

# ANALYSIS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACTS AND DISCRETIONARY BEHAVIOR IN NIGERIAN ACADEMICS: THE ROLE OF ACADEMICS STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES

*Mustapha Olanrewaju Aliyu*  
University of Ilorin, Nigeria

*Ambali Taiwo Toyin*  
University of Ilorin, Nigeria.

Received: December 30, 2021    Accepted: February 19, 2022    Online Published: March 3, 2022

## Abstract

*In the history of tertiary education in Nigeria, there had been incessant strikes to draw the Government's attention to a range of problems that have continued to hinder the education sector. Despite the various phases of industrial action, embarked on by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), this action has not been able to bring a permanent solution to its demand. As a result, the study examines the analysis of psychological contracts in Nigerian academics: the role of academics' staff union of Universities. The study was anchored on social contract theory to explain how every human competes with each other for the resources they desire. in-depth interview (IDI) was employed to collect qualitative data from two management staff members (from the registry unit) and two members of the Academic Staff Union (from the ASUU leadership). Thematic analysis was used to transcribe, identify, and analyze the data collected from IDI. The qualitative findings revealed that university academics were dissatisfied with their working conditions, underfunding, shortages of facilities and equipment, and, most importantly, the quality of service, which had resulted in multiple industrial unrests, brain-drain, and plans to transfer high-skilled academics to other universities. The study found that the Breach of Psychological Contracts (BPC) affected academics in a variety of ways, with a preference for Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) and Deviant Workplace Behaviour (DWB). Unfortunately, the proclivity for DWB surpassed the proclivity for OCB. It was recommended that building psychological linkages between organizational and staff goals should help universities integrate employee behavior.*

**Keywords:** Psychological contracts, citizenship behavior, deviant behavior, ASUU.

## 1. Introduction

The creation, diffusion, and application of knowledge are one of the University's main roles. This improves other essential teaching and research duties, as well as determining national and worldwide ranking. However, Breach of Psychological Contracts (BPC) may occur when an employee perceives that their employer has failed to live up to its obligations. Unfortunately, the employer is not likely to see such a BPC since the employer has the power to ensure that employees do what they are expected to do at the right time. This is why many existing studies pay more attention to the consequences of BPC on the employees rather than the employers.

Meanwhile, the common BPC in Nigerian Universities is broadly categorized into three (3), namely, the welfare of members, poor condition of service and arbitrariness of administration. For instance, the welfare of members is linked with poor and inconsistent payment of salaries and allowances. Similarly, the poor service conditions include poor work settings (working environment, laboratories, classrooms, long hours of work), fringe benefits (office space, internet, office furniture, computer, cabinets, printer, etc.). Other recent BPC issues are the non-payment of Earned Academic Allowances (EAA) arrears, coercing academics into the Integrated Personnel Payroll Information System (IPPIS), which not long ago led to striking in the university environment across Nigeria. These have severe implications for both employees and the organization because when a BPC occurs, employees may tend to have more thoughts of revenge, and the performance of an organization is more likely to be negatively affected.

Moreover, the isolation of Federal Universities in the North-central is credible because those Universities in the North-central have attracted attention for a decade due to violations of BPCs. For instance, at the University of Ilorin, where the administration sacked academics arbitrarily, their actions have triggered litigation that caused Government fortunes in prosecution and judgment debt granted to illegally sacked staff. There was a case of misconduct against an erstwhile Vice-Chancellor (VC) at the University of Abuja, which ended up in an indictment of the University administration in the white paper and the case was alleged as being suppressed to date. The media was recently awashed with pictures and stories of staff at the Federal University, Lokoja proclaiming the obituary of the immediate past VC over her BPC while in office. Similarly, the exercise to the appointment of a substantive VC of the University of Jos has been put on hold following protests by some candidates who cited anomalies of BPC.

In the succeeding years after the formation of the Academics Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), there has been a proliferation of Federal Universities in Nigeria, with today's figure standing at 43. Despite the establishment of many Universities, most of the lecturers operate within an uncondusive environment where there is limited office space with up to three lecturers sharing a small office. The learning environment is compromised by over-congested classrooms, infrastructural inadequacy, poor academic standards, inadequate monitoring and poor inspection by regulatory agencies, poorly equipped laboratories, equipment, among others.

However, in the history of tertiary education in Nigeria, there had been incessant strikes to draw the Government's attention to a range of problems that have continued to hinder the education sector. Since the union's inception, the union has undergone series of

industrial actions that amount to several strike actions apart from the internal strikes by the various chapters of the union. However, despite the various phases of industrial action, embarked on by the ASUU, this action has not been able to bring a permanent solution to its demand. The Government on the other hand purported ASUU to be ungrateful and insatiable, adding that academics are so high in demand for one thing or the others coupled with involvement in deviant behaviors such as sexual harassment, among others.

In view of the focus and context of the previous studies (Anzam, 2016; Aliyu, Akinwale & Shadare, 2020), some gaps exist for future studies to be undertaken, because studies such as have worked on the related topic. Yet, there were dearth of studies on BPC focus on the Federal Universities from dimensions of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) towards the academics (OCB-A); OCB towards the University (OCB-U) (Baharuddina, Ruzainy, Asyraf, Omara, & Ismail, 2017). Similarly, Deviant Workplace Behavior (DWB) towards the academics (DWB-A); DWB towards the University (DWB-U) (Pickford & Genevieve, 2016). In addition, previous studies revealed a need for more scientific studies on the types of discretionary behavior exhibited mainly by academics when psychological contracts are breached (Aliyu, 2021).

The study investigates the psychological contract, its breaches and implications for Nigerian Universities, considering the contemporary problems bedeviling Universities in Nigeria. Therefore, it is imperative to scientifically investigate analyses the psychological contracts in Nigerian academics in order to expand the frontiers of knowledge on discretionary behaviour and psychological contracts in Nigeria.

## 2. Literature review

Psychological contracts are becoming increasingly important in describing the relationship between employees and the organizations and employees' performance. In contrast, a psychological contract is built on trust and represents that employees believe that the organizations can fulfil their obligations and commitments. Argyris (1960) introduced the term psychological contract to present the importance of implicit mutual expectations between employees and organizations (Anzam, 2016; Maguire, 2016).

