PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACTS, CAREERISM, 
AND GOAL ORIENTATIONS

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ABSTRACT. Psychological contracts are subjective perceptions about exchange agreements between employees and employers. Through surveys of 256 graduating college seniors with recently accepted job offers, beliefs regarding employment obligations were investigated. Consistent with findings by Rousseau (1990), new hires’ perceptions of employee and employer obligations were interrelated and consistent with either transactional or relational contracts. Further, while expected tenure with the first employer was related to relational contracts, “careerism” was negatively related to new hires’ beliefs in a relational contract and positively related to a transactional contract with an employer. The results also revealed that goal orientations moderate the relationship between relational contracts and careerism. Specifically, the results indicate that the relationship was more strongly negative in individuals with high mastery orientation. The findings in this study therefore indicate that new hires’ attitudes are shaped by both explicit and implicit promises and by individual characteristics such as goal orientations.

INTRODUCTION

It has been suggested that the psychological contract is the key factor influencing attitudes among employees (Lee & Liu, 2009; Raja, Johns, & Ntalianis, 2004). Although this concept can be traced

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back to the 1960s when it emerged as a footnote in Argyris (1960) book on organizational behavior, research on psychological contracts emerged as a major field in management and applied psychology outlets in the 1980s and 1990s in response to the organizational changes that took place during these decades and which transformed the traditional employment relationship (Freese & Schalk, 2008).

More than twenty years have passed since Rousseau (1990) examined the relationship between new hires’ perceptions of own and organizational obligations and career motives. The study identified how different psychological contract content, transactional or relational, impacts individual perceptions of mutual obligations in the employment relationship. Rousseau found that perceptions of employee and employer obligations were interrelated and clarified the distinction between transactional and relational contracts. She further found that new hires’ perceptions of relational obligations to the employer were positively related to expected organizational tenure, but also a negative relationship between “careerism” (e.g., viewing employment as a stepping-stone for future opportunities) and perceived obligations.

The purpose of this study is to replicate the work performed by Rousseau (1990). Given the changes that have taken place since the 1990s with increased competition from emerging markets, the recent financial crisis, prolonged recessionary trends, a tight job market, and the overall changing dynamics of the employment relationship (such as an aging workforce, the “milleniums” entering the workforce, and an increased use of technology in organizational communication) a replication may be warranted. This study therefore seeks to extend our understanding of the emergence of employee-employer obligations in a contemporary context. It specifically examines the relationship between new hires’ perceptions of their own and their future organizations’ obligations, obligations and career motives. However, in order to more fully understand why individuals develop different types of contracts, this study also examines how “goal orientations,” or self-theories about the development of attributes (Dweck, 1999), impact these relationships. Previous research has established that there is a relationship between different types of goal orientations and achievement and behaviors in workplace situations (Dweck, 1986; Nicholls, 1984; Van Yperen & Janssen,
2002) and through this empirical study we seek to understand how such differences may impact the employer-employee relationship.

**THEORY AND HYPOTHESES**

Social exchange theory, which suggests that parties enter into relationships when they both perceive it to be beneficial to do so, is the starting point when trying to understand the nature of psychological contracts (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). A great amount of research has accumulated on psychological contracts over the last couple of decades, as researchers appear to believe that such contracts shape employee attitudes and behaviors at work (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; Herriot, Manning, & Kidd, 1997; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Robinson & Wolfe Morrison, 1995; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999; Turnley & Feldman, 2000).

Although scholars have disagreed upon a clear definition of what a psychological contract constitutes, most work on psychological contracts cite the work of Denise Rousseau (e.g., 1989, 1990, 1995, 2000). Rousseau (1995) defined psychological contracts as “individually held perceptions regarding exchange agreements between employees and organizations.” Such perceptions are based on promises made, accepted, and relied on between employees and organizations, or someone acting on their behalf (Conway & Briner, 2005) and are generally considered to be of a subjective nature as employees process and incorporate promises into their own unique psychological contracts (Wade-Benzoni, Rousseau, & Li, 2006).

Studies on psychological contracts have typically differentiated between transactional and relational contracts when identifying contract content. Transactional psychological contracts are characterized by highly specified performance terms, narrow scope, and finite time periods (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994), while relational contracts are based on good faith and fairness, and consist of the exchange of personal and socio-emotional resources in addition to purely economic resources (Rousseau, 1990; 1995).

