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## **Beyond the Dotted Line: Psychological Contracts and their Relations with Organizational Commitment**

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Beyond the Dotted Line:  
Psychological Contracts and their Relations with Organizational Commitment

(Spine title: Psychological Contracts and Organizational Commitment)

(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

Kate McInnis

Graduate Program in Psychology

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science

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THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
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**Beyond the Dotted Line: Psychological Contracts and their Relations with  
Organizational Commitment**

is accepted in partial fulfilment of the  
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Chair of the Thesis Examination Board

## Abstract

Understanding the commitments both an employee and his or her employer make to each other is important to organizations. I explore these commitments by examining the relation between employee commitments and employer psychological contracts (i.e., promises employers make to their employees). Traditionally, psychological contracts have been measured based on the contents of the contract (e.g., promotion opportunities), making it difficult to generalize findings across work arrangements. Instead, I adopt and extend a new approach to examining psychological contracts by looking at the contracts' features (e.g., stable). Employees from a variety of organizations completed surveys on their organizational commitment and perceptions of their employers' psychological contracts. Results illustrated a clear picture of what features correlated with desired forms of commitment (i.e., affective and normative) compared to a less desired form of commitment (i.e., continuance) and the uncommitted. Implications of the findings for management and directions for future research are also presented.

Keywords: Psychological Contracts, Employee Obligations, Employer Obligations, Organizational Commitment, Employee Commitment.

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### Beyond the Dotted Line:

#### Psychological Contracts and their Relations with Organizational Commitment

For several decades, organizational commitment has been a dominant topic in Industrial/Organizational (I/O) psychology (Benkhoff, 1997; Lee, Carswell, & Allen, 2000; Mowday, 1998; Yang, Worden, & Wilson, 2004). Of recent interest is whether individuals can afford to commit to an organization in today's turbulent work environment (e.g., downsizing and layoffs) (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Baruch, 1998; Carson, Carson, Roe, Birkenmeier, & Philips, 1999; Irving, Coleman, & Cooper, 1997). Acknowledging that organizations are changing, however, Meyer and Allen (1997) pointed out that they are not disappearing and still require a core group of individuals to function. Many agree, stating that committed and dedicated employees are essential during organizational changes (Brockner, Tyler, & Cooper-Schneider, 1992; Conner, 1993; Conner & Patterson, 1982; Harris, Hirschfeld, Field, & Mossholder, 1993; Swailes, 2002). Undoubtedly, gaining insight into how and why employees commit to organizations is of critical importance to management (Boshoff & Mels, 2000; Harris et al., 1993; Howard, 1995; Mowday, 1998; Putterill & Rohrer, 1995).

Also of interest to management is the psychological contract. Closely related to organizational commitment, the psychological contract refers to the obligations and promises employers and employees commit to one another (Conway & Briner, 2005). The psychological contract differs from other employment contracts (e.g., legal contract) because it is based on beliefs and perceptions about what each party believes the other is obligated to provide in the employer-employee relationship (e.g., Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). From the employee's viewpoint, it is the perceptions of what he or she

owes the employer and what the employer owes him or her (Rousseau, 1989). For example, the employee may work hard and help coworkers, with the perception that the employer will provide fair wages and good working conditions (Conway & Briner, 2005). Most research, including the present study, focuses only on the employees' perceptions of the employers' obligations.

Many have argued that the employer-employee relationship has changed drastically from being paternalistic to a relationship that no longer includes employers promising their employees secure and long term employment (e.g., Cavanaugh & Noe, 1999; Csoka, 1995; De Meuse, Bergmann, & Lester, 2001; De Meuse & Tornow, 1990; Kissler, 1994; O'Reilly, 1994; Richman, 1995). Although the nature of psychological contracts may have changed over the years, they arguably still play an important role in the relationship between employers and employees (Rousseau, 1995).

Past research on the relations between organizational commitment and psychological contracts has included studies of affective commitment (i.e., an employee's emotional attachment to the organization; Meyer & Allen, 1997) and employees' perceptions of employer psychological contract breach (e.g., Bunderson, 2001; Kim & Gyung, 1999; Lester, Turnley, Bloodgood, & Bolino, 2002). An employee perceives contract breach has occurred when there is a discrepancy between what he or she perceived the employer committed to provide and what was actually delivered (Conway & Briner, 2005; Herriot, Manning, & Kidd, 1997; Rousseau, 2000). Research has indicated that employees' perception of employer psychological contract breach correlates significantly negative with affective commitment (e.g., Conway & Briner, 2005).

