

Graduate entitlement management: Exploring the graduate-employer disconnect in students' anticipatory psychological contract

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COMMENTS

The reader should keep the following in mind:

- The editorial, as well as reference style, utilised in this dissertation follow the format prescribed by the Publication Manual (Sixth edition) of the American Psychological Association (APA) unless indicated otherwise for the purposes of revision and publication of parts of this dissertation. This is in line with the policy of the Programme in Labour Relations Management at the North-West University (Potchefstroom) to use APA style in all scientific documents as from January 1999.
- The dissertation is submitted in the form of four research articles.
- The format style for each of the research articles (Chapter 2, 3, 4 and 5) is in accordance with the guidelines for authors of each of the targeted journals
- For the purpose of this thesis, all research articles headings, figures and tables were numbered (for example, 2.1, 2.2, etc.) to make it easier to read and reference. Take note that the articles submitted for publication are not numbered.
- Chapter one comprises the proposal for this study as presented and accepted by the North-West University on April 2015.

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ABSTRACT

Key terms: Anticipatory psychological contract, entitlement, psychological contract, graduates, prospective employees.

Since expectations have always been regarded as an interrelated part of the psychological contract, it can be assumed that the antecedent thereof, namely entitlement beliefs, is a component of the anticipatory psychological contract. It is believed that by fully understanding the effect that entitlement beliefs have on the anticipatory psychological contract of prospective employees, employers may reduce the occurrence of psychological contract breach, which has the potential to reduce the turnover intent of new working graduates. There is, however, a problem that research regarding the anticipatory psychological contract, as well as entitlement in the workplace is quite limited. Therefore, the general objective of this research was to explore the anticipatory psychological contract of graduates and occupational newcomers to determine the graduate-employer disconnect and its theoretical principles that will be used to develop a model of the anticipatory psychological contract that will enhance our understanding of managing graduate entitlement within the framework of psychological contract theory.

This study was mixed method, which included both exploratory and descriptive research methods. The research was divided into two phases that would ultimately reach the research objectives.

The first phase followed a qualitative approach to research. The first research article focused on expanding psychological contract development theory by exploring the mental schemas of graduates' anticipatory psychological contract, and including entitlement disconnect as a component thereof. A qualitative approach to research was adopted consisting of interviews with 18 final-year graduate students in the final phase of their degrees to derive themes associated with the mental schemas of graduates' anticipatory psychological contract. The findings suggest that graduates already have a developed mental schema that was based on their entitlement. It was also confirmed that graduates had a disposition towards voluntary turnover intuition before organisational entry, which was due to an entitlement disconnect perception. The most surprising finding was that some graduates displayed a pre-employment psychological contract breach, where graduates already anticipated contract breach before entering an employment relationship. This research suggests that graduates' mental schemas in their anticipatory psychological contract play a much bigger role in the development of their psychological contract, after organisational entry, than what was initially thought.

The second research article aims to explore and substantiate themes associated with the subjective experiences, expectations and obligations of new employees and the experiences and employability perception of their employers to determine whether an obligational disconnect exists. A qualitative approach to research was adopted consisting of interviews with 18 employees in their first two years of employment, as well as 18 interviews with their supervisors. Our findings suggest that there is a clear obligational disconnect between occupational newcomers and their supervisors, and that employers have a negative employability perception of graduate occupational newcomers.

The second phase followed a quantitative approach to research. It is suggested that if we assess an individual's mental schema, it may facilitate a better understanding of the psychological contract formation process due to the specific terms of the psychological contract, which are only present during the organisation entry phase. Therefore, the third research article was aimed at developing and validating an instrument to measure the anticipatory psychological contract of labour market entrees. The research was conducted on 316 final-year students from two different campuses of a South African university. The newly developed anticipatory psychological contract questionnaire (APCQ) was administered and analysed. The themes identified in research articles 1 and 2 were used to develop the APCQ. Results indicated that the APCQ is reliable and valid to measure the anticipatory psychological contract of graduates. The descriptive statistics and correlation coefficient results clearly enhanced our understanding of how the anticipatory psychological contract works, and it was established that students did have a predisposition towards turnover intent, had some form of pre-employment violation, and were considered entitled.

The last article's focus was to develop and assess the theoretical model of the mental schema of prospective employees through a structural equation model (SEM). This was due to no theoretical model existing at the time of writing. The APCQ was used to gather data from 316 final-year students. The results supported an excellent fit in the proposed model of the anticipatory psychological contract. This model indicated that entitlement is central to the anticipatory psychological contract, and that the norm of reciprocity was already present in the anticipatory psychological contract.

Based on the results of this dissertation, the effective way to manage graduate entitlement is by focusing on continuous violation triggering in every phase of students' academic process by focusing on the graduate-employer disconnect aspects that were identified.

OPSOMMING

Aangesien verwagting nog altyd geag is as 'n interafhanklike deel van die psigologiese kontrak, kan aanvaar word dat die voorganger daarvan, naamlik oortuigings ten opsigte van aanspraak, 'n komponent van die antisiperende psigologiese kontrak is. Daar word geglo dat, deur die effek wat oortuigings ten opsigte van aanspraak het op die voornemende psigologiese kontrak van voornemende werknemers ten volle te verstaan, kan werkgewers die voorkoms van psigologiese kontrakbreuk verminder, wat die potensiaal het om die omset-intensie van nuut gegradueerde werkers te verlaag. Daar is egter 'n probleem, aangesien navorsing ten opsigte van die antisiperende psigologiese kontrak, sowel as aanspraak binne die werkplek, nogal beperk is. Dus was die algemene doelstelling van hierdie navorsing om die antisiperende psigologiese kontrak van gegradueerdes en beroepsnuwelinge te ondersoek, om die gegradueerde-werkgewer-ontkoppeling en sy teoretiese beginsels te bepaal, wat gebruik kan word om 'n model te ontwikkel oor die antisiperende psigologiese kontrak wat ons begrip oor die bestuur van aanspraak deur gegradueerdes binne die raamwerk van psigologiese kontrak-teorie kan verbeter.

Hierdie studie was gemengde metodes, wat beide eksploratiewe en beskrywende navorsingsmetodes gebruik het. Die navorsing is verdeel in twee fases wat uiteindelik sal lei tot die bereiking van die navorsingsdoelstellings.

Die eerste fase het 'n kwalitatiewe benadering tot navorsing gevolg. Die eerste navorsingsartikel het gefokus op die uitbouing van psigologiese kontrak-ontwikkelingsteorie deur die geestelike skemas van gegradueerdes se antisiperende psigologiese te ondersoek, en het aanspraak-ontkoppeling as komponent daarvan ondersoek. 'n Kwalitatiewe benadering tot navorsing is aangeneem, bestaande uit onderhoude met 18 finale jaar-voorgaadse studente in die finale fase van hul grade om temas verbandhoudend met die geestelike skemas van gegradueerdes se antisiperende psigologiese kontrak af te lei. Die bevindinge suggereer dat gegradueerdes reeds 'n ontwikkelde geestelike skema het, gebaseer op hul aanspraak. Daar is ook bevestig dat gegradueerdes 'n ingesteldheid het tot omset-intensie nog voor organisasie-betreding, wat die gevolg is van 'n aanspraak-ontkoppeling-persepsie. Die mees verrassende bevinding was dat sommige gegradueerdes voor-indiensneming-psigologiese kontrakbreuk vertoon het, waar gegradueerdes reeds kontrakbreuk antisipeer het, nog voor die indiensnemingsverhouding betree is. Hierdie navorsing suggereer dat gegradueerdes se geestelike skemas in hul antisiperende psigologiese kontrak 'n baie groter rol speel in die ontwikkeling van hul psigologiese kontrak, na organisasie-betreding, as wat aanvanklik gedink is.

Die tweede navorsingsartikel poog om temas geassosieer met die subjektiewe ervarings, verwagtings en verpligtinge van nuwe werknemers sowel as die ervarings en indiensneembaarheidspersepsie van hul werknemers te ondersoek en staaf, om te bepaal of 'n verpligting-ontkoppeling bestaan. 'n Kwalitatiewe benadering tot navorsing is aangeneem, bestaande uit onderhoude met 18 werknemers en hul toesighouers. Ons bevindinge suggereer dat daar 'n duidelike verpligtingsontkoppeling bestaan tussen beroepsnuweling en hul toesighouers, en dat werkgewers 'n negatiewe indiensneembaarheidspersepsie van gegradueerde beroepsnuweling het.

Die tweede fase het 'n kwantitatiewe benadering tot navorsing gevolg. Daar word gesuggereer dat indien ons 'n individu se geestelike skema assessee, kan dit 'n beter begrip van die psigologiese kontrakformasieproses fasiliteer, weens die spesifieke terme van die psigologiese kontrak, wat slegs teenwoordig is gedurende die organisasiebetredingsfase. Dus was die derde artikel gemik op die ontwikkeling en validering van 'n instrument om die antisiperende psigologiese kontrak van arbeidsmarkbetreders te meet. Die navorsing is uitgevoer op 316 finale jaarstudente van twee kampusse van 'n Suid-Afrikaanse universiteit. Die nuut ontwikkelde antisiperende psigologiese kontrak-vraelys (APCQ) is toegedien en geanaliseer. Die temas geïdentifiseer in navorsingsartikels 1 en 2 is gebruik om die APCQ te ontwikkel. Resultate toon dat die APCQ betroubaar en geldig is om die antisiperende psigologiese kontrak van gegradueerdes te meet. Die beskrywende statistiek en korrelasiekoëffisiënt-resultate het duidelik ons begrip rakende hoe die antisiperende psigologiese kontrak werk, verbeter, en daar is vasgestel dat studente wel 'n predisposisie ten opsigte van omset-intensie, 'n mate van voor-indiensnemings-skending het, en hulself as geregtig ag.

Die laaste artikel se fokus was om die teoretiese model van die geestelike skema van voornemende werknemers te ontwikkel en te assessee deur 'n strukturele vergelykingsmodel (SEM). Hierdie was weens die feit dat geen teoretiese model bestaan het ten tye van die skryf van hierdie proefskrif nie. Die APCQ is gebruik om data in te samel vanaf 316 finale jaarstudente. Die resultate steun 'n uitstekende passing in die voorgestelde model van die antisiperende psigologiese kontrak. Hierdie model het getoon dat aanspraak sentraal is tot die antisiperende psigologiese kontrak, en dat die norm van wederkerigheid reeds teenwoordig was in die antisiperende psigologiese kontrak.

Gebaseer op die resultate van hierdie proefskrif is die effektiewe wyse om aanspraak deur gegradueerdes te bestuur, deur te fokus op voortgesette skending-oorsake in elke fase van studente se akademiese proses deur te fokus op die gegradueerde-werkgewer-ontkoppelingsaspekte wat geïdentifiseer is.

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Chapter 1: Research proposal

Chapter one comprises the proposal for this study as presented and accepted by the North-West University in April 2015.

1.1 Introduction

An individual's belief about the mutual obligations within the context of the relationship between employer and employees is regarded as that individual's psychological contract (Van der Smissen, Schalk, & Freese, 2013). Rousseau (2011) stated that "psychological contract theory represents the employment relationship in terms of the subjective beliefs of employees and their employers" (p 193). Shore and Tetrick (1994) are of the opinion that the function of the psychological contract exists to reduce insecurities in the employment relationship due to the employment relationship being unable to address all the issues in its formal and written contracts; therefore, the psychological contract fills in the gaps in the relationship. Each employee has a unique psychological contract based on his/her expectations and obligations towards the organisation (Turnley & Feldman, 1999), which can lead to the experience of breach or violation if these expectations are not met.

According to Restubog, Bordia, and Tang (2006), and Turnley, Bolino, Lester, and Bloodgood (2003), psychological breach occurs when an individual feels that the organisation did not live up to its requirements and commitments. If this breach is noteworthy, it will establish a feeling of violation (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Paul, Niehoeff, & Turnley, 2000). According to Linde (2007) and Hellgren (2003), a breach is the mental perception that an employee experiences when the organisation was unable to maintain one or more aspects of the psychological contract. Linde (2007) and Morrison and Robinson (1997) indicated that the violation of the psychological contract refers to the emotional and affective reactions, such as those that can arise when an employee feels that the organisation failed to properly maintain its end of the psychological contract.

The psychological contract is considered as balanced when the employees feel that the organisation has upheld its requirements and commitments. Employees with balanced psychological contracts are less likely to want to leave a relationship such as the employment relationship (Scott, Eau, & Jill, 2001).

Originally, it was perceived that the beliefs regarding the mutual obligations in the psychological contract were formed in the recruiting and socialisation process when first applying for a position (Rousseau, 2001); however, nowadays, certain authors have accepted the possibilities of an anticipatory psychological contract (De Vos, Stobbeleir, & Meganck, 2009; Gresse et al., 2013). The term 'anticipatory psychological contract' is used to refer to the psychological contract that individuals develop before organisational entry (De Vos et al., 2009), even before the recruitment process, when applying for employment (Gresse et al., 2013; Gresse, 2013).

Expectations were always regarded as an interconnected part of psychological contract research since its initiation in the 1960s (Freese & Schalk, 2008; Paul et al., 2000; Van den Heuvel & Schalk, 2009), and the fact that the psychological contract is seen as a subjective belief of an individual indicates that it is perceived experience where an individual may feel entitled to certain considerations, even though it is not grounded or motivated. De Vos et al. (2009) indicated that graduates already have a mental model regarding expectations, even though they may have no former work experience when entering the workplace for the first time. This mental model would determine graduates' choice of job and the evaluation method they would make use of to determine the degree to which their expectations match the reality after employment (De Vos et al., 2009). De Vos et al. (2009) also confirm that the pre-employment expectations are likely to affect the psychological contract of the graduate when he/she commences employment.

The fact that individuals have a mental model regarding their employment conditions motivates the tendency that something else creates pre-entry expectations, namely perceived entitlement. Snyders (2002) describes the term 'perceived entitlement' as a "sense of deservingness" (p. 22). This sense of deservingness, or privilege, is also regarded as psychological entitlement (Harvey & Harris, 2010). Psychological entitlement can be defined as a fairly stable and universal characteristic that occurs when an individual expects a high level of reward or preferential treatment regardless of his/her ability and performance level (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004; Harvey & Harris, 2010). People with this attitude towards entitlement believe they are owed many things in life, where they do not have to earn what they get, but they are just entitled to it because of who they are (Snyders, 2002).

Gresse et al. (2013) and Naumann, Minsky, and Sturman (2002) indicated that individuals' entitlement beliefs determine their expectations. This also indicates that expectation and entitlement are not merely synonyms of each other. Gresse et al. (2013) believe that if an individual has certain expectations regarding employment and those expectations are not met by the employer, the individual would still accept less from the employer. This would rather constitute a minor breach of the psychological contract, but if that person has an entitlement belief regarding employment, that person will not settle for anything less than what he/she feels entitled to.

Harvey and Martinko (2009) already established a positive relationship between perceived entitlement and turnover intent. Fisk (2010) and Twenga and Campbell (2009) believe that individuals are gradually subscribing to the idea that they should get what they want, even if that means they must affect the well-being of others negatively. Urban and Finn (2013) displayed a simple formula to measure happiness, indicating that happiness is a result of reality minus one's

expectations. This formula summarises the inner workings of psychological contract theory if one takes the same formula and replaces happiness with psychological contract. In other words, the psychological contract is a result of reality minus one's expectations. The reason for this logic, when applying the formula to the context of a potential graduate, is that when a graduate has certain expectations regarding his/her potential career path and employment, and those expectations are higher than the reality of employment, the chances would be very good that this individual would experience a breach or violation of the psychological contract in the workplace due to the unmet expectations. In contrast, when expectations regarding the potential employment are lower than the actual reality, the chances would be good that one would experience a balanced psychological contract in the workplace due to expectations being met.

Unfortunately, the latter is not always the case, as there are authors who indicate that we are currently living in the 'age of entitlement' (Fisk, 2010; Twenga & Campbell, 2009), where high or unrealistic expectations have been associated with Generation Y individuals (Broadbridge, Maxwell, & Ogden, 2007; Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010; Schofield & Honore, 2011; Urban & Finn, 2013), which include the majority of potential or new graduates. Entitlement beliefs are an antecedent of expectations, where these entitlement beliefs determine the expectation levels (Gresse et al., 2013) and, if these unrealistic expectations or 'entitlements' are not managed effectively prior to organisational entry, it may have a devastating effect on graduates' anticipatory psychological contract (Gresse, 2013).

1.2 Problem overview

Since expectations have always been regarded as an interrelated part of the psychological contract (Freese & Schalk, 2008; Paul et al., 2000; Van den Heuvel & Schalk, 2009), it can be assumed that the antecedent thereof, namely entitlement beliefs, is a component of the anticipatory psychological contract. Just as an individual will experience a breach or violation of the psychological contract if expectations are not met (Linde, 2007; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Zhao, Whyne, Glibkowski, & Bravo, 2007), it will be possible that a breach or violation will be experienced within an individual's anticipatory psychological contract if he/she feels that within future employment the employer will not be able to meet these expectations.

Breach of the psychological contract has been associated with various negative consequences, such as lower citizenship behaviour, reduced organisational commitment and satisfaction, and turnover intent (Zhao et al., 2007). According to Robinson (1996), a breach of the psychological contract is a perceived experience and refers to an individual's perception that another party has failed to fulfil

sufficiently the promised obligations of the psychological contract. This can and does occur in the absence of an actual breach. Robinson (1996) states that it is the employee's belief that a breach has occurred that affects individual's behaviour and attitudes, regardless of whether an actual breach of a reasonable expectation took place.

Gresse et al. (2013) stated that "by fully comprehending the effect entitlement beliefs have on the anticipatory psychological contract of prospective employees, the employer may minimise the occurrence of psychological contract breach or violation, which may decrease turnover intention of new working graduates" (p 285). Schofield and Honore (2011) also confirm that the turnover intention of graduates is a problem for employers. A study conducted by Schofield and Honore (2011) regarding the expectations of graduates and their managers found that most of the participants who were new graduates were proud to work for their employer and would recommend their employer as a good place to work. These participants were also willing to walk the extra mile in the workplace to ensure the success of the organisation. According to Schofield and Honore (2011), this research would have been encouraging for organisations were it not for the fact that most of the study participants stated that they had the intent to leave the employer within two years. This poses a question as to why graduates feel the intent to leave their employer even though they are happy with their employer, or is this merely, as Gresse et al (2013) stated, a problem with the entitlement beliefs of graduates regarding the anticipatory psychological contract.

According to Harvey and Harris (2010), unrealistic entitlement beliefs can cause problems for both employees and employers. Snyders (2002) believes there should be a warning to individuals in the process of attaining something special, for instance a degree, and then fall subject to the dangers of entitlement. Research that has focused on psychological entitlement in employment has confirmed that psychologically entitled employees displayed a tendency toward unethical behaviour and conflict with their supervisors, high pay expectations, low levels of job satisfaction, and high levels of turnover intention (Harvey & Harris, 2010; Harvey & Martinko, 2009; Kets de Vries, 2006; Levine, 2005).

It makes sense to assume that by effectively identifying the entitlements of graduates we can confront the roots of the problem, being unrealistic entitlements, and not merely its symptoms, which are the expectations associated with these entitlements, since entitlement beliefs are a determinant factor of expectations (Gresse et al., 2013; Naumann et al, 2002). Gresse et al. (2013) identified level of qualification, graduates' perception that they would contribute to the company, self-efficacy of the graduate, current labour market tendencies, the amount of job-related experience, and the general cost of living or surviving as factors influencing the entitlement beliefs

of graduates. Gresse et al. (2013) also stated that there could be more factors that influence the entitlement beliefs of individuals. It was also evident that most of these factors could be managed or altered in one way or another.

It is necessary to determine what to manage in the anticipatory psychological contract of graduates to influence the entitlement beliefs of such graduates. Schofield and Honore (2011) used the term “graduate-employer disconnect” to refer to the gap between graduates’ expectations and the expectations of their future managers. According to Schofield and Honore (2011), this ‘disconnect’ between graduates and their employers threatens the future success of organisations, but by focusing on this gap, it is possible to manage this disconnect. Gresse (2013), Gresse et al. (2013), Schofield and Honore (2011) and Ng et al. (2010) suggest that students have especially high expectations regarding aspects such as challenging or interesting work, salary, and career advancement, where the reality was much lower than their expectations. Schofield and Honore (2011) concluded that there were inconsistencies between graduate expectations and management expectations in job security, work-life balance, management, teamwork and respect (Schofield & Honore, 2011).

A few authors have determined that students’ expectations regarding employment became more realistic as they neared graduation (Ng et al., 2010). Ng et al. (2010) argue that this occurs due to two reasons; the first reason being the possibility of accessing statistical information online, as well as receiving subjective salary information from their peers. The second reason is that they adjust their short-term expectations downwards where they accept less-than-ideal positions in the short term so that they have better long-term attainment (for instance, gaining experience). The problem with this is that it is costly to employers (O’Connell & Mei-Chuan, 2007), because they employ the graduates, invest time and money to develop them, and as soon as the graduates flourish, they leave that employer to find an organisation that caters more to their initial entitlement perception (Schofield & Honore, 2011).

The problem statement that arises from the above background is that students have unrealistic expectations regarding their future employment based on the entitlement perception that forms part of their anticipatory psychological contract. This indicates that the anticipatory psychological contract needs to be explored, which would provide researchers and managers with the necessary tools to effectively manage graduate entitlements.

From the above-mentioned problem statement, the following research questions arise:

- What are the entitlement beliefs of students during their studies?

- What are the employers' expectations and experiences regarding graduates?
- Do employers experience a problem with graduates' expectations?
- Is there a difference between the entitlements of graduates and the expectations of their employers?
- Does this graduate-employer disconnect have a negative impact on the psychological contract when graduates commence employment?

1.3 Research objectives

1.3.1 General objective

The general objective of this research was to explore the anticipatory psychological contract of graduates and occupational newcomers, and to determine the graduate-employer disconnect and its theoretical principles that will be used to develop a model of the anticipatory psychological contract that will enhance our understanding of managing graduate entitlement within the framework of psychological contract theory.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this research were to:

- explore themes associated with students' mental schema in their anticipatory psychological contract and to review the themes through a literature study;
- determine the graduate-employer disconnect by exploring the themes associated with working graduates' experiences, expectations and obligations, as well as themes associated with employer expectations and experiences regarding graduates, and to review the themes through a literature study;
- develop a measuring instrument to measure the anticipatory psychological contract of graduates and to report on their anticipatory psychological contract;
- build and validate a theoretical model of the anticipatory psychological contract using structural equation modelling.

1.4 Research methodology

1.4.1 Research design

The focus of this proposed study was to explore and determine the graduate-employer disconnect, which enabled the researcher to identify the focus points on how to effectively manage graduate

entitlement within the framework of psychological contract theory. The proposed study was mixed method, which included both exploratory and descriptive research methods. The research was divided into two phases that would ultimately reach the research objectives. The first phase concentrated on the achievement of the first and second specific objectives of this proposed study; the second phase concentrated on achieving the third and fourth specific objectives of this proposed study. The final objective will be discussed in the conclusion chapter of the thesis. The phases of the proposed study are as follows:

1.4.2 Phase 1: Qualitative research method (exploratory)

1.4.2.1 Research method

The first phase of the study used a qualitative approach for data gathering. According to Trochim and Donnelly (2008), qualitative research may be used if the state of knowledge in an area is limited, or when the constructs are not well understood, defined or measured. An interpretivist/constructivist epistemological paradigm was followed, which is regarded as the framework for most qualitative approaches to research (Maxwell, 2006). According to Maxwell (2006), the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm sees the world as established, interpreted, and experienced by a person in his/her interaction with other individuals and social systems. For this study, interviews were conducted that would enable the identification of the themes associated with the psychological contract, expectations and entitlements of graduates. This phase was exploratory in nature, since there has not been much focus on entitlement and the anticipatory psychological contract in psychological contract studies.

A semi-structured interview was used to gather information about the expectations, entitlements, recommendations and experiences of the participants. According to Adams (2010), a semi-structured interview is especially useful when the researcher needs to ask probing open-ended questions and wants the individual to elaborate on a response following a fixed pre-determined question that was asked. This approach will not limit the response of the interviewee within the constraints of a structured question; therefore, the researcher can follow it up if the participant did not understand the question correctly, consequently improving the validity of the response. The interviews will focus on the expectations and entitlements of graduates' psychological contracts, as well as experiences and recommendations from employers and working graduates regarding entitlement management. From these interviews, themes were identified and confirmed by a literature review.

After the interviews were transcribed and themes were identified, a literature review was conducted. The literature review was based on the research of the relevant literature regarding the expectations,

psychological entitlement and the psychological contract, especially work by the following authors: De Vos, A.; Harvey, P.; Rousseau, D. M.; Fisk, G. M.; Turnley, W. H; and Schalk, R. The primary and secondary research sources included various publications such as textbooks, journals and previous studies related to this research topic. The databases that were used are EBSCO host, Google Scholar and Sabinet-online. General keywords that were used for the literature search include – but are not limited to – ‘expectation’, ‘entitlement’, ‘psychological entitlement’, ‘psychological contract’, ‘anticipatory psychological contract’, ‘psychological contract development’ and ‘employment’. The themes identified in this proposed study also direct the course of the literature review process. This provided an understanding of the dynamics of each construct and how they are linked together to form a new aspect of psychological contract research, as well as establishing the validity of the themes identified in the interview.

1.4.2.2 Participants

The theoretical population was final-year university students, working graduates within the first two years of employment and graduate employers. The main difference between the theoretical population and the accessible population is that theoretical population refers to the population you would like to generalise to, whereas the accessible population refers to the population that is accessible to you (Trochim & Donnelly; 2008). The sample refers to the actual units you select to participate in your study (Trochim & Donnelly; 2008).

Consequently, the interviews were conducted in two phases:

Phase 1: Students at a university

The research was conducted on South African university students due to its accessibility to the researcher. Purposive and snowball sampling was used to identify students from a South African university. The sample was compiled from third- and fourth-year Economic and Management Sciences students at a South African university who were selected based on equal representation of gender. Interviews were conducted until saturation points for information were achieved. Saturation point refers to a point where no new data comes to light during the interview process (Francis et al., 2010).

Phase 2: Working graduates within the first two years of employment and graduate employers

To conduct interviews with graduates within their first two years of formal employment and graduate employers, the researcher had to schedule a meeting with various programme leaders at a South African university. The researcher had to request a list of graduates who have commenced employment within the last two years from these programme leaders. A snowball sampling technique was also used while conducting interviews with working candidates, where they would

refer someone else to interview who they considered as an information-rich source. The researcher also had to request the contact details of their immediate supervisor. The researcher then contacted these supervisors to establish willingness to participate and to arrange a meeting for the interview. Interviews were conducted until saturation of information was achieved.

1.4.2.3 Data analysis

In the qualitative analysis, the interviews were transcribed by the researcher. Each response was recorded, including the additional probing questions. A content analysis was done with the transcribed data, which assisted in determining the reliability and validity of the interviews. The responses from the qualitative data were analysed by identifying the relevant efficacy items, as well as counting the number of occasions that the item emerges, to determine its importance. This was achieved by using a coding process of the transcribed data. This coding process was done in Microsoft Excel, where a table was formed that displayed each theme based on the responses from the participants. All the themes were captured in this table, regardless of how relevant it is to the question. Each time a participant mentions a theme, that theme received a point. These points were used to calculate a percentage that was used in the findings and interpretation section.

1.4.3 Phase 2: Quantitative research method (descriptive)

A quantitative approach to data gathering was used in the second phase of this research. A questionnaire based on the structure of the Psycones questionnaire (Isaacson, 2006) was developed. Traditionally, the Psycones questionnaire comprises three sections. The first section of the questionnaire, using Guttman scaling, focuses on the employer's obligations. The second section of the questionnaire, using Likert scaling, focuses on emotions. The third section of the questionnaire, also using Likert scaling, focuses on the employee's expectations. Scaling can be defined as the area of measurement that includes the formation of a measure based on a connotation of qualitative judgements regarding a construct with qualitative metric units (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). According to Trochim and Donnelly (2008), Likert scaling can be defined as "the process of developing a scale in which the rating of the items is summed to get the final scale score. Ratings are usually done using a one-to-five Disagree-to-Agree response format" (p 136). A Likert-type scale is usually linked to a number of statements to measure attitudes or perceptions, and five-point or seven-point scales are often used (Struwig & Stead, 2004).

The item content of the newly developed questionnaire is completely different from the Psycones questionnaire due to its focus on the anticipatory psychological contract. The questionnaire was developed based on the themes identified in the qualitative research conducted in phase one of this proposed study. The questionnaire included components such as biographical information, content

of the anticipatory psychological contract, state of the anticipatory psychological contract, as well as a component to determine the entitlement and turnover intent of the participants. After the questionnaire was developed, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the IBM SPSS to determine the validity within the questionnaire. A pilot study was conducted to test the questionnaire and to further determine the effectiveness, validity and reliability thereof. This newly developed questionnaire was used to gather data from the participants.

1.4.3.1 Participants

The research was conducted at a South African university due to its accessibility to the researcher. For the quantitative data-gathering procedure, the stratified random sampling method was used to determine which students should be included in the sample. The criteria for the theoretical populations were that the candidates must be prospective employees who have not yet entered formal employment. The study population was derived from the theoretical population. Therefore, the sample consisted of final-year Economic and Management Sciences students at a South African university. The reason why the researcher chose Economic and Management Sciences students is because this field of study is one of the top producers of graduates in South Africa; in 2012 this field produced 460 440 graduates (Department of Higher Education, 2012), which makes it easier for the researcher to obtain sufficient data for statistical analysis. The participants consisted of a total of 316 ($n=316$). The sample included both male and female participants, and represented African (49.7%), white (43.4%), coloured (3.8%), Indian (1.6%) and Chinese (0.3%) participants.

