8		A1	
It is important not to get too involved in your job	Tr	A2 A6 A8	A3, A4	A10	A5 A7	A1 A9			
I expect to grow in this organization	R				A9	A10	A3 A4 A5 A7	A1 A2 A6 A8	
I expect to be paid for any overtime I do	Tr		A9	A4		A8	A3 A7	A1 A5 A6 A10	A2
I come to work purely to get the job done	Tr	A2	A1 A3 A8 A9	A4 A5 A7 A10	A6				
I feel part of a team in this organization	R		A6 A8 A9	A2	A10	A5	A1 A3	A4 A7	
My loyalty to the organisation is defined by the terms of my contract	Tr	A9	A2 A8	A3 A4 A5	A1 A6 A10			A7	
I feel this organization reciprocates the effort put in by its employees	R	A2 A5 A6	A8 A9	A3 A10	A4	A1		A7	
I only do what is necessary to get the job done	Tr	A1 A2 A5 A6 A9 A10	A3 A4 A7	A8					
I am motivated to contribute 100% to this organization in return for future employment benefits	Tr		A1 A9	A3 A5 A7 A10	A6	A4	A2 A8		
I have a reasonable chance of promotion if I work hard	R	A2	A7 A9		A5 A10	A3	A4 A6 A8	A1	
My career path in the organisation is clearly mapped out	Tr	A6 A9	A5 A8 A10	A3		A2 A4	A1	A7	

I work to achieve the purely short term goals of my job	Tr	A2	A4 A5 A8 A9 A10	A1 A7		A3	A6	
I will work for this organization indefinitely	R	A1 A8	A3 A10	A5 A7 A9	A4		A2	A6
I am heavily involved in my place of work	R		A8		A1 A4 A10	A9	A3 A5	A2 A6 A7

- Tr = Transactional; R = Relational; A1-A10 = Interviewee code

Psychological contract scores – Registered nurses (10)

Nurse	% score on Relational scale	% score on Transactional scale
A1	76	57
A2	57	27
A3	67	44
A4	73	47
A5	61	43
A6	63	47
A7	71	57
A8	51	44
A9	65	31
A10	51	50

Note: The above scores for each interview are the interviewee's aggregate score for all items on each of the two instrument scales expressed as a %. For example, interviewee A1had a predominantly Relational orientation in his/her psychological contract based on a score of 76% for items on the Relational scale compared to only 57% for items on the Transactional scale.

Item	Scale*	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree	Don't know
		1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*0*
I do this job just for the money	Tr	S6 S7	S2 S4 S8	S1 S3	S5				
I prefer to work a strictly defined set of working hours	Tr	S1 S2 S5	S3 S4 S6 S7 S8						
I expect to gain promotion in this organization with length of service and effort to achieve goals	R		S7	S1	S6	S4	S2 S3 S5 S8		
It is important not to get too involved in your job	Tr	S4 S7 S8			S2	S1 S3 S5	S6		
I expect to grow in this organization	R				S6	S3 S4	S2 S5	S1 S7 S8	
I expect to be paid for any overtime I do	Tr	S1 S5 S6 S8	S4 S7	S2 S3					
I come to work purely to get the job done	Tr	S2 S6 S7 S8	S3		S4 S5		S1		
I feel part of a team in this organization	R				S3 S4	S5	S2 S7 S8	S1 S6	
My loyalty to the organisation is defined by the terms of my contract	Tr	S1 S5 S7 S8	S6	S3	S2		S4		
I feel this organization reciprocates the effort put in by its employees	R				S3 S4	S1 S2 S6 S7	S5 S8		
I only do what is necessary to get the job done	Tr	S1 S2 S3 S6 S7 S8	S4 S5						
I am motivated to contribute 100% to this organization in return for future employment benefits	Tr		S3 S4		S5 S8	S6	S1 S2 S7		
I have a reasonable chance of promotion if I work hard	R			S8		S3	S2 S4 S5 S7	S1 S6	

* Tr = Transactional; R = Relational; S1-S8 = Interviewee code

My career path in the organisation is clearly mapped out	Tr		S3	S5	S4 S8	S2 S6	S1 S7		
I work to achieve the purely short term goals of my job	Tr	S2 S6 S7	S1 S4 S5 S8	S3					
I will work for this organization indefinitely	R	S3			S8		S1 S2 S4 S6 S7		S5
I am heavily involved in my place of work	R			S5	S4	S3 S8	S1 S2 S6 S7		

* Tr = Transactional; R = Relational

Psychological contract scores – Registered scientists (8)

Scientist	% score on Relational scale	% score on Transactional scale
S1	84	46
S2	84	40
S3	61	37
S4	73	33
S5	65	39
S6	80	36
S7	78	31
S8	76	27

Note: The above scores for each interview are the interviewee's aggregate score for all items on each of the two instrument scales expressed as a %. For example, interviewee S1had a predominantly Relational orientation in his/her psychological contract based on a score of 84% for items on the Relational scale compared to only 46% for items on the Transactional scale.

Appendix 4.3: Psychological contract scores – Primary teachers (6)

Item	Scale *	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree	Don't know
		1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*0*
I do this job just for the money	Tr		T3 T5	T1	T4		T2	T6	
I prefer to work a strictly defined set of working hours	Tr	T1 T4	T3	T5	T2 T6				
I expect to gain promotion in this organization with length of service and effort to achieve goals	R	T3 T4	T1	T5	T2			T6	
It is important not to get too involved in your job	Tr		T3 T4	T1	T2 T5 T6				
I expect to grow in this organization	R	T3		T5	T2 T4		T1	T6	
I expect to be paid for any overtime I do	Tr	T1 T2 T3 T4				T5	T6		
I come to work purely to get the job done	Tr		T3 T4	T1	T2	T5	T6		
I feel part of a team in this organization	R			T5	T1 T2 T3		T4 T6		
My loyalty to the organisation is defined by the terms of my contract	Tr	T1 T2 T3	T5		T4	T6			
I feel this organization reciprocates the effort put in by its employees	R	T2 T3 T4	T1 T5					T6	
I only do what is necessary to get the job done	Tr	T3 T4		T1 T5	T2	T6			
I am motivated to contribute 100% to this organization in return for future employment benefits	Tr	T4	T5	T1	T2	T3 T6			
I have a reasonable chance of promotion if I work hard	R	T1 T3 T4	T5		T2	T6			
My career path in the organisation is clearly mapped out	Tr	T1 T3	T5		T6	T2		T4	
I work to achieve the purely short term goals of my job	Tr	T3 T4		T1 T5		T2 T6			
I will work for this organization indefinitely	R	T1 T6				T2 T5		T3 T4	
I am heavily involved in my place of work	R	T6		T1 T2	T5			T3 T4	

* Tr = Transactional; R = Relational; T1-T6 = Interviewee code

Appendix 4.3 continued

Psychological contract scores – Primary teachers (6)

Teacher	% score on Relational scale	% score on Transactional scale
T1	39	31
T2	57	54
T3	45	26
T4	55	34
T5	45	44
T6	63	73

Note: The above scores for each interview are the interviewee's aggregate score for all items on each of the two instrument scales expressed as a %. For example, interviewee T1 had a predominantly Relational orientation in his/her psychological contract based on a score of 39% for items on the Relational scale compared to only 31% for items on the Transactional scale.

APPENDIX 5

Appendix 5.1: Ideological orientation to organization– Registered nurses (10)

A. To what extent <u>DO</u> each of the following attributes describe your hospital today?

Attribute	Not at all	Limited extent	Some extent	Consid erable extent	Great extent	Type *
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
1. Integrated system		A4, A8 A9 A10	A1 A3 A5 A6	A7	A2	B
2. Entrepreneurial		A1 A2 A3 A6 A8 A9	A4 A5 A7 A10			M
3. Competent medical staff			A6 A8 A10	A1 A3 A4 A5 A9	A2 A7	P
4. Concerned with the health of the community		A6	A1 A5	A3 A4 A8 A10	A2 A7 A9	C
5. Emphasises system-wide goals		A5 A9	A1 A3 A4 A6	A8 A10	A2 A7	B
6. Business-oriented		A5	A4 A6 A9	A1 A3 A8 A10	A2 A7	M
7. Fosters clinical excellence		A6 A8	A5 A10	A1 A3 A4 A9	A2 A7	P
8. Accessible health care for the community		A6 A8 A10	A9	A1 A3 A4 A5	A2 A7	C
9. Achieves system-wide co-ordination		A8 A9 A10	A1 A3 A4 A5 A6 A7		A2	B
10. Stresses high quality health care			A3 A4 A6 A8 A10	A1 A5 A9	A2 A7	P
11. Community oriented		A6	A1 A9 A10	A3 A4 A5 A8	A2 A7	C
12. Competitive with other systems	A6		A1 A3 A4 A5 A7 A9 A10	A8	A2	M

B. In your opinion, to what extent <u>SHOULD</u> each of the following be an attribute of your hospital?

Attribute	Not at all 1	Limited extent 2	Some extent 3	Consid erable extent 4	Great extent 5	Type *
1. Integrated system				A1 A3 A4 A5 A6 A10	A2 A7 A8 A9	B
2. Entrepreneurial			A2 A7 A10	A1 A3 A5 A6 A8 A9	A4	M
3. Competent medical staff					A1 A2 A3 A4 A5 A6 A7 A8 A9 A10	P
4. Concerned with the health of the community				A1 A5 A6	A2 A3 A4 A7 A8 A9 A10	C
5. Emphasises system-wide goals				A1 A5 A6	A2 A3 A4 A7 A8 A9 A10	B
6. Business-oriented		A7	A1 A4 A6 A10	A2 A3 A5 A8 A9		M
7. Fosters clinical excellence					A1 A2 A3 A4 A5 A6 A7 A8 A9 A10	P
8. Accessible health care for the community				A1 A4	A2 A3 A5 A6 A7 A8 A9 A10	C
9. Achieves system-wide co-ordination				A1 A4	A2 A3 A5 A6 A7 A8 A9 A10	B
10. Stresses high quality health care					A1 A2 A3 A4 A5 A6 A7 A8 A9 A10	P
11. Community oriented				A1 A4 A6	A2 A3 A5 A7 A8 A9 A10	C
12. Competitive with other systems	A6		A4 A7	A1 A2 A3 A5 A8	A9 A10	M

* B = Bureaucratic; M = Market; P = Professional; C = Community

Appendix 5.2: Ideological orientation to organization – Research scientist (8)

A. To what extent <u>DO</u> each of the following attributes describe your organization today?

Attribute	Not at all	Limited extent	Some extent	Consid erable extent	Great extent	Type *
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	
1. Integrated system		S6 S7	S1 S3	S2 S5 S8	S4	B
2. Entrepreneurial		S1 S3 S6 S7		S4 S5 S8	S2	M
3. Competent scientific staff				S1 S2 S3 S6 S7	S4 S5 S8	P
4. Concerned with the advancement of knowledge			S3 S4 S7	S2 S5 S6 S8	S1	C
5. Emphasises organization-wide goals			S3 S6	S1 S5 S7 S8	S2 S4	B
6. Business-oriented		S1	S3 S6	S2 S4 S5 S7 S8		M
7. Fosters scientific excellence			S1 S3 S4 S7 S8	S2 S5 S6		P
8. Accessible scientific outcomes for the community		S8	S3 S5 S7	S1 S4 S6	S2	C
9. Achieves organization-wide co-ordination		S1 S6	S5 S7 S8	S2 S3 S4		B
10. Stresses high quality scientific outcomes			S1 S6 S7 S8	S2 S3 S4	S5	P
11. Community 'public good' oriented		S8	S1 S3 S4 S5 S7	S2 S6		C
12. Competitive with other science organizations			S4 S5	S1 S3 S7 S8	S2 S6	M