Meyer, Allen, and Topolnytsky (1998) argued for also examining an employee's normative commitment toward the organization when studying psychological contracts. Normative commitment is a feeling of obligation to remain with an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Because both normative commitment and psychological contracts focus on obligations, it makes intuitive sense to consider normative commitment in addition to affective commitment. Another form of organizational commitment that is of potential interest is continuance commitment. Defined as the awareness of costs associated with leaving the organization, employees with strong continuance commitment remain with the organization because of accumulated investments in the organization (e.g., time spent on a project) (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Powell & Meyer, 2004). Similar to affective and normative commitment, psychological contracts could play an influential role in employees' levels of continuance commitment towards the organization. For example, the obligations employers promise to their employees (e.g., benefits) may impact the employees' feelings of having to remain with the organization (e.g., the economic costs of leaving).

The present research will contribute to both the psychological contract and organizational commitment literatures by examining the association between the two. In the following sections, I will first provide brief overviews of both organizational commitment and psychological contract research. Next, I will highlight what is known about the relations between psychological contracts and organizational commitment and what knowledge gaps still remain, providing the needed background for my hypotheses.

### *Organizational Commitment*

Commonly conceptualized as a psychological state, organizational commitment is one important aspect of the relationship that exists between an employee and his or her organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990, 1996; Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997). It has also been expressed as a link and/or bond between an employee and organization (Ferris & Aranya, 1983; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Initially, organizational commitment was perceived as an unidimensional construct that focused primarily on employees' emotional attachment toward the organization (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974; Somers, 1995; Steers, 1977). With continued study, however, organizational commitment came to be viewed as multi-dimensional (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer & Smith, 2000; Mowday, 1998). For example, Allen and Meyer (1990) have empirically identified three conceptually distinct components of commitment, termed affective, normative, and continuance commitment, with each component reflecting a different mindset pertaining to the relationship between the employer and employee.

As I stated earlier, affective commitment describes an emotional attachment to the organization, suggesting employees remain with the organization because they desire to (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Normative commitment reflects the moral obligation employees feel toward their organizations (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Wiener, 1982) and continuance commitment describes a need to remain because of the economic and social costs of leaving (Powell & Meyer, 2004). Although each component of commitment binds the individual to the organization, each possesses different antecedents and consequences (for a review, see Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). I have selected the

three component model of commitment for the present study because it is widely accepted within the I/O psychology literature and has received substantial empirical support (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer et al., 2002).

### *Commitment Profiles*

Meyer and Allen (1997) proposed that because employees can experience all three mindsets to varying degrees, employees can be characterized as having a commitment profile. For example, “One employee might feel both a strong attachment to an organization and a sense of obligation to remain. A second employee might enjoy working for the organization but recognize that leaving would be very difficult from an economic standpoint” (Meyer & Allen, 1997, p.13). Because an employee experiences all three components of commitment simultaneously, examining the antecedents and consequences of an individual’s overall commitment profile may be more informative, compared to past research that has typically focused on the three commitment components separately (Gellatly, Meyer, & Luchak, 2006; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Wasti, 2005).

Many researchers have chosen to perform a simple median split with each commitment component when creating profiles (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Meyer, Srinivas, Lal, & Topolnytsky, in press). Identifying individuals as being high or low on each component using a median split produces eight potential commitment profiles. Employees with high levels of affective, normative, and continuance commitments are categorized as Profile 1 (HHH). Employees with high levels of affective and normative commitments but low continuance commitment are categorized as Profile 2 (HHL), and those with high affective and continuance

commitments but low normative commitment are categorized as Profile 3 (HLH).

Profiles 4 to 7 include the following high and low combinations of affective, normative, and continuance commitments, respectively: Profile 4 (HLL), Profile 5 (LHH), Profile 6 (LHL), and Profile 7 (LLH). Lastly, employees with low levels on all commitment components (i.e., uncommitted) are categorized as Profile 8 (LLL).

Another approach that has been used to create commitment profiles involves clustering individuals based on similarity of their commitment scores (e.g., cluster analysis, see Sinclair, Tucker, Cullen, & Wright, 2005, and Wasti, 2005). I have selected the median split approach because it allows me to generate predictions a priori, rather than waiting to determine what profiles emerge from the data.