The psychological contract idea was defined by Argyris (1960) as the employer and employee expectations and mutual duties of the work relationship. Many academics produced alternative ideas on the contractual arrangement between employee and employer after Argyris' formulation (Blackman & Benson, 2012; Bolino, Turnley, Lester & Bloodgood, 2012).

Rousseau (1989) was later acknowledged with a new approach to psychological contract theory (Dialoke & Nwakamma, 2016; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). Rousseau (1989) expands on the core idea. Rousseau (1989) emphasized the psychological contract's unilateral nature as a personal conviction about the terms and circumstances of a reciprocal exchange agreement between the focused person and another party. The psychological contract is a set of unwritten ideas held by both the employee and the organization about what each should give and what each is required to deliver in the exchange relationship that exists between them (Anzam, 2016; Adom & Hussein, 2017; Rousseau, 1989, 1995).

In his exploration of the word, Rousseau (1995) described it as a reciprocal responsibility based on verbal and implicit agreements. It stands for psychological contract, a social psychological concept that anticipates how individual workers would understand

their work experiences and expectations (Anzam, 2016; Atkinson, 2007; Avey et al., 2009). The contract outlines perceptual limits that exist outside and beyond any structured legal instrument or work contract (Mathijs, 2009). This promotes both conceptual and empirical inquiries into how and where employment relationships thrive and become commonplace, as well as how and why they collapse, particularly in situations and places when one or both parties appear to have betrayed trust (Atkinson, 2007).

Breach of Psychological Contract occurs when an organization or employee fails to fulfill one or more of the psychological contract's duties. It largely accounts for what the employee believes to be a violated promise. PCB referred to an employer's violation and perceived breach in this study. The actual abdication of the exchange agreement by the employer is referred to as an employer's breach. A perceived breach, on the other hand, is the cognitive judgement that a key promise has not been kept.

### ***2.1 Features and forms of psychological contract***

Rousseau (1989) emphasized the psychological contract's three fundamental characteristics: subjective, conditional, and reciprocal. To begin with, psychological contracts are subjective since they are founded on people's opinions or views about how they want to trade money. The acts or reactions of third parties can be used to infer implicit commitments made by organizations or personnel (Mazur, 2018; Najjar, Shamasi & Almandeel, 2019).

Second, psychological contracts are conditional because they are based on exchanges in which one party's fulfillment of promissory commitments is conditioned on the fulfillment of other parties' duties. Third, psychological contracts are reciprocal because they entail shared ideas about the relationship's mutual duties. Each party's views affect its contributions to the other, and each party's subsequent contributions can either strengthen or destroy the other party's ideas about reciprocal exchange (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2002; Maria-Lavinia, 2011).

Literature revealed four major forms of psychological contract, namely; as transactional, relational, balanced and transitional (Tekleab & Taylor, 2005; Yang & Chao, 2016).

- a) *Transactional Contract*: When an employment relationship is for a brief or limited period of time, the transactional contract is present. It is largely focused on the exchange of work for money, with a defined definition of duties and obligations and minimal engagement in the organization. This means that the employee is only required to execute a specific set of tasks and only as much as the company requests. According to Rousseau (2001; 2003), an employee is only bound to do a defined or limited set of responsibilities for which they are compensated. On the other side, the employer is devoted to providing employees with only limited engagement in the organization, little or no training or other forms of employee development, and short-term employment. An employee who is only committed to working for a short period of time has no commitment to stay with the company.
- b) *Relational Contract*: Long-term work relationships based on mutual trust and loyalty give rise to the relational contract. Seniority is the primary source of career advancement and pay, whereas other bonuses and awards are only tangentially linked to job performance (Subramanian, 2017). Relational into stability (employee is bound to stay with the business and do what is necessary to maintain a job) was defined by Rousseau (2001; 2003). An employer is dedicated to providing steady

salaries and long-term employment) or loyalty (employees are required to put the company's interests first and to support and be a good corporate citizen). In addition, the employer cares for its employees' and their families' well-being).

- c) *Balanced Contract*: A balanced psychological contract is a dynamic and open-ended employment agreement that is predicated on the employer's commercial success as well as the employee's ability to build skill sets and possibilities for career progression depending on skills and performance. Rousseau (2001; 2003) divided the balanced contract into external employability (i.e., the employee is required to develop marketable skills, while the employer is committed to improving the employment prospects of its employees in both the external and internal labor markets), and internal advancement (i.e., career advancement within an internal labor market). An employee has a responsibility to improve abilities that are appreciated by their present company. While an employer is committed to providing employees with opportunities for career advancement within the company, dynamic performance (i.e., the employee is required to successfully complete new and more demanding goals that may change frequently in the future to help the company become and remain competitive) is also important. An employer, on the other hand, is dedicated to encouraging continual learning and assisting employees in achieving these various objectives).
- d) *Transitional Contract*: It's a mental condition that reflects the effects of organizational change and transitions that are incompatible with previously established work arrangements. This is simply a moment of transition between two psychological contract conditions. Here, the individual has doubts about the organization's motives and is concerned about his or her job security and advancement. The company may also have doubts about the employee's motivations and hide crucial information from them. The employee is unsure about his future responsibilities to the company. The company may also refuse to provide the employee with job security. If this psychological contract is not maintained, the employee may continue to receive confusing signals from the organization and grow unsure if his contributions will result in enough reward (Avey, Avolio, Crossley & Luthans, 2009).

Transitional was classified into distrust in the literature (Bankole & Ajagun, 2014) (i.e. employee believes he received contradictory and confused signals from the corporation about its aims and mistrusts it.) The employer has concealed critical information from the employee and has a negative attitude toward its employees.) uncertainty (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2012) (i.e. the employee is unsure about the nature of their responsibilities to the company).

Employee uncertainty (Epitropaki, 2015) (i.e. employee expects to receive fewer returns from their contributions to the firm than in the past; anticipates continuing declines in the future) and erosion (Epitropaki, 2015) (i.e. employee expects to receive fewer returns from their contributions to the firm than in the past; anticipates continuing declines in the future). As a result, a business may make adjustments that lower employee salaries and benefits, lowering the quality of work-life in comparison to past years).