1.4.3.2 Statistical analysis

In the quantitative analysis, a statistical analysis was carried out with the SPSS program. Firstly, exploratory factor analysis was used to determine the validity within the questionnaire by analysing the internal consistency between the themes identified in the qualitative analysis. This was achieved through a data reduction process. Secondly, descriptive statistics were used to determine the experiences of the candidates. Descriptive statistics provided the mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. According to Trochim and Donnelly (2008), the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) will determine the reliability of the questionnaire. According to Trochim and Donnelly (2008), a questionnaire is considered reliable when the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is higher than 0.7 ($\alpha > 0.7$). Furthermore, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling (SEM) were used to determine whether there is a connection between the different variables of the study and to prove a hypothesised model; this was done in IBM AMOS.

1.5 Ethical consideration

A letter and research proposal were sent to the Ethics Committee of the North-West University requesting the approval of the research study. Once consent had been received from the Ethics Committee of the North-West University to proceed with the research study, the author continued with the research with a valid ethics number (NWU-00310-15-A9).

1.6 Division of chapters

The chapters of the proposed study will be arranged as follows:

Chapter 1: Research proposal and problem statement

Chapter 2: Research article 1 (qualitative research)

- Title: Entitlement disconnect: Exploring graduates' mental schema in their anticipatory psychological contract

Chapter 3: Research article 2 (qualitative research)

- Title: Exploring occupational newcomers' perceived expectations, obligations and employability

Chapter 4: Research article 3 (quantitative research)

- Title: Entitlement, anticipatory state of the psychological contract and pre-employment violation of graduates: Validating the anticipatory psychological contract questionnaire

Chapter 5: Research article 4 (quantitative research)

- Title: Modelling the anticipatory psychological contract: A structural equation model approach

Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations.

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Chapter 2: Entitlement disconnect: Exploring graduates' mental schema in their anticipatory psychological contract

Chapter 2 (Research article 1) will be submitted for revision and publication in the Journal of Organizational Behavior, and the editorial and reference style was adapted in accordance with the editorial policy and guidelines for the submission of papers to this journal (Extended abstract, double spaced; 12 point font, Times New Roman)

Aim of this chapter

To explore the mental schemas of graduates' anticipatory psychological contract to expand on the psychological contract formation theory by incorporating entitlement disconnect as a part of the anticipatory psychological contract

2.1 Entitlement disconnect: Exploring graduates' mental schema in their anticipatory psychological contract

2.1.1 Abstract

In this paper, we expanded on psychological contract development theory by exploring the mental schemas of graduates' anticipatory psychological contract. With this research, we aimed to explore and substantiate themes associated with the mental schemas of graduates, so that the psychological contract formation theory can be expanded by incorporating entitlement disconnect as part of the anticipatory psychological contract. Literature regarding the formulation of the psychological contract is still underdeveloped, especially regarding the anticipatory phase thereof. Entitlement disconnect has also not been focused on in past literature, especially as a component of the anticipatory psychological contract that can have an impact on graduates' professional career plan and voluntary turnover intention. A qualitative approach to research was adopted consisting of interviews with 18 final-year graduate students in the final phase of their degrees to derive themes associated with the mental schemas of graduates' anticipatory psychological contract. The findings suggest that graduates already have a developed mental schema that was based on their entitlement. It was also confirmed that graduates had a disposition towards voluntary turnover intuition before organisational entry, which was due to an entitlement disconnect perception. The final and most surprising finding was that some graduates displayed a pre-employment psychological contract breach, where graduates already anticipated contract breach before entering an employment relationship. This research suggests that graduates' mental schemas in their anticipatory psychological contract play a much bigger role in the development of their psychological contract, after organisational entry, than what was initially thought.

The psychological contract plays a vital role in defining the relationship between employer and employee (Shore, Coyle-Shapiro & Tetrick, 2012) and it comprises employees' perceptions and beliefs, which are formed by the organisation, regarding the implicit and explicit obligations that make up the employment relationship (Conway & Briner, 2005; Rousseau, 1995). Windle and von Treuer (2014) have proposed a theoretical model suggesting that the psychological contract is formed based on three stages of socialisation. These authors indicated that the psychological contract already formed in the anticipatory phase (pre-employment and recruitment), then moved over to the early socialisation phase (first six months of employment) and lastly to the latter socialisation phase (contract evaluation and revision). De Vos, Buyens and Schalk (2005) and Rousseau (2001) suggest that new employees hold a basic psychological contract that becomes more complex and matured over time, as their work experiences increase. Understanding this development of the psychological contract, specifically the exchange agreement, will enable employers to partially predict future employee behaviour and provide a solid foundation to manage the employment relationship over time (Sherman & Morley, 2015). According to Sherman and Morley (2015) and O'Leary-Kelly, Henderson, Anand and Ashforth (2014), literature regarding the formulation of the psychological contract is still underdeveloped, especially literature regarding the anticipatory phase thereof.

It is important to take note of the interpretation of the psychological contract as a mental schema of an individual to truly understand the development of the psychological contract (Sherman & Morley, 2015; Schalk et al., 2010), which acts as a cognitive map that guides an individual's actions and behaviour. This indicates that the mental schema is built based on the perceptions and beliefs of individuals regarding the exchange relationship, rather than actual occurrences. This is supported by Guest (2007), who indicates that the psychological contract is the perception of the employee and employer of the reciprocal promises and obligations in an employment relationship. Gresse, Linde and Schalk (2013) has confirmed that expectations from a graduate's mental schema can be influenced by self-perception factors (for instance, perceptions regarding organisational

contribution and self-efficacy), environmental-oriented factors (for instance, group affiliation or cost of living) and workplace-oriented influences (for instance, previous job experience and job advertisements). This may cause some negative consequences, particularly in the anticipatory phase of the psychological contract, as some individuals have no prior experience in employment to base their beliefs on. The word, 'entitlement', has been associated with the current new employees entering the workplace; the millennials (Gardner & Eng, 2005; Maxwell & Broadbridge, 2014; Laird, Harvey & Lancaster, 2015).

It is believed that the factors that form the psychological contract develop during the recruitment stage of employment, as well as interaction with other employees when they start to work (Rousseau, 2001). There are, however, certain authors (including Ruchika & Prasad, 2017; Eilam-Shamir & Yaakobi, 2014; Gresse, 2013; Gresse, Linde, & Schalk, 2013; De Vos, Stobbeleir, & Meganck, 2009) who have accepted that some factors of the psychological contract can develop prior to organisational entry, even before the recruitment phase of employment, in the form of an anticipatory psychological contract. De Hauw and De Vos (2010) defined the anticipatory psychological contract as the pre-employment beliefs that individuals have regarding future employment. This contract also includes promises that individuals want to make to their future employers and incentives they expect to receive (De Vos et al., 2009). De Vos et al. (2009) were of the opinion that prospective employees have already developed a mental schema about what they expect from their future employer, even if they have no prior experience in employment, which was also confirmed by Gresse et al. (2013) in interviews conducted with final-year students who have not yet entered formal employment. This conceptual model that prospective employees have – regarding what they expect from employment – will determine the degree to which their expectations matched the actual employment relationship (De Vos et al., 2009).

Expectations were always regarded as an interconnected part of psychological contract research, since it was first referenced in the 1960s (Freese & Schalk, 2008; Van den Heuvel & Schalk, 2009; Paul, Niehoff & Turnley, 2000), and the fact that the psychological contract is a subjective belief of

an individual indicates that it is the perceived experience where an individual may feel entitled to certain considerations, even though it is not a legitimate expectation. Previous research has suggested a model of the individuals' anticipatory psychological contract, which confirmed that expectation levels can fluctuate based on an individual's entitlement beliefs (Gresse et al., 2013; Gresse, 2013), where individuals with a higher level of perceived entitlement will have higher expectations regarding the employment outcomes.

Snyders (2002) regards entitlement perceptions as a sense of deservingness, while Naumann, Minsky and Sturman (2002) suggested that understanding and exploring an employee's perception of entitlement were crucial to understanding the expectations of that employee or prospective employee. This sense of deservingness that individuals perceive was also referred to by Harvey and Harris (2010) as psychological entitlement. Psychological entitlement can be defined as a fairly stable and universal characteristic that occurs when an individual expects a high level of reward or preferential treatment regardless of his/her ability and performance level (Campbell et al., 2004; Harvey & Harris, 2010). For the purpose of this study, 'entitlement' will refer to psychological entitlement. Entitlement has been mentioned in previous psychological contract studies (Rousseau, 1998; Paul et al., 2000), but it was only regarded as a synonym for expectations, which is not the case anymore as there is now a clear distinction between expectations and entitlement in psychological contract theory (Gresse, 2013).

Harvey and Harris (2010) were of the opinion that unrealistic entitlement beliefs have negative consequences for both parties in an employment relationship, and Snyders (2002) believed that there should be a warning to individuals in the process of attaining a qualification and then fall subject to the dangers of unrealistic entitlement perceptions, something that can have a negative impact on future employment relations. Research that has focused on psychological entitlement in employment confirmed that psychologically entitled employees displayed a tendency toward unethical behaviour, conflict with their supervisors, high pay expectations, low levels of job satisfaction, and high levels of turnover intention (Harvey & Harris, 2010; Harvey & Martinko,

2009; Kets de Vries, 2006; Levine, 2005). Previous research on entitlement perceptions and the anticipatory psychological contract of individuals found that entitlement beliefs actually act as a determining factor for their levels of expectation, which are difficult to be fulfilled (Gresse, 2013; Gresse et al., 2013), but relatively little is known about how entitlement beliefs truly influence the psychological contract development, other than creating higher expectation levels in employees. A study conducted by Schofield and Honore (2011) indirectly hinted at this connection between entitlement perceptions and the psychological contract.

Schofield and Honore (2011) conducted a study regarding expectations of employees and their managers and found that the majority of the participants, who were new working graduates, were proud to work for their employer and would recommend their employer as a viable employment possibility. These employees were also willing to do more for the company to ensure the success of the organisation. According to Schofield and Honore (2011), this research would have been encouraging for employers were it not for the fact that the majority of these participants stated that they had the intent to leave the employer within the first two years of working there. This indicates that the graduates still had a voluntary turnover intention although there was no perception of breach or violation within these employees' psychological contract. It is proposed that this occurrence where employees have a balanced psychological contract and still want to leave the company in a few years can occur as a result of an entitlement disconnect that is experienced by the employee.

Entitlement disconnect, as a perception, refers to where an employee's employment expectations and the actual reality of employment are not in sync with their entitlement perceptions. This can lead to a predisposition of an employee to leave the employer due to the perception that the employer will not in future be able to honour the entitlement beliefs that the employees have, in absence of a grounded psychological contract breach or violation. Priesemuth and Taylor (2016) have found that psychological contract violation has a significant correlation with employee depressive mood states and that this relationship was higher for individuals who display high levels

of entitlement. Entitlement disconnect has never been investigated as a component of the anticipatory psychological contract.

Therefore, the aim of this paper was to explore the mental schemas of graduates' anticipatory psychological contract to expand on the psychological contract formation theory by incorporating entitlement disconnect as a part of the anticipatory psychological contract. To achieve this, the following research propositions were derived from the above sections:

Research proposition 1: Graduates' anticipatory psychological contract includes an entitlement-based professional career plan, before entering employment for the first time.

Research proposition 2: Graduates' anticipatory psychological contract can cause a predisposition towards voluntary turnover intention due to their entitlement disconnect perception.

2.2 Research design

2.2.1 Research approach

We used a qualitative data gathering approach to derive themes associated with graduates' employment perceptions and entitlements, due to a lack of a grounded theoretical model on entitlement disconnect in the anticipatory psychological contract. An interpretivist/constructivist epistemological paradigm was followed, which is regarded as the framework for most qualitative approaches to research (Maxwell, 2006). According to Maxwell (2006), the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm sees the world as established, interpreted, and experienced by a person in their interaction with other individuals and social systems. The purpose of this interpretive/constructivist inquiry is not to generalise the findings to the general population, but rather to enhance the understanding of an occurrence (Farzanfar, 2005).

The questions that were developed were based on theoretical principles of the psychological contract, expectations and entitlements. Coded themes were also discussed through a literature

study. Trochim and Donnelly (2008) stated that one of the reasons why a researcher may consider doing a qualitative study is when the current state of knowledge in an area is inadequate and a better understanding of a phenomenon is needed. Qualitative investigation is an in-depth process that allows the researchers to discover patterns, categories and interrelationships through the exploration of open questions (Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006).

2.2.2 Research strategy

Interviews were conducted and the data gathered was transcribed to identify the various themes associated with the anticipatory psychological contract and entitlements of graduates. The themes were identified based on a coding process. The various research propositions also acted as a measure to identify the themes related to this study and a literature review was conducted to substantiate these themes. This article is exploratory in nature since entitlement has not been sufficiently investigated in psychological contract research. For this reason, this article focuses on deriving themes, by means of a thematic analysis, associated with entitlement and perceptions of graduates using semi-structured qualitative interviews.

2.2.3 Research method

2.2.3.1 Research setting

The theoretical population for this study was graduates who have not yet entered formal employment. A sample that best represents the theoretical population was students in the final phase of obtaining their qualification, as they will enter the labour market within a few months. We used purposive sampling and snowball sampling to identify the potential participants. Purposive sampling was used to determine a viable sample that would represent the research population. Trochim and Donnelly (2008) explain purposive sampling as a sampling technique where a researcher will sample with a specific purpose in mind. The sample requirement was that participants should be final-year commerce-related university students who will enter the labour

market after they complete their current enrolled qualifications. The interviews were specifically timed to take place during the final examination of final-year students as they will be graduates after passing their examinations. The researcher made appointments with various university programme leaders to request a list of eligible participants.

Snowball sampling was also used to select participants for the interviews. Snowball sampling refers to where a participant in a study refers other subsequent participants who meet the sampling requirements (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). A total of 18 interviews were conducted, which included 12 male and six female participants. The sample consisted of 18 final-year students majoring in Transport Economics, Logistics Management, Economics, Management or Public Administration, who have not yet entered formal employment. Participation in the interviews was voluntary and complete anonymity in reporting the results was promised to limit bias and to increase the overall honesty of the participants.

2.2.3.2 Data collection method

A semi-structured interview was conducted to obtain data from the participants, based on an interview guideline (Annexure 1). This guideline set out the process of the interviews, the environment conditions, record and data keeping conditions, as well as some ethical considerations. The length of the interviews was approximately ten minutes each. The interviewer asked questions related to the research propositions that the participant had to consider and respond to. The responses of the participants were perceived by the interviewer as open and unguided. If additional information was required from a participant, the interviewer would ask the participant to elaborate. The main purpose of the questions was to understand the mental schemas of graduates' anticipatory psychological contract; therefore, the interview scheme consisted of seven questions that determined:

1. The professional career plan of the graduates (research proposition 1);

2. The graduates' perception of the number of employers they will work for in the first 10 years of employment as well as the motivation therefore (research proposition 2);
3. The overall entitlement perceptions and expectations of graduates (research proposition 2).

The specific interview questions that were used in data collection are displayed in the interview guideline (Annexure 1).

2.2.4 Recording and data analysis

The answers to each of the interview questions were transcribed and analysed separately to obtain themes associated with the research propositions. After this process, the responses were documented using a thematic analysis approach. The coding process was done in two phases:

Firstly, in Microsoft Excel, a coding grid was created where all the responses were captured according to the question that the response was related to, based on the central idea of the response. The central idea of a response was determined by the word choices that participants used (for instance: 'adapting', 'exposure' and 'learning') and what that word meant within context. If the central idea of a response was related to a previously documented response, the participant number was captured next to response and if the central idea of a response was unrelated to a previous documented response, a new response was documented. This was done until all the transcribed interview responses were captured based on the question they relate to. After analysing 14 of the 18 transcribed interviews, a saturation point was reached as no new data or responses became known, although points were still assigned to each existing response.

In the second phase, all responses were grouped together based on similarity, irrespective of the question they relate to. This coding process was done in Microsoft Excel, where another coding grid was formed. The first step was to remove data clutter. Some of the responses were combined with responses from other questions due to them having the same central idea. Each response was then grouped in terms of similarity to form a cluster. Similarity of responses was determined by

identifying the common characteristic between responses, which we called ‘response core’. A descriptive heading was then assigned to each cluster. The clusters were then analysed and grouped by using subject literature and the research propositions in our paper as guidelines. These combined clusters represented the themes and sub-themes and were provided an appropriate name. The coding was performed by the interviewer and reviewed by the co-author. The thematic analysis, which includes the final coding in phase 2, can be seen in Tables 2-1 and 2-2.

2.3 Results

There were two global themes identified from the participants’ responses: firstly, themes associated with graduates’ mental schemas; and secondly, themes related to graduates’ predisposition towards turnover intention, with the coded themes indicated in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: Results of graduates’ mental schema

Global theme 1: Graduates Mental Schema				
Responses	Response core	Participants	Sub-theme	Theme
Get a basic job to obtain experience	Gain employment	1; 9; 15; 17	Immediate strategy	Career Goals
Gain employment in a lower managerial position	Gain employment	4; 11; 13;		
Start own company when I graduate	Gain employment	10; 11		
Adapting to the workplace	Socialisation behaviour	1; 2; 7; 14		
Start from the bottom and work your way up	Socialisation behaviour	2; 4; 5; 7; 8; 9; 17		
Meet influential people	Socialisation behaviour	1; 2; 4; 5		
Learn the ropes	Socialisation behaviour	1; 2; 3; 4; 7		
Do not know what is expected from me when I start working	Socialisation behaviour	1; 3; 4; 5; 6; 9; 10; 11; 12; 14; 17; 18		
Prove yourself to your employer	Career advancement	2		
Gain experience to advance in career	Career advancement	3; 6; 11; 13; 14, 16; 18		
Climb the employment ladder as quickly as possible	Career advancement	13		

Face different challenges	Career advancement	12; 16; 18	Long-term goals	
I want to be the owner of my own business	Long-term goals	1; 3; 4; 5; 8; 10; 13; 14; 15; 18		
I want to manage a company (CEO)	Long-term goals	2; 3; 5; 7; 11; 13; 17		
I want personal and professional growth	Long-term goals	3; 5; 7; 15		
I want a PhD degree	Long-term goals	6		
Obtaining set goals	Long-term goals	6		
Success is having a lot of money	Success perception	4; 7; 10; 11; 14; 13; 17; 18		
Success is making a difference in people's lives	Success perception	9		
Success is enjoying your job	Success perception	12; 17		
Success is when you own your own company	Success perception	1; 2; 3; 4; 5		
Success is being in a top management position (CEO)	Success perception	2; 11; 16; 18		
Upwards mobility is important	Require career advancement	4; 6; 13; 14, 18	Results orientation	
Gain money to become independent	Monetary rewards	7; 17		
Receiving monetary reward	Monetary rewards	4; 7; 10; 11; 13; 17; 18		
Having a lot of money	Monetary rewards	10; 11; 13; 14; 18		
Being a leader	Status	10; 16	Status and power	
Empowering others	Status	4; 5; 7; 8; 9; 10; 15		
Providing for others	Status	8; 14		
Value power	Recognition	3; 4; 8; 9; 10; 14; 18		
Being the best in your field	Recognition	7		
Ensuring company growth	Recognition	12		
Obtaining a PhD degree	Recognition	6		
Admiration and respect from others	Recognition	6; 15; 16; 17; 18		

The results of the coded themes, regarding graduates' predisposition towards turnover intent, can be seen in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2. Results of graduates' predisposition towards turnover intent

Graduates' Predisposition towards turnover intent			
Responses	Response core	Participants	Theme
Exposure to different career experiences	Building career exposure	3; 5; 6; 7; 9; 11; 12; 15; 16; 17	Strategic career move
Corresponding with other potential employers	Building career relationships	1	
I will receive better employment offer	Anticipate better offer	2; 4; 5; 13; 14	Impatience to succeed
Company will not provide a sufficient salary	Anticipate low salary	4; 18	
Loyalty towards company	Loyalty	1	Pre-employment violation
Low loyalty perception of company	Loyalty	1; 7; 17	
Some co-workers will not like me	Conflict with co-workers	2; 4; 18	
You will get bored with the company and type of work	Workplace boredom	7; 11; 18	
First company will not be permanent	Lack of permanent position	8	
Unhappiness with employer	Employment dissatisfaction	4; 7; 8; 18	
Company will not provide a sufficient salary	Anticipate low salary	4; 18	

2.4 Findings

In this section, we will discuss the key findings of this qualitative study that will provide context to the results. The first global theme was identified as graduates' mental schema.

2.4.1 Graduates' mental schema

As displayed in the results, three themes have been identified describing graduates' mental schema.

The themes were career goals, results orientation, and status and power.

2.4.1.1 Career goal

This finding relates to graduates' perception of their career and was based on two sub-themes, i.e. immediate strategy and long-term strategy.

Immediate strategy refers to the strategies that graduates will use to enable them to reach their career goals. The mental schema of graduates already included three specific strategies, which they believe will contribute to the obtainment of their career goals. The first immediate strategy was that graduates need to *gain employment*. Gaining employment means finding a basic job in their field so that they can gain experience, something which they regard as important to achieve success. The respondents were aware that they would start in a lower position within a company, but there were some of the participants who believed that they would start in a lower managerial position. Two of the interviewees stated that they are going to start their own company as soon as they graduate – without any formal experience.

The second strategy was that they need to display *socialisation behaviour* in order to make them effective in employment. Some participants stated that their immediate career strategy involves adapting to the workplace and getting to know various important people within the company who can be an asset for career advancement. A response from one of the participants was:

*“My **short-term career goals** would be that I would get some **exposure** and **communicate with different people** to get various skills and be able to **understand** what the company requires me to do”* [Participant 2, Male Logistics Management].

The participants emphasised that gaining experience in their field is the main goal in their short-term career strategy and paves the road for career advancement and additional benefits.

Career advancement was the final immediate strategy and refers to the desire of the interviewees to start gaining experience in their field so that they can advance through the ranks of the corporate ladder. Participants mentioned that they must have the opportunity to advance in their career. They

were willing to start at lower levels of a company, but emphasised that their goal is to advance to the next level as quickly as possible. One participant specifically stated:

*“My **short-term career goal** is to **climb** the corporate **ladder** quite fast, within two years I want to be in a junior management position and within five years of working I want to be in **senior management**”* [Participant 13, Female, Transport Economics].

Long-term goals were the second sub-theme of career goals and refer to the specific career goals that these graduates want to accomplish within 10 years from starting employment. The results suggest that the majority of graduates want to have their own business or manage an existing company in a senior capacity. Only a few emphasised professional growth and status (PhD) as their long-term goals. This theme also suggests that the participants had *success entitlement*. This suggestion is based on a high correlation between participants’ long-term goals and their success perception. One of the respondents was very specific and stated:

*“In ten years from now I will be the **CEO** of South African Airways, because they **pay** their **CEO** very well”* [Participant 11, Male, Transport Economics].

When asked what the respondents regard as success, most of them replied that success is when you are the owner of a company, when you empower others and when you are in the top position of an existing company. Only two of the participants stated that success means enjoying your job.

2.4.1.2 Results orientation

The second theme that was related to graduates’ mental schema was that they are very results oriented in their approach to their careers. The responses that support this theme were that graduates want to be able to advance in their career and that they value monetary reward. Some responses from the participants included:

*“I want to work so that I can start making **money** and take care of myself, basically I was in university all this time and now I want to **get a job** and earn **money**, that is my **short-term career goal**”* [Participant 17, Female, Public Administration];

*“To me, being **successful** in my **career** means being a **billionaire**”* [Participant 11, male, Transport Economics]; and

*“**success** depends on **money**, because maybe you started from a poor environment and now you **work yourself to the top** and are surrounded by **money** so you have basically become **financially stable**”* [Participant 18, Female, Public Administration].

Only one of the respondents stated that they would like to prove themselves to the company, the rest of the respondents only emphasised aspects that they want from their employers. The majority of the participants stated that they had no idea what will be expected from them when they start working, but they know exactly what they want from their future employers.

2.4.1.3 Status and power

This theme refers to the respondents' desire to have status and power within society so that people will respect them. The career plan of the respondents included gaining status and power to give them the opportunity to empower others. Some of the responses related to this theme were:

*“Something that will provide meaning for me in my work is to be able to **make a difference** in other people's lives, this is also my perception of what professional **success** will be”* [Participant 9, Female, Transport Economics];

*“The **ultimate goal** in my career will be that people **admire** and **respect** me and what I am doing”* [Participant 15, Male, Logistics Management];

*“I need **power**, and for me to get **power** I must **gain experience** and look at what I am doing which is good and build on that”* [Participant 3, Female, Logistics Management].

The second global theme associated with this study was graduates' predisposition towards turnover intent.

2.4.2 Graduates' predisposition towards turnover intent

When asked how many employers the respondents think they will work for within the first ten years of employment, all the respondents stated that they would work for at least two different companies in the first decade of their career (with the average amount being four different employers). One of the participants stated that:

*"I am a bit **loyal** person and therefore I think I will work for maybe three companies in the first ten years of employment"* [Participant 1, Male, Transport Economics].

This is surprising because even though this participant emphasises that he is loyal, he already had a disposition towards turnover intention. The themes related to graduates' disposition to turnover intention are: strategic career moves, impatience, and pre-employment violation.

2.4.2.1 Strategic career move

This theme refers to turnover intention due to acquiring different experiences within the field. Half of the respondents stated that the reason for their turnover intent is due to their desire to experience different sectors within their field, so that they can gain diverse experiences in their career. Some of the responses were:

*"I want to work for at least three employers in the first 10 years of my career because when I eventually settle down I want to know the **culture of the organisation**, and know each and every **perspective of the organisation** so that I don't hop around between jobs later in my life"*
[Participant 6, Male, Management];

*"The reason for working for different companies is to **experience different work experiences** and **different companies**, for instance working at Transnet to **gain experience** in transport and*

*then working at the Department of Transport to **gain experience** in government and so on”*
[Participant 16, Male, Transport Economics].

2.4.2.2 Impatience to succeed

This theme relates to turnover intent due to the impatience of graduates to achieve goals. Some participants stated that the main reason they will work for more than two companies will be due to them getting a better offer from another employer. One of the interviewees stated that:

*“When I go through the internet and look at positions in Logistics it shows that a degree and three years’ **experience** will provide you with a certain **salary** per month. Now I am working for less than that amount till I have three years’ **experience** then I will apply for the **better salary** job. In the future, there may be another job that provides even a bigger **salary**, so I will apply for that, this is the reason that I will work for different employers in the first ten years of my **career**”* [Participant 4, Male, Logistics Management]

2.4.2.3 Pre-employment violation

The most unexpected finding from the interviews was that graduates experience a form of pre-employment violation, even before starting their first job. Pre-employment violation refers to already established negative feelings or violations in the relationship with your future employer, even if you have not formally met them yet. Seven of the 18 participants had some form of pre-employment violation. One of the respondents believed that his future employer will not be loyal toward him, and therefore he must move to another company. Three of the respondents believed that their co-workers will make the job unbearable for them, which will necessitate them to leave the company. For example, one of the participants stated:

*“If you are working for a certain company you will eventually **make enemies** in that company because certain **groups won’t like you** because you just came in the company fresh from*

*university and are doing more work than they're doing, so you will need to **change employers***"

[Participant 2, Male, Logistics Management].

Some respondents believed that the salary from their future employer is not going to be sufficient, which will necessitate a career move. Three of the respondents stated that the reason that they are going to leave the company is due to them believing that their jobs will be boring and that there will not be opportunities for them to get promoted; some of the responses were:

*"From life **experience**, I have learnt that sometimes you know you **will not be happy** and you are at a place in your life where you want to go somewhere else. let's say you have been working for two years, and now you feel that you are **not learning anymore** and doing the same thing every day over and over. This will make you want to **change the scenery** and go to a place where you can actually **learn** something different compared to what you already know"* [Participant 7, Male, Economics]

*"The problem is that you will **not be satisfied** with your job and location, so you will want to **move**"* [Participant 8, Male, Management]

The last respondent who was interviewed stated that the main reason that she will have various employers in her career is that she believes that she will not be happy in her job. Some of her specific responses were:

*"I feel maybe in my first job I **will not be happy** and just want to **change**, I will have the same problem with my second employer. At my third job, I will stop because I also want to be focussing on my entrepreneurial side, I want to be my **own boss** someday";*

*"you might find that there are **people that you don't like**. I know that there will be **people that you won't get along with** in the work environment. Maybe you might **not be comfortable** there where you are working, or maybe your employer will **treat you bad**. There might be problems with your working hours, where they expect you to work long hours, where everybody knows that*

*you should not be working more than eight hours. I believe that the **salary** will also not be enough”* [Participant 18, Female, Public Administration].

These results are significant because none of these participants have any work experience that could act as a frame of reference for their mental schema.

2.5 Discussion

2.5.1 Graduates’ mental schemas

When considering the results, it is evident that graduates, in accordance with the opinion of De Vos et al. (2009), already had a clear mental schema of what they want from their future employers. The results also show that graduates already have a professional career plan in their anticipatory psychological contract. Graduates will use this mental model to determine their choice of job as well as the evaluation method they will use to determine the extent to which their expectations relate the reality of work (De Vos et al., 2009). These pre-employment expectations, based on the graduates’ mental schemas, were likely to affect the psychological contract of those individuals once they start their employment (Gresse et al., 2013; De Vos et al., 2009).