### *The Psychological Contract*

One framework for examining the relationship between employers and employees is the psychological contract (Argyris, 1960). The psychological contract is an individual's perception of the obligations and commitments between the self and another party (Guest, 1998; Rousseau, 1989, 1990; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998; for complete reviews of the construct and history, see Conway & Briner, 2005, and Taylor & Tekleab, 2004). Therefore, it is an individual's unique understanding of the terms and conditions of the obligations (Anderson & Schalk, 1998; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Turnley & Feldman, 1999). Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl, and Solley (1962) termed the contract *psychological* because it is based on beliefs and perceptions. Because not all terms and conditions of the employer-employee relationship are formally documented, the study of psychological contracts is necessary to explore these subjective and implicit obligations (Kotter, 1973; Rousseau, 1995).

For the purposes of the present study, the psychological contract will be defined as the explicit (e.g., verbal agreement) and implicit commitments (e.g., observing behaviour) the employee feels his or her employer have made to him or her. It is important to note that within the psychological contract literature, and this present study, the terms obligations, promises, and commitments are used interchangeably. Unlike several researchers (e.g., Argyris, 1960; Guest, 1998), explicit obligations and commitments have been included as part of the psychological contract because employees still subjectively perceive these forms of commitments. I will only be examining the employees' perceptions of the relationship, and not the employers', because I am interested in how employees' perceptions of the contract correlate with their organizational commitment.

Rousseau & Tijoriwala (1998) identified three approaches to the measurement of psychological contracts: content, evaluation, and features. The content approach to measuring psychological contracts focuses on specific terms and the classification of types. Terms that are typically used to measure employer commitments and promises include pay, advancement, training and development, and job security (Robinson et al., 1994; Rousseau, 1990). Lester and Kickul (2001) also made the distinction between terms that are related to extrinsic outcomes (i.e., are related to the outcomes of completing the job, e.g., pay and benefits) and terms that are related to intrinsic outcomes (i.e., are related to the work environment and the job itself, e.g., meaningful work and freedom to be creative).

The content approach to measuring psychological contracts also includes categorizing the contents into types. Based on individual differences and work

circumstances, a variety of psychological contract forms between employers and employees are possible (e.g., Robinson et al., 1994; Rousseau, 1995; Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1995), making the creation of a complete typology challenging (Shore & Barksdale, 1998). Nevertheless, Rousseau (2000) identified two widely studied types, which she termed *relational* and *transactional*. Relational contracts are long term, have loosely defined terms, and are socioemotional in nature (Rousseau, 1995, 2000; Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993). These contracts are often based on mutual trust and loyalty (Rousseau, 2000). In contrast, transactional contracts are characterized as being short term, narrow (i.e., only relates to the job), clearly defined, and static. Transactional contracts typically focus on economic exchanges with limited personal involvement between parties (Rousseau, 1995, 2000) and have been described as “a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay” (Rousseau, 1995, p.91; Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1994, p.466).

Rousseau (2000) also identified a third contract type termed balanced. Balanced contracts are a hybrid of both relational and transactional contracts. Balanced contracts contain the flexibility of relational contracts and the tangible limited terms of transactional contracts. Both employer and employee are active in each other’s learning and development (Hui, Lee, & Rousseau, 2004; Rousseau, 1995, 2000; Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1995), and the contract is often conditional on the organization’s economic success (Rousseau, 2000). Balanced contracts have emerged in response to changes in the work environment that require a flexible contract within a limited time frame.

The Psychological Contract Inventory (PCI) developed by Rousseau (2000) is the most popular measure of psychological contract types (e.g., Dabos & Rousseau, 2004;



King, 2003; Millward & Hopkins, 1998). To my knowledge, this is the only available measure of psychological contract types. It assesses both the employees' perceived promises to the employers and what they perceive their employers have promised to them. However, several researchers have chosen to measure psychological contracts based on their own measures of the contracts' terms and conditions that best fit the sample of interest (e.g. De Meuse, et al., 2001; Robinson et al., 1994; Rousseau, 1990).

Overall, the content approach is informative in understanding the psychological contract terms and conditions. However, the most serious criticism of this approach is that contents for one sample may not be applicable or appropriate for another sample, making it difficult to generalize results across work settings, individuals, and employment arrangements (Conway & Briner, 2005; Janssens, Sels, & Van den Brande, 2003; Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003; McLean Parks, Kidder, & Gallagher, 1998; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998; Sels, Janssens, Van den Brande, 2004). In addition, criticisms of the contract type approach include whether types are mutually exclusive and the possibility that some content terms (e.g., training) can be present in both types depending on the context (Conway & Briner, 2005; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000).