## 2.2 Social Contract Theory

The Social contract theory was originally pioneered by Hobbes (1651). He begins by stating that everyone is fundamentally equal in strength and intelligence. Nobody is so clever or strong that they can't be outwitted or vanquished by someone else (or maybe a few others). As a result, everyone believes that he is capable of obtaining everything he desires. Furthermore, people always behave in their own best interests. As a result, every human competes with each other for the resources they desire. As a result, the 'state of nature' was coined by the social contract theory to explain men's initial state. Man created a social compact to escape the state of nature (Abdulazeez, Waidi, & Hameed, 2019).

The argument went on to say that in their natural form (before government), humans would be constantly at odds with one another, with everyone vying and battling for resources that aren't plentiful enough for everyone to have all they want. This is man's natural condition, in which individuals live in "constant fear and threat of violent death," and existence is "solitary, impoverished, ugly, brutish, and brief." Hobbes states that humans are essentially selfish and that if there are no rules to constrain them, they would do whatever they need to survive.

In a similar vein, John Locke (1632-1704) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) developed Hobbes's previous social contract theory, suggesting that the need for social order and certain inherent limits may offer a natural basis for morality. While there may be enormous incentives for social anarchy in the absence of an objective (and maybe supernatural) source of morality, the incentive is built into the social system by the mere fact that we live with one another. Naturally, there is a need to agree to treat each other with fundamental respect and to adhere to some basic standards.

Based on their respective conceptions, these three social contract theorists contend that humans existed or would have survived without the state and its apparatuses. As a result, social contract theories propose the possibility of two living forms before and after the state's inception, according to Gauba (2003). The following questions arise as a result of this voluntary agreement of all people who make up the state: (1) What was the situation like before there was a state? (2) If the state was created on an agreement, what were the terms of its formation? (3) Between the creator and the creature in issue, who has the upper hand? Although the first point involves the state of nature, the second and third points address the conditions of the contract and the character of sovereignty, according to Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau's responses.

A prisoner A betrays the other prisoner, as shown in Figure 1. Instead of serving a year in jail, prisoner A will be released if prisoner B keeps silent (for remaining silent). If prisoner B betrays prisoner A, however, prisoner A will only be sentenced to 5 years rather than 10 years if he keeps silent. In any case, it is beneficial for prisoner A to betray prisoner B. The same is true for prisoner B.

Overall, while the social contract theory has been useful in explaining the nature of government and conceptualizing democratic values in modern state systems, it has been subjected to some criticism. The legality of the social contract notion is also questioned. It is argued that a legally sound contract presupposes the presence of some authority and the sanction of that authority before the contract is entered into. According to him, the belief that men lived in a "state of nature" before deciding to create political institutions based on a mutual agreement to produce order and security is false. As a result, the cultural shift is thought to have been from one status to another. Thus, in early civilization, an individual's rank was decided by his or her participation in a social group. Customs regulated man's life

at various levels of grouping: family, clan, tribe, and so on. Law, sovereignty, and political institutions were claimed to have emerged slowly and gradually through this process, rather than as a result of a freely contracting individual's agreement.

Figure 1 – Illustration of the Social Contract Theory

	Prisoner B remains silent	Prisoner B betrays prisoner A
Prisoner A remains silent	Prisoner A: 1 year Prisoner B: 1 year	Prisoner A: 10 years Prisoner B: Goes free
Prisoner A betrays prisoner B	Prisoner A: Goes free Prisoner B: 10 years	Prisoner A: 5 years Prisoner B: 5 years

Source: Sharma & Garg (2017)

### 2.3 Empirical review

Findings from the study conducted by Baharuddina et al. (2017) showed a positive relationship between psychological breach contract and employee intention to quit indicated that people tend to quit if they perceived that their organization do not fulfil their promises and obligation. Meanwhile, psychological contract fulfilment was found to be negatively correlated with intention to quit, suggesting that when employer fulfilled their promises and obligation, employee intention to quit is low. It was concluded that the telecommunication company needs to pay attention in their employment relationship with their employees especially concerning the commitment as well as obligation.

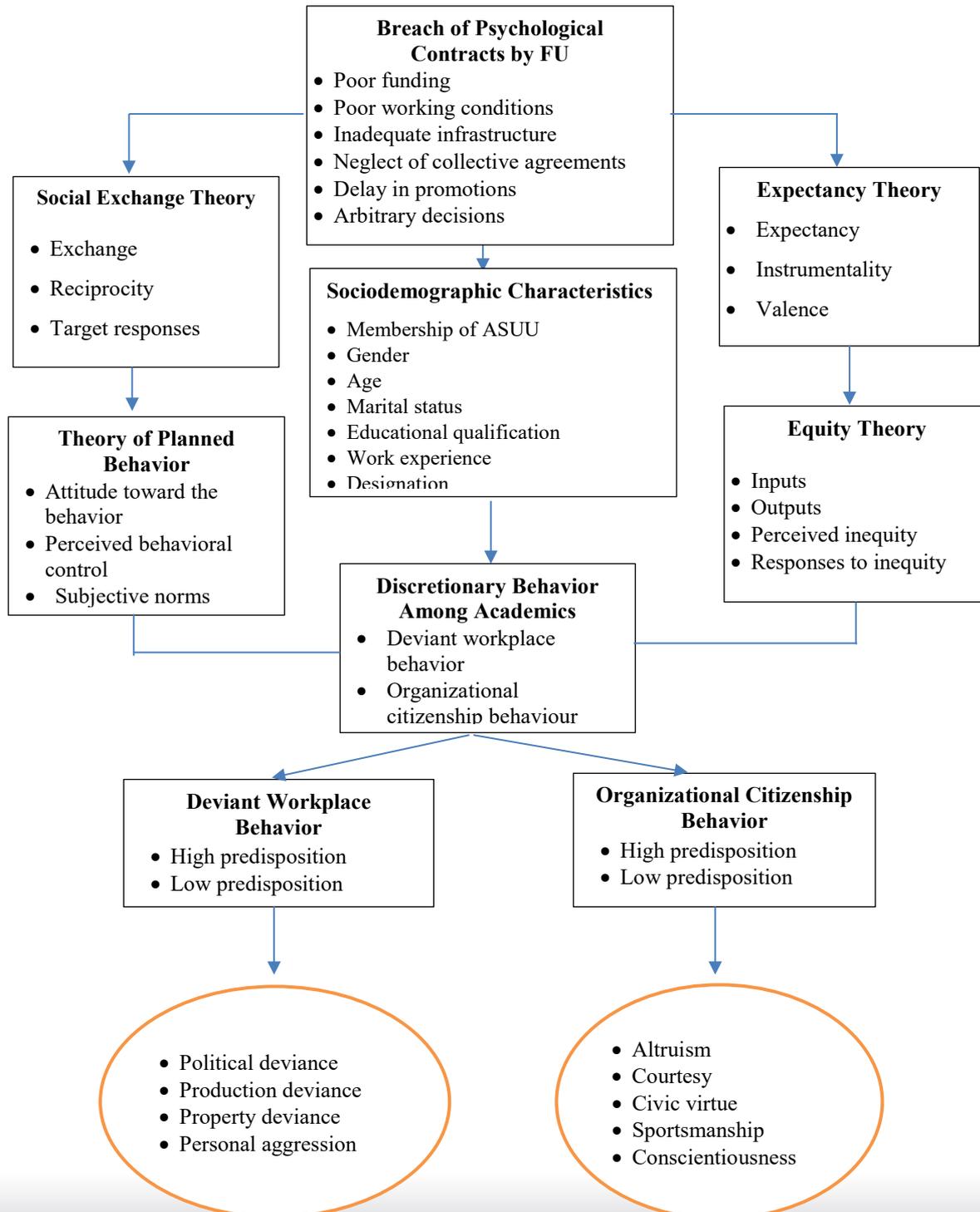
Using transactional psychological contract, relational psychological contract and perceived supervisor support on organizational citizenship behavior of hospitality employees in South Korea by Liu, Cho and Seo (2018). A descriptive research design was used with a self-administered questionnaire distributed across 350 employees working in international hotel chains in South Korea. Findings from a study conducted by Liu et al. (2018) revealed relational psychological contracts did not affect hospitality employees' OCB either; thus, was rejected and the results of the study showed that when hospitality employees in South Korea perceive greater supervisor support, they would demonstrate more organizational citizenship behavior.