The first research proposition was that graduates’ anticipatory psychological contract already included an entitlement-based professional career plan before organisational entry. The first theme that was identified was career goal, with the sub-themes immediate strategy and long-term strategy. From the results, it is clear that the strategy that graduates follow is aimed at achieving success – which, in their case, is also their entitlements – in other words, everything they as prospective employees do, is a means to an end. This correlates with research findings by Kerslake (2005) that new job entrants are success driven. Broadbridge, Maxwell and Ogden (2007) also confirmed that students are willing to work harder in the beginning of their careers to ensure advancement and future opportunities. Ng, Schweitzer and Lyons (2010) have also found that graduates tend to lower expectations for their first job, but seek rapid development thereafter, which correlates with the

results of this study. There were, however, a few unique cases in this study where some respondents still had unrealistic expectations regarding their first jobs (for example, starting in a managerial position, starting their own company or high pay expectations), which contradicts the literature that states that students tend to lower their expectations before organisational entry (Ng et al., 2010); however, this may be due to inflated entitlement perceptions. Gresse et al. (2013) have identified that the level of qualification, perception of future contribution to company, self-efficacy levels, the current labour market tendencies, employment equity standing, experience levels and cost of living are all factors that can influence the level of entitlement perceptions of an individual.

In terms of graduates' long-term career goals that were identified from the results, if graduates start working at approximately 22 years of age (after 4 years at university), it will indicate that graduates believe that they will be in a top position of a company, or the owner of their own company at the age of 32. From the article written by Hogg (2014), the average age of the CEO in the top 100 companies on the South African-based Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) is in their 50s, the youngest being 37 years of age (due to his father being the founder of a well-established listed company) with the rest all being over the age of 40. This indicates that graduates' long-term career strategies are unrealistic, as it does not fit within the norm. When considering the model of the individuals' anticipatory psychological contract suggested by Gresse et al. (2013), it can therefore be established that the career goals of graduates are entitlement-based due to it being a higher individual expectation.

The second theme identified was that graduates are results oriented. This indicates that it was less about what the employer can gain from the graduate's skills and more about what the graduate can gain from his/her employer (getting something out of the relationship). Studies have confirmed that instant gratification is an occurrence that is evident among the current generation entering the workplace (Flower, Jones & Hogan, 2010), which was also present in this study. Monetary reward was a reoccurring theme that most participants emphasised, but only a small minority of the

participants emphasised the importance of getting an enjoyable job, which contradicts international literature in terms of career expectations of this generation of employees (Broadbridge et al., 2007; McDonald, 2008; Mills, 2009; Maxwell & Broadbridge, 2016). An example of contractional literature includes Allen's (2004) findings that making a great deal of money tends to be less important for the current generation of employees than enjoying a full and balanced life. The participants stated that they do not know what the employer will expect of them, but they knew exactly what they wanted from the employment relationship. It would seem as if graduates, in the anticipatory phase of the psychological contract, do not realise the importance of their obligation towards their potential employers, which further highlights that entitlement perceptions might be present. This correlates with findings from Ng et al. (2010), who indicated that first-time occupational newcomers are regarded as entitled, based on the finding there was no relationship between performance levels (on a grade-point-average) while trying to achieve an outcome and the expectation for promotion or higher salary.

The final theme was status and power. The concepts of status and power are directly linked to graduates' long-term career strategy and emphasise the outcomes of new employees' career ambitions. Status and power could be summarised as the final outcome of the graduate's career plan; therefore, if the graduate's career plan was a competition, then the power and status will be equivalent to the prize of that competition. The fact that graduates desire status and power correlates with the findings from Ng et al. (2010) that new employees have a desire for praise and recognition.

2.5.2 Predisposition towards turnover intention

The aim of the second research proposition was two-fold; the first aim was to prove that graduates have a predisposition towards voluntary turnover intention, before organisational entry, which was confirmed. All the participants stated that they believe that they would work for a minimum of two employees in the first ten years of employment. This finding correlates with the findings of Ng et al. (2010) and Schofield and Honore (2011). It must, however, be noted that in the case of Schofield

and Honore (2011), their research involved employees who had the desire to leave their current employer even though they had a positive and constructive employment relationship.

The second aim of the research proposition was to determine whether the reason for graduates' predisposition towards voluntary turnover intention was based on an entitlement disconnect. A strategic career move was identified as the first reason that this disposition towards turnover intention exists among graduates. It was already emphasised that the current generation of graduates is success driven (Kerslake, 2005), which can result in the perception that graduates need to explore their career opportunities so that they can find a job that is best suited for them to succeed. Although this tendency towards turnover intention may have a negative impact on the future employment relationship, between the graduate and their first employer, the reasoning thereof is related to the personal development of the individual rather than the entitlement-disconnect.

The second reason was due to graduates' impatience to succeed, which is a result of their desire for rapid advancement in their careers. This theme was named impatience to succeed because it was already established earlier that graduates want to climb the corporate ladder as quickly as possible. The participants believe that it will take longer for their salary and position to advance within a single company, and therefore they must seek employment elsewhere so that they can receive a better position and benefits. The impatient nature of the current generation of employees, in seeking rapid career advancement, has already been established in literature (for instance Erickson, 2009; Ng et al., 2010). This theme, however, does relate to entitlement disconnect perceptions as graduates believe that the rate in which their salary and career will advance will not be sufficient to satisfy their entitlement beliefs, even though they have no frame of reference yet that supports the validity of their expectations.

The most surprising and unexpected finding of this study is that graduates seem to already have a sense of pre-employment psychological contract breach, and in some instances a degree of violation is experienced, even though they have never entered an employment relationship. When entering an

employment relationship, people tend to develop certain expectations about that relationship. Employees learn what the employer expects them to contribute and, in turn, these employees develop ideas about what they should receive in return (Heath, Knez & Camerer, 1993). Each employee has a unique psychological contract based on his/her expectations and obligations towards the organisation (Turnley & Feldman, 1999), which can lead to the experience of breach or violation if these expectations were not met. According to Restubog, Bordia and Tang (2006), and Turnley, Bolino, Lester and Bloodgood (2003), psychological contract breach occurs when a party to an employment relationship feels that the other party did not uphold its requirements and commitments.

The psychological contract is considered balanced if the employees feel that the organisation has upheld its requirements and commitments, and research suggests that employees with a balanced psychological contract are less likely to want to leave their employer (Scott, Eau, & Jill, 2001). The problem in this case, however, is that students have not entered formal employment yet, so there is no way for them to determine whether expectations were met. It does, however, seem as if these graduates are entering employment with an unbalanced psychological contract, something that has never been found in psychological contract research. The occurrence of this pre-employment breach may be a kind of defence mechanism that graduates use for them to minimise the effect of entitlement disconnect after organisational entry, similar to the findings from Ng et al. (2010) that graduates tend to lower expectations before organisational entry to avoid disappointment when expectations are not met.

2.6 Conclusion

This research aimed to explore and substantiate themes associated with the mental schemas of graduates so that the psychological contract formation theory can be expanded by incorporating entitlement disconnect as part of the anticipatory psychological contract. Sherman and Morley (2015) have suggested that a schema theory approach to the psychological contract has the potential

to provide new insights into how it is created; they also stated that if researchers were able to determine the unique experiences that were rooted in the schema, of employees or graduates, it would result in a better understanding of the psychological contract creation.

The findings suggest that graduates already have a developed mental schema (which correlates with De Vos et al.'s (2009) findings), which was, in fact, entitlement based. The themes that became known were graduates' career plans, which included graduates' immediate and long-term strategies, results orientation and status and power. The immediate career plan of graduates was aimed at getting any job and then incorporating various strategies to advance in their career; the long-term strategy was to achieve success in their careers, which was identified as a success entitlement. It was found that graduates were results oriented, where the participants only emphasised aspects that they expected from their employer, for instance money, which graduates emphasised as an important aspect of employment, even though it contradicts some literature that millennials do not see money as important as, for instance, an enjoyable job (Allen, 2004). The reason for this finding, which goes against popular literature, may be due to the uniqueness of the sample, as most students studying at this specific institution are from rural areas studying on government bursaries. This, however, reinforces the idea that entitlement perceptions play an important role when deconstructing the mental schemas of employees and graduates. The last theme identified was that graduates want power and status, which correlates with the findings from Ng et al. (2010), that the current generation of employees has a desire for praise and recognition.

The second part of this study was to determine whether graduates had a tendency towards turnover intention and whether this tendency was due to an entitlement disconnect. From the results, all the respondents believed that they would work for a minimum of two employers in the first decade of employment, which confirms that graduates had a disposition towards voluntary turnover intention before organisational entry. The themes that became known were strategic career move, impatience to succeed and pre-employment psychological contract breach. It was established that strategic

career move – graduates’ desire to experience different areas within their field of expertise – was not related to entitlement disconnect, but rather related to the personal development of the individual. The second theme, impatience to succeed, reinforced the notion that new employees had a drive to succeed in their careers. These graduates believed that the rate in which their career advances will be too slow when only working for a single company, so when another company advertises a position, the graduate will most likely apply for the new position. It was established that graduates’ impatience to succeed is due to an entitlement disconnect perception. The final and most surprising theme was pre-employment psychological contract breach, where graduates already had a form of breach of the psychological contract before organisational entry. These graduates believed that their employer will not meet their expectations and that is the reason why they believe that they would work for more than one employer. The only logical explanation for this occurrence is that the graduate is using it as a defence mechanism to minimise the effect of entitlement disconnect and disappointment after organisational entry. These findings suggest that graduates’ mental schemas in their anticipatory psychological contract play a much bigger role in the development of their psychological contract after organisational entry, than what was initially thought.

Although these results might paint a grim picture about graduates’ mental schemas it is important to note that careers are evolving and adapting. In the past, a long-term career in a single organisation was the main goal for employees, which was also the norm at that time (Moses, 1997); however, nowadays the norm seems to be shifting because graduates do not want to work for a single company anymore, which correlates with the perspective of Ng et al. (2010). Therefore, the only way for a company to retain talented employees will be to adapt to the new norm and make their company attractive for a new generation of workers.

2.7 Reference List

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Chapter 3: Exploring occupational newcomers' perceived expectations, obligations and employability

Chapter 3 (Research article 2) will be submitted for revision and publication in Management Revue, and the editorial and reference style was adapted in accordance with the editorial policy and guidelines for the submission of papers to this journal (Double spaced; 12 point font, Times New Roman)

Aim of this chapter

To explore and substantiate themes associated with the subjective experiences, expectations and obligations of new employees and the experiences and employability perception of their employers to determine whether an obligational disconnect exist.

3.1 Exploring occupational newcomers' perceived expectations, obligations and employability

3.1.1 Abstract

Employers have long been criticising the ability of graduates to contribute effectively in the workplace due to a disconnect in needed attributes and skills of jobseekers. Therefore, our aim was to explore and substantiate themes associated with the subjective experiences, expectations and obligations of new employees and the experiences and employability perception of their employers to determine whether an obligational disconnect exist. Our findings suggest that there is a clear obligational disconnect between occupational newcomers and their supervisors, and that employers have a negative employability perception of graduated occupational newcomers.

The psychological contract represents the employment relationship in terms of the subjective beliefs of employees and their employers (Rousseau, 2011). Each employee has a unique psychological contract based on their understanding of the obligations toward their employer (Turnley & Feldman, 1999); in turn, employees have certain expectations of their employers (Rousseau, 2004). It is a known fact that psychological contract breach occurs when a party to the employment relationship feels that the other party has not met their expectations (Restubog, Bordia, & Tang, 2006; Turnley, Bolino, Lester, & Bloodgood, 2003); therefore, it is essential for employers to take the psychological contract into consideration to retain talented employees so that the company can attain a competitive advantage (Festing & Schäfer, 2014). Knowledge regarding the development of the psychological contract, especially the anticipatory phase thereof, is still quite limited and underdeveloped (Sherman & Morley, 2015), which makes it difficult to effectively manage occupational newcomers' psychological contract.

The psychological contract is based on promises communicated or implied regarding the exchange agreement between an individual and the employer (Rousseau, 2004), and some of these implied promises may arise prior to organisational entry due to an individual's anticipatory psychological contract (De Vos, Stobbeleir, & Meganck, 2009; Gresse, Linde, & Schalk, 2013). The anticipatory psychological contract is regarded as pre-employment ideas or beliefs that individuals have regarding employment (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010), which include expectations and entitlement perceptions that individuals hold (Gresse et al., 2013). De Vos et al. (2009) and Gresse et al. (2013) have confirmed that employees have an established mental schema regarding future employment expectations, which they will use to determine the degree that their expectations will match reality after these employees commence employment. According to Dulac, Coyle-Shapiro, and Delobbe (2006), the anticipatory psychological contract makes up part of the job seeker's employment schema and contains impressions and beliefs that individuals have regarding employment information that they have obtained. These authors suggest that the anticipatory psychological

contract is highly individualistic in nature and represents a naïve schema that is dependent on the individual's perception.

Gresse and Linde (2018) found that prospective employees have a predisposition towards voluntary turnover due to their entitlement beliefs and that some participants already have some degree of a breached psychological contract, before organisational entry, due to the belief that their future employer will not be able to meet their expectations. These findings can be problematic for both employer and employee as it may affect the employability perception of unexperienced graduates in the labour market.

Andrews and Higson (2008) regarded employability as a complex construct; therefore, there is no unified view of what employability includes. Employability is not just regarded as 'getting a job' or gaining employment (Pool & Sewell, 2007), but can also be explained as the basic skills that are needed to perform a job and, once an individual commences employment, employability develops to transferable core skills, which indicates the ongoing process of personal and professional development (Rosenburg, Heimler & Morote, 2012). The International Labour Organisation (2000) provides a broader perspective of employability:

Employability involves self-belief and an ability to secure and retain employment. It also means being able to improve productivity and income-earning prospects. This often requires competing effectively in the job market and being able to move between occupations as necessary. It requires 'learning to learn' for new job opportunities. p. 37

Research into employability tends to overlook the subjective dimension of the employability theory and how it relates to not only the way individuals come to perceive and understand the labour market they are entering, but also the types of attitudes, identities, and dispositions they develop around potential employment and employability (Tomlinson, 2007). Some authors (De Cuyper, van der Heijden, & de Witte, 2011; du Gay, 1996; Grey, 1994; Tomlinson, 2007) have suggested that individuals use their subjective frame of reference to engage within the world of work. Tomlinson

(2007) stated that work is not only a technical matter that needs to be executed, but also a personal matter that involves self-discovery and reflection in an ongoing social process of engagement with the labour process in which they operate. Perceived employability is defined as an individual's perception of the likelihood in obtaining a new or alternative position in the company in which they currently work for or another organisation (Berntson & Marklund, 2007; Berntson, Sverke, & Marklund, 2006; De Cuyper et al., 2011). Vanhercke, De Cuyper, Peeters, and De Witte (2013) have called on further research on employability, by stating:

A further point related to subjectivity concerns the source of this subjectivity: most studies have focused upon self-reports, but also other-reports may be useful. For example, supervisory reports on the staff's employability may lead to decisions on which human resource practices need to be provided. p. 601

There are studies that have confirmed the importance of the perceptions of graduates' employability by employers and supervisors (e.g. Cai, 2013; Scholarios et al., 2008; Suleman, 2016; Vanhercke et al., 2013). Prospective employees face changing and competitive employment sectors that require them to demonstrate specific employer valued skills and qualities for them to succeed in finding employment (Sarkar, Overton, Thompson, & Rayner, 2016). Previous research on employability from a psychological contract approach has found a positive relationship between perceived employability and employees' intention to leave (De Cuyper et al., 2011; Van der Vaart, Linde, de Beer, & Cockeran, 2015). Employers have long been criticising the ability of graduates to contribute effectively in the workplace due to a disconnect in the needed attributes and skills of jobseekers (Prinsley & Baranyai, 2015; Sarkar et al., 2016). We suggest that the subjective dimension of graduate employability that employers hold may also contribute to employers' criticism of occupational newcomers.

Therefore, the aim of this paper will be to explore and substantiate themes associated with the subjective experiences, expectations and obligations of new employees and the experiences and employability perception of their employers to determine whether an expectation disconnect exists

between employer and employee, which could result in both a negative anticipatory psychological contract in occupational newcomers and a negative employability perception of occupational newcomers.

3.2 Research design

3.2.1 Research approach

This paper is exploratory in nature and a qualitative approach to data gathering was applied to derive themes associated with employees and their employers' subjective experiences within the context of anticipatory psychological contract theory. The questions that were developed were based on theoretical principles of the psychological contract, specifically the anticipatory psychological contract and employability. Identified themes were also discussed and substantiated through a literature study. An interpretivist or constructivist epistemological paradigm was followed, which is regarded as the framework for most qualitative approaches to research (Maxwell, 2006). According to Maxwell (2006), the interpretivist/constructivist perspective perceives the world as created, interpreted, and experienced by individuals in their interaction with each other and the wider societal systems. This paradigm to research regards the nature of inquiry as interpretative and therefore the purpose of inquiry is to better understand a phenomenon and not generalise findings to a population (Farzanfar, 2005).

3.2.2 Research strategy

Interviews were conducted and the data gathered was transcribed to identify the various themes associated with the experiences and expectations of occupational newcomers and their direct supervisors, through a thematic analysis. We focused on deriving themes associated with the experiences and expectations of employees and their direct supervisors by using semi-structured qualitative interviews.

3.2.3 Research methods

3.2.3.1 Research setting

The research population included employees within the first two years of employment – occupational newcomers – and their direct supervisors – representing the employer. This means that our research had two different research samples; the first sample included occupational newcomers, and the second sample included their employers. A combination of purposeful and snowball sampling techniques was used to identify the potential participants. In purposive sampling, a researcher will sample with a specific purpose in mind (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). The sample requirement was that participants had to be within their first two years of employment after completing a degree or diploma in a commerce-related field. Appointments were made with various programme leaders at universities where potential graduate candidates were identified and contacted. Interviews were scheduled with willing participants and the contact details of their direct supervisors were requested. The supervisors were also contacted, and an anonymous interview was scheduled with those who were willing to assist. Snowball sampling was also used to identify other participants who would be willing to participate, due to the difficulty and availability of the required sample. Snowball sampling refers to where a participant in a study refers other subsequent participants who meet the sample requirements (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). A total of 36 interviews (N=36) were conducted, which included 18 occupational newcomers and 18 employers. Participation in the interviews was voluntary and complete anonymity in reporting the results was promised to limit bias and to increase the overall honesty of the participants.

3.2.3.2 Data collection method

A semi-structured interview was conducted to obtain data from the participants. The average length per interview were approximately 30 minutes. The questions were predetermined based on the objectives of this study and the participants had to consider and respond to the questions that were

asked. The responses of the participants were open and unguided. If additional information was required from the participant, the interviewer would ask the participant to provide additional information. The interview process had two phases, namely the graduate employee interview phase and the supervisor interview phase. These two interview phases were conducted in separate sessions (without the other party being present) in an attempt to reduce bias. The questions related to each phase can be seen in this interview guide.

The graduate employee interview phase consisted of questions related to the experience and expectations that employees had and the main aim of the interview questions was to determine:

1. the pre-employment expectations of the working graduates;
2. the employees' experience since the participant has been employed;
3. the current work circumstances compared to the expectations of the participant that they had prior to organisational entry; and
4. the career plan of the working graduates.

The supervisor interview phase consisted of questions related to the experience and expectations that supervisors had and the main aim of the interview questions was to determine:

1. the employers' expectations of occupational graduate newcomers who have graduated with a degree or diploma;
2. the employer's experiences of these newcomers; and
3. the employer's perception of graduates and whether these graduates meet the employer's expectations.

3.2.3.3 Recording and data analysis

All of the interviews were transcribed by an independent contractor and the responses were documented using a coding system approach. This coding process was done in two phases:

Firstly, in Microsoft Word, all the responses were captured according to the question that the response was related to, based on the central idea of the response. The central idea of a response was determined by the word choices that participants used (for instance: ‘practical’, ‘experience’ and ‘need’), and what that word meant within its specific context. If the central idea of a response was related to a previously documented response, the participant number was captured next to response, and if the central idea of a response was unrelated to a previous documented response, a new response was documented. This was done until all the transcribed interview responses were captured based on the question they relate to.

In the second phase, all responses were grouped together based on similarity, irrespective of the question they relate to. This process was done in Microsoft Excel, where a coding grid was formed. The first step was to remove repeating data, where some of the responses were combined with responses from other questions due to them having the same central idea. Each response was then grouped in terms of similarity to form a cluster. Similarity of responses was determined by identifying the common characteristic between responses, which we called a ‘response core’. A descriptive heading was then assigned to each cluster. The clusters were then analysed and grouped by using psychological contract literature and the aim of this paper as guidelines. These combined clusters represented the themes and sub-themes and were provided an appropriate name. The coding was performed by the interviewer, and reviewed by another independent academic and the co-author. The example of the thematic analysis, which includes the final coding in phase 2, can be seen in Table 3-1 and Table 3-2.

3.2.4 Reporting

The findings were reported by using two main categories, namely *graduate expectations* (based on the newcomers’ experiences and expectations) and *graduate obligations* (based on employers’ experiences, perceptions of employability, and expectations), which were identified as the global themes.

3.3 Results

3.4 Graduate expectations

Graduate expectations refer to the expectations and experiences that graduate employees have about general employment and their employer. These themes were identified based on the responses related to what employees' employment expectations were prior to employment and how it relates to what they experienced in their tenure. All the employees experienced at least one disconnect between their pre-employment expectations and the actual working reality. Some participant (G1, G2, G3, G7, G10, G11, G12, G14, G15, G17 & G18) also stated that they have a positive perception of their current employment relationship, and participants (G1, G7, G12, G15 & G18) believed that they had a good relationship with their current supervisor. Another general finding was that graduates did not know what was expected from them when they started employment (G1, G3, G7, G15 & G18). The results associated with graduate expectations can be seen in Table 3-1.

The themes constituting graduate expectations included employment-related expectations, job-related expectations and entitlement-related expectations.

3.4.1 Employment-related expectations

Employment-related expectations are expectations that the employees held regarding general employment that were not related to a specific job. Employment-related expectations had three sub-themes, namely autonomy, personal space and work-life balance.

Table 3-1: Results – Graduate expectations

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Response core</i>	<i>Respondents</i>	<i>Sub Theme</i>	<i>Encompassing theme</i>
Less flexibility in employment as when being a student	<i>lack of Flexibility - general employment</i>	G1, G2, G5, G6, G7, G10, G11, G12, G14, G15, G16, G17	Autonomy	Employment related expectations
I must work with other people	<i>lack of flexibility - Collaboration</i>	G15		
I did not get my own office	<i>sharing of office</i>	G4, G9, G10, G13	Personal space	
I share equipment with other people	<i>sharing of equipment</i>	G4, G9, G10, G13, G12, G18		
I do not have my own laptop	<i>sharing of computer</i>	G9, G13		
Work takes up most of your time	<i>work hours - no personal time</i>	G1, G2, G5, G12, G13, G15	Work-life balance	
Don't have time for personal activities during working time	<i>work hours - no personal time</i>	G1, G12, G17, G18		
Long working hours	<i>Long work hours</i>	G1, G2, G3, G4, G9, G10, G11, G12, G13, G15		
have to take work home	<i>work hours invading personal time</i>	G1, G4		
Don't have time to enjoy life	<i>work hours invading personal time</i>	G1, G12, G17		
A mentor makes work easier	<i>Job complexity - guidance</i>	G4, G7, G8, G10, G12	Workplace guidance	Job related expectations
Work is difficult	<i>Job complexity - guidance</i>	G1, G2, G12, G13, G15		
have to learn a lot of new things	<i>Job complexity - guidance</i>	G1, G2, G3, G4, G6, G10, G13, G16		
Big difference between theory and practice	<i>low contribution - Job misconception</i>	G2, G5, G6, G7, G9, G10, G12, G13, G14, G15, G16, G18	Meaningful work	
Big difference between what I am doing and what I actually studied	<i>low contribution -Job misconception</i>	G2, G3, G4, G8, G9, G10, G11, G13		
Admin and unskilled work a large part of employment	<i>low contribution - irrelevant work</i>	G1, G2, G4, G5, G9, G16, G17, G18		
Traveling takes up a lot of work time	<i>low contribution - irrelevant work</i>	G2, G12, G13, G17		
I am an expert in my field and should be treated as one	<i>Status in the workplace</i>	G1, G3, G4, G7, G8, G9, G10, G12, G15, G16	Workplace status	Entitlement related expectations
Company and employees regard you as a nobody and a junior	<i>Status in the workplace</i>	G1, G4, G5, G12, G16		
I am employed in a lower position than expected	<i>Status in the workplace</i>	G4, G5, G8, G9, G10, G16		
Slow career advancement (promotions)	<i>Promotion - workplace status</i>	G2, G4, G7, G18		
Salary is very low	<i>Salary expectation</i>	G5, G7, G8, G9, G10, G11, G12, G13, G17	Attractive remuneration and benefits	
Almost no employment benefits	<i>Benefit expectation</i>	G2, G12, G16, G18		
I thought that I will get a big salary	<i>Salary expectation</i>	G1, G4, G8, G9, G10, G15, G16		

Autonomy is related to the employees experiencing a lack of flexibility that was not present during tertiary education (12 participants). The participants believed that they would have a say in how, when, and what they had to do in the workplace. They believed this was justified due to the academic attainment of a degree that made them an expert in their field; however, the reality was that they lacked autonomy in their job and that their supervisors stipulated what they had to do. For instance, some of the responses were:

“If I miss ten minutes of work, my boss will remind me that I am ten minutes late and that it should not happen again.” (G5)

“At work there is normal working hours and fixed rules that you must comply with, where at university you can leisure anytime you want.” (G15)

Personal space is related to the participants’ beliefs that they would have personal space in which to conduct their work. One participant summarised this finding with her response:

“You know, when I was an undergraduate student doing the final year of my degree I thought that when I entered an organisation after finishing my studies I am going to find a laptop waiting for me, a telephone with my very own office, not knowing that, in reality, I am going to share everything with other people, including a shared work space.” (G12)

Work-life balance is based on employees’ pre-employment expectation that there will be a balance between hours worked and free-time during the day, week or month. Some of these participants pointed out that they do not necessarily get paid to take additional work home or work during weekends. This had the effect that it contributed to work-life conflict, as some participants felt that they do not have free time for themselves. For instance, one participant stated:

“The workload really gets me, when I get home I don’t even get time to watch TV because I am just so tired, so I go straight to bed.” (G12)

Another employee responded:

“I expected my boss to understand that I have a private life outside of work and that sometimes I have to deal with personal things during work time, but the reality is that you have to put in formal leave each time you want to attend to some personal issues.” (G18)

3.4.2 Job-related expectations

Job-related expectations are expectations that the employees held regarding the specific job that they had to do, which also included the task. Job-related expectations had two sub-themes, namely workplace guidance and meaningful work.

Working guidance is an expectation derived from participants experiencing complexity with the specific job that they had to complete. This is related to workplace guidance because some participants stated that they felt lost when they started working and sometimes their superiors were impatient with them if they were asked to help. With regard to supervisor not giving clear guidance, a participant stated:

“In school the lecturer give you an assignment and then explain how to go about doing the assignment, but my work supervisor will give me an assignment, please do this for me he will show me the computer and say you click here, click there, do that and that is how you do it and then he says he wants the assignment by tomorrow and I have to submit it by email.” (G4)

A response that supported the importance of this expectation was: *“My experience was fine so far because the person that I’m under is supervising very well and showing me all the ropes and all that so now I am familiar with the system, because in the beginning was difficult, but now I have adjusted a lot.” (G10)*

Meaningful work describes the perception that employees have regarding their work, specifically in terms of it being related to their field of study as well as relevant to company success. Participants believed that they will do work in line with what they studied and that their work will constitute a meaningful contribution to the company, which was not the case for these participants. Some also stressed that general office administration duties (for instance filing, making coffee, data capturing) take up most of their workday, and that they do not necessarily do the things that you learned at university; for instance, some of the participants stated:

“Sometimes the office next door might send me to go make tea for them, when I studied I did not think that my degree meant that I will have to make tea for people at work.” (G4);

“I have been appointed in a certain job that have certain duties but when I come to office, I am not doing those duties but things like make coffee and reorganising the filing cabinet etc.” (G5);

3.4.3 Entitlement-related expectations

Entitlement-related expectations were identified by asking the participants what aspects of working reality did not match their expectations. Entitlement-related expectations are based on the specific disconnects that employees experienced and had two sub-themes, namely workplace status, and attractive remuneration and benefits.