B. In your opinion, to what extent <u>SHOULD</u> each of the following be an attribute of your organization?

Attribute	Not at all *1*	Limited extent *2*	Some extent *3*	Consid erable extent *4*	Great extent *5*	Type *
1. Integrated system			S1 S4 S5 S6 S7 S8	S3	S2	B
2. Entrepreneurial	S7	S1	S5 S6	S2 S3 S4 S8		M
3. Competent scientific staff				S6	S1 S2 S3 S4 S5 S7 S8	P
4. Concerned with the advancement of knowledge				S3	S1 S2 S4 S5 S6 S7 S8	C
5. Emphasises organization-wide goals		S6	S1 S4 S8	S3 S5 S7	S2	B
6. Business-oriented		S1 S6	S3 S7 S8	S2 S5	S4	M
7. Fosters scientific excellence					S1 S2 S3 S4 S5 S6 S7 S8	P
8. Accessible scientific outcomes for the community				S6	S1 S2 S3 S4 S5 S7 S8	C
9. Achieves organization-wide co-ordination			S1 S5 S6 S7 S8	S2 S3 S4		B
10. Stresses high quality scientific outcomes				S6	S1 S2 S3 S4 S5 S7 S8	P
11. Community 'public good' oriented				S1 S3 S6	S2 S4 S5 S7 S8	C
12. Competitive with other science organizations		S5	S7		S1 S2 S3 S4 S6 S8	M

* B = Bureaucratic; M = Market; P = Professional; C = Community

Appendix 5.3: Ideological orientation to organization – Primary teachers (6)

A. To what extent <u>DO</u> each of the following attributes describe your organization today?

Attribute	Not at all	Limited extent	Some extent	Consid erable extent	Great extent	Type *
	1	2	3	4	5	
1. Integrated system	T4 T5	T3	T1		T2 T6	B
2. Entrepreneurial	T1 T2 T5 T6	T3	T4			M
3. Competent teaching staff				T1 T3 T5 T6	T2 T4	P
4. Concerned with the education of the community			T1 T5 T6	T2 T3	T4	C
5. Emphasises system-wide goals		T5	T3 T4	T1 T2 T6		B
6. Business-oriented	T1 T2 T6	T3 T5	T4			M
7. Fosters teaching excellence			T1 T4 T5	T2 T3	T6	P
8. Accessible education for the community		T3	T6	T1 T5	T2 T4	C
9. Achieves system-wide co-ordination	T5	T1 T3 T4	T2	T6		B
10. Stresses high quality education		T3 T5		T6	T1 T2 T4	P
11. Community oriented		T3 T4	T2 T5 T6		T1	C
12. Competitive with other education systems	T1 T2 T3			T4 T5 T6		M

* B = Bureaucratic; M = Market; P = Professional; C = Community

B. In your opinion, to what extent <u>SHOULD</u> each of the following be an attribute of your organization?

Attribute	Not at all *1*	Limited extent *2*	Some extent *3*	Consid erable extent *4*	Great extent *5*	Type *
1. Integrated system			T3	T1 T5	T2 T4 T6	B
2. Entrepreneurial	T2 T6	T1 T4 T5	T3			M
3. Competent teaching staff				T6	T1 T2 T3 T4 T5	P
4. Concerned with the education of the community			T6	T2 T5	T1 T3 T4	C
5. Emphasises system-wide goals				T2 T5 T6	T1 T3 T4	B
6. Business-oriented	T1 T2 T6	T4 T5	T3			M
7. Fosters teaching excellence					T1 T2 T3 T4 T5 T6	P
8. Accessible education for the community			T6		T1 T2 T3 T4 T5	C
9. Achieves system-wide co-ordination				T5	T1 T2 T3 T4 T6	B
10. Stresses high quality education					T1 T2 T3 T4 T5 T6	P
11. Community oriented			T6	T1	T2 T3 T4 T5	C
12. Competitive with other education systems	T2		T5		T1 T3 T4 T6	M

* B = Bureaucratic; M = Market; P = Professional; C = Community

APPENDIX 6:

Published refereed work relevant to this thesis

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A hidden dimension? Work ideology and psychological contracts

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Abstract

This paper explores whether the concept of psychological contracts underpinned by relational/transactional exchanges provides an adequate description of knowledge workers' contracts. Interviews were conducted with scientists from the CSIRO. The analysis identified content of the psychological contract for the knowledge worker best understood by reference to an ideological currency. It raises questions over the role of normative occupation-specific beliefs about work, and the sharing of common currency elements by individuals in the same organization within the same occupation. The analysis lends support to calls in the literature for a reconsideration of the transactional/relational interpretative framework that underpins the psychological contract.

Keywords: psychological contract, knowledge workers, work ideology.

Introduction

Within the resource-based view of the firm there is increasing recognition of the potential of human capital to make a substantial and lasting impact on sustainable competitive advantage (Barney & Wright, 1998). This coincides with the growth of the knowledge economy focusing on learning and knowledge management as central outputs (Thurow, 1999), and the consequent "professionalisation" of the workforce (Millward & Brewerton, 2000). To realise the potential of their human capital, organizations require HR strategies and practices informed by an understanding of the role of professional work ideologies in the psychological contract. Such an understanding is essential in managing the employment expectations of "professionals" in the workplace, and the impact of unmet expectations on employee attitudes and behaviour.

Managing the psychological contract

The "psychological contract" concept deals with the pattern of unwritten and implied beliefs held by the employee and organization about what each should offer, and what each is obligated to provide, in the exchange relations that operate between them. In line with the majority of research to date, this study adopts Rousseau's (1995) cognitive-perceptual definition of the concept (see also Rousseau, 1989, 1998a, 2001; see Millward and Brewerton, 2000, for a review of the concept's development). Much of the original development of this approach has come from Rousseau, and while some elements have been challenged (e.g. Guest, 1998a, 1998b), it is supported by a substantial body of theoretical and empirical research by other scholars. According to Rousseau, a psychological contract forms when "an individual perceives that contributions he or she makes obligate the organization to reciprocity (or vice versa)", and it is the belief in this obligation of reciprocity, although unilateral, that constitutes the contract. (1989: 124).

The consensus in the literature favours operationalising the psychological contract using a bipolar continuum from "transactional" to "relational" for classifying contract content and generic contract features, first articulated by Rousseau (1995). In line with the notions of economic and socio-emotional transaction found in social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), Rousseau (1995) links content character directly to generic contract features to describe four contract types. Firstly, the *transactional* type has primarily economic terms, and is short-term in focus with explicit performance terms. Secondly, there is the *relational* type that has primarily emotional terms, long-term commitments by both parties, and non-explicit performance terms. The *balanced (hybrid)* type has a uniquely complex combinations of transactional and relational terms, and aims at a long-term relationship while at the same time specifying performance requirements. It is becoming commonplace in today's workplace. The fourth type is the *transitional* contract that offers no guarantees because of instability in the organization's environment and conditions. (Rousseau, 1995).

The transactional and relational contract types are the foundation classifications in Rousseau's framework. The currency of transactional exchange is reasonably

explicit, short-term and economic in nature; such exchange assumes rational and self-interested parties, and does not result in ongoing interdependence. Relational exchange is more complex and promotes interdependence through a commitment to the collective interest over self-interest; its currency is less clear, evolves over time, and involves long-term investments from which withdrawal is difficult (Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993).

By linking the nature of a promise to the way in which individuals respond in the event of its non-delivery by the organization (Herriot & Pemberton, 1996; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Turnley & Feldman, 1999), Rousseau's bipolar framework has contributed significantly to our understanding of how and why individuals respond to change in the employment relationship (Anderson & Schalk, 1998). However, a view is developing that ongoing change in the employment context may have rendered the framework too simplistic and inadequate for understanding the increasingly complex relationship between contract terms and features and response to perceived breaches.

Burr and Thomson contend that a new form of contract is emerging that has a "transpersonal perspective, an evaluation not only of "what's in it for me" (transactional) and "what's in it for us" (relational), but also of "what is the fit between me, us, and the rest of society" (2002: 7). Thompson and Bunderson (2003) suggest this new development – which they label the "ideology-infused" contract – coincides with the adoption of cause-driven missions by organizations seeking to establish a broader explicit connection with their environments in order to induce greater employee contributions.

Burr and Thomson contend the increasing importance to the individual of perceived value fit internal and external to organization must be recognised, and that the transactional/relational framework with its roots "very much in the beliefs and values domain of the individual with regard to the organization" (2002: 4) needs to be reconfigured to allow this to happen. To this end, they propose its expansion to include the notion of a so-called "transpersonal" perspective that recognises the "connectivity of people and organizations to something outside themselves" (Burr & Thomson, 2002: 1). In terms of generic features, contracts with a primarily transpersonal perspective will have an intrinsic and extrinsic focus. They will be subjective, dynamic, flexible, open-ended, of changing duration, and encompass the "me", the "we" and the "all". According to Burr and Thomson, (2002) content terms will reflect a concern for: the community; service to humanity; connectedness to the environment; compassion and care; and voluntary selfless work.

Thompson and Bunderson (2003) concentrate on the bipolar framework's inherent premise that the focus or currency of the psychological contract is either economic or socio-emotional in nature, and develop a case for ideology as a third focus. Drawing on the idea that in social exchange ideological rewards can be effective inducements, because "helping to advance cherished ideals is intrinsically rewarding" (Blau, 1964: 239), Thompson and Bunderson argue that "psychological contracts may be premised on 'ideological rewards', and that espousal of a cause can represent a distinct inducement to elicit employee contributions and commitment" (2003: 571). They define ideological currency as "credible commitments to pursue a valued cause or principle (not limited to self-interest) that are implicitly exchanged at the nexus of the individual/organization

relationship" (Thompson & Bunderson, 2003). Such commitments reflect the individual's belief that the organization will provide a mechanism and supportive environment through which the individual can contribute to a highly valued cause (e.g. occupational ideals such as professional autonomy and discretion).

The attraction of incorporating a "transpersonal" perspective (Burr & Thomson, 2002) and the introduction of "ideological currency" (Thompson & Bunderson, 2003) into the psychological contract concept lies in its potential to provide new insights into why individuals identify with their employing organization. If contemporary changes in organizations have "effectively hollowed out" the potential for individuals to identify with the organization, as suggested by Rousseau (1998b), ideology may be the key to better understanding how the individual's need for meaning is met, and the processes and factors that shape and link identification with work. The incorporation of an ideological component also opens up the possibility of deriving new explanations for the ways in which individuals respond to contract breach by the organization. For example, the individual's perception of breach by the organization of an ideological commitment need not produce a negative personal impact in the way implied by a transactional/relational interpretative framework based only on economic and socio-emotional currencies.

The case of the knowledge worker

Knowledge workers are unlike previous generations of worker, not only because of their access to educational opportunities, but because in knowledge organisations they own the means of production i.e. knowledge that is located in brains, dialogue and symbols (Blackler, 1995; Drucker, 1993). As a consequence, productivity is now, more than ever, dependent on the contributions of specialist knowledge workers (Tovstiga, 1999).

Knowledge work - the acquisition, creation, packaging or application of knowledge - is characterised by variety and exception rather than routine, and is performed by professional workers with a high level of expertise (Davenport, Jarvenpaa, & Beers, 1996). Drucker (1999) explains that making knowledge workers more productive requires attitudinal changes entailing the involvement and understanding of the entire organisation not just the worker themselves. Specifically, knowledge workers must be able to determine the focus of their task, and have autonomy and responsibility for their own productivity. Their tasks have to include a commitment to continuing innovation, and provide for continuous learning. There needs be a commitment to quality and treating the knowledge worker as an asset rather than as a cost. When these factors are not an integral part of the organisational context, the productivity of the knowledge worker is at risk (Drucker, 1999).

Theoretically these arguments are appealing but there has been little empirical research investigating the relationship between employer and knowledge worker. Accordingly, the following exploration of changes within the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) attempts to explore the basis of the psychological contract of knowledge workers for that organisation.

Changes at CSIRO

CSIRO is one of the world's most diverse scientific research organisations with an international reputation for its scientific achievements. It has 22 research divisions, based in all states of Australia, which are largely organised around scientific disciplines. Of its approximately 6600 staff, around 1650 are research scientists performing research and development in agribusiness, environment and natural resources, information technology, infrastructure and services, minerals and energy and manufacturing (CSIRO, 2003). The commitment to research and development at CSIRO provides a unique example of an organisation that exemplifies the features of a knowledge worker environment. It is also an organisation that has been subject to major change impacting on the nature of employee expectations.