Findings from Oyelakin and Agu (2017) revealed that the effect of community on the relational psychological contract was 0.016 thus, the effect is small. The effect of community on employee turnover intention was 0.019. Inner life on the relational psychological contract was estimated at 0.075. Inner life on employee turnover intention has 0.021. Meaningful work has the highest effect of 1.032 on relational psychological contracts, while meaningful work does not affect employees' turnover intention. It was concluded that creating an atmosphere of spirituality in the workplace and having an employee's positive attitude to work is critical to encourage employees to stay in an organization.

### 3. Conceptual framework of the study and hypotheses development

The conceptual framework in Figure 2 shows a hypothetical relationship between DB among academics and BPC by the Federal Universities as influenced by academics' sociodemographic characteristics such as gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, work experience and designation.

Figure 2 – Conceptual framework of the study



Consequently, academics irrespective of their socioeconomic status expect improvement in what bothers on BPC elements such as poor funding, inadequate infrastructure, neglect of collective agreements, delay in promotions, arbitrary decisions, among others. However, their awareness of participation in, and level of benefit from collective agreements can be largely determined by their sociodemographic characteristics.

The framework further demonstrates that the BPC may influence academics' DB such as OCB and DWB. For instance, when an individual becomes employed in a university, many paper contracts are signed where both the employee and the institution develop expectations of each other. However, if academics feel their inputs are greater than the outputs, they may seek to reduce the inequity by determining their equitable return after comparing their inputs and outcomes with those of their colleagues; and distorting inputs and outcomes in their minds. As a result, when academics perceived inequity from their employer, they may respond to inequity by engaging in DWB and vice versa.

Finally, when academics experience unfavorable treatment from their employer, they may reciprocate by engaging in DWB. Similarly, when academics experience favorable treatment from their employer, they may respond by upholding OCB. Meanwhile, TPB was conceptually independent antecedents leading to the behavioral intention from the attitude toward the behavior, perceived behavioral control and subjective norms. This measures the degree to which academics have a negative/positive evaluation of their performance. Each of these variables might have more or less weight depending on how academic staff perceived the BPC by the Federal Universities. Meanwhile, the framework proposes that the predisposition for behavioral outcomes could be high or low depending on the values and perceptions from person to person at different times and places.

#### Hypotheses Development:

*H<sub>01</sub>: Perceived breach of psychological contracts by Federal Universities is not associated with deviant workplace behavior among academics in Nigeria.*

*H<sub>02</sub>: Perceived breach of psychological contracts by Federal Universities is not correlated with organizational citizenship behavior among academics in Nigeria.*

## 4. Data and methods

The relevant information was elicited directly from the target population throughout the Federal Universities in North-Central Nigeria using a descriptive survey approach. The participants in this study are academics from all of Nigeria's Federal Universities in the north-central region. North-central Nigeria had seven federal universities as of 2018. (NUC, 2018). Because they are owned, sponsored, and governed by the federal government, federal universities were chosen for this study because they are anticipated to give a fair and truthful assessment of their operations' plans.

The qualitative data was created with the goal of acquiring primary data for the research. For this study, the in-depth interview (IDI) was employed to collect qualitative data. These two ways are deemed acceptable since they will aid in the provision of in-depth information, expertise, and unique insight into the subject under consideration (Jaclyn,

Richard & Ann, 2010). Twenty-eight (28) in-depth interviews were done to investigate the individual meanings associated with discretionary behavior. This means that from each Federal University in Northcentral Nigeria, two management staff members (from the registry unit) and two members of the Academic Staff Union (from the ASUU leadership) were picked. The choice was made based on the researcher's preferences (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2003). ASUU's registry units and leadership supplied details on the nature of Federal University breaches of psychological contracts that led to professors' discretionary behavior.

The interactions were recorded with the aid of a tape recorder. The in-depth interviews give room for flexibility and provide an opportunity to probe deeper into some aspects, which the questionnaire might not cover. Questions for IDI were the same for each respondent and was directly linked to study objectives.

In-depth interviews were used to collect qualitative data (IDI). The aims of the study were conveyed to the respondents during the interview. The purpose of the first half of the interview was to build rapport and encourage people to engage. The responders were also guaranteed secrecy and anonymity by the researcher. This instilled faith in their ability to respond to inquiries. The interview lasted at least one hour and took place at the respondents' offices. The interview subjects were enabled conversationally, allowing respondents to speak freely about whatever they wanted. To minimize data loss, all interview sessions were recorded on audio recordings while notes were collected.