Workplace status refers to the deservingness perception that participants held with regard to their position in the company, not just in terms of the job position or level they are in, but also how others see them (recognition). Ten of participants felt that they were experts in their fields after completion of their qualification, before organisational entry, but they acknowledged that they did not know anything about the true nature of work in their field; something they believe will increase as they gain experience. One participant stated:

“In any university students’ mind you think that you are going to walk in and you’re going to be ‘The Man’ walking around, but then obviously you see that when you come into the workplace you are going to start in a similar place as when you started as a first year student in university, and you have to work yourself up again. Most students think they are going to walk into a business and they are going to be boss, but they’re not.” (G1);

Some participants believed that their degree will be the main source of status in the workplace, as one participant stated:

“When you have a degree, and get a job you think people will respect you due to your qualification, but the reality is that they believe that degrees have no value and that you are just a ‘learner’ in the company.” (G5)

Some participants were even employed in a position lower than their expectations. For instance, one of the responses was:

“I didn’t expect to be an intern, I wanted to start with normal employment straight away because I have been taught about employment at university, but it didn’t work out for me like that.” (G4)

Attractive remuneration and benefits refer to the participants’ perception that they deserved and expected a high salary and employment benefits that are, according to them, associated with their qualification and field. Participants expected that they would be appointed in a managerial position with an attractive remuneration package. The truth, however, was that only two of the participants stated that the pay that they received was higher than what they expected it to be and all the rest stressed that they received a lower salary than what they thought a person with their qualification should get. One of the participants stated:

“When you start working you obviously don’t get the amount of money that you wanted, but there are so many other expenses which you did not have while studying, so the amount of money that you actually receive makes no sense and makes surviving very difficult.” (G1)

3.5 Graduate obligations

Graduate obligations refer to the expectations and experiences that supervisors, representing the employer, have about new employees. These themes were identified based on employer responses related to questions regarding their experience with working and supervising new employees who have some form of degree or diploma. All these themes were compiled by analysing the interviews that were conducted with the supervisors of the employees. General findings suggest that some employers (E10, E17, E17) agree that graduates bring new energy within the company; and some employers (E7, E8, E10, E12, E15) acknowledge that graduates have new and creative ideas. It should, however, be noted that some employers (E1, E4, E6, E7, E9, E10, E12, E24, E15) emphasised the difficulty in working with new graduates fresh from university. The themes

constituting graduate obligations included socialisation obligations, employment obligations and employability obligations. The results are displayed in Table 3-2:

Table 3-2: Results – Graduate obligations

Graduate obligations					
Graduates lack practical experience	<i>learning in the workplace</i>	E17, E15, E14, E10, E9, E6, E5, E3, E2, E1	Workplace learning	Socialisation obligations	
Graduates tend to be overwhelmed and frustrated when starting, they have to learn	<i>learning in the workplace</i>	E11, E8, E5, E2			
Graduates do not know anything and must be willing to learn	<i>learning in the workplace</i>	E14, E11, E10, E9, E8, E7, E5, E4, E2, E1			
Employment is not as flexible as when these employees were students	<i>adapting to world of work</i>	E14, E12, E9, E5, E4, E3	Adaptability		
Graduates should start as an intern	<i>adapting to world of work</i>	E15, E12, E11, E10, E8, E7, E5, E3, E4			
There are constant challenges at our company which means that graduates must be adaptable	<i>adapting to world of work</i>	E17, E16, E15, E12, E10, E14, E9, E8, E5			
Graduates are not open to the way things are done at this company, they want to do it their way	<i>take instruction from supervisor</i>	E16, E15, E10, E8, E4	Willingness of subordination		Employment obligations
Employees must take instruction from their superiors	<i>take instruction from supervisor</i>	E16, E14, E11, E10, E7, E6, E1, E3			
Graduates tend to always have excuses if something goes wrong	<i>take responsibility for their actions</i>	E18, E16, E14, E11, E10, E8, E5, E4, E3, E2, E1	Accountability		
Graduate do not want to take responsibility for their actions	<i>take responsibility for their actions</i>	E18, E7, E3			
We have experienced high graduate turnover in the past	<i>Show loyalty to company</i>	E18, E16, E12, E8, E14, E3	Loyalty		
It is expected that graduate work a lot of overtime	<i>commit to ekstra work</i>	E15, E14, E12, E11, E9, E1	Commitment		
Expected that graduates do small ad hoc tasks	<i>commit to additional duties</i>	E18, E17, E5, E3, E2, E1			
Graduates have a sense of entitlement	<i>have unrealistic expectations</i>	E18, E17, E15, E14, E12, E11, E10, E8, E5, E4, E2, E1	Realistic employment expectations	Employability obligations	
Graduates have unrealistic expectations on how long it takes to receive a promotion	<i>have unrealistic expectations</i>	E16, E15, E14, E13, E12, E10, E9, E6, E4, E3, E2, E1			
Graduates believe that pay is not related to hard work	<i>have unrealistic expectations</i>	E17, E15, E14, E8, E4, E1			
Graduates have unrealistic expectations about pay and positions they will start in	<i>have unrealistic expectations</i>	E18, E17, E14, E11, E10, E8, E5, E4, E3, E2, E1, E17			
Graduates tend to overestimate their own skills	<i>don't have necessary skills</i>	E18, E9, E5, E2	Relevant workplace skills		
Graduates are not prepared for the workplace	<i>don't have necessary skills</i>	E14, E10, E8, E5, E4, E3			
Graduates must have skills and knowledge relevant to their field	<i>have hard skills</i>	E18, E17, E16, E15, E14, E13, E12, E11, E10, E9, E8, E7, E6, E5, E4, E3, E2, E1			
Time is money so we don't have time to train new gradautes to do their job	<i>don't have necessary skills</i>	E10, E2			
We can not be expected to teach employees soft skills	<i>don't have soft skills</i>	E5, E3, E2	Relevant soft-skills		

3.5.1 Socialisation obligations

Socialisation obligations refer to employers' expectations of new employees, during the socialisation phase of employment. Socialisation obligations had three sub-themes, namely workplace learning, adaptability and willingness of subordination.

Workplace learning refers to employers' expectations that new employees must understand that, even though they have a degree, there is still a great deal they have to learn. The responses include suggestions that employees should attend training and development opportunities. Various supervisors stated that there is a tendency that new employees think that they now that they have a degree, this automatically empowers them to understand everything related to work, but the fact is that these employees still have a great deal to learn about the industry that they are working in. One of the participants stated:

"I think the graduates feel that they can just come in with a degree and they are going to fast track their career and be driving the nice cars, earning a great salary and getting a high position, and they eventually realise, after some time in employment, that it is hard to adapt to the world of work and that you need to work hard, develop and learn to be able advance in your job." (E2)

Adaptability refers to employers' expectations that new employees should be adaptable to keep up with changing nature of the workplace, but also to successfully transition (adapt) from student to employee. Supervisors expected that graduates must be able to adapt to the circumstances and constant changes in the workplace; for instance, one participant stated:

"We are living in the technology age, so I expect graduates to know the ins and outs of new technology because the world of work is rapidly changing, and they need to keep up." (E8)

In terms of adapting from student to an employee, an employer in the tourism industry stated:

"Some employees come here from universities and they are not willing to assist somebody with physical work where they have to use their hands, the ladies want to wear high heel shoes and work in an office, they come here with the idea that they are going to be an executive in an office and

answer the telephone. Graduates must learn to get their hands dirty, because it will be required from you in the future.” (E5)

Willingness of subordination refers to an employee’s ability to take instruction from their superiors. The supervisors expected new employees to be willing to take instructions from them. One of the participants stated:

“We have a dress code in our office, and the minute you tell them that you are not allowed to wear your scruffy jeans or track suits and all that, they act like they did not expect that, they will then take you on and argue that they are interns and don’t get paid like you do, so they will just come to the office with uncombed hair and I have to deal with that.” (E4)

A response that summarises the socialisation obligations theme is:

“Young graduates must be willing to learn, must be able to adapt and must be able to take instruction in order to adapt to the organisational culture.” (E10)

3.5.2 Employment obligations

Employment obligations refer to the employers’ expectations regarding general employment. Socialisation obligations had three sub-themes, namely accountability, loyalty and eagerness.

Accountability refers to the employers’ expectation that graduates should take responsibility for their actions. Participants expected that their subordinates should take responsibility in their work and not assign blame to other factors. When asked about their experience with new graduates, some of the participants stated:

“Do you know how many times a new employee would shift the blame to another colleague when the job is not done properly, and the sad thing is that they tell this to clients, so they think that your business is dysfunctional.” (E18)

“These employees are new and if they come late or miss a work deadline and I ask them what happened they always have some excuse where they try to shift the blame.” (E3).

Loyalty refers to the employers' expectation that graduates will show loyalty to their employer and stay within the company that spent resources and time on training these employees. One participant stated:

"Every year we employ between nine and twelve new graduates and at the end of that year only three or four of them remains, the rest of them resigned during the year. It's not that I tell them that they must go, it is just that they say the hours is too long, the pay is too low, they must travel a lot and stuff like that, they say it is not what they signed up for, even though what we provide to employees are regarded industry standards for newcomers." (E12).

Commitment refers to the employers' expectation that graduates will do what is necessary for the company to achieve success, including doing *ad hoc* tasks and working additional hours. Participants stated that sometimes there will be deadlines and everybody will have to put in extra hours to be able to reach those deadlines, for instance:

"We normally work from eight to five, but there are times that we have to work until about midnight if not longer just to get the workload off our table." (E11)

Sometimes the work requires you to do something that was not planned, for instance a participant stated:

"My work has a lot of traveling involved and you are going to different locations of the company all of the country, you will most probably get a message today that you have to be in Mpumalanga tomorrow morning at eight o'clock because there might have an urgent meeting. Graduates will be hesitant towards that because that means they have to drive at four o'clock in the morning." (E12)

3.5.3 Employability obligations

Employability obligations refer to employers' expectations that graduates should be employable, and display the necessary abilities and skills that are associated with employability literature. Employability obligations had three sub-themes, namely realistic employment expectations, relevant workplace skills and relevant soft-skills.

Realistic employment expectations refer to the employers' expectation that graduates must have realistic expectations. Most of the participants stated that graduates have unrealistic expectations in the workplace that create problems in the employment relationship when it is impossible to meet these expectations. One of the participants stated:

"I have found it very difficult to work with new graduates, because they have this sense of entitlement, they are not always open to the way that things are done at this company. They believe that they feel that they have studied for four years and believe that that makes them entitled to start at a higher position. They just want to have everything but do not necessarily understand that you have to work hard to get further in life." (E15)

Relevant workplace skills refer to the employers' expectation that graduates must have the hard skills necessary for employment. All the participants acknowledged that graduates had theoretical knowledge that they obtained at university; there was, however, some participants who believed that graduates overestimated their own skills. One participant stated:

"It is very important to manage expectations, don't put somebody into a world they're not ready for. That is what we are trying to do quite a bit here, we say to people we do want you to grow, but you are not ready for a higher position like regional manager. Sometimes they don't listen and we give them what they want, but they cannot handle it and they look back and say, you were right. People believe they are graduates therefore they can do it, but we as employers also need to be educated because you cannot expect a new graduate to have all the experience." (E2)

Relevant soft-skills refer to the employers' expectation that graduates must have certain soft-skills necessary for employment. Employers expected that employees should already know office etiquette and business communication skills when they start working. For instance, one participant stated:

"These new employees don't know how to communicate with colleagues in an office, they don't know how to answer a telephone. These employees will have to use the fax and photocopy

machines, telephones, emails, and we don't have money or time to spend training these graduates on how basic things work and how to display proper telephone etiquette.” (E5)

3.6 Discussion

Based on the experiences of occupational newcomers, it can be established that employees did experience disconnect between their expectations and the reality of employment. The employment entry experiences that these employees had provided a new perspective on the anticipatory psychological contract, especially regarding their pre-employment expectations, which have not been focused on in previous anticipatory psychological contract studies. The anticipatory expectations – expectations based on an individual's pre-employment cognitive schema – that these employees had were divided into three categories, namely employment-related expectations, job-related expectations and entitlement-related expectations.

Employment-related expectations are the anticipatory expectations that employees held regarding general employment and were divided into the sub-themes autonomy, personal space and work-life balance. Autonomy was used to refer to employees' lack of flexibility in employment. In literature, employee autonomy is defined as the degree that a job provides an employee with freedom, independence and discretion in scheduling their work and determines the best course of action of how to complete it (Burcharth, Knudsen, & Sondergaard, 2017; Hackman & Oldham, 1976). The anticipatory expectation was that employees expected to have autonomy in employment, which was justified by the perception that they have an advanced qualification. This was not the case, as there were individuals who felt that they had no control over their jobs. Previous research has indirectly linked autonomy to psychological contract breach, in Patterson et al.'s (2005) work, which regarded autonomy as a dimension of the psychological climate that affects the perception of psychological contract breach. Hartmann and Rutherford (2015) directly linked autonomy to psychological contract breach by hypothesising that when a person's ability to exercise discretion is restricted, that person might feel as if his/her employer's obligation pertaining to the work itself, resources

availability, and scope of responsibility are unmet and constitute a psychological contract breach. The findings suggested that autonomy was negatively associated with psychological contract breach (Hartmann & Rutherford, 2015).

Personal space is related to the participants' beliefs that they would have personal in which to conduct their work. The anticipatory expectation, associated with personal space, was that employees believed that they will receive their own office and equipment upon organisational entry. This was not the case as employees had to share office space and equipment with other employees. It is worth noting that Grenier (2015) found that occupational therapy fieldwork education students frequently reported that having access to personal work space enhanced learning by providing them a place to complete documentation, read, and complete assignments. This information may also explain why the graduate employees felt the need to have a personal work space available, as they too are still in the learning and adapting phase of employment. Research on work space has found that employees who have their own office or a shared office with another colleague are more satisfied with productivity support, and privacy and have higher concentration levels than employees who work with more than three employees in a single work space (De Been & Beijer, 2014).

Work-life balance is the anticipatory expectation that there will be a balance between hours worked and free time during the day, week or month (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003). These employees expected that they were going to work hard and that it will be required from them to work overtime, but they believed that they should be remunerated for additional hours worked and given equal time off for them to enjoy their private life. Previous research in the psychological contract has found that new employees have high expectations regarding work-life balance and that they want a different psychological contract with their future employer that portrays a better balance between work goals and personal goals (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Employee attitudes and personal dimensions of the employee, for instance stress, can impact work-life balance and if these elements

are not addressed, it will result in increased staff turnover (Deery & Jago, 2015), which indicates that it can lead to a violated psychological contract.

Job-related expectations are the anticipatory expectations that employees held regarding their anticipation of what they will do in the job that they are employed in. Job-related expectations were divided into the sub-themes workplace guidance and meaningful work.

Workplace guidance (or mentorship) is described as the anticipatory expectation that employees will receive guidance in completing tasks, from a mentor or supervisor, when they start employment. Swager, Klarus van Merriënboer, and Nieuwenhuis (2015) defined workplace guidance as development support that helps new employees learn and socialise in the workplace so that they can develop work competencies. Overall, the employees emphasised the learning curve associated with employment. These employees stated that the task is not only new for them, but is also quite difficult; therefore, they expected some form of guidance during the occupational socialisation process. Some employees stated that their supervisors did not necessarily guide them during their first few months of employment, which contradicted their expectations. Employees who had a guiding mentor confirmed that occupational socialisation was smoother and less stressful. Workplace guidance has been confirmed in socialisation studies (e.g. Swager et al., 2015), and mentorship has been established in psychological contract studies (e.g. Haggard & Turban, 2012).

Meaningful work describes the perception that employees have regarding their work, specifically in terms of it being related to their field of study as well as relevant to company success. The anticipatory expectation was that employees will do work in line with what they studied and that their work will constitute a meaningful contribution to the company. This was not always the case, as employees felt that general office administration duties (for instance, filing, making coffee, data capturing) took up most of their workday, which, according to their opinion, is not related to their studies. Meaningful work is something that many employees crave, which is also the single most valued feature of employment for most workers (Cascio, 2003) and it has been associated with a

range of benefits for both employees and their employers, including employee wellbeing (Routledge et al., 2011; Soane et al., 2013), job satisfaction (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003) and intent to stay within an organisation (Scroggins, 2008). Meaningful work has also been mentioned in previous anticipatory psychological contract research in De Hauw and De Vos (2010). Rawlins, Indvik, and Johnson (2008) found that new employees, specifically millennials, prefer meaningful work over well-paid work, and Dries, Pepermans, and Kerpel (2008) confirmed that new employees expect meaningful and challenging work that will present them with opportunities to advance in their careers. It is important to note that meaningfulness is subjective and innate to the employee and is something that each person must find for themselves in their work (Bailey, Madden, Alfes, Shantz, & Soane, 2017; Ciulla, 2000), which makes it very difficult for an employer to effectively manage it.

Entitlement-related expectations are the anticipatory expectations based on the deservingness perception that employees have. Entitlement-related expectations had two sub-themes, namely workplace status and attractive remuneration and benefits.

Workplace status refers to anticipatory expectation that employees will have status in the workplace in terms of job position and recognition. Recently, Gresse and Linde (2018) found that graduates' mental schema in their anticipatory psychological contract already includes a desire for status and power, which was based on entitlement perceptions. Employees believed that a degree would elevate their position in the workplace, which would ensure acknowledgement of their expertise by co-employees. In this regard, a disconnect was experienced by employees when they were employed in junior positions, which was intensified when co-workers did not recognise them as experts in their field, despite their qualification. Gresse et al. (2013) have found that workplace status is regarded as a higher individual expectation in an employee's anticipatory psychological contract, which is influenced by their entitlement beliefs.

Attractive remuneration and benefits are the anticipatory expectations in terms of salary and employment benefits that employees hold. Gresse et al. (2013) identified a good salary and the

benefits associated with it as the main motivation why individuals tend to complete a degree; therefore, this result comes as no surprise. These anticipatory expectations were unmet by their employers, as the majority of employees in this study complained about a low salary and almost no employment benefits. The results clearly indicated that employees expected a high salary and some attractive employment benefits. These results are supported by Kreitner and Kinicki (2008), who found that employees younger than 35 years of age value compensation as one of their top needs. Salary is regarded as an important work value, since it can be used as a measuring instrument to determine career success, and therefore younger employees have high expectations regarding financial rewards (Dries et al., 2008; Ruchika & Prasad, 2017). Attractive salary has also previously been confirmed in the anticipatory psychological contract as a higher individual expectation that was influenced by a higher entitlement belief of an individual (Gresse et al., 2013).

This concludes all the anticipatory expectations that employees have, which brings us to the next part of the discussion: the graduate obligations. These obligations are not anticipatory obligations; the reason for this is that these findings comprise actual employer expectations. Graduate obligations were divided into three categories, namely socialisation obligations, employment obligations and employability obligations.

Socialisation obligations refer to the employer's expectations related to the socialisation phase of employment. This phase of employment is regarded as the transition phase, where a graduate accepts his/her new role as an employee. Delobbe, Cooper-Thomas, and De Hoe (2016) explained that the socialisation process is where an employee will learn the dynamics of his/her new role and become a contributing member of a company, which is also considered a crucial phase in psychological contract development. Socialisation obligations were divided into three categories, namely workplace learning, adaptability and willingness to subordinate.

Workplace learning, as a socialisation obligation, refers to the expectation that new employees should be willing to learn. These findings correlate with Allen (2004), who stated that employees have an obligation towards their employer and mentors in that they need to respect them and exhibit

a willingness to learn. The findings suggest that, in most cases, occupational newcomers will only have theoretical knowledge with no formal work experience. This indicates that a new employee will not be able to effectively contribute to occupational success due to them still requiring specific critical work-related skills, which was confirmed by the results of the study (relevant workplace skills). This also includes the requirement that employees should participate in training and development opportunities. Hodges and Burchell (2003) also reported on research on graduate competencies, and they found that employers value graduates' abilities, willingness to learn, energy and passion, teamwork and cooperation, and interpersonal communication the most. McMurray, Dutton, McQuaid, and Richard's (2016) findings suggest that a crucial transferable skill when recruiting graduates is that they should be willing to learn.

Adaptability, as a socialisation obligation, relates to one of the most important aspect of the socialisation process, namely adapting to the organisation. Adaptability refers to the willingness and capability of an individual to change his/her behaviours, feelings and thoughts in response to environmental demands (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004). Employers expect occupational newcomers to be able and willing to adapt to their new role as employee. Employers in this study criticised new employees' beliefs regarding flexibility and stated that employment is not as flexible as the circumstance surrounding the student phase before employment, further emphasising the need for employees to adapt to the new reality. Employers also believed that occupational newcomers, with no formal work experience, should start in a junior position so that they can learn and adapt gradually; this belief, however, does cause some friction in the employment relationship due to employees' unrealistic expectations. Adaptability has been established in psychological contract research, as Delobbe et al. (2016) recently used adaptability as an item to measure occupational newcomers' obligations – to determine its effect on the psychological contract of occupation newcomers during socialisation.

Willingness to subordinate, as a socialisation obligation, refers to the employers' expectation that employees must be willing to take instruction from them. This finding correlates with the other two

socialisation obligations in that it acts as a measure to achieve workplace learning and adaptability. Employers experienced resistance from employees when giving them work tasks, which were normally related directly to the content of what they had to do or the process of how they had to complete the task. Subordination as an employee obligation has already been confirmed in psychological contract research, for instance Chen, Tsui, and Zhong (2008) found that the quality of the supervisor-employee exchange deteriorated when it was perceived that the employee did not fulfil his/her obligations. It was also confirmed that new employees with a higher sense of their own obligations towards the employer (greater sense of subordination) tend to see training as a useful method to increase productivity and display a higher tendency to build high-quality relationships with their supervisors and peers (Delobbe et al., 2016).

Employment obligations refer to the general employment obligations that employers have. Employment obligations were categorised based on commitment, loyalty and accountability. Commitment refers to the expectation that employees will show willingness to make personal sacrifices in order to enhance organisational performance, and includes working additional hours and doing additional tasks not necessarily related to your job, but which may contribute to organisational success. Loyalty as an employment obligation comes from employers' negative experiences associated with high graduate turnover. Employers have stated that they invest in these employees' professional development and use time and money to train them, but high turnover is still a problem. One of the supervisor's responses was:

"Every year we employ between nine and twelve new graduates and at the end of that year only three or four of them remain, the rest of them resigned during the year. It's not that I tell them that they must go, it is just that they say the hours is too long, the pay is too low, they must travel a lot and stuff like that, they say it is not what they signed up for, even though what we provide to employees are regarded industry standards for newcomers" (E12).

Both commitment and loyalty have been established in psychological contract theory; for example, job satisfaction, commitment, loyalty, performance and intention to quit have been identified as typical psychological contract outcomes (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Rousseau, 1995).

Accountability, as an employment obligation, refers to the expectation that employees must take responsibility for their actions. The findings suggest that employees tend to shift blame. Accountability is closely associated with locus of control, which can be defined as the generalised attitude, belief, or expectancy regarding the nature of the causal relation between behaviour and its consequences (Rotter, 1966). Cobb-Clark (2015) suggested that people with an internal locus of control believe that outcomes in everyday life are due to their own efforts, while people with an external locus of control believe that outcomes are due to external factors. This indicates that an individual with an internal locus of control is much more prone to take responsibility for his/her actions. Although the employers did not specially require of new employees to display an internal locus of control, they believed that it will be easier to manage employee behaviour if these employees took responsibility for their actions. Keim, Landis, Pierce, and Earnest (2014) found that internal locus of control has a significantly negative relationship with job insecurity. Pienaar and De Witte (2016) made the assumption that an individual with an internal locus of control and a high sense of coherence will be better in dealing with perceived psychological contract breach, related to job insecurity, and its expected consequences, than people with external locus of control and low sense of coherence. Cobb-Clark (2015) cited Spector (1982) who concluded, from many studies, that internals do perform better than externals, but only if they believe that their effort will lead to valued rewards.

Employability obligations refer to employers' expectations that occupational newcomers should be employable. Employability obligations were categorised in terms of relevant workplace skills, relevant soft skills and realistic expectations. Employers expect that an employee who has graduated from university should have relevant skills and knowledge related to their field. The results suggest that employers find it difficult to work with graduate employees and that these

employees are not prepared for the workplace, although supervisors believed that the theoretical knowledge of these employees was sufficient. Results further show that occupational newcomers' soft-skills are lacking in employment. Based on feedback from graduates and employers, Sarkar et al. (2016) found that generic skills (soft-skills) have higher relevance in the workplace than field-related knowledge and skills, and graduate respondents wish that undergraduate studies would have focused more on their soft-skills development. Discipline-related skills and knowledge (relevant workplace skills) have also been established in employability research (ILO, 2000; Rosenberg et al., 2012).

The only employability obligation that has not been established in employability research is realistic expectations. Employers expect that occupational newcomers should have realistic expectations regarding employment. Supervisors criticised occupational newcomers' unrealistic expectations, stating that it makes it difficult to work with these employees. These employers stated that employees are unrealistic in terms of salary and promotions and are regarded as entitled. One of the responses was:

“On the first day new guys are very humble, but in the second day they start with this arrogant attitude where they sometimes don't even greet you. When you ask them to do something they always have some issue, and that is a problem for us because it is not like they are prepared for the workplace. I have seen how new employees struggle to function in the workplace because they are not prepared, yes, they were in university and wrote exams but that does not make them practical. They are entitled and think everything must just happen for them.” (E10)

Employability research by Bhatnagar and Agarwala (2017) has found, through interviews with recruiters and employers, that the core skills they require from graduates to consider them for employment include aspects such as general awareness, curiosity, ambition, positive attitude and intelligence. Similar to our results, these aspects are also not normally associated with employability research. It should be noted that there seems to be little consensus on employability and what should be included (Suleman, 2016). Employability perception of employers should be

important because they transform employability into employment (Bhatnagar & Agarwala, 2017, Harvey, 2001). Suleman (2016) specifically stated:

Furthermore, the employers' perceptions play a key role in the definition of the required skills for graduates. The underlying assumption of the research is that employers are undoubtedly aware of their needs. But is this a reliable assumption? Research shows clear signs of uncertainty and, indeed, little agreement. p. 173

Vanhercke et al. (2014) stated that the definition of perceived employability does not only include obtaining employment, but also maintaining employment; therefore, we believe that employers' perceived employability of their subordinates could also include maintaining employment.

Based on the results of this study, and the fact that there is no unified definition of employability (Andrews & Higson 2008), with little consensus of what should be included in employability theory (Suleman, 2016), and that employability perception could include supervisor reports on staff's employability (Vanhercke et al., 2014), we therefore make the assumption that when employers experience that occupational newcomers have unrealistic expectations, it will lead to a negative employability perception of a graduate by the employer, which could affect the 'maintain employment' aspect of employability. Therefore, it can be concluded that employers had a negative employability perception of graduated occupational newcomers.

3.7 Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to explore and substantiate themes associated with the subjective experiences, expectations and obligations of new employees and the experiences and employability perceptions of their employers to determine whether an expectation disconnect exists between employer and employee.

Graduate expectations contained three categories of anticipatory expectations, namely employment-related, job-related and entitlement-related expectations. The **employment-related** expectations, which graduates expect, include *autonomy* over how to do their job, having *personal work space* to

conduct their work in, and having a positive *work-life balance*. The **job-related** expectations included *workplace guidance* to help them cope with socialisation, and *meaningful work* that would add value to the company. The **entitlement-related** expectations include *workplace status* that is associated with recognition and a higher position in employment, and *attractive remuneration and benefits*, which they believe is justified by their obtainment of a degree.

The employee obligations were categorised according to socialisation obligations, employment obligations and employability obligations. **Socialisation obligations**, in terms of employers' expectations, included *workplace learning* in that employees should be willing to learn, *adaptability* in that employees should participate in the socialisation process and adapt to their new role, and *willingness of subordination* in that they should take instruction from their supervisor to ease the entire socialisation process. **Employment obligations** include *accountability* in taking responsibility for actions, *loyalty* in terms of willingness to stay in the company, and *commitment* in terms of personal sacrifice and eagerness in contribution to company success. The **employability obligations** include having *realistic employment expectations*, having the *relevant workplace skills* that are required in your field of expertise, and having the *relevant soft-skills*.

From the results there was a clear disconnect between the expectations and obligations that occupational newcomers had, which is evident in the contrast between expectations of graduates and expectations of their employer (for instance, autonomy vs subordination; work-life balance vs commitment; meaningful work vs workplace learning; meaningful work vs commitment; meaningful work vs relevant workplace skills; workplace status vs adaptability; workplace status vs willingness of subordination; workplace status vs realistic employment expectations; attractive remuneration vs loyalty; and attractive remuneration vs realistic employment expectations). The interviews with occupational newcomers also confirmed that their anticipatory expectations and the reality after commencing employment were different, and that their expectations were not met. The supervisors also felt that graduates did not meet their obligations when they started working. The most surprising finding was that every single employee stated that one or more of their pre-

employment expectations were not met by their employer when they started working, but still these employees were content with their employer. This should clearly warrant a breach of the psychological contract, especially if you take into account that Restubog et al. (2006) and Turnley et al. (2003) explained that psychological contract breach occurs when a party perceives that the other party has not met their expectations. However, in most cases, for these employees the breach was minimal and did not constitute a violation of the psychological contract.

A theory as to why this occurred may be due new employees' under-developed cognitive sense-making process. According to Louis (1980), whenever there is a difference between projected and actual outcomes, a cognitive process of sense-making starts. This process requires both interpretation and action, and asks both the questions 'what is going on' and 'what should be done about it' (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). Dulac, Coyle-Shapiro, Henderson, and Wayne (2008) stated that employees engage in cognitive sense-making appraisals to derive meaning from the experienced breaches. Seeck and Parzefall (2008) believe research regarding sense-making is important, especially in exploring Weick et al.'s (2005) second question, which focuses on individual action, because little is known about how employees actively shape their psychological contract. This means that when these new employees experienced a breach of the psychological contract, they did not have an existing frame of reference to base their cognitive sense-making appraisal on, as they have no prior employment experience. Therefore, they might regard the unmet expectations as normal in employment, thereby eliminating the perception of violation of the psychological contract. If this theory is correct, it could enhance our understanding of how the psychological contract develops as a cognitive sense-making process in the occupational entry phase of employment, which will form the foundation on which all future psychological contracts will be evaluated. This might also explain the differences in how different individuals perceive psychological contract breach.