Established in 1926, CSIRO is a government-funded organisation committed to scientific research that provides independent expert advice to Government and the Australian public. Until the 1990s, the organisation had essentially been free to pursue projects that it considered to be in the 'common good'. In 1995, however, the Australian federal government's requirement that CSIRO adopt a more commercial focus and generate 30 per cent of its income via commercial projects became one of six performance indicators agreed for the organization (CSIRO, 1996). Concern amongst CSIRO staff about the effect of funding changes was ongoing. On the Radio National Science Show, broadcast on 5/10/2002, Dr. Whitten, a retired Chief of the CSIRO Division of Entomology, claimed that the funding changes and new restrictions on scientific research activity had resulted in palpable increased levels of stress amongst the scientists. Furthermore, he predicted, "untold irreparable damage will be done and the organisation that we're finishing up with will be one that people won't worry too much about keeping".

The aim of the current research is to review the impact of these changes in light of the current debate about an appropriate work context for the knowledge worker. With reference to the psychological contract literature, the research question becomes: whether the binary characterisation of the contract terms as being either economic or socio-emotional in nature is sufficient to explain the perceived psychological contract of knowledge workers within CSIRO and whether there is evidence of a ideological component of the contract?

Research methodology

The complexity of issues under investigation required a rich data source. Semi-structured interviews provide the best means of data collection because they allow appropriate exploration of key issues (Neuman, 2000; Babbie, 1992). To ensure consistency with the literature a 17 item scale of psychological contract breach, based on measures established in the literature, was used (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2002; Lester, Turnley, Bloodgood & Bolino, 2002; Turnley & Feldman, 2000). As this is exploratory qualitative research, the researcher tape-recorded the explanations given for each score and it is these comments that form the basis of the analysis. In addition, a second set of questions concerned with organisational commitment, using the updated Myer and Allen (1991) continuance and affective commitment scale (see Myer & Allen, 1997) was used.

The schedule was developed and then tested in a pilot study before finalisation. An experienced professional interviewer was used to conduct the interviews. The tape recordings were then subsequently transcribed and analysed using QSR NUD*IST 5[3] software.

The sample consisted of 10 research scientists drawn from one CSIRO research division who were operating as project managers with some autonomy in the way they conducted their work. Of these 3 were female and 7 were male. The longest period of CSIRO employment was 30 years and the minimum 10. The level of experience reflected in this sample allowed us to explore a full range of issues for these knowledge workers. For the purpose of this exploratory research younger scientists were defined as being with CSIRO between 10 and 15 years, while older scientists were defined as being with the organisation for 20 or more years.

Results

The interviews began with a general question about the nature and extent of perceived changes that had taken place at CSIRO in the course of the interviewee's career. All of the interviewees either noted the commitment to commercialisation or the resultant structural changes as key features in their perceptions of organisational life. Interviewees were then asked to view the items listed on the psychological contract survey and comment on the level of fulfilment of each of the items.

Ideological Component of the Psychological Contract

The quotes provided below are indicative of the responses to items that elicited the most reaction from the scientists. Two of these items, for example, 'the freedom to do my job well' and 'enjoyable work', prompted responses about the nature of the science being conducted and the type of knowledge that was being generated. Concerns shared by both old and young scientists suggested a common ideological component of the contract. These included the need for public availability of the knowledge produced (greater for younger scientists), the possible ongoing generation of new knowledge (greater for older scientists), commitment to 'public good' projects, and Australia's access to international research developments.

> *We have really become consultants, contractors I guess you could say. The possibility of generating meaningful original science and involvement in 'public good' research is getting harder and harder to achieve.* (Interviewee # 9 -older scientist)

> *My main frustration is that the knowledge that we generate is no longer really in the public domain - only the groups that we answer to really get the benefit of the science.*
>
> (Interviewee #5- younger scientist)

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Younger scientists tended to have a more transactional view of their contract. In general they enjoyed working with their project teams and valued the collegiality but were also much more pragmatic about leaving the research and taking up new projects. Their commitment to the organisation itself was limited.

> *I like working here but I don't feel restricted to this option. If something else came up that was interesting I would certainly be open to that possibility.* (Interviewee #8)

Older scientists expressed concern at this:

> *I also get very concerned about younger scientists who are working on project work for an outside interest. They don't get around to publishing their ideas because they don't have the time. This means that the knowledge base is not being built up and there is a short-term focus on everything.* (Interviewee # 9)

They continued to value the relational part of their contract but only as long as the organisation's requirements were congruent with their own ideology.

> *I actually just turned down another job that would have meant great financial returns. But I have a lot personally invested in the research that I have done here and I am very committed to it.* (Interviewee # 1)

The older scientists identified some of the drivers of changes in their psychological contracts.

> *We need to focus less on administration and restructuring and remember what we are here for - science and research.* (Interviewee # 9)

Many of the older scientists clearly identify that the perceived changes in their contract are sources of disaffection and withdrawal of commitment. Their perceptions had moved to be more transactional towards the organisation while retaining a 'passion' for their science, but not the non-science components of their work.

> *The thing that keeps me here? The science* (Interviewee # 4)

> *Someone asked me the other day if I would go out of my way to do something for CSIRO and I just laughed. I would have at one time but not any more.* (Interviewee #1)

Discussion

The results indicate that the scientists are concerned about the nature of scientific output and knowledge generation at CSIRO. The issues of concern are more ideological and societal based in nature than transactional or relational associated with the organisation. The scientists responded most strongly to the psychological contract questionnaire items, "the freedom to do my job well", "enjoyable work" and "resources needed to perform the job". The older scientists were particularly concerned about the reduction of autonomy in the knowledge creation process, connecting it with failures to generate and publish knowledge in new areas and research issues that were associated with the 'public good'. They were also concerned about Australia's profile in international research activity. While younger scientists were more concerned about 'resources needed to complete the job' they also shared concerns about the ongoing development and publication of knowledge, and the limited public access to technological developments.

These results help clarify key features in the psychological contract of the knowledge worker. Drucker (1999) highlights the link between productivity and the principles of professional autonomy and responsibility for task direction and productivity i.e. principles that allow an ideological component of the psychological contract to be created by knowledge workers. According to the older scientists interviewed these principles operated in CSIRO in the past but developments in the last ten years have reduced their significance. The strong response to this development indicates that the principles of professional autonomy and responsibility are key factors in the psychological contract, especially for scientists who have had longer careers.

A further factor that arose from the interviews, not identified by Drucker (1999), is the need for the knowledge worker to make a sustained and valued contribution to the relevant body of knowledge i.e. a contribution that transcends the organization. Concomitant with this need is the expectation the organization will provide the opportunity to make that contribution. Scientists commented with concern that organizational change had meant that much of the knowledge they create is not being effectively published and consequently their ability to contribute to the advancement of Australia' scientific base is stifled. This commitment to the collective development of ideas and the body of knowledge itself, along with public access of knowledge, appears to be an enduring factor regardless of tenure.

The beliefs regarding professional autonomy and responsibility, making a sustained and valued contribution to the relevant body of knowledge, and possessing a common commitment to the wider knowledge base appear better understood in terms of the primacy of ideological elements of the psychological contract (Burr & Thomson, 2002; Thompson & Bunderson, 2003). That these elements appear to be fundamental to the group of scientists interviewed suggests the possibility that they may form core content terms within the psychological contract. It also suggests that any relational elements in the psychological contract may be artefacts of congruence between organisational aims and scientists' ideological stance.

Conclusions

Echoing Drucker's (1999) descriptions of the factors that underline knowledge worker productivity, the interviews raise the possibility that content terms of the psychological contract for the CSIRO scientists may directly reflect ideological issues. Freedom to select the focus of work, autonomy to decide how to conduct the work, organisational resources to complete the task to a satisfactory standard, and the organisation's commitment to the development of knowledge as a value independent of business needs, occurred in this research as key expectations in the scientists' psychological contract. The need to make a recorded contribution to the body of professional knowledge and to the 'public good' was also evident in the scientists' view of their work.

It is argued that although both transactional and relational components of the psychological contract are evident, scientists' concerns cannot be fitted neatly within the relational/transactional characterisation of the contract. The inducement to contribute seems to tap into ideological rewards i.e. the rewards associated with being involved with some intangible principle or with benefiting society, or some segment of it. In fact, there appears to be evidence that for some knowledge workers at least the relational part of the contract exists only so long as there is congruence between their own ideology and the organisation's aims. The maintenance of a focus on the advancement of science that transcends the organization, and a reduced commitment by scientists to the organisation itself, is consistent with the suggestion that knowledge workers often direct their loyalty towards their careers and profession rather than to their organization (Holland, Hecker & Steen, 2002).

This exploratory study lends support to calls in the psychological contract for the reconsideration of the cognitive-perceptual definition of the concept and its transactional/relational interpretative framework. It suggests work ideologies may be significant in the psychological contract, particularly for professional employees. That many individuals seem to be refocusing their allegiance and career aspirations away from the organization onto their occupations to anchor their self-esteem and identity in the workplace makes the role of professional ideologies in the psychological contracts worthy of further examination.

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Professional work ideology and psychological contracts

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ABSTRACT
This paper explores whether the concept of psychological contracts underpinned by relational/transactional exchanges provides an adequate description of the psychological contracts of professional employees. Interviews were conducted with registered nurses at a hospital that is the sole public sector provider of a broad range of medical and nursing services in the city. The analysis identifies content of the psychological contract for the registered nurse best understood by reference to an ideological currency. It also suggests that the registered nurses expect the organization to demonstrate a credible commitment and support for 3 core elements in nursing's professional ideology – specialist expertise, patient (client) focus, and an other-orientation. A lack of perceived credible commitments by the organization impacts significantly upon the psychological contract of individual registered nurses.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of the psychological contract deals with the pattern of unwritten and implied beliefs held by the employee and organization about what each should offer, and what each is obligated to provide, in the exchange relations that operate between them (Anderson & Schalk, 1998). In Australia, as in other places, the pursuit of increased organizational responsiveness, productivity, flexibility and innovation has led to a changed context for employment relationships and a destabilising of the psychological contract (Kabanoff, Jimmieson, and Lewis, 2000). Prior to these changes, the psychological contract was thought to reflect a more simple form of employment connection. It was constructed around an individual's loyalty and commitment to, conformity with, and trust in the firm, in return for which the organization provided job security, career prospects, and training and development opportunities. Now, however in the changed context, the individual is required to accept longer hours, more responsibility, multi-skilling and role ambiguity. In return, the organization provides higher pay, rewards for performance and a job rather than a career (Millward & Brewerton, 2000).

According to Burr and Thomson (2002), this transition to a new deal has seen an increase in the general level of cynicism about organizations, which in turn has prompted many individuals to search for broader meaning in their work and to reassess their purpose in the workplace. Employees are attempting to create psychological contracts within the organizational context that no longer just reflect the "I" and "we" paradigm that underpins the dyadic notion of the psychological contract currently holding sway in the literature. There is a trend on the part of the individual to incorporate an evaluation of "what is the fit between me, us, and the rest of society" alongside an evaluation of "what's in it for me" and "what's in it for us" (Burr & Thomson, 2002: 6 –7). Thompson and Bunderson (2003) suggest there is evidence to show that it is not just individuals making this shift. Organizations too are seeking to establish a broader explicit "connection" with their environments through the adoption of cause-driven missions in an endeavour to induce greater employee contributions. This paper explores some of the implications of these perceived trends specifically with regard to the content and form of the psychological contract.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT

In line with the majority of psychological contract research to date (Coyle-Shapiro, Shore, Taylor, & Tetrick, 2004), this study uses a cognitive-perceptual approach and defines the psychological contract as the:

> "individual's belief in mutual obligations between that person and another party such as an employer (either a firm or another person). This belief is predicated on the perception that a promise has been made (e.g. of employment or career opportunities) and a consideration offered in exchange for it (e.g. accepting a position, foregoing other job offers), binding the parties to some set of reciprocal obligations." (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998: 679).