Transactional contracts assume that the relationship between employer and organization is clearly stated and defined, and that there are no implied expectations that the parties will contribute beyond the specified terms. In contrast, with relational contacts the employer is concerned about the employee’s well being in return for
contributions on assignments that go beyond previous arrangements and experiences (Tsui, Pearce, Porter, & Tripoli, 1997). As the individual psychological contract is shaped by multiple contract makers and with potentially different promises being made, the expectations of what is being promised may vary greatly from person to person, even within the same organization. Consistent with Rousseau’s (1990) findings, we do, however, expect to find that perceptions of employee and employer obligations will be interrelated:

Hypothesis 1: New hires’ perceptions of employee and employer obligations will be interrelated and consistent with either transactional or relational contracts.

In return for employer investments in training and development, employees with relational contracts are typically willing to adjust to new and challenging performance requirements and embrace opportunities for career development provided by the employer (Rousseau, 1995; Millward & Hopkins, 1998; Conway & Briner, 2005). Since they also tend to view work arrangements as open-ended, it would be natural to assume such employees would see the employment relationship as ongoing and dynamic as they are promised opportunities for professional and personal growth. We therefore expect, consistent with Rousseau (1990), that employment length with an organization will be associated with the obligations they believe exist between them and their first employer following graduation. We therefore hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2: Expected tenure with the first employer following graduation is positively related to a perceived relational contract with the employer.

Additionally, targeting a specific organization for employment based on opportunities for professional and personal growth would most likely suggest that the employee hopes to develop a relationship with that employer. We therefore hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3: A new hire’s desire for employment in a particular organization is positively related to perceived relational contracts.

Given the uncertainty associated with entering the workplace for the first time, particularly in a tight job market, new hires may not, however, view their first job as one that they will stay with for an extended period of time. As frequently addressed in mass media,
graduating college seniors have been told that not only will they have multiple jobs in the years ahead, but even multiple careers. It would therefore be natural to assume that some new hires will seek out employment opportunities with future external mobility in mind. Rousseau (1990) labeled such behavior careerism, and she defined it as behavior where employees view their employment with a particular organization as a stepping-stone to better jobs elsewhere. She further suggested that employees exhibiting such behavior are adopting a transactional view of their employment since they perceive few obligations to exist between themselves and the employing organization. Consistent with Rousseau’s work, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 4: Careerism is negatively related to new hires’ belief in a relational contract and positively related to a transactional contract with the employer.

The extent to which new hires seek to take advantage of opportunities offered to them by the hiring organization or use it as a stepping-stone could be explained by their goal orientations. Dweck (1999) defined goal orientations as stable personality characteristics generated through “self-theories” about the nature and development of individual attributes such as intelligence, personality, abilities, and skills. Research on goal orientations suggests that there is a relationship between different types of goal orientations and achievement in workplace situations (Dweck, 1986; Nicholls, 1984; Van Yperen & Janssen, 2002). Various definitions have been used to distinguish between different goal orientations, but we will use Van Yperen and Janssen’s (2002) language and distinguish between a performance orientation and a mastery orientation. The former describes an inclination toward establishing superiority over others, while the latter describes efforts directed at “developing competence, gaining skills, and doing one’s best” (Van Yperen & Janssen, 2002; p. 1181). A conceptual differentiation between the two orientations suggests that individuals with a performance orientation view intelligence, or skills and abilities, as fixed, while individuals with a mastery orientation view it as something that can be developed, as suggested in Dweck’s (1999) work.

A practical implication of these two distinct goal orientations would be associated with how they approach challenges and opportunities associated with employment. Individuals with a performance orientation will not believe that exerting effort at work
will lead to improved performance since they view abilities and talents as fixed and internal entities. In contrast, individuals with a mastery orientation view the same entities as dynamic and that exerting efforts will lead to improved performance (Van Yperen & Janssen, 2004). This dynamic view of performance will most likely impact those who view the employment relationship as on going and open ended to a greater extent than those who view it as a purely economic transaction. After all, individuals with relational contracts are expected to adjust to new and challenging requirements and opportunities for training and development, (Rousseau, 1995; Millward & Hopkins, 1998; Conway & Briner, 2005). Similarly, individuals with a performance orientation will most likely not embrace these opportunities, as they do not believe that entities such as skills and abilities are possible to change (Dweck, 1999).