In addition, thematic analysis was used to transcribe, identify, and analyze the data collected from IDI. This was done manually, using Fisher's (2004) four-stage process: (a) data collection: Before starting work on a new day, the researcher's thoughts and observations, audiotape redirection, and transcription for the previous day were gathered. (b) data reduction: to decrease error, the data were sorted and organized. The data was coded and analyzed thematically. (c) Data Presentation: Data was presented following the study goals and concerns relating to academics' discretionary behavior. (d) results: presented the results of the qualitative data analysis.

## **5. Results**

This section presents the result derived from the qualitative data obtained from the in-depth interview (IDI), which was transcribed and analysed through thematic analysis. This was done in four stages, namely; assembling of data, coding, sorting and organisation of data to reduce errors. The following report of the thematic analysis was done based on responses obtained from 14 academics' representatives (ASUU leadership) and 14 Management staff.

The majority of respondents interviewed were holders of PhD degrees with a few among them being holders of MSc, MBA, among others. This includes membership of the academics' union (ASUU leadership) and management staff with a minimum of 5 years and above. The respondents show great excitement and interest in participating in the study, thus accomplishing many challenges, and affirm that not beyond what one can uphold with time. However, the study revealed that the respondents were not satisfied with the poor working condition and the quality of education to students; thus, they crave excellently to work as an academic in Federal Universities, Nigeria. While some feel fortunate and happy to work, others complained the jobs are very tasking and that the workload is too much. Five themes emerged from the interview conducted with sub-themes under each of them articulated below.

### 5.1 Perceived responses on the interpretation of BPC in Federal Universities

*“I feel happier when I am teaching at university. It is a great experience for me. Well, I feel fulfilled and grateful; thus, I don’t either see it as a privilege rather than what I have been destined to do. However, I can check out if I see any other better offer”.* ASUU members

This, however, means that informal arrangements, mutual beliefs, common ground and perception of the employer-employee relationship are not met. Therefore, perceived some elements of breach of psychological contracts, which may lead to absenteeism, reduced productivity and in some cases, turnover intention. The theme further emerged from the interviews was that of a shift toward fair returns, such as employees performing adequate responsibilities that are predicated on self-monitoring behavior.

Some respondents articulated that;

*“They have adequate responsibilities with little return. When asked what are the main responsibilities of academics in the university where they are currently working? .....” “My responsibility is not far from research and teaching. Majorly, the job of an academic is teaching, the issue of researching has vied for promotion, but teaching is the main responsibility of academic staff. The teaching of knowledge, research, report of research should help, Government, industry etc. and community service. Teach and guide students, counselling, marking of scripts. Impacting knowledge and providing a solution to societies problem through the conduct of research. Teaching (lecturing), research and community services. Academic like me is expected to teach, carry out acceptable research as well as community services”.*

ASUU members

This directly implies that fairness is a significant part of the psychological contract, bound up in equity theory “returns for responsibilities of good services and fairness”. This implies that employees need to perceive that they are being treated fairly to sustain a healthy psychological contract. Furthermore, this resonates with a shift from fair rewards for good work. This, however, may have a direct influence on discretionary behavior.

*“I am a registry staff, and administrative precisely, I coordinate the affairs of mostly academic staff of the university. My work is more of administrative, other assignment given to me by registrar or VC”.* Also, *“Coordinating and organizing the administrative records, taking the registration and graduating function of the university were the roles played in some cases attaching to the Assistant faculty office and secretary to any faculty boards in academic-related matters”.*

Management Staff

The above statement is shown that there are distinct roles played by the administrators, but mostly shoulder on the affairs of academics in the Universities. This means that a psychological contract creates opportunities for an organizational chart that clearly defines lines of authority and responsibility that matched the performance settings and goals of individuals. Meanwhile, every function should be monitored by a specific individual in the

scheme of responsibilities among academics of Federal Universities in North-central Nigeria.

### ***5.2 Predisposing Factors affecting discretionary behavior among academics***

#### *Sub-theme: Lack of Spacious offices*

One of the participants from ASUU standpoint claimed that:

*“It is very hard because I cannot seat longer than expected because my office choked me”.* This means that the respondent envisaged the lack of spacious offices and congestion, leading to suffocation and boredom services among academic staff and the need to expand the offices of academics in Nigerian Universities.

#### *Sub-theme: Lack of teaching and research facilities*

Other participants (ASUU) articulated that:

*“Sometimes, I feel dissatisfied with the routine jobs, taking the same course every time without any opportunity for review. It is an arduous task; it’s never an easy job to prepare for classes, conduct acceptable research and other peculiar issues. It is very hard working under intense pressure with a little teaching and researching aids”.*

From the excerpt above, it means mounting pressure on academics to teach and conduct research without providing them with teaching and research aids leading to job dissatisfaction and posing a great challenge to psychological contracts between employers-employees relations.

#### *Sub-theme: Poor infrastructural facilities*

*“carrying out my responsibilities is easy when necessary facilities and conditions are in place, thus very tedious due to overload and short notice of deadlines”.*

ASUU members.

When asked the participants on the state of facilities or infrastructure for teaching in the university, the response given was that:

*“The issue of facilities and infrastructure is grossly inadequate. This is one of the problems in Nigerian Federal Universities, and there are no adequate facilities for infrastructure for teaching, most of our lecture halls are not adequate, likewise the theatres. This poses great challenges and the need for support in terms of recruitment and career development to give students what they need.”*

ASUU members.

#### *Sub-theme: Lack of Learning Facilities*

While management staff said that:

*“Library equipment and public address system, modern-day electronics and other e-learning facilities are moderate but not adequately provided, though, the institutions are trying their best but much needed to be done on necessary infrastructure for effective teaching in most Universities”.*

One of ASUU correspondents lamented that:

*“Of the major problem is an erratic power supply and off and on internet facilities that is why most of my work is done at home”.*

This implies that researching without e-learning facilities prohibit many academics from co-written articles in both local and foreign outlets. This has a great effect on the efficiency and productivity of academics of Federal Universities in North-central, Nigeria.