This study also confirms Tomlinson's (2007) opinion that employability research should include individuals' attitudes, identities and dispositions around potential employment and Vanhercke et

al.'s (2014) opinion that perceived employability could include supervisor reports of their staff's employability. Our findings suggest employers should regard the perceptions, beliefs and expectations that graduates have as a determining factor about how these employers perceive their employability.

3.8 References

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Chapter 4: Entitlement, anticipatory state of the psychological contract and pre-employment violation of graduates: Validating the anticipatory psychological contract questionnaire

Chapter 4 (Research article 3) will be submitted for revision and publication in the South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences, and the editorial and reference style was adapted in accordance with the editorial policy and guidelines for the submission of papers to this journal
(Structured abstract, 1.5 line spacing; 12 point font, Times New Roman)

Aim of this chapter

Developing and validating an instrument to measure the anticipatory psychological contract of labour market entrants. This information could enhance our knowledge of both the anticipatory psychological contract and psychological contract development.

4.1 Entitlement, anticipatory state of the psychological contract and pre-employment violation of graduates: Validating the anticipatory psychological contract questionnaire

4.1.1 Abstract

Background: It is suggested that if we assess an individual's mental schema, it may facilitate a better understanding of the psychological contract formation process. This will add a theoretical contribution to psychological contract research, as it will enhance our understanding of the specific terms of the psychological contract, which are only present during the organisation entry phase.

Aim: We aimed at developing and validating an instrument to measure the anticipatory psychological contract of labour market entrants. This information could enhance our knowledge of both the anticipatory psychological contract and psychological contract development.

Setting: The research was conducted on final-year students from two different campuses of a South African university. The sample consisted of a total of 316 participants.

Methods: We used an exploratory quantitative research approach to measure prospective employees' anticipatory psychological contract. The newly developed anticipatory psychological contract questionnaire (APCQ) was administered and analysed.

Results: Results indicated that the APCQ is reliable and valid to measure the anticipatory psychological contract of graduates. The descriptive statistics and correlation coefficient results clearly enhanced our understanding of how the anticipatory psychological contract works.

Conclusion: Our research contributes to anticipatory psychological contract research by introducing the APCQ questionnaire to effectively measure the anticipatory obligations, anticipatory expectations, entitlement and anticipatory state of the psychological contract of prospective employees' mental schema.

4.2 Introduction

Upon organisational entry, an occupational newcomer holds a rudimentary psychological contract that becomes more elaborate throughout their professional career as they gain experience (De Vos, Buyens, & Schalk, 2005; Rousseau, 2001; Shore & Tetrick, 1994). A great deal of attention has been given on how the psychological contract develops once a person is employed (for instance Adams, Quagraine, & Klobodu, 2014; O'Leary-Kelly, Henderson, Anand, & Ashforth, 2014; Tomprou & Nikolaou, 2011), but relatively little attention has been given to the anticipatory psychological contract that precedes employment, with only a few publications on this topic (for instance De Vos, Stobbeleir, & Meganck, 2009; Gresse & Linde, 2018a; Gresse, Linde & Schalk, 2013; Linde & Gresse, 2014). Based on this, we aimed at developing and validating an instrument to measure the anticipatory psychological contract of labour market entrees, which could enhance our knowledge of psychological contract development. To understand this proposed measure, a literature review in the anticipatory psychological contract is required.

4.3 Anticipatory psychological contract and psychological contract development

It is generally accepted that the beliefs regarding the mutual obligations of the psychological contract are formed in the recruitment and socialisation phase when first applying for a position (Rousseau, 2001), and this phase is still regarded as a critical period for the employment relationship, since the newcomer learns how to adapt to the world of work and the boundaries of the exchange relationship between employee and employer get tested and established (Debode, Mossholder, & Walker, 2017; De Vos & Freese, 2011; Thomas & Anderson, 1998; Woodrow & Guest, 2017). A crucial part of the psychological contract develops during this socialisation process due to prospective employees actively engaging in information-seeking behaviour and research in response to perceived employer incentives and employee contributions (De Vos, Buyens, & Schalk, 2003; De Vos & Freese, 2011; Thomas & Anderson, 1998). The knowledge that is required during this period drives the psychological contract development (Woodrow & Guest, 2017). Payne, Culburtson, Boswell, and Barger (2008) considered that some parts of the psychological contract developed prior to organisational entry, in the form of an anticipatory psychological contract, which acted as precursor of new employees' involvement in socialisation activities.

Coyle-Shapiro (2006) has suggested that an individual's anticipatory psychological contract gets developed during adolescence and is influenced by his/her family, friends, media, peers, school, contact with working individual and personal experiences. Delobbe, Cooper-Thomas, and De Hoe (2016) and Payne et al. (2008) studied the role of employees' anticipatory psychological contract in the socialisation process and found that the perception of obligations of prospective employees towards their future employer, prior to organisational entry, did affect their perception and

involvement in some of the socialisation activities, specifically in terms of training and interactions with supervisors and peers. Other authors (including De Vos, Stobbeleir, & Meganck, 2009; Eilam-Shamir & Yaakobi, 2014; Gresse, Linde, & Schalk, 2013; Linde & Gresse, 2014; Ruchika & Prasad, 2017) have also accepted that the anticipatory psychological contract plays an important role in the development of the exchange relationship between employer and employee. Sherman and Morley (2015) argued that to enhance our understanding of how the psychological contract is created, one should look through the theoretical lens of schema theory, which these authors considered as an underdeveloped area within psychological contract research.

4.4 Mental schemas and the anticipatory psychological contract

The anticipatory psychological contract can be defined as pre-employment beliefs and perceptions that individuals have (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010), and includes the expectations and entitlement they hold regarding future employment (Gresse et al., 2013) and promises they are willing to make to their future employers (De Vos et al., 2009). Employees entering the labour market already have certain expectations about the job they will do, the organisation they will work for, and the employment relationship, which together function as the foundation of the psychological contract formation process (Thomas & Anderson, 1998). The schema theory is nothing new to psychological contract research as it has been implied in Rousseau's (1990) reconceptualisation of the psychological contract, from the employee's perspective. Schema theory provides a theoretical lens to evaluate how the psychological contract works, which emphasises how information is used when parties come to an agreement (Sherman & Morley, 2015). Research suggests that individuals already have an established mental schema of what they expect from their future employer, even if they have no prior employment history (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008; De Vos et al., 2009; Gresse et al., 2013; Gresse & Linde, 2018a; Linde & Gresse, 2014), although it is considered that occupational newcomers' psychological contract is constructed based on an imperfect schema (Anderson & Thomas, 1996).

De Vos et al. (2009) have suggested that this mental schema that individuals have will be used to determine the degree that their expectations match the actual exchange relationship, after commencing employment. Morrison and Robinson (2004), as cited by Alcover, Rico, Turnley, and Bolino (2017), explained that schemas develop early in an individual's life when they learn generalised values about mutuality, *quid pro quo* rules, and rewards for effort exerted, and these value sets are influenced by their family, schools, peers, stereotypes, employment perceptions and interaction with working people. This indicates that the key to deciphering the psychological contract of a person may lie in analysing their mental schema, before organisational entry.

Gresse and Linde (2018a) reported on qualitative research conducted, which explored the mental schemas of graduates who have not yet entered formal employment, and found that their mental schema already included short- and long-term career strategies. These graduates were also result-oriented (in their minds the employment relationship was primarily concerned with what they get out of the deal) and desired status and power. Gresse and Linde (2018a) also established that the mental schema of graduates included a predisposition towards turnover intent – normally associated with psychological contract breach.

4.5 Obligations towards and pre-employment violation of the anticipatory psychological contract

A general overview of obligations and the experience of breach in the psychological contract are required to provide context for obligations and pre-employment violation in the anticipatory psychological contract. The psychological contract contains beliefs about the employer's obligations to the employee and the employee's obligations to the employer (Bordia, Restubog, Bordia, & Tang, 2017; Chen, Tsui, & Zhong, 2008; Rousseau, 1995), which is also referred to as the contents of the psychological contract. Many researchers (Bal, Chiaburu, & Jansen, 2010; Kasekende, Munene, Otengei, & Ntayi, 2016) have indicated that the perceptions of employers and employees about the fulfilment of their unwritten expectations and obligations are important, since it could result in a perception of psychological contract breach. A breach of the psychological contract can occur when any of the psychological contract obligations were perceived as not delivered (Bordia et al., 2017). The undesirable consequences of employees' behaviour, if their employer failed their obligations, are well documented in psychological contract literature (Conway & Briner, 2009; Montes & Zweig, 2009; Robinson & Morrison, 2000). When an individual experiences a breach in the psychological contract and the breach is perceived as significant, it will constitute a violation (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Paul, Niehoff, & Turnley, 2000). Empirical research has suggested a positive relationship between breach of employer obligations and breach of employee obligations (Bordia et al., 2017; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2002; Coyle-Shapiro & Neuman, 2004). Bordia et al. (2017) explained this relationship as existing due to the norm of reciprocity, which forms the ideological basis of social exchange theory, where employees minimalised their contribution to the company because they felt their employer did not fulfil their obligations. Gresse and Linde (2018a) have found that prospective employees already have a form of pre-employment violation in their anticipatory psychological contract.

According to the principles of psychological contract theory, the expectations that employees have automatically become the obligation of the employer, and *vice versa* (Kasekende et al., 2016). Kasekende (2017) defined obligations as a promise of future action, which the parties have agreed

upon, even though the terms of the promise, the execution thereof and degree of mutuality open the contract to disagreements. Some of these obligations and expectations in the psychological contract develop prior to organisational entry (De Vos, et al., 2009; Gresse et al. 2013; Rousseau, 2012), which indicates that an individual's perception of obligations, including their obligation towards their employer and their employer's obligation towards them, can be created without an existing agreement between the parties. This can be perceived as problematic, considering that expectations and obligations existing in the anticipatory psychological contract are based only on the perception that an individual holds, even if they have never met their employer (Gresse & Linde, 2018a).

Gresse and Linde (2018b) confirmed some anticipatory expectations (pre-employment expectations) that occupational labour market entrees held, which include autonomy in their work, personal space to conduct their work in, a positive work-life balance, some workplace guidance to assist them in adapting in the workplace, meaningful work, status in the workplace and attractive remuneration and benefits. Gresse and Linde (2018b) also identified some of the actual expectations that employers have of inexperienced occupational newcomers, in that they should be willing to learn, be adaptable, take instruction from their superiors, take responsibility for their actions, be committed and loyal to the company, have realistic expectations, and have the necessary hard and soft skills associated with employability. Graduates' perceptions of their fulfilment of their obligation towards their future employer become the graduates' anticipatory obligations. In this study, the anticipatory state of the psychological contract (ASPC) was used to refer to psychological contract fulfilment beliefs that an employee holds regarding future employment.

To fully understand the anticipatory psychological contract of an individual, one needs to take the entitlement perception of that individual into account, which has been established as an influencing agent of a person's expectations (Gresse et al., 2013, Linde & Gresse, 2014).

4.6 Role of entitlement in the anticipatory psychological contract

The word 'entitlement' has been mentioned in earlier psychological contract studies (Paul, Niehoff, & Turnley, 2000; Rousseau, 1998), but there was no clear distinction between entitlement and expectations. Gresse (2013) drew a distinction between entitlement and expectations in psychological contract research and regarded entitlement as 'psychological entitlement'. Psychological entitlement is defined as a stable and pervasive sense of deservingness, where a person expects high levels of reward and preferential treatment in the absence of actual ability and performance levels (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004; Harvey & Harris, 2010). Entitlement in the workplace is a cause for concern for managers (Harvey & Harris, 2010) due to their subordinates' inflated self-perceptions and feelings of deservingness of praise and recognition, regardless of actual performance (Campbell et al., 2004; Naumann, Minsky, &

Sturman, 2002). Entitled employees tend to overestimate their performance and still expect certain performance rewards (Campbell et al., 2004; Harvey & Martinko, 2009) and believe they should receive better treatment than their co-workers do (Campbell et al., 2004; Exline, Baumeister, Bushman, Campbell, & Finkel, 2004). Unrealistic entitlement beliefs in employees have been associated with unethical workplace behaviour, perceived inequity, high pay expectations, lower job satisfaction, high turnover intention, corruption and conflict with supervisors (Harvey & Harris, 2010; Harvey & Martinko, 2009; Kets de Vries, 2006; Levine, 2005). Research regarding entitlement and psychological contract breach has found that employees with a strong sense of entitlement were more likely to experience depressive mood states after the perception of psychological contract violation due to their belief that the organisation owes them (Priesemuth & Taylor, 2016).

Entitled individuals tend to arrive at their jobs with high levels of demands and expectations (Crampton & Hodge, 2009; De Hauw & De Vos, 2010). Gresse et al. (2013) found that the anticipatory psychological contract of an individual includes entitlement beliefs of employees, which have a positive relationship with the expectation levels that an individual holds, especially regarding career aspirations and workplace benefits (Linde & Gresse, 2014). Gresse et al. (2013) also found that final-year university students' sense of entitlement was influenced by factors relating to self-perception (perception regarding organisational contribution, experience levels and self-efficacy), academic factors (the obtainment of a qualification) and environmental factors (association with a social group, labour market tendencies and cost of living).

In understanding graduate entitlement, the role of 'academic entitlement' cannot be discarded. Academic entitlement is defined as a tendency of students to have predetermined attitudes, opinions and expectations that they deserve academic success in absence of justifiable academic scores and performance (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Finney & Finney 2010; Kopp, Zinn, Finney, & Jurich, 2011; Lippman, Bulanda, & Wagenaar, 2009; Peirone & Maticka-Tyndale, 2017). Peirone and Maticka-Tyndale (2017) reported a positive relationship between academic and pre-employment entitlements, which indicates that academic entitlement also impacts the anticipatory psychological contract.

In interviews conducted with graduates, Gresse and Linde (2018a) found that they had a predisposition toward turnover intent in their anticipatory psychological contract, which was established as being based on entitlement. It was further reported that graduates felt entitled to being successful and that they are impatient about how long it will take for them to advance in their careers.

Sherman and Morley (2015) argued that assessing an individual's mental schema may facilitate a better understanding of the psychological contract formation process. These authors added that such research will add a theoretical contribution to psychological contract research, as it will enhance our understanding of specific terms of the psychological contract, which is only present during the organisational entry phase. At this stage, there seems to be no standardised measuring instrument to measure the anticipatory psychological contract from a schema perspective. Therefore, the objectives of this study will be:

Objective 1: To develop and validate the anticipatory psychological contract questionnaire (APCQ) on prospective employees to determine its validity and reliability.

Objective 2: To report on the descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients of prospective employees by using the newly developed APCQ

4.7 Method

4.7.1 Procedure and participants

We used an exploratory quantitative research approach to measure prospective employees' anticipatory psychological contract. The theoretical population of this research was graduates who have entered the labour market, but have not yet acquired employment. The study population was derived from the theoretical population, being graduates who have not yet entered formal employment, but were in the final phase of entering the labour market. Due to the difficulty of getting access to a large number of such participants, it was decided that the sample will consist of students in the final phase of their degree who will enter the labour market within the next couple of months. Therefore, the sample was South African students in the final year of their degrees. Data was collected from two different campuses of a South African university. The students were invited to participate in the study to measure their anticipatory psychological contract by filling out a paper-and-pencil questionnaire at the end of their class. The participants consisted of a total of 316 (n=316). The sample included both male and female participants, and represented African (49.7%), white (43.4%), coloured (3.8%), Indian (1.6%) and Chinese (0.3%) participants. For the purpose of determining entitlement, it was also decided to report on participants' main source of tertiary education funding. Just over two percent (2.2%) of the participants paid for their qualification themselves; the sources of tertiary education funding of the rest of the participants included: parents/family (57.6%), government funding (26.9%), private institution funding (4.4%), study loan (5.7%) and other sources (1.9%, including friends or acquaintances).

4.7.2 Instrument

The anticipatory psychological contract questionnaire (APCQ) was developed to explore the anticipatory psychological contract of the participants. The questionnaire was based on the structure of the Psycones questionnaire (Isaacson, 2006), which is still widely used in psychological contract research (for example Kaskende, 2017; Snyman, Ferreira, & Deas; 2015, Surujlal & Dhurup, 2017), and its contents are based on research findings from Gresse et al., (2013), Gresse and Linde (2018a), Gresse and Linde (2018b), and Linde and Gresse (2014). The items that were developed under the constructs of the psychological contract framework were different from that of the Psycones questionnaire, due to the psychological contract not being part of an employment contract. The APCQ consists of six sections, namely biographical information, anticipatory employee expectations, anticipatory employee obligations, anticipatory state of the psychological contract, turnover intent, anticipatory pre-employment violation, and entitlement.

4.8 Results

4.8.1 Validation of the anticipatory psychological contract questionnaire

The first objective was to develop and validate the anticipatory psychological contract questionnaire (APCQ) on prospective employees; this was achieved by statistically analysing each of the sections of the APCQ by using IBM SPSS (version 25). Obtaining the validity and reliability was achieved by doing exploratory factor analysis and determining the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the five sections of the APCQ (excluding biographical information).

4.8.1.1 Anticipatory employee expectations (AEX)

The anticipatory employee expectations refer to the expectations that employees have regarding future employment. A total of 18 items were developed based on the exploratory research findings of Gresse et al. (2013) and Gresse and Linde (2018b). The main themes of these items were *autonomy expectations* (3 items), *reward and recognition expectations* (5 items), *meaningful work expectations* (3 items), *attractive remuneration expectations* (4 items), *personal space expectations* (3 items) and *work-life balance expectations* (2 items).

The participants were asked to rate the AEX questions based on whether they think that their future employer will make the corresponding promises to them and to what extent they believe that their employer will fulfil his/her promise, on a six-point Likert scale (1 = "My future employer will make no such promise"; 2 = "Yes, my future employer will make such a promise, but this promise might not be kept at all"; 6 = "Yes, my future employer will make such a promise and it might be fully kept"). An example of some of the AEX items are: "Will provide you with the freedom to decide

how to do your job?”, “Will provide you with interesting work” and “Will recognise you as an expert in your field?”

Referring to both EAX and EAO, “No” (1) and “Yes” (2-6) refer to the measurement of the contents of the anticipatory psychological contract. The scale from 2 to 6 refers to future fulfilment beliefs of the anticipatory psychological contract, after the content of the psychological contract has been determined. Therefore, the items that refer to an exclusion of the contents (“No”) were not included in the statistical analysis. The rest of the scale was then recoded into a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = “Yes, my future employer will make such a promise, but this promise might not be kept at all” to 5 = “Yes, my future employer will make such a promise and it might be fully kept”. An exploratory factor analysis confirmed that all the items could be grouped together to form a single component – anticipatory employee expectations (AEX) – with loadings above 0.45 and communality values (h^2) higher than 0.45. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was 0.92 ($\alpha = 0.92$). DeVellis (2003) stated that an ideal Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is above 0.7 (which confirms reliability). The exploratory factor analysis for AEX can be seen in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1: Factor loadings of anticipatory employee expectations (AEX)

Items	h^2	Components		
		1	2	3
Expect appreciation	0.67	0.74		
Expect own office	0.62	0.73		
Expect interesting work	0.56	0.72		
Expect personal space	0.57	0.69		
Expect recognition as expert	0.55	0.69		
Expect medical benefits	0.50	0.69		
Expect annual bonus	0.56	0.68		
Expect autonomy control	0.68	0.68		-0.45
Expect transport financing	0.66	0.67	0.43	
Expect autonomy job	0.65	0.66		-0.46
Expect own resources	0.50	0.65		
Expect additional reward	0.47	0.65		
Expect autonomy flexibility	0.57	0.64		
Expect field related tasks	0.56	0.62		
Expect success related tasks	0.63	0.61	-0.45	
Expect time for personal issues	0.47	0.57		
Expect accommodation assistance	0.70	0.54	0.61	
Expect not taking work home	0.49	0.43		0.43
<i>Eigenvalues</i>		7.65	1.56	1.18
<i>Percentage variance</i>		42.52	8.67	6.57
<i>Percentage covariance</i>		42.52	51.19	57.76

h^2 Communalities; F_1 AEX

4.8.1.2 Anticipatory employee obligations (AEO)

The anticipatory employee obligations refer to the promises that employees are willing to make to their future employer. A total of 21 items were developed based on the exploratory research findings of Gresse and Linde (2018b). The main themes of these items were *workplace learning* (3

items), *accountability* (3 items), *employment obligations* (5 items), *commitment* (3 items), *adaptability* (3 items) and *subordination* (4 items).

Similar to the Likert scale with the anticipatory employee expectations, participants were asked to rate the AEO questions based on whether they are willing to make such a promise to their future employer and to what extent they will fulfil this promise, on a six-point scale (1 = “I will make no such a promise”; 2 = “Yes, I will make this promise to my future employer, but my promise might not be kept at all”; 6 = “Yes, I will make such a promise and it will be fully kept”). Examples of some of the AEO items are: “Commit yourself to skills development opportunities?”, “Work extra hours without compensation” and “Do work outside your job description”. These AEO items were used in the statistical analysis.

An exploratory factor analysis suggested that the AEO items should be grouped into three different components. Based on this suggestion, the first component was labelled AEO general employment (Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.89), and the second component was labelled AEO additional duties and hours (Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.80). The results of the exploratory factor analysis can be seen in Table 4-2:

Table 4-2: Factor loadings of anticipatory employee obligations (AEO)

Items	h ²	Components		
		1	2	3
Commit to rules and regulations	0.65	0.74	-0.28	-0.09
Commit to skills development	0.68	0.73	-0.31	-0.19
Commit to workplace discipline	0.58	0.73	-0.15	-0.14
Commit to being mentored	0.64	0.72	-0.28	-0.16
Commit to deadlines	0.52	0.67	-0.25	-0.05
Commit to office hours	0.52	0.65	-0.24	-0.12
Commit to training	0.60	0.65	-0.34	-0.15
Commit to time management	0.56	0.65	0.03	0.25
Commit to take responsibility	0.54	0.65	-0.26	0.04
Commit to work-related activities	0.53	0.62	-0.03	0.23
Commit to self-monitoring	0.65	0.53	0.10	0.29
Commit to leave procedure	0.41	0.51	-0.02	0.12
Commit to supervision	0.55	0.47	0.38	0.08
Commit to non-work errands	0.77	0.18	0.72	-0.11
Commit to work over weekends	0.70	0.26	0.64	-0.13
Commit to extra hours	0.61	0.32	0.64	-0.01
Commit to serve (coffee/tea)	0.66	0.36	0.61	-0.19
Commit to ad-hoc tasks	0.66	0.29	0.59	-0.29
Commit to take work home	0.68	0.40	0.47	-0.30
Commit to accountability	0.72	0.25	0.33	0.62
Commit to subordinate responsibility	0.66	0.40	0.18	0.58
<i>Eigenvalues</i>		<i>6.21</i>	<i>3.16</i>	<i>1.32</i>
<i>Percentage variance</i>		<i>29.57</i>	<i>15.05</i>	<i>6.27</i>
<i>Percentage covariance</i>		<i>29.57</i>	<i>44.62</i>	<i>50.90</i>

h² Communalities; F₁ AOE General employment; F₂ AOE Additional duties and hours; F₃ AOE Accountability

Due to a low Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the last component ($\alpha = 0.58$), it was rather decided to split it into two single item components; therefore, the last two components for AEO were: AEO accountability and AEO accountability for subordinates.

4.8.1.3 Anticipatory state of the psychological contract (ASPC)

To measure the ASPC of prospective employees, a total of eight items were developed based on the exploratory research findings of Gresse and Linde (2018a) and Gresse and Linde (2018b).

Participants were asked to rate whether they agree with various ASPC statements, on a five-point Likert scale (1 = "Not at all"; 5 = "Totally"). Examples of some of the items are: "Do you believe that you will be fairly rewarded for the effort you will put into your future job?" and "Do you believe that your future manager will treat you fairly?" An exploratory factor analysis confirmed that all the items could be grouped together to form a single component: Anticipatory state of the psychological contract (ASPC) with loadings above 0.45, communality values (h^2) higher than 0.45, and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.85 ($\alpha = 0.85$).

4.8.1.4 Turnover intent (TI)

The APCQ had three items that measured the turnover intent (TI) of prospective employees and was developed based on findings from Gresse and Linde (2018a). Participants were asked to rate whether they agreed with the following statements: "I do not plan to work very long for my first employer" and "I will keep applying for better positions once I start working". They had to rate these questions using a five-point Likert scale (1 = "Not at all"; 5 = "Totally"). Students were also asked to rate how many employers they believe they will work for in the first 10 years of employment based on another five-point scale (1 = "one employer"; 2 = "two employers", 3 = "three employers"; 4 = "four employers", 5 = "five or more employers"). Due to two different scales and a low Cronbach's alpha coefficient ($\alpha = 0.58$) and inter-item correlation, it was decided to report on the items separately in terms of *Immediate TI*, *Continuous TI* and *Long-term TI*.

4.8.1.5 Pre-employment violation (PEV)

The APCQ had four items that measured the pre-employment violation (PEV) of prospective employees. Pre-employment violation refers to a finding in Gresse and Linde (2018a) where graduates already had a sense of psychological breach due to them believing that their future employer will not be able to meet their expectations, thereby failing to retain them. Participants were asked to rate whether they agreed with four pre-employment violation statements, on a five-point Likert scale (1 = "Not at all"; 5 = "Totally"). An example of one of these statements was: "I believe that I will have to find alternate employment when I start working due to personality clashes with my future supervisor".

Due to a low Cronbach's alpha coefficient ($\alpha = 0.53$) and inter-item correlation, it was decided to report on the items separately in terms of *PEV better offer* (anticipate better offer from another company), *PEV field of study* (anticipate that a position outside their field will provide a better salary), *PEV conflict with supervisor* (anticipate clashes with their supervisor) and *PEV low position* (anticipate lower job level). We believe that the low Cronbach's alpha coefficient might be due to the highly individualistic nature of violation experiences in the anticipatory psychological contract.

4.8.1.6 Entitlement (ENT)

To measure the entitlement of prospective employees, a total of five items were developed based on research findings by Linde and Gresse (2014), Gresse et al. (2013), and Gresse and Linde (2018a). The common theme of the items was *sense of deservingness* of the participants.

Participants were asked to rate whether they agree with five subtle entitlement statements, on a five-point Likert scale (1 = "Not at all"; 5 = "Totally"). Examples of some of the items are: "Due to my qualification, I deserve a very good job" and "I believe that I will be the best candidate for any job in my field". An exploratory factor analysis confirmed that all the items could be grouped together to form a single component: Entitlement (ENT). Entitlement displayed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.61 ($\alpha = 0.61$), which is lower than the ideal of 0.7, as suggested by DeVellis (2003). However, Pallant (2013) stated that Cronbach's alpha values are sensitive to the number of items in a scale, especially in scales with fewer than ten items; therefore, it is better to report the mean inter-item correlation for the items. Briggs and Cheek (1986), as cited in Pallant (2013), recommended that the optimal range for inter-item correlation is between 0.2 and 0.4. Table 4-3 displays a summary of the item statistics for ENT.

Table 4-3: Summary of Entitlement item statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum/ minimum	Variance
Item means	3.36	2.63	3.98	1.35	1.51	0.30
Item variances	1.54	1.08	2.05	0.97	1.90	0.17
Inter-item covariances	0.37	0.15	0.67	0.51	4.32	0.03
Inter-item correlations	0.25	0.13	0.43	0.30	3.40	0.01

Based on the above table, the inter-item correlation mean was 0.25 with a range of 0.3, which is within the optimal range as suggested by Briggs and Cheek (1986); therefore, ENT can be regarded as a reliable instrument.

4.8.2 Measuring graduates' anticipatory psychological contract

The second objective was to report on the descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients of graduates by using the APCQ. The statistical analysis was carried out with the IBM SPSS 25 program. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the minimum, maximum, mean standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis. Results of the descriptive statistics can be seen in Table 4-4. The table shows that, in most cases, the distribution of data is normal with a skewness and kurtosis between the values -1 and 1. AOE General employment (-1.02), Continuous TI (-1.05) and PEV Better offer (-1.25) all fall outside the barriers of what is considered normal distribution for skewness, and AEO Accountability (-1.12) and AEO Accountability for subordinates (-1.1) fall outside barriers of what is considered normal distribution for kurtosis. These, however, are very close to acceptable standards.