Based on differences in goal orientation, we do not expect individuals with a performance-orientation to seek out employment situations with a high degree of investment in human capital, whereas those with a mastery orientation will value such opportunities. We therefore hypothesize:

Hypothesis 5: Mastery orientation will moderate the relationship between relational contracts and careerism. The relationship will be more strongly negative with high mastery orientation.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Procedure

The participants in this study consisted of 256 graduating seniors from a state university on the east coast of the United States. All subjects had secured employment following graduation and they were currently enrolled in their last semester of course-work when the collection of data took place. The subjects were told that the study aimed to better understand the employer/employee relationship. Three hundred and fifty surveys were distributed to students who had identified themselves as “employed following graduation” and 256 (response rate = 73%) complete and useable surveys were returned from the students. Of the respondents, 55% were female and 45% were male. The mean age was approximately 21 years (SD = 1.1).
Instruments

Careerism
The questionnaire contained five questions measuring expectations about changing employers many times during one’s career. These questions were identical to those utilized by Rousseau (1990), and it utilized a 1-7 scale (from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”). Items included: (1) I took this job as a stepping-stone to a better job with another organization, (2) I expect to work for a variety of different organizations in my career, (3) I do not expect to change organizations often during my career (reverse scoring), (4) there are many career opportunities I expect to explore after I leave my present employers, and (5) I am really looking for an organization to spend my entire career with (reverse scoring). The items yield an alpha reliability of 0.78.

Specific Company
The extent to which the respondents wanted a job with a specific organization when going through the recruitment process was measured with the same two questions used by Rousseau (1990) on a 1-7 scale (from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”). Items included: (1) I specifically set out to get a position with this organization and (2) I really wanted a job with this particular employer. The items yield a scale reliability of 0.80.

Expected Tenure
The respondents were asked to indicate how long they expect to remain with their first organization using the following scale: (0) less than a year (1) 1 year (2) 2 years (3) 3 years (4) 4 years (5) 5 years or more.

Obligations
Consistent with Rousseau (1990), the respondents were asked to indicate what they believed to be their obligations to their future employer and the employer’s obligations to them. Employee obligations were measured with eight items using a 1-7 scale (from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”), and employer obligations were measured with seven items using a 1-7 scale (from “strongly
disagree" to “strongly agree”). All items are included in Appendix A. The items yield scale reliabilities of 0.82 and 0.79 respectively.

**Goal Orientation**

Goal orientation was measured with the items utilized by Van Yperen and Janssen (2004). Eleven items identified *mastery* orientation and *performance* orientation using a 1-7 scale (from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”). All items are included in Appendix B. The items yield scale reliabilities of 0.90 and 0.91 respectively.

**Gender**

Respondents’ gender were recorded and dummy-coded (0=male, 1=female) in order to control for the possibility that there could be gender differences.

**RESULTS**

The zero-order correlations in this study are provided in Table 1. The correlations were calculated in order to test hypotheses 1-4.

**TABLE 1**

Zero-Order Correlations for Obligations, Motivations, and Goal Orientations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Employer Contract</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(1) Transactional</td>
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<td>(2) Relational</td>
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<td>0.07</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Transactional</td>
<td>0.41*</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(4) Relational</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.44*</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(5) Careerism</td>
<td>0.25*</td>
<td>-0.24*</td>
<td>0.19*</td>
<td>-0.44*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Company specific</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>-0.15*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(7) Expected tenure</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.13*</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.26*</td>
<td>-0.56*</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
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<tr>
<td>(8) Performance orientation</td>
<td>0.23*</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.22*</td>
<td>0.26*</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.25*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) Mastery orientation</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.15*</td>
<td>0.30*</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.14*</td>
<td>0.31*</td>
<td>0.36*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * p <0.05.
Hypothesis 1 proposed, consistent with Rousseau’s (1990) original study, that new hires’ perceptions of employee and employer obligations would be interrelated and consistent with either transactional or relational contracts. The results revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between employer and employee transactional contract obligations ($r=0.41, p<0.05$), and a positive relationship between employer and employee relational contract obligations ($r=0.44, p<0.05$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

With respect to Hypothesis 2, we expected tenure with the first employer following graduation to be positively related to a perceived relational contract with the employer. Consistent with the hypothesis, the results revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between expected tenure and relational contracts ($r=0.26, p<0.05$). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Hypothesis 3 suggested that a new hire’s desire for employment in a particular organization would be positively related to perceived relational contracts. The results, however, were consistent with Rousseau’s (1990) findings, and no statistically significant relationship existed ($r=0.11, p>0.05$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Hypothesis 4 suggested that careerism would be negatively related to new hires’ belief in a relational contract and positively related to a transactional contract with the employer. The results were consistent with those in the original study by Rousseau (1990). Careerism was negatively and statistically significant related to relational contracts ($r=-0.44, p<0.05$), and positively related to transactional contracts ($r=0.19, p<0.05$). Thus, Hypothesis 4 was supported.