According to Rousseau, a psychological contract forms when "an individual perceives that contributions he or she makes obligate the organization to reciprocity (or vice versa)", and it is the "individual's belief in an obligation of reciprocity that constitutes the contract. This belief is unilateral" (1989: 124).

Within the literature, this definitional stance is mostly operationalised using a bipolar continuum from "transactional" to "relational" first articulated by

Rousseau (1995). Drawing on legal contract theory (Macneil, 1985), and in accord with the notions of economic and socio-emotional transaction found in social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), Rousseau (1995) links content character directly to generic contract features to describe four contract types. Firstly, the transactional type has primarily economic terms, and is short-term in focus with explicit performance terms. Secondly, there is the relational type that has primarily emotional terms, long-term commitments by both parties, and non-explicit performance terms. Thirdly, the balanced (hybrid) type has uniquely complex combinations of transactional and relational terms, and aims at a long-term relationship while at the same time specifying performance requirements. Evidence appearing in the research literature suggests this type of contract is becoming increasingly commonplace in today's workplace (Millward & Brewerton, 2000). The fourth type is the transitional contract that offers no guarantees because of instability in the organization's environment and conditions (Rousseau, 1995).

The transactional and relational contract types are the foundation classifications in Rousseau's typology. The currency of transactional exchange is reasonably explicit, short-term and economic in nature; such exchange assumes rational and self-interested parties, and does not result in ongoing interdependence. Relational exchange is more complex and promotes interdependence through a commitment to the collective interest over self-interest; its currency is less clear, evolves over time, and involves long-term investments from which withdrawal is difficult (Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993).

By linking currency to the way in which individuals respond in the event of non-fulfilment by the organization (Herriot & Pemberton, 1996; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Turnley & Feldman, 2000), Rousseau's bipolar framework has contributed significantly to our understanding of how and why individuals respond to change in the employment relationship (Anderson & Schalk, 1998). However, while there is a supporting body of empirical research, the reliability and adequacy of the bipolar conceptual framework has been challenged (Arnold, 1996; Coyle-Shapiro, Shore, Taylor, & Tetrick, 2004; Guest, 1998a, 1998b; Herriot & Pemberton, 1997).

Thompson and Bunderson (2003) question whether ongoing change in the employment context has rendered the bipolar transactional/relational framework inadequate for understanding psychological contracts displaying increasingly complex content terms and features. In line with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), they propose an expansion of the transactional/framework to incorporate another type of psychological contract type – the ideology-infused contract – that includes not only a combination of economic (transactional) and socio-emotional (relational) content terms but also ideological terms. In other words, their proposition is that the currency of exchange in the psychological contract can include not only economic and socio-emotional terms, but also ideological terms (see Table 1 below).

Within their expanded system for classifying content terms, Thompson and Bunderson define ideological currency as "credible commitments to pursue a valued cause or principle (not limited to self-interest) that are implicitly exchanged at the nexus of the

Table 1

	Economic currency	Socio-emotional currency	Ideological currency
Organization's obligations	Provide continued employment, safe working environment, fair compensation	Provide training, career development, promotion opportunities, long-term job security	Demonstrate credible commitment to a valued social cause
Individual's obligations	Fulfil formally specified role requirements	Fulfil generalised role obligations; organizational commitment and involvement; OCB	Participate in the organization's mission/cause; organizational and societal citizenship behaviour
Salient beneficiary	Self	Self and organizational community	Society, some segment thereof, or an intangible principle
Affiliation logic	"The organization gives me a fair day's pay for a fair day's work."	"The organization nurtures my professional development and sense of community."	"The organization shares my passion, cause, and/or mission."
Model of human nature	Egoistic, instrumental	Collectivistic, socialised	Principled, involved

(Adapted from Thompson & Bunderson, 2003: 575 - An expanded framework for understanding psychological contracts: a comparison of currencies)

individual/organization relationship" (2003: 574). They propose that such commitments, when they form part of the currency exchange in an ideology-infused contract, reflect the individual's belief that the organization will provide a mechanism and supportive environment through which the individual can contribute to a highly valued cause. Such causes might include for instance, occupational ideals such as professional service, autonomy and discretion, or social ideals such as the right of every member of the community to the provision of high quality education and health services regardless of individual socio-economic status. In effect, Thompson and Bunderson's (2003) proposal to reconfigure the bipolar framework is an attempt to link the conceptual framework for the psychological contract to "a longing in each of us to invest in things that matter" and to have organizations in which we work successful (Block, 1996: cited in Burr & Thomson, 2002). It is the notion of ideology-infused exchange, and particularly occupation-specific work ideologies, that is the specific focus of interest in this paper.

PROFESSIONAL WORK IDEOLOGIES

Occupations play a crucial role in the cultural dynamics within complex organizations. They derive their essential distinctiveness from the specialised nature of the knowledge and skills required to perform specific work roles. Occupation-specific systems of collective values and beliefs about work, or occupational ideologies, sustain this distinctiveness (Trice, 1993). The literature on the development and nature of professions, and the process of professionalisation, is voluminous and quite varied in the perspectives brought to bear on the topic (see for example, Abbott, 1988; Greenwood, 1966; Roth, 1974; Torstendahl & Burrage, 1990; Trice, 1993; and Wallace, 1995). It is possible

however to identify in this literature a consensus that an occupation with the status of a profession will exhibit certain general attributes.

The first of these attributes is possession of a systematic and abstract body of specialised knowledge expressed in a language known fully only to the members of the profession. Second, the members of the profession claim autonomy in the application of their specific knowledge and resist interference in their work by those who are less qualified. Involvement by non-fellow professionals is believed to impede effectiveness and quality of outcomes. Third, professional occupations maintain bodies that are heavily involved in the development and management of the profession, including the formulation of minimum qualification standards for entry and a set of ethical principles or code of practice. The occupation itself often administers the professional association, membership of which in some cases may be a state-legislated requirement for approval to practice. Fourth, membership of a professional association entails a commitment to a code of ethics or practice that places community interests and those of the profession above self-interest. The penalties for breaching a code of ethics may include termination of the right to practice and membership of the profession. Fifth, because of their monopoly of professional expertise, members of professional occupations claim authority over, but share responsibility with, clients who are assumed to be lesser skilled and so unable to determine their own needs or properly judge the quality of service provided by members of the professional occupation. All these attributes are referenced in the distinctive, complex occupational ideologies that professional occupations develop and sustain. In particular, the attributes of professional autonomy, client focus with its concomitant responsibility to adhere to a code of ethical principles, and commitment to the development of professional knowledge and the profession, all carry significant weight.

Because of the different underlying principles on which they are built, professional and management ideologies promote different conceptualisations of the organization and the individual's relationship to the organization. This is turn means that understanding the link between occupational ideology and conceptualisation of the organization's purpose, goals, and design principles is important to understanding the psychological contract of individuals who are professionals employed in organizations. There has however been limited discussion in the psychological contract literature of the role that values and beliefs regarding the nature of and relationships between work, occupations, organizations and the community, play in the psychological contract the individual professional makes.

Bunderson et al (2000) and Bunderson (2001) explore the essential differences in professional and management ideologies. Drawing on organization theory, sociology of work, and the relevant occupations/professions literature, Bunderson et al (2000) define four generic schemas each with three defining attributes - the *bureaucratic* and *market enterprise* models based on the administrative principle that underpins management ideology, and the *professional group* and *community service* models based on the occupational principle that underpins professional ideologies. The administrative principle emphasises authority based on incumbency of a legally defined office, commitment to the organization, hierarchical decision making, and efficiency; the occupational principle emphasises authority based on professional competence, commitment to the work, collegial decision making, and service (Trice, 1993).

In essence, the two management ideology models conceptualise the organization as a system organized and managed to achieve common goals in an efficient and co-ordinated way. The bureaucratic model focuses on management of the organization's internal operations, and its key attributes are system-wide goals, integration, and co-ordination. The related market enterprise model focuses on external market relations, and wealth maximisation. Its three key attributes are: an entrepreneurial, a business and a competitive orientation. On the other hand, the two professional ideology models conceptualise the organization as a system focussed on professional goals and objectives. The professional group model emphasises the authority of the professional expert and its three key attributes are: professional competence, excellence, and high quality in the work of the organization. The community service model has an external focus emphasising the relationship with the client, and its three key attributes are: responsible application of professional expertise, a commitment to service, contribution to the benefit of the community and public good.

The set of generic models, each with their defining attributes, articulates the comparative schema differences between professionals and others in a complex organization. The generic models (Bunderson et al, 2000) make clear how ideological differences between professionals and others will shape their view of the organization, and reveal the basis of tension that can develop around organizational goals, objectives, roles and obligations.

The specific research question addressed in this paper is whether there is evidence of an ideological component in the perceived psychological contract of nursing professionals, as well as evidence of credible commitments by the hospital in support of that component. To this end, the defining attributes identified for each of the two schemas related to professional work ideology – professional group and community service – are brought together as (a) professional competence, authority, and excellence, (b) client focus, and (c) the notion of service and contribution to the broader community, as the focus for data analysis.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purposes of this study, the nursing professional was defined as a nurse registered with the government regulatory authority as having the necessary qualifications and competence to practice professionally. The sample for analysis comprises 10 Registered Nurses employed at a large metropolitan public hospital that is the sole public provider of a broad range of hospital services in the city. Currently, the hospital is struggling within a very tight budgetary context to deliver the full range of health care services expected.

Registered nurses were selected as the focus for this study because nursing claims the status of a professional occupation and clearly exhibits those attributes by which professions are defined. Acquisition of competence in a highly specialised field of knowledge through completion of a tertiary level qualification is a prerequisite for registration to practice. The profession is highly organized with both peak industrial and professional associations heavily involved in furthering the profession's interests and development. The majority of its members practice as paid employees in organizational settings rather than as independent self-employed professionals. Finally, professional practice is codified in formal documentation, developed by the professional associations in

conjunction with registration authorities, which includes statements specifying the scope of practice and code of ethics for registered nurses.

As this is exploratory qualitative research, semi-structured interviews were selected as the best means of data collection, because they would allow appropriate exploration of the complex issues under investigation and produce a rich data set of comments for analysis (Neuman, 2000; Babbie, 1992). The researcher tape-recorded each interview, with each being subsequently transcribed. Those transcriptions formed the basis of analysis done using QSR NUD*IST 5 software[4]. At the commencement of each interview, each participant was asked to complete two questionnaires as a prelude to discussion. The purpose of administering the questionnaires was not to conduct a group psychometric analysis (the number of participants was too small), but to set the scene for the subsequent interview discussion. The two instruments used were: a 17 item scale of psychological contract breach (Millward and Hopkins, 1998); and the 12 item instrument developed by Bunderson et al (2000) for measuring organizing models.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Chapter 3: General

Responses to the two questionnaires (Millward & Hopkins, 1998 and Bunderson et al, 2000) indicated that all interviewees perceived their psychological contract to be more, rather than less, relational in degree overall. All interviewees indicated a strong affiliation with the nursing profession and the notion that they expected to grow professionally within the organization; but the majority did not see themselves as likely to remain with the organization for the long term. In assessing the hospital's current performance level, all interviewees expressed views reflective of a cognitive framework and conceptualisation of the organization's goals, objectives and operations consistent with a professional work ideology. For example, there was a unanimous view that the hospital should be characterised to the greatest extent by professionally competent medical staff, clinical excellence, and high quality health care. A concern with the health of the community, community access to health care, and a general community orientation were considered by all the interviewees as only marginally less important attributes for the hospital to have.

Ideological currency
On the matter of whether there is evidence for an ideological currency distinct from the transactional and relational currencies, the quotes below are indicative of views that were expressed generally by interviewees during discussion. In general, comments made by interviewees support the notion that professional ideologies can form the basis of contributions by individuals that emphasise professional expertise and excellence, client focus, and an other-orientation or sense of contribution outside the individual to the broader public good.