Table 4-4: Descriptive statistics of the APCQ

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
AEX	313	0.2	5	2.75	1.00	0.14	0.14	-0.53	0.27
AEO General employment	305	0.5	5	3.74	0.85	-1.02	0.14	0.93	0.28
AEO Additional duties and hours	310	0	5	2.11	1.15	0.25	0.14	-0.64	0.28
AEO Accountability	314	0	5	2.39	1.65	-0.10	0.14	-1.11	0.27
AEO Accountability for subordinates	314	0	5	2.80	1.68	-0.31	0.14	-1.10	0.27
ASPC	310	1	5	3.50	0.85	-0.28	0.14	-0.35	0.28
Immediate TI	315	1	5	3.17	1.27	-0.09	0.14	-0.91	0.27
Continuous TI	312	1	5	4.06	1.12	-1.05	0.14	0.21	0.28
Long-term TI	308	1	5	2.81	1.01	0.12	0.14	-0.38	0.28
PEV Better offer	314	1	5	4.17	1.09	-1.25	0.14	0.83	0.27
PEV Field of study	313	1	5	3.62	1.24	-0.50	0.14	-0.72	0.27
PEV Conflict with supervisor	314	1	5	3.00	1.24	0.01	0.14	-0.89	0.27
PEV Low position	313	1	5	3.01	1.19	0.03	0.14	-0.73	0.27
ENT	311	1.2	5	3.36	0.78	-0.10	0.14	-0.49	0.28

The mean (M) provides some interesting insight into the anticipatory psychological contract of these participants. In terms of anticipatory expectations (AEX), the majority of participants displayed average levels of expectations ($M = 2.75$). The anticipatory obligations level was also quite average for most participants, where they were willing to make certain promises to their future employer and in most of cases keep those promises. Participants were slightly more reluctant to fulfil their obligation towards additional duties and hours, but then again, they were more than willing to make up for that by keeping their promises if their obligations were related to general employment, which is supported with a much higher mean ($M = 3.74$). In terms of general employment, the results suggest that graduates tend to promise more, but expect less from their future employer. It is encouraging to see that most participants have a positive opinion of their future exchange relationship, which is supported with a high mean ($M = 3.5$) for the anticipatory state of the psychological contract. From the results, it is evident, and alarming, that graduates do

already have a predisposition regarding turnover intent with a higher than average mean for immediate turnover intention ($M = 3.17$) and an extremely high mean for continuous turnover intention ($M = 4.06$). Most participants also display high levels of pre-employment violation where they believe that their future employer will not be able to retain them, especially in terms of their employer matching or beating an offer from another company (which can also be a position outside their field of study).

Overall, these participants can also be regarded as being entitled ($M = 3.36$). Gresse et al. (2013) reported that various factors can influence the entitlement perception of individuals, which was confirmed when looking at the descriptive statistics (specifically the mean) based on the different groups in the biographical information. For instance participants studying on government funding displayed considerably higher levels of entitlement ($M = 3.66$) than students whose main source of financing comes from themselves ($M = 3.31$), parents or family ($M = 3.29$), private institutions ($M = 3.12$), study loans ($M = 2.96$) and other sources ($M = 3.1$). Female participants ($M = 3.44$) also displayed a slightly higher entitlement than male participants ($M = 3.25$).

The results of the correlation coefficient between the different variables are displayed in Table 4-5; this correlation coefficient would describe the degree of relationship between two variables (Tronchim & Donnelly, 2008).

Table 4-5: Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient of the APCQ

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. AEX	-	.												
2. AEO General employment	.44**	-												
3. AEO Additional duties and hours	.22**	.24**	-											
4. AEO Accountability	.13*	.17**	.26**	-										
5. AEO Accountability for subordinates	.14*	.33**	.20**	.41**	-									
6. ASPC	.56**	.38**	.26**	.10	.10	-								
7. Immediate TI	.09	-.06	-.02	.01	.05	.05	-							
8. Contentious TI	.16**	.33**	.00	.01	-.01	.15*	.18**	-						
9. Long-term TI	-.04	-.01	.02	.01	-.04	.08	.23**	.07	-					
10. PEV Better offer	.09	.32**	.04	-.00	.05	.12*	.20**	.39**	.14*	-				
11. PEV Field of study	.04	.19**	.14*	.13*	.08	.03	.04	.30**	.13*	.24**	-			
12. PEV Conflict with supervisor	.11*	-.03	.08	.07	-.06	.13*	.13*	.03	.19**	.14*	.22**	-		
13. PEV Low Position	.09	.00	.29**	.23**	.15**	.10	.08	.07	.09	.14*	.26**	.30**	-	
14. ENT	.20**	.15**	.06	.02	-.01	.38*	.20**	.20**	.27**	.24**	.27**	.32**	.21**	-

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results show that all significant correlations ($p < 0.05$ & $p < 0.01$) between the variables had a positive correlation ($r > 0$), which means that both variables move in the same direction. There is no relationship between anticipatory expectations and the *pre-employment violation constructs*, with the strongest correlation being between *AEX* and *PEV Conflict with supervisor* that only displayed a statistically significant correlation ($r = 0.11$, $p < 0.05$). In terms of anticipatory employee expectations, a relationship was established between *AEX* and *AEO general employment* ($r = 0.44$, $p < 0.01$). There was no practical significant relationship between *AEX* and *ENT* ($r = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$), as well as *AEX* and *continuous TI* ($r = 0.16$, $p < 0.01$), although the correlation was statistically significant for both with $p < 0.01$. The highest relationships that involved *EAX* were between *EAX* and the *ASPC* ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.01$).

The anticipatory employee obligations variables all had significant relationships with one another, although the strength of the relationships was relatively weak, with the highest being between *AEO accountability* and *AEO accountability for subordinates* ($r = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$). There was a relationship between: *AEO General Employment* and *ASPC* ($r = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$); *AEO General Employment* and *Continuous TI* ($r = 0.33$, $p < 0.01$); and *AEO General employment* and *PEV Better offer* ($r = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$). There is no practically significant relationship between *AEO General employment* and *ENT* ($r = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$) although the correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. *AEO Additional duties and hours* had a very weak practically significant relationship with *ASPC* ($r = 0.26$, $p < 0.01$) and *PEV Low position* ($r = 0.22$, $p < 0.01$) with both displaying a statistically significant correlation ($p < 0.01$). *AEO Accountability* displayed a very weak practically significant relationship with *PEV Low position* ($r = .23$, $p < 0.01$).

There was no practically significant relationship between *ASPC* and *Continuous TI* ($r = 0.15$, $p < 0.05$); *ASPC* and *PEV Better offer* ($r = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$); and *ASPC* and *PEV Conflict with supervisor* ($r = .13$, $p < 0.01$) even though the correlation is statistically significant with $p < 0.05$. There was, however, a weak practically significant relationship between *ASPC* and *ENT* ($r = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$).

There was almost no practically significant correlation between the turnover intent variables, although there were some statistically significant correlations. There was also no practically significant relationship between *Immediate TI* and *PEV Better offer* ($r = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$) and *Immediate TI* and *PEV Conflict with supervisor* ($r = 0.13$, $p < 0.05$), although both had a statistically significant correlation with $p < 0.05$. Continuous turnover intention did display a practically significant relationship with some of the pre-employment violation variables. There was a relationship between *Continuous TI* and *PEV Better offer* ($r = 0.39$, $p < 0.01$) and *Continuous TI* and *PEV Field of study* ($r = 0.30$, $p < 0.01$). In terms of the relationship between entitlement and turnover intention, there was no relationship between entitlement and immediate or continuous

turnover intent. There was a relationship between *ENT* and *Long-term TI* ($r = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$), although the practically significant relationship was weak.

All the pre-employment violation variables had weak practically significant relationships between themselves, although they were statistically significant ($P < 0.05$). The highest inter-variable relationship was between PEV conflict with supervisor and PEV Low position ($r = 0.30$, $p < 0.01$), although the strength of the practically significant relationship is still considered weak. There was a weak relationship between ENT and PEV Better offer ($r = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$); ENT and PEV Field of study ($r = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$); and ENT and PEV Low position ($r = 0.21$, $p < 0.01$). The strongest relationship regarding violation and entitlement was between ENT and PEV Conflict with supervisor ($r = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$).

4.9 Discussion

Sherman and Morley (2015) suggested that by using a theoretical lens of the *schema theory* and looking at employees' mental schema in the final stages before organisational entry may enhance researchers' efforts to understand how the psychological contract develops. Our research and Delobbe et al.'s (2016) findings largely support Sherman and Morley's (2015) perception in that we both found that the anticipatory psychological contract directly impacts the actual exchange relationship. The descriptive statistics highlighted the collective mental schema of South African students. The first notable aspect was that these participants can be regarded as being entitled due to a high mean. Entitlement being associated with graduates has already been documented in education research (i.e. Abrahams, 2017; Scully, 2013) as well as psychological contract research (Gresse et al. 2013; Gresse & Linde, 2018a; Linde & Gresse, 2014). The second notable aspect was that these results confirm Gresse and Linde's (2018a) finding that graduates had a predisposition towards continuous turnover intent; in other words, tendency toward job hopping.

Previous studies have confirmed a positive relationship between breach of employee obligations and breach of employer obligations (Bordia et al., 2017; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2002; Coyle-Shapiro & Neuman, 2004). It would seem as if the same principle applies in the anticipatory psychological contract where individuals' perception of future fulfilment (ASCP) had a positive relationship with both anticipatory expectations and anticipatory obligations. It was found that if employees held a positive belief that their future psychological contract beliefs will be fulfilled by their future employer, they were more inclined to have higher expectations and higher obligations toward their future employer. The same principle applied to them having a lower perception of future fulfilment. This relationship makes sense due to the norm of reciprocity (Bordia et al., 2017), where employees will have lower expectations if they think that their employer will not fulfil their perceived contractual obligations, and *vice versa*. There was a stronger practically significant

relationship between the anticipatory expectations and the anticipatory obligations that the participants had than there was between anticipatory obligations and the anticipatory state of the psychological contract. This might indicate that prospective employees' anticipatory expectations might play a bigger role in determining their anticipatory obligations. This means that the anticipatory expectation level of occupational newcomers might determine to what degree they will to keep their employment promises.

An interesting relationship from the results is that there was a positive relationship between the pre-employment violation variables and the anticipatory expectations as well as with the anticipatory obligations. The logical assumption will be that when you perceive violation you will automatically expect less and will also be less likely to fulfil your obligational promises (Bordia et al., 2017; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2002; Coyle-Shapiro & Neuman, 2004). From the descriptive statistics, it was clear that these participants had high levels of pre-employment violation, which was supported by relatively high means of all the violation variables, especially regarding violation due to the anticipation of a better offer, which was overall the highest rated item of the questionnaire. The results of the correlation coefficient displayed no relationship between pre-employment violation variables and anticipatory expectations. The results displayed a positive relationship between pre-employment violation and anticipatory obligations, which suggests that higher experiences of violation are accompanied by a higher tendency of the individual to fulfil his/her promises, a finding that is inconsistent with literature. We believe that this correlation exists due to cognitive sense-making in the anticipatory psychological contract.

In employment, if a breach of the psychological contract is experienced, the employee will first go through a cognitive sense-making process to determine whether the breach is significant, before deciding on action (Dulac, Coyle-Shapiro, Henderson, & Wayne, 2008; Louis, 1980; Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005). Rousseau (2001) based her theory of the psychological contract on the schema theory, and focused specifically on how employees made sense of their psychological contracts. Our results confirm prospective employees' mental schemas already include a pre-employment violation perception, in that they believe that their future employer will not be able, or might not be willing, to match or beat another company's employment offers. During the phase leading up to labour market entry, prospective employees might get new employment information from the various sources that influence their mental schemas (as suggested by Morrison & Robinson, 2004), or by actively taking part in information-seeking activities (De Vos, Buyens, & Schalk, 2003; De Vos & Freese, 2011; Thomas & Anderson, 1998). This information might contradict their current beliefs, which already formed part of their mental schema. Therefore, it can be assumed that prospective employees might be experiencing breach in their anticipatory

psychological contract and will try to make sense of what they are experiencing, like the sense-making process when an individual experiences psychological contract breach in employment. The result of this sense-making process will determine whether the outcome will get established in the mental schema, which was the case in this study, due to a high mean of participants to always accept a better offer from another employer. The mental schema of an individual acts as blueprint for how employment information is processed (Sherman & Morley, 2015) and we now add that there is a potential that a sense-making process can influence what gets established in the mental schema, requiring certain reactions. A similar situation was reported in Gresse and Linde (2018b), who found that new working graduates experienced one or more discrepancies between their expectations and employment reality, even though the majority experienced a healthy exchange relationship and were overall happy with their employer; this should have clearly constituted psychological contract breach or violation. It was also suggested that the sense-making process associated with psychological contract breach was the reason for this occurrence.

Therefore, we suggest that some aspects that are established in the mental schema of an individual will directly influence their pre- and post-employment behaviour. This suggestion is also supported by our findings due to a relationship between pre-employment violation regarding anticipation of a better offer and continuous turnover intent, which can also be interpreted as job-hopping behaviour. In this case, violation was experienced that triggered the sense-making process to determine its significance; when the individual perceives the violation as significant it will contribute to undesirable behaviour (supported by the relationship between PEV better offer and Continuous TI) and if it is insignificant it will be discarded from the individual's mental schema. If this is the case, it confirms Gresse and Linde's (2018a) assumption that pre-employment violation experience is actually a psychological defence mechanism used to diminish disappointment in employment.

The relationship between pre-employment violation regarding the anticipation of a better offer and anticipatory obligations exists due to the link between pre-employment violation and job-hopping tendencies. When an employee commences employment, he/she tends to display certain behaviours to self-manage the advancement in his/her career, including networking behaviour (getting to know influential people), visibility behaviour (drawing attention to work accomplishment), positioning behaviour (pursuing valuable job opportunities), behaviour related to developing themselves (pursuing training and education opportunism), validating behaviour (proving competence) and behaviour relating to controlling work-life balance (Jonker, 2011). We believe that the reason why there is a positive relationship between pre-employment violation and anticipatory obligations is due to a person's perception that these career self-managing behaviours are essential in employment with their future employer in order to make themselves visible and viable for employment in other

companies. In most cases, an application for a job in another company will require a positive reference (letter of recommendation) from previous employers.

Gresse and Linde (2018a) established that new employees had some form of pre-employment violation in their anticipatory psychological contract, but it was never confirmed whether entitlement has a relationship with these violations. The results indicate that there was almost no relationship between pre-employment violation variables and entitlement. The only notable relationship was between entitlement and pre-employment violation due to employees anticipating conflict with their future supervisors. Harvey and Harris (2010) have confirmed that psychologically entitled employees had a higher tendency to have conflict with their supervisors. This indicates that the more entitled an employee is, the greater the chance that they anticipate conflict with their supervisor. This does not explain why entitled employees will anticipate this conflict if they have no prior work experience. The only logical explanation might be that individuals who are regarded as entitled might have experienced conflict earlier in life with authority figures (for instance parents, teachers, lecturers etc.) and therefore it will happen again with future authority figures (supervisors).

Although entitlement only had a relationship with one of the pre-employment violation variables, it should be noted that there might exist other pre-employment violation experiences (which were not assessed in this study) in the anticipatory psychological contract of employees who may have a relationship. This assumption is supported due to the highly individualistic nature of entitlement, as suggested in psychological entitlement's definition (Campbell et al., 2004; Harvey & Harris, 2010), as well as all the factors that can influence an individual's entitlement perception (Gresse et al., 2013).

Our results also indicate that there was a positive relationship between entitlement and the anticipatory state of the psychological contract. Linde and Gresse (2014) confirmed that entitlement leads to higher expectations; therefore, we can conclude that entitlement impacts on the anticipation of future employment (ASPC). The higher an individual's entitlement perception is, the more likely it will be that they will have a positive perception regarding future psychological contract fulfilment, which can be attributed to their deservingness perception in terms of performance rewards (Campbell et al., 2004; Harvey & Martinko, 2009) and better treatment (Campbell et al., 2004; Exline et al., 2004) in the absence of actual abilities and performance levels (Campbell et al., 2004; Harvey & Harris, 2010).

4.10 Conclusion

The schema theory approach in trying to explain psychological contract development is perceived to be an underdeveloped area within psychological contract research (Sherman & Morley, 2015), especially with regard to the anticipatory psychological contract. Markovi and Stoilkovska (2015) also drew the conclusion that studies regarding the anticipatory psychological contract are quite rare. Our research contributes to anticipatory psychological contract research by introducing the APCQ questionnaire to effectively measure the anticipatory obligations, anticipatory expectations, entitlement and anticipatory state of the psychological contract of prospective employees' mental schema. A correlation coefficient confirmed a positive practically significant relationship between the anticipatory state of the psychological contract and anticipatory obligations, as well as a positive relationship between the anticipatory state of the psychological contract and anticipatory expectations. It was also suggested that pre-employment violation had no relationship with anticipatory expectations, although it had a positive relationship with anticipatory obligations. It was then concluded that this relationship exists due to a sense-making process that occurs in the mental schema of a prospective employee. Entitlement had a positive relationship with the anticipatory state of the psychological contract as well as with one of the pre-employment violation variables.

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Chapter 5: Modelling the anticipatory psychological contract: A structural equation model approach

Chapter 5 (Research article 4) will be submitted for revision and publication in Organizational Psychology Review, and the editorial and reference style was adapted in accordance with the editorial policy and guidelines for the submission of papers to this journal (Abstract, 1.5 line spacing; 12 point font, Times New Roman)

Aim of this chapter

To develop and assess the theoretical model of the mental schema of prospective employees through a structural equation model (SEM)

5.1 Modelling the anticipatory psychological contract: A structural equation model approach

5.1.1 Abstract

It is suggested that the ‘schema theory’ approach, to view occupational newcomers’ anticipatory psychological contract in the pre-socialisation phase of employment, might promote scholars understanding of the psychological contract development process. This knowledge could empower employers to effectively manage these employees. However, research regarding the anticipatory psychological contract is quite rare with no existing theoretical model to understand first-time employees’ anticipatory expectations and obligations. Therefore, the focus was to develop and assess the theoretical model of the mental schema of prospective employees through a structural equation model (SEM). A questionnaire was used to gather data from 316 final-year students. The results supported an excellent fit in the proposed model of the anticipatory psychological contract. This model indicated that entitlement is central to the anticipatory psychological contract, and that the norm of reciprocity was already present in the anticipatory psychological contract.

5.2 Introduction

There was almost no empirical research on the psychological contract formation before Rousseau (1989; 1995) re-interpreted the psychological contract as a perceived agreement of promises between employee and employer (Tomprou & Nikolaou, 2011). Initially, there was a lack of research on the formation of the psychological contract and the development of contract breach, despite calls for additional research (De Vos, Buyens, & Schalk, 2003; Robinson & Morrison, 2000; Rousseau, 2001), but eventually it started gaining momentum with an influx of research focusing on these aspects of the psychological contract (e.g. Blancero & Kreiner, 2000; De Vos et al., 2003; De Vos, Buyens, & Schalk, 2005; Dulac & Coyle-Shapiro, 2006; Rousseau, 2001; Sherman & Morley, 2015; Suazo, Martinez, & Sandoval, 2011; Tomprou & Nikolaou, 2010). Sherman and Morley (2015) have suggested that addressing the psychological contract in its formation phase may increase the odds of reinforcing desired employee employment outcomes, while simultaneously reducing the undesirable ones. In terms of psychological contract formation, researchers agreed that it was important to comprehend the psychological contract of both new and existing employees, but it was equally important understand beliefs that are developed prior to organisational entry (Blancero & Kreiner, 2000; Rousseau, 2001). This opened the way for research into the anticipatory psychological contract (e.g. De Vos, Stobbeleir & Meganck, 2009; Eilam-Shamir & Yaakobi, 2014; Gresse, Linde & Schalk, 2013; Linde & Gresse, 2014).

The anticipatory psychological contract is defined as the pre-employment perceptions and beliefs that a person has, including the promises they are willing to make to their future employer and the pre-employment expectations they hold (De Vos et al., 2009; De Hauw & De Vos, 2010). This contract should be an important consideration for employers due to reported difficulty in managing young talent in the workplace (Dziewanowska, Pearce, & Zupan, 2016), and it affects on how occupational newcomers perceive and react to future employment relationships (De Vos et al., 2009; Zupan, Dziewanowska, & Pearce, 2016). It is suggested that the ‘schema theory’ approach, to view occupational newcomers’ anticipatory psychological contract in the pre-socialisation phase of employment, might promote efforts to understand psychological contract development that could empower employers to effectively manage these employees (Sherman & Morley, 2015). The importance of the anticipatory psychological contract in understanding the psychological contract has been acknowledge in past research (De Vos et al., 2009; Eilam-Shamir & Yaakobi, 2014; Gresse et al., 2013; Lee, 2016; Linde & Gresse, 2014; Ruchika & Prasad, 2017; Sherman & Morley, 2015), and research findings suggest that this contract directly influences employee behaviour during the socialisation phase of employment (e.g. Delobbe, Cooper-Thomas, & De Hoe, 2016; Payne, Culbertson, Boswell, & Barger, 2008).

The problem is that research regarding the anticipatory psychological contract is quite rare (Lee, 2016; Markovi & Stoilkovska, 2015), with no existing theoretical model to understand first-time employees’ anticipatory expectations and obligations. A theoretical model of the anticipatory psychological contract will enhance our understanding of how the pre-employment cognitive schema of first-time job seekers can influence the psychological contract once they are formally employed. Therefore, the aim of this study was to assess the theoretical model of the mental schema of prospective employees through a structural equation model (SEM). To understand graduates’ cognitive schema, it is important to review current literature on the anticipatory psychological contract that would act as the foundation for this model.

5.3 Cognitive schema in the anticipatory psychological contract

The anticipatory psychological contract is a cognitive schema of an individual regarding the beliefs that they hold about future employment (De Vos et al., 2009). A schema represents a guideline that directs individual behaviour, thoughts and interpretation of situations and problems (Van Boven & Thompson, 2003). Based on this cognitive schema, prospective employees already have set ideas of what employment will be like, what they expect from their employer, and how they feel about their future employer. These perceptions function as the basis for psychological contract creation once they enter formal employment (Gresse & Linde 2018a; Thomas & Anderson, 1998).

It is generally accepted that the cognitive schema that prospective employees hold will be used to determine the degree that their expectations match employment reality (De Vos et al., 2009), and it includes a sense-making component that is used to evaluate pre- and post-employment information (De Vos et al., 2003; Gresse & Linde, 2018c; Tomprou & Nikolaou, 2011). Tomprou and Nikolaou (2011) perceive sensemaking as an individual's attempt to build meaning in relation to themselves and their context. It is believed that when employees enter the workplace, they rely on sensemaking in the cognitive schema to interpret and understand the new employment relationship (De Vos et al., 2003; Tomprou & Nikolaou, 2011; Weick, 1995). Predispositions that employees have will influence how they interpret reciprocity in their psychological contract (Dulac & Coyle-Shapiro, 2006; Tomprou & Nikolaou, 2011). Gresse and Linde (2018c) believe that sensemaking could also regulate how pre-employment information is interpreted and established within the cognitive schema of a prospective employee, which could explain the dynamic nature of the cognitive schema (Rousseau, 1995) and the anticipatory psychological contract (Blancero & Kreiner, 2000; De Vos et al., 2009).

Morrison and Robinson (2004, as cited by Alcover, Rico, Turnley, & Bolino, 2017) explained that cognitive schemas develop early in life when an individual learns general values regarding reciprocity, fairness, and reward for hard work, which are influenced by family, schools, peers, stereotypes, employment perceptions and interactions with employees. Similarly, Coyle-Shapiro (2006) has suggested that the anticipatory psychological contract develops during adolescence and is influenced by family, personal experiences, friends, media, peers, school and working people. It is reported that both the anticipatory and actual psychological contract are dynamic and idiosyncratic by nature (Blancero & Kreiner, 2000; Rousseau, 1995), but that the anticipatory psychological contract is much more personalised and individualistic (Lee & Gardner, 2007). It should be noted that this cognitive schema that prospective employees hold is underdeveloped and flawed (Anderson & Thomas, 1996), as there is a clear disconnect between employee expectations and employer obligations once these individuals commence employment (Gresse & Linde, 2018b). Weick (1995) emphasised that one of the most important characteristics of sense making is its focus on retrospect; therefore, we can assume that the reason why an obligational disconnect exists between first-time occupational newcomers and their employers is due to employees lacking a frame of reference to base their experiences on or it can be due to their sense of entitlement.

5.4 Entitlement and employment

Literature suggested that the entitlement that individuals hold plays an important role in the psychological contract (Priesemuth & Taylor, 2016; Westerlaken, Jordan, & Ramsay, 2017) and the

anticipatory psychological contract (Gresse et al., 2013, Gresse & Linde, 2018a; Gresse & Linde, 2018c; Linde & Gresse, 2014). Harvey and Dashborough (2015) have stated that:

Expectations of praise for mediocre performance, intolerance of negative feedback, and reward expectations that border on bizarre are among the workplace entitlement issues that have been well documented in the media and popular press, particularly since members of the “millennial” generation began entering the workplace. p. 460.

Snyders (2002) used the word ‘perceived entitlement’ to refer to a person’s sense of deservingness and noted that these individuals believe that they are owed in life and do not have to earn what they want, as they are entitled to it. Other authors (e.g. Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004; Harvey & Harris, 2010) refer to this sense of deservingness perception as ‘psychological entitlement’. Harvey and Harris (2010) described psychological entitlement as a fairly stable and global characteristic that occurs when an individual expects high reward or preferential treatment, irrespective of their abilities and performance. Recently, some authors (e.g. Harvey & Dashborough, 2015; Peirone & Maticka-Tyndale, 2017; Westerlaken et al., 2017) started to draw a distinction between the different contexts of psychological entitlement – economic, equity, legitimate and academic entitlements – and rebranded psychological entitlement to work-related outcomes as ‘workplace entitlement’.

According to Harvey and Dashborough (2015) and Westerlaken et al. (2017), the phenomenon of entitlement within the organisational context has received little attention from organisational academics. Westerlaken et al. (2017) have defined employee entitlement as excessive egocentricity and the belief that privileged and preferential treatment at work is a legitimate right. Entitlement within the work context has found that it can lead to negative behaviour, and conflict with supervisors (Harvey, Harris, Gillis, & Martinko, 2014), job frustration and co-worker abuse (Harvey & Harris, 2010), lack of reciprocity (Naumann, Minsky, & Sturman, 2002; Westerlaken et al., 2017), high rewards and expectations (Gresse et al., 2013; Linde & Gresse, 2014) and turnover intent (Gresse & Linde, 2018a; Harvey & Martinko, 2009). Entitlement is normally conceptualised as a specific trait that an individual demonstrates across situations and contexts (e.g. Campbell et al., 2004), but there are researchers (Harvey & Dashborough, 2015; Westerlaken et al., 2017) who acknowledge the possibility that employees can be conditioned into exhibiting context-specific forms of entitlement due to past experiences. An example, specific to graduates, can be students being conditioned to experiencing deservingness in the workplace, due to them receiving higher grades for assignments and tests at university from specific lecturers than what they deserve (actual performance). Therefore, the assumption can be made that higher workplace entitlement can be

linked to low standards and difficulty in certain subjects at university and schools (Peirone & Maticka-Tyndale, 2017; Twenge, Campbell, & Gentile, 2012). Twenge et al. (2012) have confirmed that the awarding of higher grades to students with weak academic aptitude inflated their academic self-perception, thereby increasing academic entitlement. Peirone and Maticka-Tyndale (2017) confirmed that academic-related entitlement correlates positively with employment-related entitlement.

Gresse et al. (2013) found that prospective employees' entitlement beliefs determined whether that individual will display higher individual expectation or normative expectations in their anticipatory psychological contract. It is suggested that final-year university students' sense of entitlement was influenced by factors relating to self-perception, academic factors, and environmental factors (Gresse et al., 2013). It was also found that the mental schema of graduates was based on entitlement and that it included a predisposition towards turnover intent (Gresse & Linde, 2018a).

5.5 Components of the anticipatory psychological contract

Previous research suggests that the components of the anticipatory psychological contract include anticipatory expectations (Carr, Pearson, Vest, & Boyar, 2006; De Vos et al., 2009; Gresse et al., 2013; Gresse & Linde, 2018b; Payne et al., 2008), anticipatory obligations (De Vos et al., 2009; Gresse & Linde, 2018c; Payne et al., 2008), entitlement beliefs (Gresse et al., 2013; Gresse & Linde, 2018a; Gresse & Linde, 2018c; Linde & Gresse, 2014), and pre-employment violation perceptions (Gresse & Linde, 2018a; Gresse & Linde, 2018c). It was also confirmed that prospective employees' mental schema already contains a turnover intention tendency (Gresse & Linde, 2018a), especially regarding job-hopping behaviour (Gresse & Linde, 2018c). Gresse and Linde (2018c) confirmed various correlations between the components of the anticipatory psychological contract that will form the basis for the model hypothesis. Gresse and Linde (2018c) confirmed a positive relationship between entitlement and how graduates felt about their future employment relationship. How employees felt about their future employer also correlated positively with their anticipatory expectations and anticipatory obligations (Gresse & Linde, 2018c). Results also showed that there was a positive correlation between employees' anticipatory expectations and their anticipatory obligations (Gresse & Linde, 2018c). Continuous turnover intent had a positive relationship with the anticipatory obligations of employees (Gresse & Linde, 2018c). It was confirmed that pre-employment violation had a positive relationship with both anticipatory obligations and turnover intent (Gresse & Linde, 2018c). Based on the findings by Gresse and Linde (2018c), we suggest the following model hypothesis:

h₁: Entitlement influences how prospective employees feel about their future employment relationship

h_{2a}: How prospective employees feel about their future employer will influence their anticipatory expectations

h_{2b}: How prospective employees feel about their future employer will influence their anticipatory obligations

h₃: The relationship between how prospective employees feel about their future employment relationship and its influence on anticipatory obligations is mediated by their anticipatory expectations

h₄: Prospective employees' predisposition towards turnover intent will influence their anticipatory obligations

h₅: The pre-employment violations that prospective employees experience will mediate the relationship between employees' predisposition towards turnover intent and anticipatory obligations.