With respect to Hypothesis 5, multiple regression analysis was used. This hypothesis proposed that mastery orientation will moderate the relationship between relational contracts and careerism, and more specifically, that the relationship will be more strongly negative with high mastery orientation. In order to assess the interaction effect, a moderated regression was performed, consistent with Aiken and West (1991), where the variables were centered at their means in order to make the results more interpretable. As shown in Table 2, there was a significant interaction between mastery orientation and careerism in predicting relational contracts ($β=-.58, p$
Hence, the negative relationship between careerism and relational contracts was particularly strong among respondents with high mastery orientation. Thus, Hypothesis 5 was supported (labeled “H5a” in Table 2). Although used as a control variable, gender differences were not statistically significant.

Since mastery orientation and performance orientation were relatively strongly correlated ($r=0.36$, $p<0.05$), we decided to perform a supplementary analysis and examine whether mastery and performance goal orientations may interact in their effects. Consistent with Aiken and West (1991), predictor variables were centered and we calculated the cross-product term and regression statistics. This analysis revealed that mastery and performance orientation interacted on the dependent variable (results from this supplementary analysis is labeled “H5b” in Table 2). These results suggest, consistent with Janssen and Van Yperen (2004), that trying to develop mastery is not inconsistent with trying to outperform others.

### TABLE 2
Results of Regression Analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Control Variables</th>
<th>Relational Contract (H5a)</th>
<th>Relational Contract (H5b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>Main effects</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careerism</td>
<td>-.49*</td>
<td>-.49*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery Orientation</td>
<td>.32*</td>
<td>.32*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careerism x Mastery</td>
<td>-.58*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careerism x Goal$^a$</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>52.43*</td>
<td>60.01*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall $R^2$</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *$p < .05$. Two-tailed hypothesis test. $^a$ Goal = mastery x performance.
As shown in Table 2 and illustrated in Figure 1, the effects of mastery orientation on relational contracts vary across levels of careerism. As Figure 1 illustrates, the negative relationship between careerism and relational contracts was particularly strong among respondents high on mastery orientation.

**FIGURE 1**
Moderation Effect of Mastery Orientation on Relational Contracts at Low and High Levels of Careerism

In conclusion, consistent with Hypothesis 5, there was a significant interaction between mastery orientation and careerism in predicting relational contracts (labeled “H5a” in Table 2). Following a supplemental analysis, the results also suggest that mastery and performance goal orientations interact in their effects (labeled “H5b” in Table 2) as illustrated in Figure 2.

**DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study was to replicate Rousseau’s (1990) study from more than twenty years ago. Her study was an early attempt at identifying differences in perceived obligations to the
employer and from the employer among recent hires. The importance of this study cannot be emphasized enough, as it paved the way for future studies examining psychological contract content. Although the psychological contract literature has evolved since Rousseau’s study which has helped turn the concept from what some critics labeled “too touchy/feely” (Tipples, 2009) into a robust construct supported by advanced research methods, the importance of understanding perceived expectations and obligations has not become less important. We expected to find similar patterns among contemporary college students as those observed by Rousseau. Whereas the original study utilized graduating MBA students, we utilized undergraduate students entering very tight and competitive job markets. The undergraduate students in our sample were facing one of the tightest job markets in recent history. Further, they had different experiences with technology than the subjects in the 1990 study, and globalization and offshoring of jobs to emerging markets was something that had become more prevalent in the years leading up to the point where they were on the threshold of their first job assignment. Despite all the changes that have taken place, the results were mirror images of those in Rousseau’s study.
First, we found that new hires' perceptions of employee and employer obligations were in fact interrelated and consistent with either transactional or relational contracts. Specifically, employer and employee transactional contract obligations were related where those with relational obligations to the employer also endorsed relational obligational from the employer, while those endorsing transactional obligations to the employer also perceived transactional obligations from the employer. Therefore, it appears as if new hires return obligations from the employer with "matching" responses. In other words, if the organization communicates mostly transactional elements to the new hire, they will not reciprocate beyond the specified terms. Similarly, if the organization communicates obligations as relational by nature, the new hire will be willing to contribute efforts that go beyond specified terms.

Second, we found that expected tenure with the first employer was related to a perceived relational contract with the employer. This suggests that individuals entering the employment relationship with a relational contract expect to spend a longer time with the employer than those who view the employment relationship as transactional by nature. This is consistent with the idea that relational contracts are viewed as open-ended and ongoing.

Third, we did not find support for the idea that those with relational contracts target specific organizations for employment. Consistent with Rousseau’s (1990) findings, no relationship existed between contract content, relational or transactional, and desire to work for a specific firm. This could suggest that promises and obligations about employment conditions are communicated during the hiring phase and not in advance with first-time hires.