"I've got … a more modern view of a nurse and so I look at them as being a clinical specialist in an area … [and] as having a minimum of a bachelor's

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degree and then perhaps postgraduate qualifications after that. I look at them as being people who are active in the health care system who have reasonable human values, accepting of people from all walks of life, cultures, race, age, anything like that, and that they're competent clinicians." *Interviewee A5*

"I've been nursing for a long time. I just feel that … you're there to help provide high quality care for the patients to the best of your ability within the resources provided to you by the community. I've always believed in excellence in nursing and professional development and it's for the benefit of the patient really." *Interviewee A7*

Credible commitment

According to Thompson and Bunderson (2003), if ideological currency forms part of the individual's contribution then the individual will perceive the organization to be obligated to provide credible commitments as part of the employment exchange. Such commitments, when they form part of the currency exchange in an ideology-infused contract, reflect the individual's belief that the organization will provide a mechanism and supportive environment through which the individual can contribute to a highly valued cause. The quotes below are indicative of views that were expressed by interviewees relevant to this question during discussion. In general, comments made by interviewees suggest that notwithstanding the individual's contribution of professional expertise, a heightened client focus, and an other-orientation to the broader public good, the hospital is not perceived as making matching or supportive credible commitments.

"[T]here have also been changes in the management structure. … We now have 3 people, 1 for each of the clinical services, and … there's an increased business side to these 3 figureheads. … When we had one figurehead, that person I think had more of a role in promoting professional collegiality and initiatives. ... I think we now lack a professional focus in our nursing leadership in this hospital." *Interviewee A9*

"[T]hey treat nurses as a commodity. … Now it's not inconceivable that I can be asked to go to from my speciality to a psychiatry ward. … I can't name another profession that would make the people do that. Do they grab trial lawyers out of court to do some will work or conveyancing? It just doesn't happen. It comes down to a numbers thing … so nurses are treated like absolute commodities." *Interviewee A6*

"One of the important things about a nurse is that you've got to be able to go home after an 8 or 10-hour shift, and feel like you've done everything that you can possibly can. … You don't want to go off … [having] … been abused by relatives and patients because the organization has let you down. That happens quite a lot." *Interviewee A4*

"I know wards in the hospital that hold raffles just so that they can get the money to buy blood pressure machines. … They've [management] opened up some of the medical wards, but they've closed other medical wards and made them into offices. … We've got less beds within the main structure of the hospital than we had. How can they say that we've got the beds and the structure to incorporate our community when we take patients from all over the State?" *Interviewee A4*

"I have been approached by outside organizations to do education sessions. … The organization wasn't quite willing to give me a definite answer; … it seemed easier to do it for my professional organization than it did for my actual employer. … It's almost always asked would you be doing it on your own time." *Interviewee A3*

Importance of ideological currency and credible commitment

Consistent with social exchange theory, psychological contract research (Rousseau, 1995; Robinson & Morrison, 1997) suggests, that where the individual perceives the organization as failing to fulfil its obligations under the psychological contract, in this instance taking actions indicative of credible commitments that support nursing's professional ideology, then the individual may alter their behaviour and attitudes towards the organization. The quotes below are indicative of views that were expressed by interviewees relevant to this issue during discussion. In general, comments made by interviewees suggest that the hospital's lack of support for the professional values and beliefs contributed by the nurses is reflected in a decreased focus on the organization, and a concomitant increase in focus on the profession. Interviewees describe a lack of congruence between the type of employment relationship the organization is perceived as offering, specifically that the hospital has work to do and anyone can do it with the right skills, and that which each individual desires. On the basis of their comments, all interviewees appear to want a relationship with the organization in which they are cared about, treated with respect, and in which their contribution of professional ideological values and beliefs is supported by the hospital.

"I don't have any loyalty to the organization at all. I have a loyalty to the people that I work with, my peers and the patients that I care for." *Interviewee A4*

"Just terribly disillusioned, really, certainly with the hospital as an organization. To the point where because my contract finishes in January next year, I'm really thinking quite hard about what I can do with my level of experience to work outside this hospital. I find it incredibly frustrating. … [It] is really disappointing." *Interviewee A10*

"I certainly think that the predominant vibe is mostly a negative. It's not an inspirational place to work. … I [want] … an organization that has an air of confidence, an air of positiveness, where employees feel valued and therefore have more job satisfaction. Things like professional development and flexibility in employment instead of having these contracts with no guarantee, recognising that people need some sort of … security, and just listening to employees and involving people at all levels in making changes." *Interviewee A8*

Impact of perceived breach

In considering the possibility that ideological currency can form part of the employment exchange for some employees, Thompson and Bunderson also formulated propositions relating to how individuals might interpret organizational intent and actions with regard to the non-delivery of credible commitments on ideological obligations forming part of the psychological contract. The data collected in this study are relevant to several of these propositions.

Firstly, Thompson and Bunderson (2003) propose that that perceived breaches of ideology-infused contracts would be seen as the result of intentional reneging on the part of the organizational decision-makers. They also suggested goal displacement, that is to say a shift in emphasis from core ideals to an emphasis on the means intended to achieve ideological objectives as ends-in-themselves, would be perceived by ideologically committed employees as lying behind the organization's failure to deliver on its obligations. Several interviewees expressed strong feelings concerning the hospital's non-delivery of support for core elements in nursing's professional ideology, that support these propositions.

"You know I think the management are under pressure with their hierarchy to come in with a certain budget. … Sometimes decisions are made that are economical rather than professional." *Interviewee A1*

"CEOs … a 3 year contract or a 2 year contract, … come in, … perform well or do what they think is well in something, and then they go again and they leave a mess generally. … [T]hey leave behind a very tight organization that is decreased in its capacity to care for the community as a whole. That's what they've left behind. … I don't think that management have got the bigger picture at all. I think that they've got a very tunnelled view of what they've done. … I suppose the hospital would be very, very, very well run for management if it didn't have any patients." *Interviewee A4*

"It's always about saving money or increasing productivity with the resources you've got. … I think some of the people who are involved in the management … have by definition lost sight of what nursing is about. … They're managing nursing budgets but they don't nurse per se any more." *Interviewee A6*

Secondly, Thompson and Bunderson (2003) propose that the relationship between perceived breach and violation will be weaker for ideological obligations than for transactional and/or relational obligations. They argue that even when employees are deeply committed to fulfilment of ideological objectives, they will at the same time be tolerant of the organization's failure to manifest a credible commitment to those objectives. Employee attributions of breach to the political, social, or economic context in which the organization operates will also attenuate the likelihood that a perceived ideological breach will result in violation. Thompson and Bunderson (2003) also contend that employees who have an ideology-infused psychological contract will tolerate some level of non-delivery by the organization because they recognise the organization needs to avoid alienating important stakeholders and constituents. Comments by two interviewees were reflective of the majority of comments related to these propositions.

"I think it definitely still inspires me to continue fighting for my patients as they are the heart of what I want to improve. I guess the frustration continues though in that the next time you talk to your manager, or write an incident report, you start to get that 'oh well where's this going to go', but I guess then I turn it around and I still encourage other people to do it because I think, well power in the numbers". *Interviewee A3*

"I think … even though the end goal I think is the same for both me and the organization, the way of getting there is done very differently. … They want

to pump them through because of the political pressures, … [and] the social pressures. I … do it just for the social pressures and that is my job. So we both want the same thing … although sometimes I feel, like many people, that we may be going in opposite directions even though I know in my own mind that it's not that way" *Interviewee A6*

"Being demoralised does you no good so you then start to act again and agitate again to get some cash. Now you may get demoralised 5 or 6 or 20 or 30 times in that time but I think because the process goes on, the patients still get operated on, everything moves forward and you still need that equipment, you can sort of develop some fight again, even though you're banging your head against the wall sometimes." *Interviewee A6*

Chapter 4: CONCLUSION

This paper explores whether the concept of psychological contracts underpinned by relational/transactional exchanges provides an adequate description of the psychological contracts of professional employees. The analysis of interview comments made by registered nurses, at a hospital that is the sole public sector provider of a broad range of medical and nursing services in the city, identified content of the psychological contract best understood by reference to an ideological currency. The analysis also suggests that the nurses participating in the study expect the organization to demonstrate a credible commitment and support for 3 core elements in nursing's professional ideology – specialist expertise, patient (client) focus, and an other-orientation. The failure of the organization to deliver on its perceived obligation to manifest a credible commitment clearly was a significant factor in the participating nurses' perceptions of their psychological contract and employment relationship.

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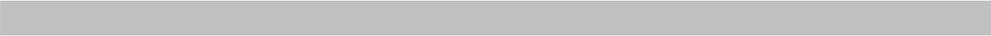
The psychological contract of knowledge workers

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper explores whether the concept of psychological contracts underpinned by relational/transactional exchanges provides an adequate description of knowledge workers' contracts.
Methodology: The research approach uses interviews with 10 scientists from within a pre-eminent Australian scientific research and development organisation, the Commonwealth Scientific & Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).
Findings: The research strong evidence of an ideological currency within the psychological contract for this set of knowledge workers.
    Implications: The research raises questions over the role of normative occupation-specific beliefs about work, and the sharing of common currency elements by individuals in the same organization within the same occupation. The analysis lends support to calls in the literature for a reconsideration of the transactional/relational interpretative framework that underpins the psychological contract.

Introduction

Within the resource-based view of the firm there is increasing recognition of the potential of human capital to make a substantial and lasting impact on sustainable competitive advantage (Boxall & Purcell, 2003; Wright, Dunford & Snell, 2001). This coincides with the growth of the knowledge economy focusing on learning and knowledge management as central outputs (Thurow, 1999), and the consequent "professionalisation" of the workforce (Millward & Brewerton, 2000). To realise the potential of their human capital, organizations require HR strategies and practices informed by an understanding of the role of professional work ideologies in the psychological contract. Such an understanding is essential in managing the employment expectations of "professionals" in the workplace, and the impact of unmet expectations on employee attitudes and behaviour.

Managing the psychological contract

The "psychological contract" concept deals with the pattern of unwritten and implied beliefs held by the employee and organization about what each should offer, and what each is obligated to provide, in the exchange relations that operate between them. In line with the majority of research to date, this study adopts Rousseau's (1995) cognitive-perceptual definition of the concept (see also Rousseau, 1989, 1998a, 2001; see Millward and Brewerton, 2000, for a review of the concept's development). Much of the original development of this approach has come from Rousseau, and while some elements have been challenged (e.g. Guest, 1998a, 1998b), it is supported by a substantial body of theoretical and empirical research by other scholars. According to Rousseau, a psychological contract forms when "an individual perceives that contributions he or she makes obligate the organization to reciprocity (or vice versa)", and it is the belief in this obligation of reciprocity, although unilateral, that constitutes the contract. (1989: 124).

The consensus in the literature favours operationalising the psychological contract using a bipolar continuum from "transactional" to "relational" for classifying contract content and generic contract features, first articulated by Rousseau (1995). In line with the notions of economic and socio-emotional transaction found in social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), Rousseau (1995) links content character directly to generic contract features to describe four contract types. Firstly, the *transactional* type has primarily economic terms, and is short-term in focus with explicit performance terms. Secondly, there is the *relational* type that has primarily emotional terms, long-term commitments by both parties, and non-explicit performance terms. The *balanced (hybrid)* type has a uniquely complex combinations of transactional and relational terms, and aims at a long-term relationship while at the same time specifying performance requirements. It is becoming commonplace in today's workplace. The fourth type is the *transitional* contract that offers no guarantees because of instability in the organization's environment and conditions. (Rousseau, 1995).

The transactional and relational contract types are the foundation classifications in Rousseau's framework. The currency of transactional exchange is reasonably explicit, short-term and economic in nature; such exchange assumes rational and self-interested parties, and does not result in ongoing interdependence. Relational

exchange is more complex and promotes interdependence through a commitment to the collective interest over self-interest; its currency is less clear, evolves over time, and involves long-term investments from which withdrawal is difficult (Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993).

By linking the nature of a promise to the way in which individuals respond in the event of its non-delivery by the organization (Herriot & Pemberton, 1996; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Turnley & Feldman, 1999), Rousseau's bipolar framework has contributed significantly to our understanding of how and why individuals respond to change in the employment relationship (Anderson & Schalk, 1998). However, a view is developing that ongoing change in the employment context may have rendered the framework too simplistic and inadequate for understanding the increasingly complex relationship between contract terms and features and response to perceived breaches.