The second approach to measuring psychological contracts is one of evaluation. The evaluation approach focuses on the measurement of psychological contract fulfillment and breach. Psychological contract fulfillment refers to the degree to which the employee believes the employer has met its obligations to the employee (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). If an employee believes the organization has fulfilled the terms of the psychological contract, the employee may feel an obligation to reciprocate and maintain a balanced relationship (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). In contrast, as mentioned earlier,

contract breach occurs when the employee perceives the employer has failed to meet his or her obligations (Conway & Briner, 2005). As will be discussed later, both contract fulfillment and breach have important implications for an employee's commitment to the organization.

Of particular interest to the present research is the features approach to assessing psychological contracts. This approach involves measuring the attributes and dimensions of the psychological contract. Rousseau and Tijoriwala (1998) made the distinction between the feature and content approaches of psychological contracts by defining *features* as adjectives describing the contract (e.g., stable), and its *contents* as nouns describing what is exchanged (e.g., promotions and pay). Researchers have recently suggested that the features approach is necessary to clearly conceptualize the employer-employee relationship (Conway & Briner, 2005; Janssens et al., 2003), to distinguish the psychological contract from the legal employment contract (Guest, 1998), and to eliminate concerns regarding situation-specific terms in the measurement (Conway & Briner, 2005; Guest, 1998; McLean Parks et al., 1998; Shore & Barksdale, 1998).

Janssens et al. (2003) and Sels et al. (2004) identified key psychological contract feature dimensions based on the work of Macneil (1985), McLean Parks et al. (1998), and Rousseau and McLean Parks (1993): level, exchange symmetry, scope, stability, tangibility, and time frame. Level refers to the degree the employee perceives the contract as being collectively regulated. That is, a collectively regulated psychological contract implies that all employees have the same contract (Sels et al., 2004), while an individually regulated contract implies that the contract is unique.

The exchange symmetry feature dimension relates to the degree of which the employer and employee are considered as equal partners in the relationship. For example, an equal symmetry contract would consider both parties' needs, whereas an unequal symmetry contract would primarily focus on the needs of one party, typically the employer.

In terms of the scope feature dimension, a contract that is considered narrow would include only terms that are directly related to the job (McLean Parks et al., 1998; Rousseau, 1995; Sels et al., 2004). A broad psychological contract, however, considers the mutual well-being of the employee and therefore includes more than the specific work terms, such as the employee's personal life.

The feature dimension of stability reflects the degree to which the psychological contract is perceived to be consistent over time (Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993). That is, in a stable contract the terms of the contract remain the same (Lester & Kickul, 2001; Bergman, 2006). A contract is dynamic and flexible if the contract terms change frequently and is often based on a high tolerance for uncertainty (McLean Parks et al., 1998; Rousseau 1995; Sels et al., 2004).

The tangibility feature dimension refers to the degree to which the contract is perceived to be well-defined and specific. Tangible contracts specify terms that can be easily observed by a third party (McLean Parks et al., 1998) and outline clearly what the contract entails. However, an intangible contract provides general commitments (e.g., willing to provide support) without providing specific details. In an intangible contract, the contract terms are subjective and less defined compared to tangible contracts.

Lastly, the time frame feature dimension is simply the extent to which the employee perceives the psychological contract as short term (e.g., limited) or long term (e.g., open-ended) in duration (McLean Parks et al., 1998; Rousseau, 1995; Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993; Sels et al., 2004).

The above researchers had measured the feature dimensions as one item each. Therefore, each dimension was assessed as the degree to which a particular feature (e.g., collective level) characterized the contract. However, in light of the fact that each feature dimension can conceivably be described in terms of either of its poles, and that in many instances the poles reflect mutually exclusive characteristics, for the purposes of the present study, I measured each of these characteristics separately: level (collective versus individual features), exchange symmetry (equal versus unequal features), scope (narrow versus broad features), stability (stable versus flexible features), tangibility (tangible versus intangible features), and time frame (long term versus short term features).

The features approach is arguably the least developed in psychological contract research (Guest, 1998; Janssens et al., 2003; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). For example, it is not known if the above dimensions are equally important or exhaustive (Guest, 1998). In addition, there is no widely used measure to assess the features. The only measurement found in the literature, besides that used by Janssens et al. (2003) and Sels et al. (2004), was developed by McLean Parks and Van Dyne (1995). However, in personal communications, Judi McLean Parks stated the measure was burdensome to use empirically and not recommended (personal communication, October 23, 2006). With respect to the measure used by Janssens et al. (2003) and Sels et al. (2004), contract features were assessed with the question: “*I expect from my employer that...*”. Rousseau

(1990) argued that expectations differ from psychological contracts because expectations are generally held beliefs regarding the employment conditions and are not necessarily obligations the employer has committed to provide the employee specifically. For example, an employee may expect to receive a promotion after six months based on past work experiences in other organizations (Conway & Briner, 2005).