*Sub-theme: Inadequate research grants and aids*

Another set of respondents (ASUU) revealed that:

*“I don’t know of other private Universities in Nigeria, but the majority of academics published an article with their money. So, no provision or no adequate provision for research grant”.*

This means inadequate grants for research among academics may be hindered them to do their job well because difficult situations and financial circumstances that may affect productivity aren’t seen by the management staff as a breach of the psychological contract.

*Sub-theme: Poor working conditions*

Participant 8 from ASUU members indicated that:

*“We are only encouraged to engage in community service but no provision of adequate facilities and grants to that effect, if I am, must be sincere with you. Academic usually encouraged to engage in community service but not enough time to do it. There are no adequate facilities at all. If were ranked between teaching, research and community service, attention usually low on community service because of no anything to community service.....”.*

### **5.3 Review of causes of incessant strike in Nigerian Universities**

*Sub-theme: Excessive social and welfare demand*

*“there is social requirements of average employees and the employer, on the other hand, trying to maximize profit. Academics across the length and breadth of Nigeria have been baffled with demand from management and Government of all levels. Quite long ago. The issue of labour union management is an everyday routine because the union will continue to make one demand or others. There are a lot of instances, specifically on welfare matters and other rights of members seemingly deny or delay”. Management staff*

*“It's usual occurrence to have such disagreement between unions and management. It is an ongoing process every time because unions always have one demand or the others which are not implemented. Therefore, Conflict in Federal Universities cannot be ignored. The main idea is the provision of working conditions and other welfare matters. The issue of conflict in the university is a*

*long story that does not end easily; hence, its usual affairs. Usually, academic members have one or two things on demand. If those demands are not met, so the issue”.*

Management staff

While responses of ASUU members on the conflicts/issues raised were:

*“Academic earnings and a lot of many issues. This, however, was triggered by the way management does manipulate the academics and confused the union leaders to their tune. This includes the abandonment of the 2009 agreement”.*

*“Yes, in 2017, when the VC of the university was in serious trouble with the non-academic of the university. ASUU has been on the issue with FG since the failure to honor the 2009 agreement which they willingly signed with ASUU. Presently, there is an ongoing conflict between union members and the Nigerian Government over non-challan attitude in handling union matters”.*

*“Failure on the part of the Government to implement the agreement signed with ASUU members usually cause conflicts. This occurs when management or Government do not pay the academics their check-off dues as at when due, poor wages and late payment of salaries usually demoralize workers. This is one of the reasons for industrial frequently staged by the unions”.*

From the excerpt of the interview above, it is clear that breach of psychological contract raised many issues which are positively or negatively affecting academics of Federal Universities. Addressing the issues by the Federal Government and many of the conflicts positively give rise to OCB, and when the implementation of demands is abortive or negative, it can lead to DWB. As participant 13 rightly attributed these issues and conflicts to poor career development, lack of motivation and a competitive learning environment. Other were lack of regular management and employee meetings, as well as poor communication.

*Sub-theme: lack of trust and goodwill*

Failure to do what is required in a psychological contract leads to the violation of psychological contracts because there is no mutual fulfilment of a promise or whatsoever. If trust and goodwill are ignored, the possibility to develop intention in what is worth doing in duties and obligations may be far from reach. Trust is what they have done, but cannot be trusted in what they have not done. In an employment relationship, the employer wanted to spend less to gain more at the expense of employees but with the union, all things being equal. This was bolstered in responses from some ASUU members:

*“The truth is that management and even the Federal Government cannot be trusted when it comes to fulfilling promises made to academics. We do not trust them a bit. We don’t trust the university management as well. No trust exists even at 40% on average based to some extent of those currently at the helm of affair in this university cannot trust anyone when it comes to fulfilling a promise”.*

In response to ASUU members, some management staff lamented that:

*“Of course, the allocation attributed to university is very small, so, it may be difficult to keep up to the promise of academics”.*

*“No, academics are not lacking anything, and all promises made to them have been fulfilled.”*

*Sub-theme: Poor Implementation of MoU; MoA*

Participant 7 from a management staff standpoint revealed that:

*“Though, management always try to give competitive reward to our staff to at least keep them on the job. Well, in my institution, rewards policies are formulated but not consistently implemented by changing needs, attributed the failure from the Federal Government to respond to their demands”. This directly implies that there is a breach of trust and promise which eventually regenerate into discretionary behavior among academics”.*

#### **5.4 Responses on the expectation to the fulfillment of psychological contract**

*Sub-theme: Expectation in administrative of visionary leadership roles*

It is an administrative role to contribute by responding to people demands and effectively promoting the organizational culture of the academic environment and correcting any DWB that can lead to a breach of psychological contract in academic settings. One of the respondents opined that:

*“I expected an environment to make me grow and excel and contribute my quota efficiently. A well-organized environment. Thought was going to be a smooth environment for academic growth....., and to reach the peak of my career and get fulfilled as at when due with the ability to a visionary leader for people working around me, have an impact in people’s life... ”.*

Management staff

Participant 9 from an academic standpoint opined that;

*“I expected to progress faster with adequate facilities. I was expected an enabling environment, power supply, printer, internet facility, among other social amenities. My expectations were high both in terms of income and working conditions”.*

*Sub-theme: Training and development*

Participant 5 opined that:

*“The greatest emphasis for change in this institution should be on training and development of academic members. This will make a lot of difference. Yet, the inadequacy in the facilities were factors expected to change the breach of psychological contract”.*

One of the respondents were of the views that:

*“They feel consideration should be given to the factors relating to staff conveniences such as proximity of postal services, transport, recreation, sports facilities though the reality was very different, conditions of service was not adhered to by the employer and my expectation here not been met. Well, I have a growing, demand change, yet, I want to continue to influence people’s life.”*

Participant 8 from the management standpoint opined that:

*“The institution should have different packages for staff development which followed the approved standard by NUC which will encourage the people in academic to engage themselves in Training and Development”.*

Others were of the views that there should be a change in promotion schemes of the Universities;

#### *Sub-theme: Expect Change in Promotion Schemes*

Participant 9 from the management standpoint said that;

*“To my knowledge, the criteria for promoting academic are in tandem with international standard and any academic who is fit for promotion got it without stress. Strictly by AP&C format. The criteria for promoting academic staff is something that distributes and the process is communicated, opened and transparent where all academics are aware of”.* The rate is relatively good and equitable.