5.6 Research design and participants

This study follows a quantitative research approach, reporting on data sampled from final-year students at two different campuses of a South African university. The students were invited to participate in the study to measure their anticipatory psychological contract and filled out a questionnaire during a lecture session. Only the students who were present during that lecture were assessed. The total sample was 316 (n=316) participants and included male (44.1%) and female (55.9%) participants. The sample represented African (49.7%), white (43.4%), coloured (3.8%), Indian (1.6%), disabled (0.3%) and Chinese (0.3%) participants.

5.7 Measuring instrument

Data was collected by using Gresse and Linde's (2018c) Anticipatory Psychological Contract Questionnaire (APCQ). The APCQ consisted of six sections:

Anticipatory employee expectations (AEX) were measured using 18 items (e.g. "Will provide you with the freedom to decide how to do your job?"). The items were scored on a six-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = "My future employer will make no such promise" to 6 = "Yes, my future employer will make such a promise and it might be fully kept". In both *anticipatory employee expectations* and *anticipatory employee obligations*, "No" (1) and "Yes" (2-6) refer to the measurement of the contents of the anticipatory psychological contract. The scale from 2 to 6 refers to future fulfilment beliefs of the anticipatory psychological contract, after the contents of the

psychological contract have been determined. Therefore, the items that refer to an exclusion of the contents (“No”) were not included in the statistical analysis. The rest of the scale was then recoded into a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = “Yes, my future employer will make such a promise, but this promise might not be kept at all” to 5 = “Yes, my future employer will make such a promise and it might be fully kept”. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for the scale was acceptable ($\alpha = .92$) with loadings above 0.45 and communality values (h^2) higher than 0.45.

Anticipatory employee obligations (AEO) were measured using 21 items (e.g. “Commit yourself to skills development opportunities?”). The items were scored on a six-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = “I will make no such a promise” to 6 = “Yes, I will make such a promise and it will be fully kept”, which were then recoded into a five-point Likert scale following the process explained in the previous paragraph. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for the scale was acceptable ($\alpha = .86$) with loadings above 0.45 and communality values (h^2) higher than 0.45.

Anticipatory state of the psychological contract (ASPC) was measured using eight items (e.g. “Do you believe that your future manager will treat you fairly?”) where participants had to rate whether they agree with a specific statement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = “Not at all” to 5 = “Totally”. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for the scale was acceptable ($\alpha = .85$) with loadings above 0.45 and communality values (h^2) higher than 0.45.

Entitlement (ENT) was measured using five items (e.g. “Due to my qualification, I deserve a very good job”), where participants had to rate whether they agree with a specific statement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = “Not at all” to 5 = “Totally”. Entitlement displayed slightly lower Cronbach’s alpha coefficients ($\alpha = .61$), but displayed an inter-item correlation range of 0.3, which is regarded as reliable (Briggs & Cheek, 1986; as cited in Pallent, 2013).

Turnover intent (TI) was measured using two items (e.g. “I will keep applying for better positions once I start working”), where participants had to rate whether they agree with a specific statement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = “Not at all” to 5 = “Totally”. Due to a low Cronbach’s alpha coefficient and inter-item correlation, it was decided to report on the items separately in terms of *Immediate turnover intent (TI1)*, and *Continuous turnover intent (TI2)*.

Pre-employment violation (PEV) was measured using four items (e.g. I believe that I will have to find alternate employment when I start working due to personality clashes with my future employer”), where participants had to rate whether they agree with a specific statement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = “Not at all” to 5 = “Totally”. Due to a low Cronbach’s alpha coefficient and inter-item correlation, it was decided to report on the items separately in terms of

PEV better offer (PEV1), *PEV field of study* (PEV2), *PEV conflict with supervisor* (PEV 3), and *PEV low position* (PEV4).

5.8 Research approach and statistical analysis

A structural equation modelling (SEM) statistical approach was used to validate the suggested hypothesis and model of the anticipatory psychological contract. Maruyama (1997) has suggested that the main motivation why researchers use SEM approaches is due to it including multiple regressions. The choice of a regression as a point of departure is logical due to the methodologies that were specifically developed from these regression techniques and built on the assumptions of regression; therefore, the reasoning researchers use in choosing regression is better achieved by using a SEM approach (Maruyama, 1997). According to Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow, and King (2006), structural equation modelling is defined as “statistical techniques that one can use to reduce the number of observed variables into a smaller number of latent variables by examining the covariation among the observed variables” (p. 329). The statistical analysis, related to the SEM, was done in IBM Amos (version 25) by the Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University, a unit that is independent from this study or researchers.

The first step in the model-building procedure involved data screening, where cases of missing values were removed from the dataset. A *listwise deletion* method was used to delete cases from the sample if there was any data missing from the variables important to the analysis (Allison, 2003). Due to the scale of AEX and AEO, where “1” was recoded to “0”, our sample had quite a high number of missing data that we had to delete, because statistical analysis in AMOS is sensitive to missing data (Allison, 2003). The reason for the high missing values was due to SPSS and AMOS interpreting a zero value as null or missing. A total of 32 cases were deleted from the sample, thereby bringing our sample to 282 (n=282) participants.

In order to test the factorial validity of the measurement model, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was implemented (Kline, 2010). Paswan (2009) has suggested that it is a waste of time to proceed to the SEM analysis if the validity of the measurement model has not been confirmed as satisfactory. In the CFA, a hypothesised model was used to estimate a population covariance matrix that is comparable with the observed covariance matrix. This helped to reduce the discrepancies between estimated and observed matrices (Schreiber et al., 2006).

The structural model was evaluated by adding the regression relationships in line with the hypotheses of our study. The model fit was determined by looking at the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (TLI) and the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI). According to Hu and Bentler (1999), the RMSEA is considered acceptable if it is less than 0.08

(RMSEA < 0.08) and excellent if it is less than 0.06 (RMSEA < 0.06). It is also suggested that the CFI and TLI with values higher than 0.90 are acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

5.9 Results

The results from the CFA confirmed that the four PEV items could not be combined into a single pre-employment violation factor due to a low Cronbach's alpha coefficient ($\alpha = 0.53$). It was also confirmed that the two TI items could not be combined to form a single turnover intent factor due to a very low Cronbach's alpha coefficient ($\alpha = 0.28$). The results displayed a good model fit when including TI2 as a standalone factor in the CFA, but the model fit results rejected TI1 as a standalone factor (TLI = 0.67, CFI = 0.68 and RMSEA = 0.07). Therefore, TI1 was removed from SEM analysis.

The CFA could also not support an acceptable model fit while including any of the PEV factors (PEV1, PEV2, PEV3, PEV4) in the model (TLI = 0.66, CFI = 0.68 and RMSEA = 0.07). Due to the PEV factors being essential in determining hypothesis *h*₅ we tried to create a sub-model for CFA and only included the factors relevant to hypothesis *h*₅. The CFA did not support a model fit with any of the PEV factors, with the strongest fit being TLI = 0.56, CFI = 0.6 and RMSEA = 0.12. Therefore, we had no other choice but to remove the PEV factors from the SEM analysis, which meant we could not prove – or disprove – hypothesis *h*₅.

Based on the CFA, the factor scores were utilised in the SEM and included the variables ENT, ASPC, TI2, AOE, and AEX. A correlation table with the mean and standard deviation is shown in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1: Correlation matrix of the anticipatory psychological contract

Observed variable	1	2	3	4	5
ENT	1				
ASPC	0.52	1			
TI2	0.19	0.14	1		
AEX	0.24	0.67	0.14	1	
AOE	0.11	0.50	0.32	0.57	1

N = 282, *M* = 0; *SD* = 1

The structural model, as depicted in Figure 5-1, evaluated the hypothesis regression and whether the anticipatory employee expectations moderated the relationship between anticipatory state of the psychological contract and anticipatory employee obligations.

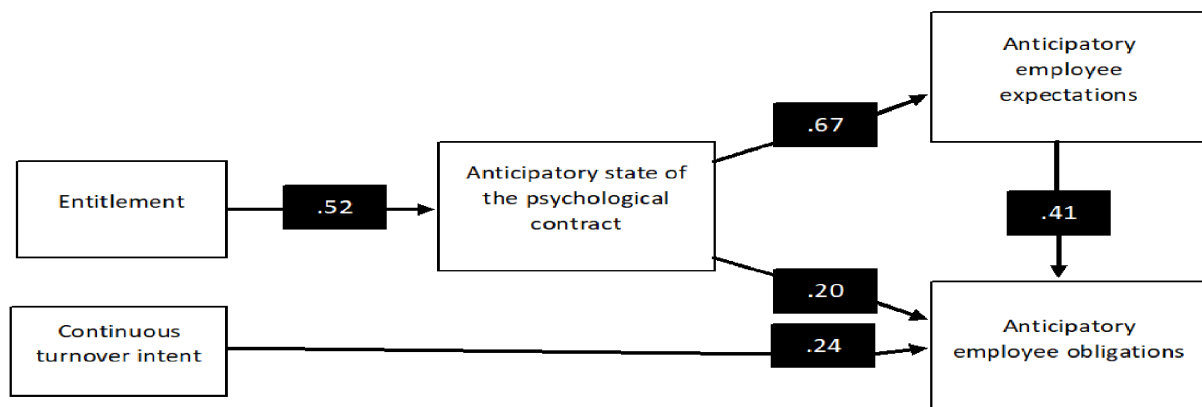


Figure 5-1: Maximum likelihood estimates of the anticipatory psychological contract model (standardised path coefficients).

The hypothesised model, as depicted in Figure 5-1, did not provide an adequate fit to the data (RMSEA = 0.15; TLI = 0.86, CFI = 0.93). Based on this, we revised the APC model by adding the direct links that entitlement has with the variables, as demonstrated in Table 5-1. The revised anticipatory psychological contract (APC-R) model, as depicted in Figure 5-2, did provide an excellent fit to the data, RMSEA = 0.03; TLI = 0.99, CFI = 1.00 and CMIN/DF = 1.32.

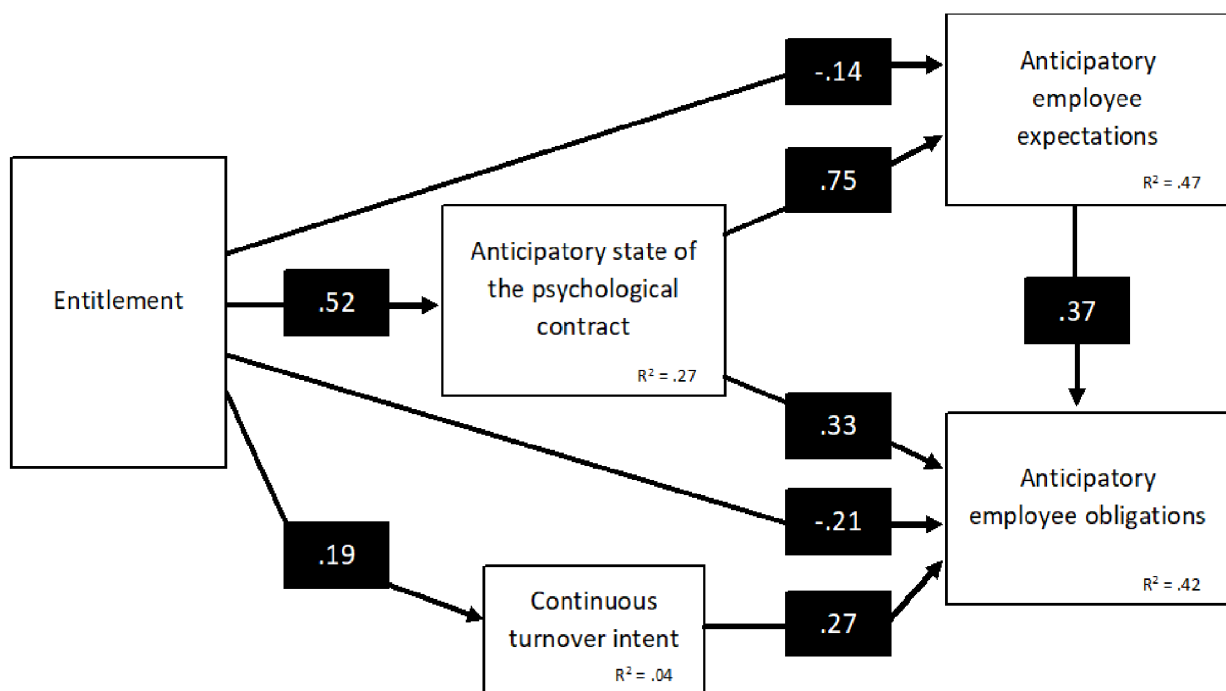


Figure 5-2: Maximum likelihood estimates of the APC-R model (standardised path coefficients).

Table 5-2 shows the standardised regression coefficient estimated by Amos for the APC-R structural model.

Table 5-2: Standardised and unstandardised coefficient for APC-R

Observed variable	β	<i>B</i>	SE	<i>p</i>
Entitlement on				
Anticipatory state of the psychological contract	0.52	1.05	0.10	***
Continuous turnover intent	0.19	0.61	0.18	***
Anticipatory employee expectations	-0.14	-0.39	0.14	*
Anticipatory employee obligations	-0.21	-0.42	0.11	***
Anticipatory state of the psychological contract on				
Anticipatory employee expectations	0.75	0.99	0.07	***
Anticipatory employee obligations	0.33	0.33	0.07	***
Continuous turnover intent on				
Anticipatory employee obligations	0.27	0.17	0.03	***
Anticipatory employee expectations				
Anticipatory employee obligations	0.37	0.28	0.05	***

*** $p \leq 0.01$

* $p \leq 0.05$

The regression results suggest that entitlement has an impact on how the employee feels about his/her future employer ($\beta = 0.52$, $p \leq 0.01$), thereby supporting hypothesis ***h₁***. How prospective employees feel also directly influences their anticipatory expectations ($\beta = 0.52$, $p \leq 0.01$) and anticipatory obligations ($\beta = 0.33$, $p \leq 0.01$), which supports both hypotheses ***h_{2a}*** and ***h_{2b}***. In terms of hypothesis ***h₃***, the regression results do suggest a mediating effect between ASPC, AEO and AEX, but it seems as if the relationship between anticipatory expectations and anticipatory obligations ($\beta = 0.37$, $p \leq 0.01$) are mediated by how prospective employees feel about their future employer, thereby rejecting hypothesis ***h₃***. Results also show that entitlement directly affects prospective employees' anticipatory expectations ($\beta = -0.14$, $p \leq 0.05$), anticipatory obligations ($\beta = -0.21$, $p \leq 0.01$) and their tendency towards turnover intention ($\beta = 0.19$, $p \leq 0.01$). It should be noted that there is a negative relationship between entitlement and anticipatory expectations, and between entitlement and anticipatory obligations. Hypothesis ***h₄*** is also supported by the results, as continuous turnover intent of prospective employees did lead to anticipatory obligations ($\beta = 0.27$, $p \leq 0.01$).

5.10 Discussion

Some studies (e.g. Blaceno & Kreiner, 2000; Sherman & Morley, 2015; Rousseau, 2001) have called on research regarding the pre-employment phase of the psychological contract, as this information could provide clarity on the psychological contract creation. The anticipatory psychological contract model represents the first attempt to provide a sound theoretical model to understand occupational newcomers' pre-employment beliefs and mental schema. The model suggests that a prospective employee's entitlement perceptions play a critical role in the anticipatory psychological contract, as it directly impacts their tendency towards turnover intent, how a person feels about his/her future employment relationship, and his/her levels of reciprocity. Our research supports previous research findings related to entitlement's influence on reciprocity (Naumann et al., 2002; Westerlaken et al., 2017) and turnover intent (Gresse & Linde, 2018a; Harvey & Martinko, 2009), although it has never been established that entitlement has an impact on the anticipatory state of the psychological contract. Entitlement also had a negative relationship with both anticipatory expectations and anticipatory obligations, which indicates that when an individual displays high levels of entitlement, it will most probably be associated with lower levels of anticipatory expectations (belief that employers will keep their employment promises) and anticipatory obligations (belief that you will keep your employment promises). It, however, seems probable, from the results, that these relationships – between entitlement and anticipatory obligations, and entitlement and anticipatory expectations – might be mediated by how you perceive your future employment relationship.

Results also show that an individual's predisposition towards turnover intent affects his/her anticipatory obligations. This indicates that when an employee has a disposition towards turnover intent, it will be associated with an increased likelihood of them keeping their obligational promises, which, on face value, does not make sense. Gresse and Linde (2018a) explained the positive relationship between turnover intent and anticipatory obligations as existing due to an employee being required to portray certain resume building behaviour that will make them eligible for employment in another company (for instance, a positive reference or recommendation from employer, proof of competence, proof of work experience, etc.).

Results also show that the anticipatory expectations of individuals determine their anticipatory obligations and that this process is mediated by how employees perceive their future employment relationship. This point, specifically, may confirm why researchers struggle to explain psychological contract creation, and may represent the niche area in psychological contract creation research. This finding suggests that the norm of reciprocity is already present in the anticipatory psychological contract, something that has never been confirmed in previous psychological contract

research. This means that students, who have not started employment, already have an idea of their future employment relationship, and based on that perception they have a certain level of expectations that directly influence their obligations toward their future employer. Rousseau's (1989) definition of the psychological contract reads as follows:

an individual's beliefs regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between the focal person and another party. Key issues here include the belief that a promise has been made and a consideration offered in exchange for it, binding the parties to some set of reciprocal obligations. p. 123.

This definition indicates that the norm of reciprocity is central to the psychological contract theory. Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2002) believed that the psychological contract framework of reciprocity also includes the perception of employees regarding their obligations towards their employer and the fulfilment of these obligations. Therefore, Rousseau's (1989) definition could include obligational perceptions in absence of an actual agreement between parties. It makes sense that reciprocity can exist in the anticipatory psychological contract without being formally employed. This indicates that the main difference between the anticipatory psychological contract and the psychological contract itself is 'employment status', as the majority of psychological contract elements are already present in the anticipatory psychological contract. Gresse and Linde (2018b) found that occupational newcomers experienced an obligational disconnect when they started working, due to their expectations and employment reality being different, which indicates that the elements of the anticipatory psychological contract directly affected employment. When considering the suggested model of the anticipatory psychological contract, Gresse and Linde's (2018b) finding might indicate that this contract carries over from the pre-employment phase and becomes the psychological contract as soon as the prospective employee starts working. Therefore, Anderson and Thomas's (1996) confirmation that occupational newcomers' psychological contract is constructed based on an imperfect schema could actually be due to a lack of employment context and experience.

5.11 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to confirm a theoretical model of anticipatory psychological contract of prospective employees by assessing this model through using structural equation modelling (SEM). Based on this analysis, we developed the anticipatory psychological contract model that would better equip researchers to understand this type of contract. This research makes a theoretical contribution to psychological contract creation, anticipatory psychological contract and workplace entitlement theories. Our findings conclude that entitlement, anticipatory state of the psychological contract, anticipatory obligations, anticipatory expectations, and prospective employees'

predisposition towards turnover intent each plays an important role in the anticipatory psychological contract that contributes to psychological contract creation.

Gresse and Linde (2018a) found that prospective employees' anticipatory psychological contract already includes some pre-employment violation or disappointments, which were confirmed by Gresse and Linde (2018c). Unfortunately, we could not test this theory because the items measuring pre-employment violations were regarded as unreliable and rejected model fit in SEM. We therefore call on additional research on anticipatory psychological contract sense-making, specifically how pre-employment violation may influence the anticipatory psychological contract.

5.12 References

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Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations

Chapter six presents the conclusions of this thesis and make recommendations for future research and managing graduate entitlement

6.1 Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

The purpose of this chapter was to draw the conclusions from the four articles that made up this study. The conclusions are drawn in accordance with the research objectives that were identified in Chapter 1. In addition, limitations of the study were discussed, and suggestions and recommendations are made for future research.

6.2 Problem overview and objectives

Since expectations have always been regarded as an interrelated part of the psychological contract (Freese & Schalk, 2008; Paul, Niehoff, & Turnley, 2000; Van den Heuvel & Schalk, 2009), it can be assumed that the antecedent thereof, namely entitlement beliefs, is a component of the anticipatory psychological contract. Gresse, Linde and Schalk (2013) believe that:

By fully comprehending the effect entitlement beliefs have on the anticipatory psychological contract of prospective employees, the employer may minimise the occurrence of psychological contract breach or violation, which may decrease turnover intention of new working graduates (p 285).

According to Harvey and Harris (2010), unrealistic entitlement beliefs can cause problems for both employees and employers, and Snyders (2002) believes there should be a warning to individuals in the process of attaining a degree, and then fall subject to the dangers of entitlement. It makes sense to assume that by effectively managing the entitlements of graduates, we can confront the roots of the problem, being unrealistic entitlements, and not merely its symptoms, which are the expectations associated with these entitlements, since entitlement beliefs are a determinant factor of expectations (Gresse et al., 2013; Naumann, Minsky, & Sturman, 2002). Entitlement within the work context has found that it can lead to negative behaviour and conflict with supervisors (Harvey, Harris, Gillis, & Martinko, 2014), job frustration and co-worker abuse (Harvey & Harris, 2010), lack of reciprocity (Naumann et al., 2002; Westerlaken, Jordan, & Ramsay, 2017), high rewards and expectations (Gresse et al., 2013; Linde & Gresse, 2014), and turnover intent (Gresse & Linde, 2018a; Harvey & Martinko, 2009). Schofield and Honore (2011) used the term ‘graduate-employer disconnect’ to refer to the gap between graduates’ expectations and the expectations of their managers. According to Schofield and Honore (2011), this ‘disconnect’ between graduates and their employers threatens the future success of organisations, but by focusing on the gap between graduates’ expectations and that of their employer, it is possible to manage this disconnect.

Ng, Schweitzer and Lyons (2010) found that students’ expectations regarding employment became more realistic as they neared graduation and explained that this occurrence was due to two reasons:

the first reason being the possibility of accessing statistical information online, as well as receiving subjective salary information from their peers; the second reason was that they adjust their short-term expectations downwards where they accept less-than-ideal positions in the short term so that they have better long-term attainment (for instance, gaining experience). The problem with this is that it is costly to employers (O'Connell & Mei-Chuan, 2007), because they employ the graduates, invest time and money to develop them, and as soon as the graduate flourishes, he/she leaves that employer to find an organisation that caters more to his/her initial entitlement perception (Schofield & Honore, 2011).

According to Harvey and Dashborough (2015), and Westerlaken et al. (2017), the occurrence of entitlement within the organisational context has received little attention from organisational academics. Harvey and Dashborough's (2015) specific words were: "What do we know about entitlement in the workplace? Not much!". The same issue was present with literature regarding the anticipatory psychological contract, as it was also considered quite rare (Lee, 2016; Markovi & Stoilkovska, 2015).

The problem statement of this study was that students have unrealistic expectations regarding their future employment based on their entitlement perception that forms part of their anticipatory psychological contract. This indicates that the anticipatory psychological contract needs to be explored, which would provide researchers and managers with the necessary tools to effectively manage graduate entitlements.

6.2.1 General objective

The general objective of this research was to explore the anticipatory psychological contract of graduates and occupational newcomers, and to determine the graduate-employer disconnect and its theoretical principles that will be used to develop a model of the anticipatory psychological contract that will enhance our understanding of managing graduate entitlement within the framework of psychological contract theory.

6.2.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this research were to:

- explore themes associated with students' mental schema in their anticipatory psychological contract and to review the themes through a literature study;
- determine the graduate-employer disconnect by exploring the themes associated with working graduates' experiences, expectations and obligations, as well as themes associated

with employer expectations and experiences regarding graduates, and to review the themes through a literature study;

- develop a measuring instrument to measure the anticipatory psychological contract of graduates and to report on their anticipatory psychological contract;
- build and validate a theoretical model of the anticipatory psychological contract using structural equation modelling.

6.3 Conclusions

In this section, the conclusions of the empirical studies are presented. The conclusion is presented per specific objective that was set for this study. This thesis included four research articles that all stand alone on their own merits, but have an overarching communality with the objectives of this dissertation. Therefore, each specific objective was related to a research article.

6.3.1 Research article 1: Explore themes associated with students' mental schema in their anticipatory psychological contract and review the themes through a literature study

De Vos, Stobbeleir and Meganck (2009) are of the opinion that prospective employees already have a developed mental schema about what they expect from their future employer, even if they have no prior experience in employment, which was also confirmed by Gresse et al. (2013) in interviews conducted with final-year students who have not yet entered formal employment. Research also suggests that entitlement beliefs actually act as a determining factor for their levels of expectation (Gresse et al., 2013; Linde & Gresse, 2014), so it was believed that a mental model of prospective employees might be based on entitlement perceptions. Therefore, the aim of the first research article was to explore the mental schemas of graduates' anticipatory psychological contract to expand on the psychological contract formation theory by incorporating entitlement disconnect as a part of the anticipatory psychological contract. Entitlement disconnect, as a perception, refers to where an employee's employment expectations and the actual reality of employment are not in sync with his/her entitlement perceptions. To achieve the aim of research article 2, research propositions were suggested:

Research proposition 1: Graduates' anticipatory psychological contract includes an entitlement-based professional career plan, before entering employment for the first time.

Research proposition 2: Graduates' anticipatory psychological contract can cause a predisposition towards voluntary turnover intention due to their entitlement disconnect perception.

In terms of the first research proposition, it was found that graduates did have a developed mental schema, as De Vos et al. (2009) suggested, and it was also established that their mental schema was entitlement based. The themes that became known were that graduates have a ***career plan*** that included their *immediate goals* and *long-term strategies*; they are ***results orientated***; and desire ***status and power***. Graduates' *immediate* career plan was aimed at getting a job in order to gain experience, something that is needed for career advancement. Graduates' *long-term strategy* was to achieve success in their careers, which was identified as *success entitlement* (the belief that they will be successful). It was also found that graduates were *results oriented* and mostly concerned with employment outcomes. The last theme identified was that graduates desired *power and status*.

In the second proposition, it was established that graduates did have a predisposition towards voluntary turnover intention before organisational entry. The themes related to the second research proposition were ***strategic career move***, ***impatience to succeed*** and ***pre-employment psychological contract breach***. *Strategic career move* refers to graduates' desire to experience different areas within their discipline, and it was determined that this theme was not due to an entitlement disconnect, but rather related to personal development.

Impatience to succeed, as a reason for turnover intent, reinforced the notion that new employees had a drive to succeed in their careers. These graduates believed that the rate at which their career advances will be too slow when only working for a single company, so when another company advertises a position, the graduate will most likely apply for the new position. This specific theme was established as existing due to an entitlement disconnect.

The final theme was the occurrence of *pre-employment psychological contract breach* (or pre-employment violation), where graduates already had a form of breach of the psychological contract before organisational entry. These graduates believed that their employer will not meet their expectations and that is the reason why they believe that they would work for more than one employer. Pre-employment psychological contract breach has never been established in psychological contract theory. All of these themes were substantiated by literature.

This concludes the main findings associated with the first specific objective.

6.3.2 Research article 2: Determine the graduate-employer disconnect by exploring the themes associated with working graduates' experiences, expectations and obligations, as well as themes associated with employer expectations and experiences regarding graduates and review the themes through a literature study

Sherman and Morley (2015) have suggested that knowledge regarding the development of the psychological contract, especially the anticipatory phase thereof, is still quite limited and underdeveloped. Due to this lack of knowledge, it is difficult to effectively manage occupational newcomers' psychological contract. It was also established, in the first research article, that graduates already had a predisposition towards turnover intent that can be problematic for both employer and employee as it may affect the employability perception of inexperienced graduates in the labour market. Employers have long been criticising the ability of graduates to contribute effectively in the workplace due to a disconnect in the needed attributes and skills of jobseekers (Prinsley & Baranyai, 2015; Sarkar, Overton, Thompson, & Rayner, 2016).

Therefore, the aim of the second research article was to explore and substantiate themes associated with the subjective experiences, expectations and obligations of new employees and the experiences and employability perception of their employers to determine whether an expectation disconnect exists between employer and employee, which could result in both a negative anticipatory psychological contract in occupational newcomers and a negative employability perception of occupational newcomers.

Graduate expectations contained three categories of anticipatory expectations, namely employment-related expectations, job-related expectations, and entitlement-related expectations. The **employment-related** expectations include the expectation that occupational newcomers will have *autonomy* over how to do their job, have *personal work space* to conduct their work in, and have a positive *work-life balance*. The **job-related** expectations included the expectation of *workplace guidance* to help them cope in the socialisation phase of employment, and the expectation that the work they do will constitute *meaningful work* that would add value to the company. The **entitlement-related** expectations include *workplace status* that is associated with recognition and a higher position in employment, and *attractive remuneration and benefits* that they believe are justified by their obtainment of a degree.

The employee obligations were categorised according to socialisation obligations, employment obligations, and employability obligations. **Socialisation obligations**, in terms of employers' expectations, included *workplace learning* in that employees should be willing to learn, *adaptability* in that employees should participate in the socialisation process and adapt to their new role, and

willingness of subordination in that they should take instruction from their supervisor to ease the whole socialisation process. **Employment obligations** include *accountability* in taking responsibility for actions, *loyalty* in terms of willingness to stay in the company, and *commitment* in terms of personal sacrifice and eagerness in contributing to company success. The **employability obligations** include having *realistic employment expectations*, having the *relevant workplace skills* that are required in your field of expertise, and having *relevant soft skills*.

From the results there was a clear disconnect between the expectations and obligations that occupational newcomers had, which is evident in the contrast between expectations of graduates and expectations of their employer. The most surprising finding was that all the employees stated that one or more of their pre-employment expectations were not met by their employer when they started working, but still these employees were content with the employer. These unmet expectations should have constituted a breach of the psychological contract, but it did not. It is believed that the reason for this was due to a sensemaking process in employees' cognitive schema.