Burr and Thomson contend that a new form of contract is emerging that has a "transpersonal perspective, an evaluation not only of "what's in it for me" (transactional) and "what's in it for us" (relational), but also of "what is the fit between me, us, and the rest of society" (2002: 7). Thompson and Bunderson (2003) suggest this new development – which they label the "ideology-infused" contract – coincides with the adoption of cause-driven missions by organizations seeking to establish a broader explicit connection with their environments in order to induce greater employee contributions.

Burr and Thomson contend that the increasing importance to the individual of perceived value fit internal and external to the organization must be recognised, and that the transactional/relational framework with its roots "very much in the beliefs and values domain of the individual with regard to the organization" (2002: 4) needs to be reconfigured to allow this to happen. To this end, they propose its expansion to include the notion of a so-called "transpersonal" perspective that recognises the "connectivity of people and organizations to something outside themselves" (Burr & Thomson, 2002: 1). In terms of generic features, contracts with a primarily transpersonal perspective will have an intrinsic and extrinsic focus. They will be subjective, dynamic, flexible, open-ended, of changing duration, and encompass the "me", the "we" and the "all". According to Burr and Thomson, (2002) content terms will reflect a concern for: the community; service to humanity; connectedness to the environment; compassion and care; and voluntary selfless work.

Thompson and Bunderson (2003) concentrate on the bipolar framework's inherent premise that the focus or currency of the psychological contract is either economic or socio-emotional in nature, and develop a case for ideology as a third focus. Drawing on the idea that in social exchange, ideological rewards can be effective inducements, because "helping to advance cherished ideals is intrinsically rewarding" (Blau, 1964: 239), Thompson and Bunderson argue that "psychological contracts may be premised on 'ideological rewards', and that espousal of a cause can represent a distinct inducement to elicit employee contributions and commitment" (2003: 571). They define ideological currency as "credible commitments to pursue a valued cause or principle (not limited to self-interest) that are implicitly exchanged at the nexus of the individual/organization relationship" (Thompson & Bunderson, 2003). Such commitments reflect the individual's belief that the organization will provide a mechanism and supportive

environment through which the individual can contribute to a highly valued cause (e.g. occupational ideals such as professional autonomy and discretion).

The attraction of incorporating a "transpersonal" perspective (Burr & Thomson, 2002) and the introduction of "ideological currency" (Thompson & Bunderson, 2003) into the psychological contract concept lies in its potential to provide new insights into why individuals identify with their employing organization. If contemporary changes in organizations have "effectively hollowed out" the potential for individuals to identify with the organization, as suggested by Rousseau (1998b), ideology may be the key to better understanding how the individual's need for meaning is met, and the processes and factors that shape and link identification with work. The incorporation of an ideological component also opens up the possibility of deriving new explanations for the ways in which individuals respond to contract breach by the organization. For example, the individual's perception of breach by the organization of an ideological commitment need not produce a negative personal impact in the way implied by a transactional/relational interpretative framework based only on economic and socio-emotional currencies.

The case of the knowledge worker

Knowledge workers are unlike previous generations of worker, not only because of their access to educational opportunities, but because in knowledge organisations they own the means of production i.e. knowledge that is located in brains, dialogue and symbols (Blackler, 1995; Drucker, 1993). As a consequence, productivity is now, more than ever, dependent on the contributions of specialist knowledge workers (Tovstiga, 1999).
Knowledge work - the acquisition, creation, packaging or application of knowledge - is characterised by variety and exception rather than routine, and is performed by professional workers with a high level of expertise (Davenport, Jarvenpaa, & Beers, 1996). Drucker (1999) explains that making knowledge workers more productive requires attitudinal changes entailing the involvement and understanding of the entire organisation not just the worker themselves. Specifically, knowledge workers must be able to determine the focus of their task, and have autonomy and responsibility for their own productivity. Their tasks have to include a commitment to continuing innovation, and provide for continuous learning. There needs be a commitment to quality and treating the knowledge worker as an asset rather than as a cost. When these factors are not an integral part of the organisational context, the productivity of the knowledge worker is at risk (Drucker, 1999).

Theoretically these arguments are appealing but there has been little empirical research investigating the relationship between employer and knowledge worker. Accordingly, the following exploration of changes within the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) attempts to explore the basis of the psychological contract of knowledge workers for that organisation.

Changes at CSIRO

CSIRO is one of the world's most diverse scientific research organisations with an international reputation for its scientific achievements. It has 22 research divisions, based in all states of Australia, which are largely organised around

scientific disciplines. Of its approximately 6600 staff, around 1650 are research scientists performing research and development in agribusiness, environment and natural resources, information technology, infrastructure and services, minerals and energy and manufacturing (CSIRO, 2003). The commitment to research and development at CSIRO provides a unique example of an organisation that exemplifies the features of a knowledge worker environment. It is also an organisation that has been subject to major change impacting on the nature of employee expectations.

Established in 1926, CSIRO is a government-funded organisation committed to scientific research that provides independent expert advice to Government and the Australian public. Until the 1990s, the organisation had essentially been free to pursue projects that it considered to be in the 'common good'. In 1995, however, the Australian federal government's requirement that CSIRO adopt a more commercial focus and generate 30 per cent of its income via commercial projects became one of six performance indicators agreed for the organization (CSIRO, 1996). Concern amongst CSIRO staff about the effect of funding changes was ongoing. On the Radio National Science Show, broadcast on 5/10/2002, Dr. Whitten, a retired Chief of the CSIRO Division of Entomology, claimed that the funding changes and new restrictions on scientific research activity had resulted in palpable increased levels of stress amongst the scientists. Furthermore, he predicted, "untold irreparable damage will be done and the organisation that we're finishing up with will be one that people won't worry too much about keeping".

The aim of the current research is to review the impact of these changes in light of the current debate about an appropriate work context for the knowledge worker. With reference to the psychological contract literature, the research question becomes: whether the binary characterisation of the contract terms as being either economic or socio-emotional in nature is sufficient to explain the perceived psychological contract of knowledge workers within CSIRO and whether there is evidence of a ideological component of the contract?

Research methodology

The complexity of issues under investigation required a rich data source. Semi-structured interviews provide the best means of data collection because they allow appropriate exploration of key issues (Neuman, 2000; Babbie, 1992). To ensure consistency with the literature a 17 item scale of psychological contract breach, based on measures established in the literature, was used (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2002; Lester, Turnley, Bloodgood & Bolino, 2002; Turnley & Feldman, 2000). As this is exploratory qualitative research, the researcher tape-recorded the explanations given for each score and it is these comments that form the basis of the analysis. In addition, a second set of questions concerned with organisational commitment, using the updated Myer and Allen (1991) continuance and affective commitment scale (see Myer & Allen, 1997) was used. The schedule was developed and then tested in a pilot study before finalisation. An experienced professional interviewer was used to conduct the interviews. The

tape recordings were then subsequently transcribed and analysed using QSR NUD*IST 55 software.

The sample consisted of 10 research scientists drawn from one CSIRO research division who were operating as project managers with some autonomy in the way they conducted their work. Of these 3 were female and 7 were male. The longest period of CSIRO employment was 30 years and the minimum 10. The level of experience reflected in this sample allowed us to explore a full range of issues for these knowledge workers. For the purpose of this exploratory research younger scientists were defined as being with CSIRO between 10 and 15 years, while older scientists were defined as being with the organisation for 20 or more years.

Results

The interviews began with a general question about the nature and extent of perceived changes that had taken place at CSIRO in the course of the interviewee's career. All of the interviewees either noted the commitment to commercialisation or the resultant structural changes as key features in their perceptions of organisational life. Interviewees were then asked to view the items listed on the psychological contract survey and comment on the level of fulfilment of each of the items.

Ideological Component of the Psychological Contract

The quotes provided below are indicative of the responses to items that elicited the most reaction from the scientists. Two of these items, for example, 'the freedom to do my job well' and 'enjoyable work', prompted responses about the nature of the science being conducted and the type of knowledge that was being generated. Concerns shared by both old and young scientists suggested a common ideological component of the contract. These included the need for public availability of the knowledge produced (greater for younger scientists), the possible ongoing generation of new knowledge (greater for older scientists), commitment to 'public good' projects, and Australia's access to international research developments.

> *We have really become consultants, contractors I guess you could say. The possibility of generating meaningful original science and involvement in ' public good' research is getting harder and harder to achieve.* (Interviewee # 9 -older scientist)

> *My main frustration is that the knowledge that we generate is no longer really in the public domain - only the groups that we answer to really get the benefit of the science.*
>
> (Interviewee #5- younger scientist)

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Younger scientists tended to have a more transactional view of their contract. In general they enjoyed working with their project teams and valued the collegiality but were also much more pragmatic about leaving the research and taking up new projects. Their commitment to the organisation itself was limited.

> *I like working here but I don't feel restricted to this option. If something else came up that was interesting I would certainly be open to that possibility.* (Interviewee #8)

Older scientists expressed concern at this:

> *I also get very concerned about younger scientists who are working on project work for an outside interest. They don't get around to publishing their ideas because they don't have the time. This means that the knowledge base is not being built up and there is a short-term focus on everything.* (Interviewee # 9)

They continued to value the relational part of their contract but only as long as the organisation's requirements were congruent with their own ideology.

> *I actually just turned down another job that would have meant great financial returns. But I have a lot personally invested in the research that I have done here and I am very committed to it.* (Interviewee # 1)

The older scientists identified some of the drivers of changes in their psychological contracts.

> *We need to focus less on administration and restructuring and remember what we are here for - science and research.* (Interviewee # 9)

Many of the older scientists clearly identified that the perceived changes in their contract are sources of disaffection and withdrawal of commitment. Their perceptions had moved to be more transactional towards the organisation while retaining a 'passion' for their science, but not the non-science components of their work.

> *The thing that keeps me here? The science* (Interviewee # 4)

> *Someone asked me the other day if I would go out of my way to do something for CSIRO and I just laughed. I would have at one time but not any more.* (Interviewee #1)

Discussion

The results indicate that the scientists are concerned about the nature of scientific output and knowledge generation at CSIRO. The issues of concern are more ideological and societal based in nature than transactional or relational associated with the organisation. The scientists responded most strongly to the psychological contract questionnaire items, "the freedom to do my job well", "enjoyable work" and "resources needed to perform the job". The older scientists were particularly concerned about the reduction of autonomy in the knowledge creation process, connecting it with failures to generate and publish knowledge in new areas and research issues that were associated with the 'public good'. They were also concerned about Australia's profile in international research activity. While younger scientists were more concerned about 'resources needed to complete the job' they also shared concerns about the ongoing development and publication of knowledge, and the limited public access to technological developments.

These results help clarify key features in the psychological contract of the knowledge worker. Drucker (1999) highlights the link between productivity and the principles of professional autonomy and responsibility for task direction and productivity i.e. principles that allow an ideological component of the psychological contract to be created by knowledge workers. According to the older scientists interviewed these principles operated in CSIRO in the past but developments in the last ten years have reduced their significance. The strong response to this development indicates that the principles of professional autonomy and responsibility are key factors in the psychological contract, especially for scientists who have had longer careers.

A further factor that arose from the interviews, not identified by Drucker (1999), is the need for the knowledge worker to make a sustained and valued contribution to the relevant body of knowledge i.e. a contribution that transcends the organization. Concomitant with this need is the expectation the organization will provide the opportunity to make that contribution. Scientists commented with concern that organizational change had meant that much of the knowledge they create is not being effectively published and consequently their ability to contribute to the advancement of Australia' scientific base is stifled. This commitment to the collective development of ideas and the body of knowledge itself, along with public access of knowledge, appears to be an enduring factor regardless of tenure.

The beliefs regarding professional autonomy and responsibility, making a sustained and valued contribution to the relevant body of knowledge, and possessing a common commitment to the wider knowledge base appear better understood in terms of the primacy of ideological elements of the psychological contract (Burr & Thomson, 2002; Thompson & Bunderson, 2003). That these elements appear to be fundamental to the group of scientists interviewed suggests the possibility that they may form core content terms within the psychological contract. It also suggests that any relational elements in the psychological contract may be artefacts of congruence between organisational aims and scientists' ideological stance.