One of the respondents further said that;

*“To the best of my knowledge, (university name held) promotion is one of the open operate affairs where all academic has the information, and the selection is based on approved criteria. The criteria are usually determined by the university’s promotion committee. The guideline is usually communicated among academic staff every year to give room for the qualified members to apply”.*

This means it is expected that the upward reassignment of individuals in academics should be looked into, accompanied by increased responsibilities, enhanced status and usually with increased income, though not always so in the university system it needs to be changed. The change and expectation of promotion schemes must provide for uniformity in promotional schemes in the university system. This will make justice to the ratios of internal promotions to external recruitment that should be the same at various levels in all departments. If this ratio is differing greatly from one department to another discretionary behavior may be seriously impaired the morale and commitment of staff. Therefore, a sound promotion scheme must be able to tell the employee in advance what avenues for advancement exist. This should be open and communicate effectively.

### 5.5 Union' roles in fulfilling the psychological contract of academics

The interview also explored the union' roles in bridging the gaps between the breach of psychological contract by the Federal Universities and discretionary behavior among academics in Federal Universities. It was found that enabling working environment, redesign job responsibilities, job security/protection, administration of collective bargain, timely review of salary, allowances and benefits, provision of healthcare facilities, giving competitive rewards, grants and aids, increasing funds allocation to Universities and provision of good working conditions.

#### *Sub-theme: Acknowledging the Role of ASUU*

While participants acknowledge the role of the union, thus inadequate when compared with other Universities.

*“Without union members, there wouldn't be any remarkable academic environment in the Universities in Nigeria. Hence, management must note that challenging, interesting, enlarged and enriched jobs should be assigned to workers, and these should be commensurate with their status according to the ladder of responsibility”.*

While majorities acknowledged the role of the union thus some few respondents said:

*“Union has little or no impacts in solving problems in a Federal University in Nigeria. Their role has been unsatisfactory, and the union leaders are not reliable, they should be trusted”.*

Thus, it is advocated that the employer-employee relationship is only possible through union and it's only through the fulfilment of ASUU's demand is the measure at which an incessant strike can be curbed.

## 6. Discussion of findings

Based on the interview conducted for the ASUU members and management staff, the following findings were reached. It was evident that BPC by the Federal Universities in North-central Nigeria influences academics' discretionary behavior, though the degrees vary. For instance, responses from ASUU members showed that there is some perceived breach of psychological contracts, which might have led to disagreement, reduced productivity and in some cases, turnover intention. Mounting pressure on academics to teach and conduct research without providing them with teaching and research aids lead to job dissatisfaction. The issue of facilities and infrastructure is grossly inadequate, and there are no adequate facilities for infrastructure for teaching, most of our lecture halls are not adequate, likewise the theatres. This finding was in tandem with study of Anyim, Obisi and Aliyu (2018) who found analyzed deviant workplace behavior in Nigeria.

Findings on the causes of conflict in Federal Universities, ASUU members lamented that failure on the part of the Government to implement the agreement signed with ASUU members usually cause conflicts. This occurs when management or Government does not pay the academic due as at when due, poor wages and late payment of salaries usually

demoralize workers. Thereby management staff, on the other hand, said, the issue of conflict in the university is a long story that does not end easily, hence, its usual affairs. Usually, academic members have one or two things on demand. This was also in consistent with the outcomes from Yang & Chao (2016) that conflict matter is positive, give rise to OCB, and when the implementation of demands is abortive or negative can lead to DWB. As attributed to the issue of conflicts to poor career development, lack of motivation and competitive learning environment.

On the issue of promotion, the qualitative report revealed that the upward reassignment of individuals in academics should be looked into, accompanied by increased responsibilities, enhanced status and usually with increased income, though not always so in the university system, therefore, it needs to be changed. The change and expectation of promotion schemes must provide for uniformity in promotional schemes in the university system. Because it was reported by Subramanian (2017); Sharma & Garg (2017) that the ratios of internal promotions to external recruitment that should be the same at various levels in all departments. If this ratio is differing greatly from one department to another, certain behavior may seriously impair the commitment of academics.

While asking for the role of ASUU in fulfilling the psychological contract of academics, it was found that if Government provides the enabling working environment, job security/protection, administration of collective bargain, timely review of salary, allowances and benefits, provision of healthcare facilities, giving competitive rewards, grants and aids, increasing funds allocation to Universities and provision of good working conditions have been the watchword of ASUU. Because Abdulazeez et al. (2019); Liu, Cho and Seo (2018) believed that if academics are well-paid and compensated, this, in turn, will satisfy them psychologically and improve their performance on the job.

While management must evaluate substandard welfare packages and compensation structures, all employees were taken along through proper channels of communication and feedback, especially when there was discretionary deviant behavior due to work discontent, according to an excerpt from the IDI. The qualitative findings revealed that university academics were dissatisfied with their working conditions, underfunding, shortages of facilities and equipment, and, most importantly, the quality of service, which had resulted in multiple industrial unrests, brain-drain, and plans to transfer high-skilled academics to other universities.

## **7. Conclusion and recommendations**

The study found that the BPC affected academics in a variety of ways, with a preference for OCB and DWB. Unfortunately, the proclivity for DWB surpassed the proclivity for OCB. When a university breaks its commitments or fails to do what it should for academics, many academics may retaliate by engaging in deviant behavior such as misusing official cars, the internet, failing to attend statutory meetings, sexual harassment, and plagiarism, among other things. When the university fails to keep its promises to academics, the results show that some academics may be more likely to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors such as promoting the university's image, assisting colleagues in resolving issues, working longer days, being punctual, and showing tolerance, among others. The study, therefore, recommends that building psychological linkages between organizational and staff goals should help universities integrate employee behavior. So, the academics

who uphold OCB despite the perceived BPC should be encouraged to sustain their good behavior.

### **7.1 Managerial implications and limitations**

The practical implication is aimed at establishing effective incentive systems that have the potential to improve tertiary institutions' satisfaction and productivity. Particularly, because a provision of adequate funding serves as a stimulating factor and predictor for organizational citizenship behavior towards academics (OCB-A), i.e. satisfaction among academics and organizational citizenship behavior towards University (OCB-U) productivity.