Fourth, we found that careerism is negatively related to new hires' belief in a relational contract and positively related to a transactional contract with an employer. Our results revealed that careerism is more common among those with transactional contracts than those with relational contracts. This could possibly be explained by careerism and the "opportunistic" nature that is associated with such behaviors. New hires who are high on careerism would most likely not be interested in contributing "above and beyond" unless it would benefit them personally.

Fifth, we found that having a mastery orientation moderates the relationship between relational contracts and careerism. Specifically,
our results indicate that the relationship was more strongly negative in individuals with high mastery orientation. Not surprisingly, we also found through a supplementary analysis that mastery and performance orientations interacted in their effects. This suggests, consistent with Janssen and Van Yperen (2004) that trying to develop new skills and abilities is not inconsistent with trying to outperform others. Although these results indicate that a mastery orientation strengthens the negative relationship between careerism and relational psychological contracts, the results also suggest that the combination of mastery and performance orientations strengthen the relationship even further.

From a managerial standpoint, the findings in this study have several practical implications. First, it is important for organizations to recognize that several entities contribute to the creation of the contract, such as recruiters, managers, coworkers, or union representatives (Rousseau, 1995). Specifically, explicit promises are communicated prior to hiring, such as expressions of organizational policies (Ho et al., 2006), or post-hire when managers and supervisors communicate promises of pay raises and promotions to subordinates, during times of turmoil or change (e.g., downsizing and layoffs; Rust et al., 2005), or during mergers and acquisitions (Bellou, 2007). Additionally, workers develop and possess pre-employment beliefs based on implicit promises that initiate the desire to be employed with a specific organization (Rousseau, 1995) in addition to promises realized through their perception of interpersonal treatment from their employers once they are hired (Saunders & Thornhill, 2006)

Second, perceived obligations to the employer as identified by endorsing relational psychological contract content, is associated with a desire to spend time with an organization. Considering the high cost associated with turnover, managers should be aware that individuals with relational contracts are more likely to stay with an employer for an extended period of time than someone with a transactional contract. Additionally, the relatively strong and negative relationship between careerism and relational contracts suggest that being “opportunistic” in the employment relationship is less likely to be observed in someone with a relational contract.

Third, paying attention to an individual’s goal orientation, particularly his or her mastery orientation, can reveal critical
information about someone’s perceptions about the employer/employee relationship. Individuals with a mastery orientation view their skills and abilities as dynamic and will be more likely to work hard in order to improve performance (Van Yperen & Janssen, 2004). Such individuals are therefore more likely to adjust to new and challenging requirements and opportunities for training and development, which is consistent with the idea of the relational psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995; Millward & Hopkins, 1998; Conway & Briner, 2005).

The results from this study have confirmed that Rousseau’s findings were not unique to her sample and the time and place in which the study took place. Our study has also added to our understanding of the careerism/psychological contract content link by also assessing the impact of goal orientations. The design of this study, however, is also a limitation that future studies should seek to address. The data was collected cross-sectionally through self-reports so results could be biased due to common-method variance and percept-percept inflation. Further, the study did not address causality due to its use of cross-sectional data, so there is a possibility that those most aware of the employment obligations/promises are also less likely to endorse careerism. Future research would benefit from longitudinal data and/or data from multiple sources, such as managers or peers. It would also be interesting to examine whether there are industry differences, or differences between public and private firms, or between for profit organizations and government or not for profit organizations. Additionally, although the samples were of moderate sizes, future studies should use larger samples.

REFERENCES


**APPENDIX A**

Employer obligations:

- Opportunities for Promotion
- High pay
- Pay based on current level of performance
- Training
- Promises of long-term job security
- Opportunities for career development
- Support with personal problems

Employee obligations

- Work extra hours
- Exhibit loyalty to the organization
Volunteer to do non-required tasks on the job
Give advance notice if taking a job elsewhere
Be willing to accept a transfer
Refusal to support/assist the employer’s competitors
Protect proprietary information
Spend a minimum of two years in the organization

APPENDIX B

_I feel successful when_...
I acquire new knowledge or learn a new skill by trying hard
I acquire new knowledge or master a new skill, which was difficult for me in the past.
I learn something that motivates me to continue.
I feel I am improving.
I learn something that makes me want to practice more.
I learn something new that is fun to do.
I get the maximum out of myself.
I improve on particular aspects.
I master new knowledge or a new skill.
I perform to my potential.
I do my very best.
I perform better than my colleagues. (P)
Others cannot do as well as me. (P)
Others mess up and I do not. (P)
I can clearly demonstrate that I am the best qualified person. (P)
I accomplish something where others failed. (P)
I am clearly the most productive employee. (P)
I am the only one who knows about particular things or who has a particular skill. (P)
I am the best. (P)

(P): indicates "performance orientation" items