Limitations

While the exploratory approach provided the flexibility needed to identify and clarify key components in the psychological contract, and qualitative methods enabled the depth and richness of the idiosyncratic perspectives of the study participants to be captured, the research method used in the study has some inherent limitations. The study findings need to be assessed in the light of these limitations.

First, as a consequence of the convenience sampling technique used in the study the sample of scientists is neither representative of the scientific research profession or of knowledge workers generally. As a profession of long standing, scientific research is characterised by a well-developed set of normative work values and beliefs that underpin a strong sense of collective identity shared by its members. Some knowledge-based occupations that have emerged more recently, for example in the IT field industry, have yet to establish similar attributes. Alternative perspectives might therefore be expected to emerge by sampling a range of professions. A larger more diverse sample might provide important information about the ways in which differences in professional cultures, structures, and histories impact on the beliefs of knowledge workers regarding their psychological contracts.

Second, the research setting selected for this exploratory study was limited to one public sector research and development organization. CSIRO's role as the major national provider of publicly-funded research capability and the largest single employer of scientific knowledge workers in Australia, arguably makes it unique in the Australian context. Consequently, the principles of "public service" and "public good", which historically have underpinned and shaped CSIRO's organizational goals and objectives, may have led to the sampled scientists being more sensitive to ideological breaches than scientists working in private sector R & D organizations. Also, in line with psychological contract research, the major funding and organizational restructurings CSIRO has experienced in recent years are likely to have shaped the perceptions of the sampled scientists significantly. Hence, using a broader sample of organizational settings, embracing the private sector and not-for-profit organizations, might shed further light on the transferability of this study's findings.

Third, the small sample size meant the analysis could not be meaningfully controlled for a range of demographic variables that previous psychological contract research has shown may attenuate reactions to psychological contract breach and fulfilment. Nevertheless the qualitative interview data gathered for this study hints at possible merit in exploring ideology-infused psychological contracts in light of a broader range of demographic factors, for example age, gender, employment tenure and status, and years of service with current employing organization. Cross-cultural variables may also be worthy of consideration.

Finally, although in the case of this study exploratory and qualitative methods were considered most appropriate, future research might also seek to explore these issues using alternative research designs, sampling strategies and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques.

Conclusions

Echoing Drucker's (1999) descriptions of the factors that underline knowledge worker productivity, the interviews raise the possibility that content terms of the psychological contract for the CSIRO scientists may directly reflect ideological issues. Freedom to select the focus of work, autonomy to decide how to conduct the work, organisational resources to complete the task to a satisfactory standard, and the organisation's commitment to the development of knowledge as a value independent of business needs, occurred in this research as key expectations in the scientists' psychological contract. The need to make a recorded contribution to the body of professional knowledge and to the 'public good' was also evident in the scientists' view of their work.

It is argued that although both transactional and relational components of the psychological contract are evident, scientists' concerns cannot be fitted neatly within the relational/transactional characterisation of the contract. The inducement to contribute seems to tap into ideological rewards i.e. the rewards associated with being involved with some intangible principle or with benefiting society, or some segment of it. In fact, there appears to be evidence that for some knowledge workers at least the relational part of the contract exists only so long as there is congruence between their own ideology and the organisation's aims. The maintenance of a focus on the advancement of science that transcends the organization, and a reduced commitment by scientists to the organisation itself, is consistent with the suggestion that knowledge workers often direct their loyalty towards their careers and profession rather than to their organization (Holland, Hecker & Steen, 2002).

This exploratory study lends support to calls in the psychological contract for the reconsideration of the cognitive-perceptual definition of the concept and its transactional/relational interpretative framework. It suggests work ideologies may be significant in the psychological contract, particularly for professional employees. That many individuals seem to be refocusing their allegiance and career aspirations away from the organization onto their occupations to anchor their self-esteem and identity in the workplace makes the role of professional ideologies in the psychological contracts worthy of further examination.

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APPENDIX 7

Appendix 7: Sample interview transcript

Q: *I'm interested in the values and beliefs you think nurses have. What does it mean to be a nurse?*

A: Funny thing is when you live with being something for such a long time, or you look forward to it, it's really hard to put that in words. I think for me, and from what I've seen, it is that nurses have a humanitarian side to them first and foremost. They like the skills of learning about procedures secondly, but first and for most it's the care and assessment of the patient and their significant others, plus the bit of autonomy that they have as they get more proficient at what they do, and being able to work within an organisation that still maintains that humanitarian basis to the care of the individual.

Q: *Take yourself back to when you decided you wanted to be a nurse, what spurred you to make that decision?*

A: When I was about 3, I was really interested in bodily things, like antiseptics and how organs work and surgical stuff. I got interested in the running of hospitals, that sort of regimented that they were in those days, and I had a little bit to do with them. Then I became more interested in people, and putting all those three components together to be trained and to do that.

Q: *Do those interests still hold true today?*

A: Absolutely. More so I think.

Q: *From that I understand you're saying that through working in a hospital as a nurse you are able to enjoy a technical interest as well as social relationships, and that the hospital provides you with the place, an instrument if you like, to still enjoy that work. What's your central focus as a nurse then?*

A: My central focus is my patient and my relationship with him, first and foremost. From that it's my assessment skills - the assessment of what's required within his physical environment, and the assessment of his family and where he is in that and his community.

Q: *So are you saying that you're interested in the patient rather than in the illness? You've talked before about being interested in bodily functions and physiology.*

A: Yes my first interest is in my patient to get a good relationship with them, then your assessment of their illness comes into being.

Q: *In what way does that make your role as a nurse different from that of a doctor?*

A: Because culturally I think doctors have always been, firstly, interested in the patient as a medical condition or a surgical condition. Even after years of training it still takes them a while to understand that there are people at the other end of that medical condition. They're like detectives really, aren't they. They've got to come up with the diagnosis in order to treat. We only have nursing diagnosis so we don't have that depth of responsibility I suppose, it's the treatment.

Q: *Can you tell me a little bit about the distinction between a medical diagnosis and a nursing diagnosis?*

A: The nursing diagnosis is treating; like you've got a headache, well its not up to us to make a diagnosis and say it could just be from flu or it could be sub-arachnoid, but it's a headache so we treat that.

Q: *So you know about the medication that relates to that?*

A: Or positioning, or light. Whereas the doctor because he's got to legally treat with drugs or procedures, he has to.

Q: *The hospital employs you as a professional. To what extent in your mind is the hospital obligated to treat you as a professional, and how do they treat you as a professional? How should they treat you as a professional?*

A: I don't feel that there's a loyalty downwards from the upper echelons of administration/managerial. I think they've lost sight of the coalface worker and what people are there to do and why they're there. I think that in order for them to treat us as a professional person I think that they need to show a bit more respect for the job that nurses do, with what they're supposed to be doing, like why we're all there to begin with.

Q: *How would they show that respect? Can you give me an example?*

A: Well, I was working in emergency for 11 years I think and I found it was just too tough because they took staff away, because even though our acuity of patients was getting heavy they did not show us the respect for the work that we did over a 24 hour period.

Q: *Are you saying that there's a mismatch between the values of the upper echelons of the hospital, to use your word, and the values of a nurse? The values of the nurse are very much to do with the patient and relationship with the patient, and there's incongruence between the way you're treated by the management as an employee, and the way that you as a nursing professional deal with your relationships?*

A: It's a bit like 'Animal Farm', isn't it?

Q: *Is it? Every workplace is a farmyard!*

A: It's a bit like 'Animal Farm'. I've been in charge in DEM during horrendous shifts and the management can come down and express some concern and may even help out for a short period of time but they don't fix the problem which is evident because of the short staffing. That's fairly universal I think through the hospital. They don't show the respect for the people that they've got working. I know they have to look at the bigger picture. I know that there are budgets, and there are community things and all that involved, but these people that we're getting through here now require more and more care. It's not like they were 10 years ago. We're doing a higher turnover, or we've got people that are placement problems but they are demented and require constant care. I don't feel that the nurses are supported in working 24 hours a day in that.

Q:	*Well, the management might say 'look, the nurses have to get realistic about this, they have to see the bigger picture, we have a limited budget and we have to make decisions about priorities and we're paid to make the decisions so they should just accept that and should see the bigger picture'. How would you respond to that sort of rationale for their actions?*

A:	They've closed too many beds in the Southern part of the State. We've lost the Repat hospital. We've lost Douglas Parker. We've lost Peacock Convalescent Home. We've lost aged care beds. We've lost the Queen Alex Hospital which incorporated a very large medical ward. We've got less beds within the main structure of the hospital that we had. How can they say that we've got the beds and the structure to incorporate our community when we take patients from all over the State. We're the receiving hospital for everywhere. There was a point I was going to make and it's just gone. What was the first part of that question?

Q:	*To what extent should nurses see and accept the bigger picture, because management would say look we've got limited budgets, we have to make priorities.*

A:	Well, I don't think that management have got the bigger picture at all. I think that they've got a very tunnelled view of what they've done. I think that we get CEOs that come in on a 3-year contract or a 2-year contract. They come in, they perform well or do what they think is well in something, and then they go again and they leave a mess generally. We need someone whose got vision.

Q:	*They don't leave financial messes presumably? They don't leave a hospital that's over staffed? They don't presumably leave a hospital that's got derelict equipment? Do they?*

A:	I know wards in the hospital that hold raffles just so that they can get the money to buy blood pressure machines because they just don't have them in the funding.

Q:	*I was suggesting that CEOs and upper management are driven by a set of management values which are basically about efficient management of resources. The staff are perceived as costs rather than as assets, though equipment is because you have to depreciate it and it shows on the balance sheet. So, when a CEO goes after 3 years say, they usually don't leave behind unbalanced budgets.*

A:	No, they leave behind a very tight organisation that is decreased in its capacity to care for the community as a whole. That's what they've left behind. When I first came here we had I think it was 500 and something beds just in the main part of the hospital. Then we had the Queen Alex which was gyno, and midi, and the large medical ward as well, that's all gone. We had the Repat that had the orthopaedic, that's all gone. Where are those patients that filled those beds?

Q: *Presumably they haven't gone anywhere, have they?*

A: No, in fact we've got more of them because Gore Street, and Douglas Parker that had the rehabilitation ward, that's had to come down here. They've opened up some of the medical wards, but they've closed other medical wards and made them into offices. I don't understand how they can say that they've got a good structure, they might have on paper, but the community is finding it very tough. I suppose the hospital would be very, very, very well run for management if it didn't have any patients.

Q: *I guess this hospital has got a strategic plan and goals? Are you familiar with the strategic plan?*

A: I've read the strategic plan but I'm not familiar with it as of this particular moment, but I have read it.

Q: *Are you saying that you've read it and that's its not relevant to your day-to-day activities?*

A: I suppose language is funny thing. You can say anything, and you can hire somebody for 6 months to write a strategic plan or a mission statement but the reality is a lot different on the floor.

Q: *So from your perspective there's a gap between the espoused values and mission in the strategic plan and the reality?*

A: I think so.

Q: *Presumably the hospital makes much of its role in contributing to the community; that is it's part of the infrastructure that's used to support the principle that everybody should have access to quality health care irrespective of social and economic status. Hospitals have this major role, public sector hospitals particularly, are seen to be essential contributors to the community. Do you think that role has changed? Is it about contributing to the community, or is it now about efficient running of this organisation?*

A: I actually think that what they've got out in the community now as directed from this hospital is better than what it was 10 years ago. There's access to more clinics, like recognition of refugee health, podiatry, diabetics, all that cardiac education rehabilitation thing. So that people can go out and learn how to structure their life better so they don't have another problem again. I think that's terrific what they've done, and I still think that they can do more with community nursing.

Q: *It sounds like that as a nurse you perceive yourself as a nurse having a fairly fundamental responsibility but also a capacity to contribute to the community? To what extent does that get fulfilled for you by working at [this hospital]? Do you think of your work in those terms?*

A: When I'm working with patients and their families I extend that education and knowledge to set up community networks for them. So yeah, that extends into the community.