Meanwhile, the theoretical implication shouldered on infrastructural should be targeted at enhancing poor working environments to mitigate against deviant workplace behavior in the Universities. However, if it is not taken into consideration, it could lead to the pronouncement of deviant workplace behavior towards academics (DWB-A), i.e. job dissatisfaction, quit intention, and deviant workplace behavior towards University (DWB-U), i.e. low productivity.

From this study, that the dimensions of BPC are not much pronounced on OCB unlike the DWB, which means there should be further research to expand knowledge in the relationship between BPC and OCB in a similar organization using qualitative techniques for more clarity on the adopted theory in this study.

## **References**

1. Abdulazeez, A.L.; Waidi, A.A. & Hameed, O.O. (2019). An examination of governance typology in Nigeria Higher Education System. *International Journal of Economic Behavior*, 9(1), 105.
2. Adom, D., Hussein, E.K. & Agyem, J.A. (2018). Theoretical and conceptual framework: Mandatory ingredients of quality research. *International Journal of Research Methods* 7(1), 93-98.
3. Aliyu, M.O. (2021). *Discretionary behavior among academics and breach of psychological contracts by the Federal Universities in North-central Nigeria*. Being a PhD thesis presented for award of PhD degree at University of Lagos, Nigeria.
4. Aliyu, M.O., Akinwale, A.A. & Shadare, O.A. (2020). Psychological contracts and discretionary behavior in Nigerian academics. *Selye International Scientific Journal*, 9(1), 24-44.
5. Anyim, F.C., Obisi, C. & Aliyu, M.O. (2018). Deviant workplace behavior in Nigeria: A conceptual and empirical analysis. *Ilorin Journal of Human Resource Management*, 2(1), 73-88
6. Anzam, M. (2016). Perceptions and impact of psychological contract breach among bank employees in Bangladesh. *Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 2(2), 121-139.
7. Argyris, C. (1960). *Understanding organizational behavior*. Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press
8. Atkinson, C. (2007). Trust and the psychological contract. *Employee Relations*, 29(3), 227-248.
9. Avey, J.B., Avolio, B.J., Crossley, C.D., & Luthans, F. (2009). Psychological ownership: Theoretical extensions, measurement and relation to work outcomes. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 30, 173-191.

10. Baharuddina, S.S., Ruzainy, M.N., Asyraf, M.A. Omara, N.E. & Ismail, N.A. (2017). Psychological contract breach and psychological contract fulfilment on employee intention to quit. *International Journal of Business Management*, 2(1), 50-58.
11. Bankole, E.T. & Ajagun, O.V. (2014). Psychological contract and organizational based self-esteem as antecedents of organizational commitment among Government workers in Ekiti State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies*, 1(2), 24-33.
12. Blackman, D.A. & Benson, A.M. (2012). The role of the psychological contract in managing research volunteer tourism. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 27(1), 221–235.
13. Bolino, M.C., Turnley, W.H., Lester, S.W. & Bloodgood, J.M. (2012). The impact of psychological contract fulfilment on the performance of in-role and organizational citizenship behavior. *Journal of Management*, 29(2), 187-206.
14. Coyle-Shapiro, J. & Kessler, I. (2002). Contingent and non-contingent working in local Government: contrasting psychological contracts. *Public Administration*, 80(1), 77-101.
15. Dialoke, I. and Nwakamma, C.N. (2016). Psychological contract and manpower development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research*, 2(12), 57-72.
16. Epitropaki, O. (2015). A multi-level investigation of psychological contract breach and organizational identification through the lens of perceived organizational membership: Testing a moderated-mediated model. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 1(4), 1-47.
17. Hobbes, T. (1651) “Leviathan”, in E. Curley (ed.), *Leviathan, with selected variants from the Latin edition of 1668*, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994.
18. Liu, J., Cho, S. & Seo, W. (2018). Investigating the impact of psychological contract and perceived supervisor support in the hospitality industry in South Korea. *Asian Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 4(1), 16-28.
19. Maguire, H. (2016). The changing psychological contract: Challenges and implications for HRM, organizations and employees. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 34(8), 1617-1637.
20. Maria-Lavinia, P. (2011). The Attitudes Importance for the Students Education. *International Journal of Economic Behavior*, 1(1), 34 doi: <https://doi.org/10.14276/2285-0430.1938>
21. Mazur, K. (2018). The dynamics of psychological contract between employee and organization. The analysis of selected factors. *Management*, 16(1), 51-64.
22. Najjar, Z., Shamsi, A. & Almandeel, S. (2019). The impact of psychological contract fulfilment on physicians’ affective commitment an empirical study on security force hospital, Dammam, Saudi Arabia. *The International Journal of Business & Management*, 7(1), 33-49.
23. Oyelakin, O. & Agu, G.A. (2017). A mediating role of relational psychological contract on the relationship between work place spirituality and employee turnover intention in Nigeria banks. *American Journal of Applied Psychology*, 6(4), 75-82.
24. Pickford, H.C. & Genevieve, J. (2016). Organizational citizenship behavior: Definitions and dimensions. *Mutuality in Business Briefing*, 1(30), 28-54.
25. Rousseau, D.M. (1989). Psychological and implied contracts in organizations. *Employee Rights and Responsibilities Journal*, 2(1), 121-39.
26. Rousseau, D.M. (1995). *Psychological contracts in organizations: Understanding written and unwritten agreements*. Newbury Park, Canada: Sage Publishers Inc.
27. Rousseau, D.M., & Tijoriwala, S.A. (1998). Assessing psychological contracts: Issues, alternatives and measures. *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International*

- Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior*, 19(S1), 679-695.
28. Sharma, N. & Garg, P. (2017). Psychological contract and psychological empowerment as employee engagement drivers in the Indian IT sector. *International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research*, 15(1), 279-287.
  29. Subramanian, K.R. (2017). Psychological contract and transparent leadership in organizations. *International Research Journal of Advanced Engineering and Science*, 2(1), 60-65.
  30. Tekleab, R.T. & Taylor, M.S. (2005). Extending the chain of relationships among organizational justice, social exchange, and employee reactions: The role of contract violations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48(1), 146–157.
  31. Yang, W. & Chao, L. (2016). How psychological contract breach influences organizational identification and organizational citizenship behavior: The mediating role of psychological capital. *American Journal of Industrial and Business Management*, 6(2), 922-930.