This concludes the main findings associated with the second specific objective. It should be noted that these findings represent the graduate-employer disconnect, as they are the aspects that should be clarified before organisational entry in order to effectively manage employee entitlement.

6.3.3 Research article 3: Develop a measuring instrument to measure the anticipatory psychological contract of graduates and report on their anticipatory psychological contract

The aim of the third research article was to develop and validate an instrument to measure the anticipatory psychological contract of labour market entrees, which could enhance our knowledge of psychological contract development. This aim was split into two objectives: The first objective was to develop and validate the anticipatory psychological contract questionnaire (APCQ) on prospective employees to determine its validity and reliability. The second objective was to report on the descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients of prospective employees by using this newly developed APCQ.

The APCQ was developed based on the structure of the Psycones questionnaire. The items were compiled based on findings from Gresse (2013), and specific objectives 1 and 2 from this dissertation. The questionnaire includes five sections (excluding biographical information). The first section used 18 items that measure **anticipatory employee expectations (AEX)** of prospective employees and this measure was confirmed as valid and reliable. The second section used 21 items to measure **anticipatory employee obligations (AEO)**. An exploratory factor analysis suggested that these items represent four factors of AEO. Anticipatory employee obligations were then

reported as *AEO general employment* (13 items), *AEO additional duties and hours* (6 items), *AEO accountability* (1 item), and *AEO accountability for subordinates* (1 item). It was established that both *AEO general employment*, and *AEO additional duties and hours* were reliable and valid measures. *AEO accountability* (1 item) and *AEO accountability for subordinates* (1 item) could not be established as reliable, since both these factors only contained one item.

The third section used eight items to measure the **anticipatory state of the psychological contract (ASPC)** of prospective employees and this measure was confirmed as valid and reliable. The fourth section used three items to measure prospective employees' predisposition towards **turnover intent (TI)**. Reliability could not be established, and therefore a decision was taken to report on these three items separately in terms of *Immediate TI*, *Continuous TI* and *Long-term TI*. The fifth section used four items to measure the **pre-employment violation (PEV)** of prospective employees. Reliability could not be established, and therefore a decision was taken to report on these four items separately in terms of *PEV better offer* (anticipate better offer from another company), *PEV field of study* (anticipate that a position outside their field will provide a better salary), *PEV conflict with supervisor* (anticipate clashes with their supervisor) and *PEV low position* (anticipate lower job level). It is believed that the reason why reliability could not be established was due to the highly individualistic nature of the violation perceptions of individuals. The final section included five items that measured the **entitlement (ENT)** of prospective employees. It was established that this measure is both valid and reliable.

The results of the descriptive statistics highlighted the collective mental schema of South African students. The first notable aspect was that these participants can be regarded as being entitled due to having a high mean value. The second notable aspect was that these results confirm that graduates had a predisposition towards continuous turnover intent; in other words, a tendency toward job hopping. Most participants also display high levels of pre-employment violation, where they believed that their future employer will not be able to retain them, especially in terms of their employer matching or beating an offer from another company (this can also be a position outside their field of study).

The correlation coefficient showed that all the relationships were positive. Some of the most noteworthy correlations were that entitlement correlated with anticipatory obligations, anticipatory expectations, turnover intent, pre-employment violation and the anticipatory state of the psychological contract. There was also a correlation between anticipatory state of the psychological contract and anticipatory expectations, and between anticipatory state of the psychological contract and anticipatory obligations. Pre-employment violations correlated with turnover intention, and, in turn, turnover intent correlated with anticipatory obligations. There was also a strong correlation

between anticipatory obligations and anticipatory expectations. These correlations were used as the basis to build the model of the anticipatory psychological contract in the final specific objective.

6.3.4 Build and validate a theoretical model of the anticipatory psychological contract using structural equation modelling

Sherman and Morley (2015) have suggested that analysing and managing the psychological contract in its formation phase may increase the odds of reinforcing desired employee employment outcomes, while simultaneously reducing the undesirable ones. In terms of psychological contract formation, researchers agreed that it was important to comprehend the psychological contract of both new and existing employees, but it was equally important to understand beliefs that are developed prior to organisational entry (Blancero & Kreiner, 2000; Rousseau, 2001), which resulted in research into the anticipatory psychological contract. The problem is that research regarding the anticipatory psychological contract is quite rare (Lee, 2016; Markovi & Stoilkovska, 2015) and, based on extensive research on the subject, there is no recent theoretical model to understand first-time employees' anticipatory psychological contract. A theoretical model of the anticipatory psychological contract will enhance our understanding of how the pre-employment cognitive schema of first-time job seekers can influence the psychological contract once they are formally employed in accordance with Sherman and Morley's (2015) suggestion. Therefore, the aim of this study was to develop a theoretical model of the mental schema of prospective employees and to assess this model by using structural equation modelling (SEM). Based on literature, a model was hypothesised. The first hypothesis was that entitlement influences how prospective employees feel about their future employment relationship and this was supported by the results. The second hypothesis was that how prospective employees feel about their future employer will influence their (a) anticipatory expectations and (b) anticipatory obligations; both hypotheses 2a and 2b were supported by the results. The third hypothesis was that the relationship between how prospective employees feel about their future employment relationship and its influence on anticipatory obligations are mediated by their anticipatory expectations; this hypothesis was not supported and the results show that the opposite was true and that the relationship between anticipatory expectations and anticipatory obligations was mediated by how employees perceived their future employer. Hypothesis four was that prospective employees' predisposition towards turnover intent will influence their anticipatory obligations; this hypothesis was supported by the results. The final hypothesis was that the pre-employment violations that prospective employees experience will mediate the relationship between employees' predisposition towards turnover intent and anticipatory obligations; this hypothesis could not be proven or disproven due to the confirmatory

factor analysis results rejecting pre-employment violation as a factor, due to low model fit and reliability issues.

The following model presented excellent fit:

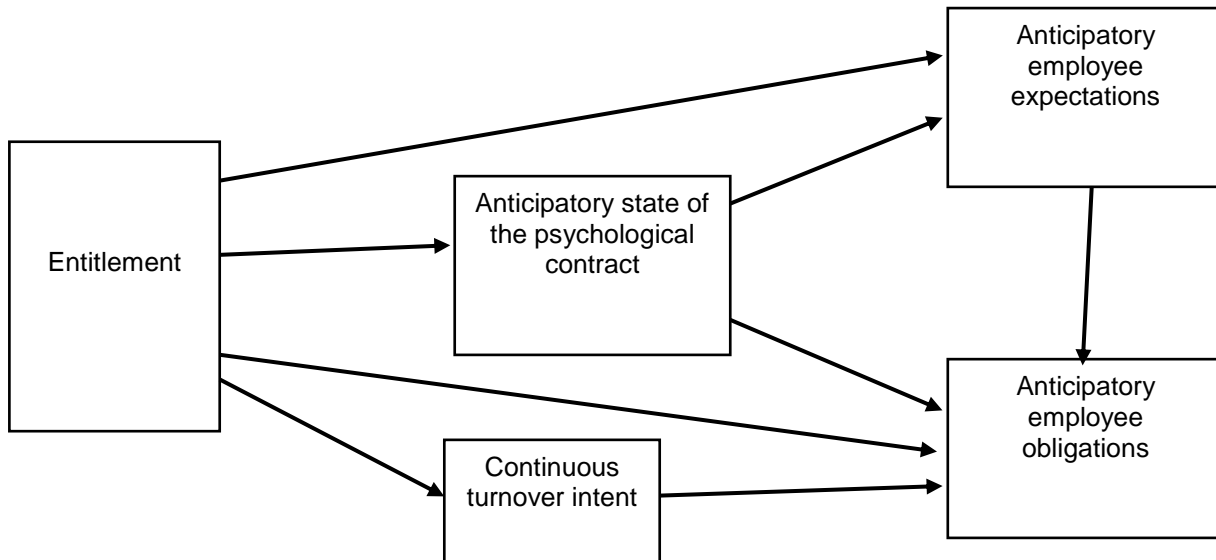


Figure 6-1: Model of the anticipatory psychological contract

The anticipatory psychological contract model represents the first attempt to provide a sound theoretical model to understand occupational newcomers' pre-employment beliefs and mental schema. The model suggests that a prospective employee's entitlement perceptions play a critical role in the anticipatory psychological contract as it directly affects their tendency towards turnover intent, how a person feels about his/her future employment relationship, and his/her levels of reciprocity. Entitlement also had a negative relationship with both anticipatory expectations and anticipatory obligations, which indicates that when an individual displays high levels of entitlement, it will most probably be associated with lower levels of anticipatory expectations and anticipatory obligations. Results also show that an individual's predisposition towards turnover intent affects his/her anticipatory obligations.

The results also showed that anticipatory expectations of an individual determine his/her anticipatory obligations and that this process is mediated by how the employee perceives his/her future employment relationship. This finding suggests that the norm of reciprocity is already present in the anticipatory psychological contract, something that has never been confirmed in previous anticipatory psychological contract research. This means that students, who have not started employment, already have an idea of their future employment relationship; and based on that

perception, they have a certain level of expectation that directly influences their obligations toward their future employer.

The fact that pre-employment violation was not present does not indicate that it is not in the anticipatory psychological contract. It merely indicates that the items were not statistically sufficient to measure it. Due to its correlation with turnover intent and anticipatory obligations, it should have an impact on the anticipatory psychological contract.

6.4 Limitations of this study

This study did include some limitations. The first limitation was that the qualitative interviews with students were conducted during the same time as the national free higher education protests broke out in South Africa, which were associated with violent student behaviour all across the country. Although these participants were not in any physical danger during the interview process, they did have some additional stressors that were based on the uncertainty regarding whether final examinations will continue as planned during the duration of the protests.

The second limitation in the present study was that the APCQ was based on self-report measures. Self-report data might be contaminated by common method variance, because both independent and dependent variables are based upon one source of information, which was as the participants in this study (Field, 2009). There are, however, authors (e.g. Semmer, Zapf, & Greif, 1996) who believe that common-method variance is not problematic.

The third limitation was due to a lack of additional items in the pre-employment violation measures and the turnover intent measures. More items in these two factors could have ensured a better Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The problem, however, was the fear that the measuring instrument would have too many items that would result in participants getting frustrated due to answering that many questions. The original APSQ included 87 items and was eventually reduced to a 63-item measure and took approximately 30 minutes to complete.

The final limitation was based on the fact that this research was done on South African students within the same faculty of a South African university. This might indicate that results may be different when analysing the students from other fields of study, for instance Law, Engineering, Medicine, etc. South Africa also has some unique legislation, for instance the Employment Equity Act, which might promote specific entitlements, which will be absent in studies based on other countries.

6.5 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to organisations, educators, and for future research:

6.5.1 Recommendations for organisations

These recommendations pertain to how employers can manage graduate entitlement in the workplace. Unfortunately, there are no specific programmes or interventions that can be compiled to do this effectively, since most entitlement perceptions are developed during an individual's lifetime. I do, however, have some recommendations on what organisations can do to manage employees' anticipatory psychological contract.

The first recommendation is that employers and employees should address the graduate employer-disconnect issues during the recruitment and initiation phase of employment. The focus points of this discussion should be the themes identified in Gresse and Linde (2018b), for instance entitlement-related expectations regarding promotional opportunities and compensation. By discussing these issues, graduates might feel included, which will influence how they perceive the employment relationship that will promote a healthy reciprocity relationship.

The second recommendation is that organisations should make themselves attractive to graduates by focusing on what expectations new graduates have to attract and retain them in employment. It makes sense to start off a graduate in a junior position with a low salary, but there are ways for employers to retain these employees, for instance include specific promotional and salary advancement figures in the employment contract. Results of this study show that graduates are results oriented, and therefore employers should use this knowledge to their advantage.

6.5.2 Recommendations for educators

There are two specific entitlement-management recommendations that educators can follow that may assist in managing the entitlement of graduates. Harvey and Dashborough (2015) have suggested that it may be probable that employees can be conditioned into displaying context-specific forms of entitlement. Therefore, it can be assumed that the opposite should also be valid, where certain context-specific interventions can reduce already established employee entitlement related to that context. Based on this assumption, the following is recommended:

Firstly, educators (teachers, lecturers, tutors) should lift the standards of the subjects and not award higher marks than what the student deserves. The mark allocated should reflect the exact performance that the student exerted. The awarding of higher marks than what is deserved can lead

to academic entitlement (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Greenberger, Lessard, Chen, & Farruggia, 2008), and it was confirmed that academic-related entitlement correlates positively with employment-related entitlement (Peirone & Maticka-Tyndale, 2017). This also indicates that government will have to increase the minimum pass requirement in schools, since this may contribute to higher entitlement levels in the future.

The second recommendation, in my opinion, is the most effective strategy to manage graduate entitlement, and involves continuous ‘violation triggering’. One of the findings of this dissertation confirmed a positive correlation between pre-employment violation and prospective employees’ predisposition towards turnover intent; it should, however, be noted that this was confirmed by assessing final-year university students. However, if violations, based on the graduate-employer disconnect aspects, get triggered in the first year of students’ university career, and are reinforced during second and third year, there will be a high probability that by the time these students reach graduation, these perceptions of violations would have completely disappeared, due to them being conditioned to believe that those entitlement-based expectations were unrealistic. In order to trigger a violation, lecturers need to be honest with students regarding employment realities and should present facts and testimonials of employees in their field study, or previous graduates to prove employment reality.

6.5.3 Recommendation for future research

This research provides a first attempt to model the anticipatory psychological contract, but there may be more elements relevant to the anticipatory psychological contract that were not considered in this study. Therefore, more research should be done on the anticipatory psychological contract and how it affects the employment psychological contract.

Another avenue for future research is in regard to pre-employment violation and how it affects the anticipatory psychological contract or the future psychological contract. This is the first study to confirm the existence of pre-employment violation, so there is a great deal of potential for further investigation.

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ANNEXURES

Annexure 1: Interview guide for research article 1

Interview guide for researcher

Process of the interview

1. During the study or any publication action, the names of the respondents will not be disclosed.
2. The study population will consist of third-year Economic and Management Sciences students of a South African university.
3. Participation in the study will only be on a voluntary basis.
4. The interviewee has the right to stop and end the interview process at any time if they feel that the interviewer has made them uncomfortable or is biased
5. No students will be victimised, nor be discriminated against (directly or indirectly).
6. Findings and recommendations will not be used to victimise or discriminate against any participant.
7. Findings of the study will be disclosed to any relevant party.
8. A semi-structured questionnaire will be used during the study.
9. Open-ended interviews will be held face to face.
10. Interviews will be recorded for any future reference.
11. Interviews will be transcribed
12. In view of the reliability issue of the study, all the interview questions will be asked in English.

Sample selection

1. Research will be conducted on final-year students at a South African university.
2. Purposeful and snowball sampling will be used to determine which third-year students will be included in the sample
3. Therefore, the sample will include final-year students in any field related to commerce.
4. The researcher will obtain a class list from third-year commerce-related lecturers where students will be randomly selected from the class list for interviews. The students may also suggest other students who might be included.

Recording and record-keeping

1. Interviews will be audio-recorded with the permission of the participants.
2. Transcripts will be made of every interview recorded.
3. Copies will be made of every interview transcript and such copies, as well as the audio recordings, will be securely held in safekeeping for any future reference.

Interview environment

1. Effort will be made to make the participants feel relaxed and comfortable during the interview.
2. The interviews will take place in the same location for all the participants.

3. The interview location will be selected to ensure minimal external influences and distractions, for instance ambient noise.
4. An attempt will be made to ensure that the conditions of the location are similar for all the interviewees, e.g. lighting and ventilation.
5. The interviewer will try to create a relaxed environment to reduce any possible stressors that the interviewee may experience, for instance the interviewer will be dressed casually.
6. Interviews will take place in a face-to-face mode.
7. Each interview will take approximately 30 minutes.

Interview guide for interviewee

Interviewee no: _____

Gender: _____

Date: _____

Venue: _____

Introduction

1. Introduction:
 - a. Welcome interviewee; and
 - b. Introduce interviewer.
2. Overview of the study:

“The purpose of this study is to explore the mental schema of graduates in order to enhance our understanding of the anticipatory psychological contract”
3. Anonymity:

“Your name and identity will be anonymous and will not be published or disclosed in any manner; there will also be no discrimination against any person or group.”
4. “Please note that if you feel uncomfortable at any stage, you are welcome to stop me and end the interview.”
5. Recording and recordkeeping: “As interviewer, I will use an audio recorder to assist me later in analysing the interview. Do you have any problem with the use of an audio recorder?”

Questions

1. You are now at the end of your undergraduate studies; how do you feel about starting your professional career? [Follow-up: Can you explain to me what your short-term career goals are?]

2. Do you believe that you have an idea of what to expect when you start working [Follow-up: why do you say this?]
3. Professionally, where do you see yourself in ten years' time? [Follow up if elaboration is required]
4. What do you think is going to happen in the first ten years of your work journey? [Follow up in terms of money, position, benefits]
5. How many employers do you think you will work for in these ten years? [Follow up with: Why?]
6. How would you regard success in your professional career; in other words, what does being successful in your career mean to you? [elaborate]
7. Any general comments?

Annexure 2: Interview guide for research article 2

Interview guide for researcher

Process of the interview

13. The study population will be university graduates in their first two years of employment, as well as these employees' direct supervisors (who represent the employer)
14. During the study or any publication the names of the respondents will not be disclosed.
15. Participation in the study will only be on a voluntary basis.
16. The interviewee has the right to stop and end the interview process at any time if they feel that the interviewer has made them uncomfortable or are biased.
17. No participant will be victimised, nor be discriminated against (directly or indirectly).
18. Findings and recommendations will not be used to victimise or discriminate against any participant.
19. The general findings of the study will be disclosed to the participants, if requested.
20. A semi-structured questionnaire will be used during the interviews.
21. To ensure that employees provide honest answers without fear that the information they provide will be communicated to their employer there will be two phases of interviews:
 - a. Interviewees representing the employer will be interviewed first
 - b. Interviewees in their first two year of employment will be interviewed second.
 - c. Open-ended interviews will be held face-to-face.
22. Interviews will be recorded for future reference.
23. Interviews will be transcribed anonymously.
24. In view of the reliability issue of the study, all the interview questions will be asked in English.

Sample Select

5. Research will be conducted with employees in any commerce related field as this is a sample group that can be generalised to almost all of the work sectors in South Africa.
6. A meeting will be scheduled with a program leaders in the field of economic and management sciences. The researcher will need to request a list of graduates, with their contact details, who have commenced employment within the last two years.
7. These employees will be requested to provide the contact information of their direct supervisor, to confirm availability for an interview
8. A snowball sampling technique can also be used when conducting interviews with working candidates where they can refer another working graduate to be interviewed

Recording and record-keeping

4. Interviews will be audio-recorded with the permission of the participants.
5. Transcripts will be made of every interview recorded.

6. Copies will be made of every interview transcript and such copies, as well as the audio recordings, will be securely held in safekeeping for future reference.

Interview environment

8. Efforts will be made to make the participants feel relaxed and comfortable during the interview.
9. The interviewer will need to travel to the participant in order to conduct the interview, this means that the location will be different for each participants.
10. The interview location will be selected by the researcher to ensure minimal external influences and distractions, for instance noise.
11. An attempt will be made to ensure that the conditions of the location are similar for all the interviewees (e.g. lighting and ventilation) although this cannot be guaranteed.
12. The interviewer will try to create a relaxed environment to reduce any possible stressors that the interviewee may experience, for instance the interviewer will be dressed casual.
13. Interviews will take place in a face-to-face mode.
14. Each interview will take approximately 15 minutes for both employee and supervisor.

Interview guide for interviewee

Interviewee no: _____

Gender: _____

Date: _____

Venue: _____

Introduction

6. Introduction:
 - a. Welcome interviewee; and
 - b. Introduce interviewer.
7. Overview of the study:

“The purpose of this study is to explore and substantiate themes associated with the subjective experiences, expectations and obligations of new employees and the experiences and employability perception of their employers to determine if an expectation disconnect exist between employer and employee.” Only information relevant to this purpose would be used in this research.
8. Anonymity:

“Your name or and identity will be handled anonymously and will not be published or disclosed in any manner; there will also be no discrimination against any person or group.”

9. "Please note that if you feel uncomfortable at any stage, you are welcome to stop me and end the interview."
10. "The information you provide will not be communicated to your specific employer/employee."
11. Recording and recordkeeping: "As interviewer, I will use an audio recorder to assist me later in analysing the interview. Do you have any problem with the use of an audio recorder?"

Questions (Employees in first two years of employment)

1. As a new employee, how did you experience the transition from university to employment? **Possible follow up question(s):** [Can you elaborate on the expectations that you had before you entered employment?]
2. Can you explain what you experienced when you started working for the first time? Possible follow up question(s): [Elaborate on your work journey up until this stage.]
3. Was the work reality, what you know now, in line with the expectations that you had before you started working? **Possible follow up question(s):** [Please elaborate?] [Can you provide me with a reason for your answer?]
4. Can you explain to me what the work reality is? (In terms of money, position, situation etc.) **Possible follow up question(s):** [Can you elaborate?]
5. Before you started working, did you regard yourself as an expert in your field? **Possible follow up question(s):** [Do you regard yourself now as an expert in your field?] [Can you explain your answer?]
6. How do you feel about your current employer and what do you think is going to happen in the next ten years of your work journey? Possible follow up question(s): [In terms of money, position, benefits.] [Can you elaborate?]
7. How many employers do you think you will work for in the next ten years? **Possible follow up question(s):** [Could you elaborate on the possible reasons for it?]

Questions (Supervisors (employers))

1. As an employer of graduates, what are your experiences with graduates that came fresh from university? **Possible follow up question(s):** [Can you elaborate?]
2. Can you explain what reasonable expectations new employees can have at your workplace? (Follow up if they do not discuss money, position, conditions etc.) **Possible follow up question(s):** [Is it different to the expectations that new graduates bring to the workplace?] [Can you elaborate?]
3. How long have you been working in this field? **Possible follow up question(s):** [What was your experience in your work journey?] [Where did you start?] [Where are you now?] [Can you elaborate?]

Annexure 3: The anticipatory psychological contract questionnaire (APCQ)

*This questionnaire should be completed on the provided multiple-choice card. **To ensure full anonymity, please make sure that you do not insert your student number on the multiple-choice card, leave it blank.** Both the questionnaire and the multiple-choice card should be handed in after completion.*

Also ensure that the number of your response on the multiple-choice card correlates with the number of the question on this questionnaire (for instance Question 1 on this questionnaire should be answered at the space where question 1 is on the multiple-choice card).

Section 1: Biographical Information:

The aim of the information gathered in this section is to determine if results can be generalised to the study population and will only be reported for this reason. Please answer the following questions:

1. Gender

A = Male	B = Female
-----------------	-------------------

2. Age

A =	B =	C =	D =
Age 18 to 20	Age 21 to 23	Age 24 to 26	Age above 27

3. Who is financing your degree (please select the main source):

A =	B =	C =	D =	E =	F =
Self	Parents or Family	Government Funding (for example: NSFAS)	Private institution funding (for example: ABSA, SASOL etc.)	Study Loan	Other







4. Employment equity group

A =	B =	C =	D =	E =	F =
African	White	Coloured	Indian	Disabled person	Chinese

Section 2: Graduate Expectations

By using the scale below to answer the following questions, consider whether you think that your future employer (after graduating) will make the following promises to you, and to what extent you think they will fulfil their promises.







Additional information: “Future employer” refers to the first employer that you will work for after you receive your qualification

A =	B =	C =	D =	E =	F =
					
My future employer will make no such promise	Yes, my future employer will make such a promise, but this promise might not be kept at all	Yes, my future employer will make such a promise, but this promise might only be kept a little	Yes, my future employer will make such a promise, but this promise might be half-kept	Yes, my future employer will make such a promise and it might be largely kept	Yes, my future employer will make such a promise and it might be fully kept

5. Will provide you with the freedom to decide how to do your job?
6. Will provide you with the opportunity to exercise control over your job?
7. Will provide you with flexible working hours?
8. Will provide you with an additional reward for good work?
9. Will recognise you as an expert in your field?
10. Will make you feel appreciated when you complete a task?
11. Will provide you with tasks related to your field of study?
12. Will provide you with work that will contribute to organisational success?
13. Will provide you with interesting work?
14. Will provide you with an annual bonus?
15. Will provide you with medical benefits?
16. Will provide you with transport financing?
17. Will help you with accommodation?
18. Will provide you with your own office?
19. Will provide you with your own resources (for instance a laptop, tablet, printer, etc.)?
20. Will provide you with personal space to conduct your work in?
21. Will provide you with time off, without taking leave, to handle personal issues?
22. Will **not** require you to work from home after working hours?

Section 3: Graduate Obligation




By using the below scale for each of the following questions, consider whether you think that you will make such a promise to your future employer (after graduating) and to what extent you think you will fulfil your promise:

A =	B =	C =	D =	E =	F =
					
I will not make such a promise	Yes, I will make this promise to my future employer, but my promise might not be kept at all	Yes, I will make this promise to my future employer, but my promise might only be kept a little	Yes, I will make this promise to my future employer, but my promise might be half-kept	Yes, I will make this promise to my future employer and it will be largely kept	Yes, I will make this promise to my future employer and it will be fully kept

23. Commit yourself to skills development opportunities?
24. Accept a workplace mentor who will teach you?
25. Undergo training to perform better in your job?
26. Take responsibility for your actions and not assign blame to others?
27. Account for workplace mistakes although it might not be your fault?
28. Be responsible for poor performance of your subordinates?
29. Strictly abide by the agreed-upon company office hours?
30. Submit a leave form even if you miss part of the working day?
31. Never be late for work, including returning from breaks?
32. Respect the rules and regulations of the company?
33. Agree to disciplinary procedure if you violate any of the agreed-upon terms in your contract of employment?
34. Work extra hours without compensation?
35. Take work home at the end of the business day?
36. Work over the weekends?
37. Completely focus on work related activities during worktime?
38. Strictly adhere to work project deadlines?
39. Not let any personal issues affect your work during worktime?
40. Follow any instruction which you receive from your supervisor/manager without questioning it?
41. Making coffee/tea for your manager?
42. Running non-work-related errands for your manager/supervisor?
43. Do work outside your job description?




Section 4: State of the anticipatory psychological contract

Please answer the following statement on the following continuum of five options, with:

A	B ----- C ----- D	E
		
Not at all		Totally

44. Do you believe that you will be fairly rewarded for the effort you will put into your future job?
45. Do you believe that senior management will care about your needs when you start working (after graduating)?
46. Would you trust your future employer to keep the promises or commitments that will be made to you?
47. Do you think that your future employer will praise you for a job well done?
48. Do you believe that your future manager will treat you fairly?
49. Do you believe that your future co-workers will treat you fairly?
50. Do you believe that you will be happy with your future employer?
51. Do you believe that your future job will be your dream job?

Section 5: Employment perception

A	B ----- C ----- D	E
		
Not at all		Totally

By using the above scale, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

52. I do **not** plan to work very long for my first employer.
53. I will keep applying for better positions once I start working.
54. If I start working and I receive a better offer from another company I will take it.
55. Once employed I will rather move to a position outside my field of study with a higher salary and position than a lower paying position in my field of study.
56. I believe that I will have to find alternate employment when I start working due to personality clashes with my future supervisor.
57. I would prefer a management position without better fundamental work exposure, rather than a junior position with better fundamental work exposure.
58. Due to my qualification, I deserve a very good job.
59. If I cannot find employment, it is the government's responsibility to create a job for me.
60. There have been some instances where people get appointed in an above average position, therefore I believe that this will also happen to me.

61. I believe that I will be the best candidate for any job in my field.

62. If I ever completed a doctorate degree, everybody should refer to me by my title, "Doctor".

For the following question please use the scale which is provided

63. How many employers do you believe you will work for in the first 10 years of employment (after you graduate)?

A =	B =	C =	D =	E =
I believe that I would only work for one employer for the first ten years of employment	I believe that I would work for 2 different employers in the first ten years of employment	I believe that I would work for 3 different employers in the first ten years of employment	I believe that I would work for 4 different employers in the first ten years of employment	I believe that I would work for more than 5 different employers in the first ten years of employment

Thank You

Annexure 4: Statistical analysis declaration



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24 May 2018

Re: Dissertation, Mr WG Gresse, Student number: 20385226

We hereby confirm that the Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University analysed the data involved in the study in regards to the Structural Equation Models of the above-mentioned student and assisted with the interpretation of the results. However, any opinion, findings or recommendations contained in this document are those of the author, and the Statistical Consultation Services of the NWU (Potchefstroom Campus) do not accept responsibility for the statistical correctness of the data reported.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Shawn Liebenberg', is written over a horizontal line.

Mr SC Liebenberg (M.Sc.)

Statistical Consultation Services

Annexure 5: Language editing certificate

To whom it may concern

Cecile van Zyl
Language editing and translation
Cell: 072 389 3450
Email: Cecile.vanZyl@nwu.ac.za

29 May 2018

Dear Mr / Ms

Re: Language editing of thesis (Graduate entitlement management: Exploring
the graduate-employer disconnect in students' anticipatory psychological
contract)

I hereby declare that I language edited the above-mentioned thesis by Mr WG Gresse (student number:
20385226).

Please feel free to contact me should you have any enquiries.

Kind regards



Cecile van Zyl
Language practitioner
BA (PU for CHE); BA honours (NWU); MA (NWU)
SATI number: 1002391