Q: *Would you recommend nursing as a career to a youngster?*

A: Absolutely. I give a talk every month to work experience kids. I've done quite a bit of nursing overseas with a few organisations. I tell them that nursing is only limited by your own imagination and where you want it to go, that you can do anything with nursing.

Q: *How long have you been giving that talk? How long have you been doing that sort of activity?*

A: 3 months I suppose.

Q: *Do you enjoy that?*

A: I don't like talking in public.

Q: *Would you recommend [this hospital] as a place to work?*

A: Oh yes. I think it is as good as anywhere.

Q: *Why? What is good about it?*

A: With nursing, there's not many hospitals in Australia that have all your specialities from psychiatric, orthopaedic, obstetric, emergencies, geriatric, rehabilitation, everything. So if you come to work at [this hospital] you've got a very extensive arena for learning about everything like paediatrics, everything. I think it's fabulous for that.

Q: *So, it's a good place to be a nurse then? Is it a good place to be an employee?*

A: Well, I think it is providing you don't have big expectations above what the organisation can deliver. You can work to attain the best you can with what you've got. One of the important things about a nurse is that you've got to be able to go home after an 8 or 10-hour shift, and feel like you've done everything that you can possibly can. When you come to work in the morning that's the foundation of what you want to do at the end of the day. You don't want to go off feeling like you've been abused by relatives and patients because the organisation has let you down. That happens quite a lot.

Q: *Can you give me an example of how the organisation might let you down in? Is it staff numbers in emergency?*

A: Oh, that's a huge one, that's a huge one.

Q: *That's the sort of let down you mean?*

A: Yes. It's a let down for staff but it's also sometimes an organisation lets the patients down, like I don't know doing something really dumb and not being able to accommodate them for whatever reason. It happens so frequently that I really can't think of one off the top of my hat but those sorts of things hurt. When you want to go to work and you want to give 110%, and you want to come home and feel like really, really good, that's that one thing that can let you down for a whole shift. Even though we shouldn't think like that, that's the way nurses think, that we bash ourselves up over inadequacies of not being able to do the job properly and missing something.

Q: *Are you saying that nurses take responsibilities for the organisation's failings?*

A: They're the representatives of the organisation, aren't they? They're on the public face of it, and I think that they've got to take some responsibility for it.

Q: *When you go home at the end of the day and you have given 110%, who have you given it to - the patient or the hospital?*

A: The patient and your peers, the people you work with.

Q: *So, you don't see yourself as making a contribution to the hospital? In a sense you're bypassing the organisation and going directly to your client. Your relationship with the patient is the major one? The relationship with the hospital is they pay you, they give you an office. It's the place that patients come to. So your relationship with it is quite instrumental?*

A: I don't have any loyalty to the organisation at all. I have a loyalty to the people that I work with, my peers and the patients that I care for.

Q: *What sort of change do you think they could make at [this hospital] that would actually encourage you to develop a loyalty to [this hospital]?*

A: For a start the people that work on the 8th and 9th floors have a very closeted, like you walk up there and you feel like putting your hush puppies on and you can't sing and laugh. So there's that delineation isn't there? My brother has been very very successful in business, like hugely successful. One of the big things that he did early on in his business was he got himself out of his office and placed himself out amongst everybody so he knew what was going on, and he was a face. That made a huge difference to that organisation and I think we need to [do the same]. I remember when nurse managers used to have their office on the floors where their units were, so you'd see them regularly and you became affiliated with them and you felt there was some sort of loyalty to them if they sort of were interested in the things that you were doing. Now you might see them, don't know.

Q: *Your supervisor, that is the person who directly supervises you, is in your unit or are they like these people?*

A: In education, they are. But when I was working on the wards it was your manager not your immediate, and the people after them. You know it takes you 7 minutes if you're lucky to get a lift to their offices, whereas that was not the case once.

Q: *The hospital structure is not very flexible and responsive in dealing with issues?*

A: I think that they need to make themselves more on the ground. I think they need to be seen to be genuinely concerned about what's happening with equipment and safety, and people, and everything. The only thing that we really see from the administration is putting a new floor in.

Q: *All this is very central to what I'm interested in. Can you give me your perception of the promises and obligations that you've entered into with the organisation and that the organisation in turn has entered into with you? They're not the explicit things, they're the things about contributing to the community, they're things about the way the organisation treats you?*

A: Flexible working hours!

Q: *Every known disease on planet, you can get it here at [this hospital]?*

A: That's just in the canteen!

Q: *As a professional, you think right I'll go and work there because they're going to give me that opportunity and I want to take advantage of that. I'm going to get involved in it. Can you think of an example, an instance when the organisation has done something where you've thought to yourself 'hang on a minute, that's not what they should be doing, that's not what I was led to believe or I expect of this place, they've let me down'?*

A: I think it would have to come back to the closing of all those beds, not just closing beds when it becomes critical but also the closing of all those beds and then saying that we have to do the same things. I remember at the time they put in a 'patch team' which was people could go home and have their IV antibiotics at home. That sort of helped free up beds and that was good you know. If someone comes in and gets contracted and then the job changes, and we've been involved with so many research projects, people will come in and say we're going to do this for 12 months, and we're going to set this up and at the end of it we'll have this. Well we might have that at the end of it but then the job disappears and there's nobody there to ensure that it carries on and it becomes a culture of the organisation. People get paid a lot of money to do this sort of stuff. I think I've probably been involved in like 10 major hospital researches that have not amounted to anything.

Q: *That happens in other organisations.*

A: I know it's the nature of the beast.

Q: *In trying to understand what being a nurse means in professional terms, I have read the guidelines prepared by the Royal College of Nursing, Australia, and the Nursing Council. There are ethics statements, and a scope of practice and those sorts of things. How significant are those documents to you in working as a nurse?*

A: Well, they're very significant because the majority of nurses don't really understand. If you gave them those competencies and said is this what you do, they'd look at them and say look I've got no idea, it's just a whole lot of big words and I don't understand them. But when you sit down and explain to people what they do, I've seen someone answer the majority of those competencies in a 3 minute care of a patient. So they're very, very important and it's very important to have those standards to increase the body of the Australia/New Zealand -wide organisation of nursing.

Q: *So you're saying the development of the profession is a very important component for you in your work?*

A: So long as it relates to what it's all about, like patient care, continuing education, understanding ethical dilemmas, not putting your own beliefs onto other people, all that sort of thing.

Q: *In some of the literature there's been a suggestion that nursing as a profession might disappear.*

A: I think that's a long-term goal.

Q: *Of whom?*

A: I don't know. I think in Canberra somewhere, there are little offices that are run by little gnomes and they live for a long time so 10 years in their life span is like a few weeks. I think they have this long term goal and they know where they want to be in 100 years time and I think that registered nurses as we know them today will cease to become that employable probably in 20 years time. I think they will be taken over by enrolled nurses, and enrolled nurses jobs will be taken over by carers and in the future they'll have medication trolleys that are set up by pharmacists and for which you don't need to have a registered nurse to distribute drugs, that sort of thing.

Q: *Who is going to do the nursing diagnosis?*

A: Well I think that there will be people who aren't as highly skilled. I think we're outskilling as the profession becomes more technically orientated, more specialised. I've worked with people from America where their speciality is so defined that they've lost sight of the future of what nursing is all about. They concentrated more on career paths and getting tertiary education, getting highly skilled, specialised. So a majority of nurses started to look for administrative managerial type things, and other nurses started to look for very speciality areas so that they became very confined in their skills. I think that we've done ourselves a disservice and I think we're all starting now to re-visit where exactly we want to go. I think we've realised that we've got a problem. Enrolled nurses 20 years ago were nurses who were probably as skilled as what registered nurses are today. The expectation of an enrolled nurse is a lot more today, like a registered nurse is a lot more today. I think that eventually they'll find that the enrolled nurses will be able to do the job of a registered nurse.

Q: *So are you saying to me that the transfer of nursing education to universities, for example, is producing a nursing professional that is actually growing more out of touch with the work requirements of hospitals?*

A: I think that the direction that it took initially when it first went into universities the components were so huge that you had to do a lot more to get your degree. Finally they've brought it down and brought it down, and so you have to do less to obtain the same degree. So I think that initially that was certainly the case. People say you have to have a university degree to a professional, well I don't have a university degree and I'm professionally very good at what I do. I've maintained a focus on utilising I suppose those things that the universities have done, looking into research and that sort of thing, in order to increase my [knowledge]. But I don't think we all need to do it. A lot of those nurses went off and wanted to do it to get out, like people who are teachers. They do all this stuff so they can get out of the clinical area and go and do office work and managers. They're the people that shouldn't be there, because they didn't understand what it was all about, they didn't like it so they wanted to get out.

Q: *How would you assess the strengths and weaknesses of university-trained nurses coming into the system now, given what you've just said? Are they bringing new strengths, new qualities?*

A: I honestly can say I really don't really see much of a difference between the hospital. Hospital training finished 14 years ago. All those nurses that finished their training 14 years ago are now either they're out of the workforce or they've become very specialised in the areas that they want to work. Now, the university trained nurses will reach those [points], so really we're much on a par. To me, university and hospital trained nurses have never been any different really.

Q: *Given your comments about the development of the profession, I'm interested in your views about your own professional development. What direction do you take yourself in? Clearly nursing knowledge is developing and given your current role in the education unit you clearly see that there should be an emphasis on professional development. How do you think nurses should do that?*

A: I think its building blocks, isn't it? You build a foundation with your training or your university degree, and then you probably spend 2 years working out what you want to do and using all of the resources that you have - your senior staff, your patients, questioning them medical staff, hospital resources, reading, internet, I mean a whole gambit of stuff - and then you slowly build by utilising that all the time, keeping an open mind and practising. You just absorb; if you really love what you do you just absorb everything.

Q: *How characteristic is that of the nursing population do you think?*

A: Probably 80% I think.

Q: *In your role as an educator, I guess you're part of the infrastructure the organisation provides to its professionals, to help them develop their competencies and expertise. Would you say that professional development is a partnership with the organisation?*

A: My job actually came out of a political election a few years ago when they couldn't get any nurses back into the hospital. My job actually has been funded by the government basically for the organisation to get these nurses back into practice again. The organisation didn't recognise it, it was like a political appointment.

Q: *Is that lack of organisational sympathy or support still there? I've talked to other nurses in the education unit who tell me, for example, that the education unit doesn't have a budget. It's not a cost centre so they have to go and request funding for everything. That to me sounds like the organisation is saying that the education unit isn't a priority, but clearly professional development for nurses is an attraction, and is used for recruitment and retention?*

A: It is, and that what you've said is true. I think it's one of parts of the organisation [recruitment and retention] that doesn't recognise the need or the depth of need, the importance of that, I don't think it's really treated.

Q: *It's amazing isn't it. Do you distinguish between when you're thinking about the hospital and the organisation as an employee, and when you're thinking about it as a nurse? Do you make such a distinction in your mind?*

A: I never think about the organisation, I never think about it.

Q: *You don't fear for your job? Job security is not an issue for you?*

A: No.

Q: *Is that because it's not an issue or because that's your mindset, that you're a professional, you're committed to nursing and that you can take your skills anywhere and you will be in demand?*

A: Yes, I'm very good at what I do.

Q: *I'm interested in how significant your direct manager is to you in performing your professional role?*

A: My direct manager, irrespective of who it is, has always been a vital person in how I perceive my job. There's been some that I haven't had a lot of respect for but I haven't trampled over them. I've been supportive and tried to build foundations I suppose, so that they could feel like that they need to be a little more proactive in what they do. There are other people that I have great admiration for, so they're very important. Whoever you work directly with is very important. Having said that however, in the whole of my time as a nurse I've only had two people that I consider to be good enough for me to have as a mentor. Not that many in the numbers that I've met and worked with.

Q: *And has that been a judgement based on your assessment of their nursing skill, or is it a judgement based on the personal chemistry between you?*

A: No, not personal chemistry because one person I wasn't particularly fond of for some time. It was their professional ethics, their knowledge and skills, their direction and problem solving, how they deal with other peers or managers that are a little bit confronting, all those things. You know you look at somebody and you know what you want to aspire to and there's not that many really. (End of tape)