The measure used by Janssens et al. (2003) and Sels et al. (2004) also found low reliability for the employer equal symmetry measure and thus was not included in their analyses. Because the measure was only used in one sample (i.e., Belgian employees from a variety of industries), it is difficult to fully evaluate its psychometric properties and generalizability. There is also concern that the measure used by Janssens et al. (2003) and Sels et al. (2004) includes contents within the items (e.g., career development opportunities), suggesting the measure confounds features and contents. This problem also raises questions about the measure's generalizability. For example, items to measure time frame include "*offers me opportunities for career development*" and "*offers me a transfer to another job if my current job would disappear*", both of which may not be applicable to all work arrangements (e.g., contingent workers).

Although measurement concerns exist, psychological contract researchers acknowledge the importance of the feature assessment approach (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998) and its role in developing a nomological network for psychological contracts (Sels et al., 2004). In addition, the features approach has the potential to provide a more thorough understanding of the employer-employee relationship beyond that of psychological contract types. For example, Janssens et al. (2003) criticized Rousseau's (1995) work on types for only considering time frame and tangibility. Although Rousseau

(2000) attempted to account for more dimensions (e.g., stability and scope), the level and symmetry dimensions are still not included, thus further warranting a feature approach to exploring psychological contracts. In addition, given the variety of possible employer-employee relationships that could exist, the feature approach eliminates concerns of whether this variety is captured when the relationships are grouped into contract types.

### *Organizational Commitment and the Psychological Contract*

Before discussing the goals of the present study, I wish to highlight past research that has explored organizational commitment and psychological contracts together. With respect to the contract types, Rousseau and Wade-Benzoni (1995) proposed that those with transactional contracts with their employer often have high continuance commitment and those with relational contracts have high affective commitment, although no empirical evidence was provided. Measuring organizational commitment with the unidimensional *Organizational Commitment Questionnaire* (Mowday et al., 1979), which closely resembles affective commitment (Dunham, Grube, & Castañeda, 1994; Meyer & Allen, 1997), Millward and Hopkins (1998) found that commitment correlated positively with employees' self ratings on relational psychological contracts, and correlated negatively with employees' self ratings on transactional psychological contracts, using the PCI type measure. However, the above study only considered the employee's self perceived obligations, not the employee's perception of the employer's obligations.

Using Rousseau's (2000) PCI type measure, King (2003) examined employees' perceptions of both their own obligations and their employers' obligations. Results confirmed that employees' perceptions of both their and their employers' relational psychological contracts correlated with affective commitment. King also found that

normative commitment, and to a lesser extent continuance commitment, also correlated positively with relational contracts. With respect to transactional contracts, results revealed a positive correlation with continuance commitment and a negative correlation with affective commitment (King, 2003). Normative commitment did not correlate significantly with perceived employer transactional contracts. Unfortunately, King (2003) reported results using only a subscale of the transactional psychological contract because he found the transactional measure in its entirety to be unreliable. Overall, the literature on commitment components and psychological contract types is too small and variable to draw valid conclusions. Further research, particularly with respect to normative commitment, is needed to accurately determine the relation between psychological contract types and organizational commitment.

With respect to the evaluation approach to measuring psychological contracts, numerous studies have illustrated that perceived employer psychological contract violation (i.e., the affective reaction to breach) correlates negatively with affective commitment (Granrose & Baccili, 2006; Lemire & Rouillard, 2005). On the other hand, perceived employer psychological contract fulfillment has been found to correlate positively with affective commitment (e.g., Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; Sturges, Conway, Guest, & Liefoghe, 2005) and negatively with continuance commitment (Sturges et al., 2005). That is, those who believe the organization has fulfilled its commitments to them are more likely to feel emotionally attached to the organization and less likely to focus on the costs associated with leaving. Future research will need to extend the findings of Sturges et al. (2005) with respect to why employees who believe their employers have fulfilled the contract are less likely to feel that they have to remain

with the organization. Although affective commitment and, to a lesser extent, continuance commitment have been examined, the evaluation approach to measuring psychological contracts has not addressed links to normative commitment.

Psychological contract features and organizational commitment have only recently been explored together. McLean Parks et al. (1998) developed hypotheses regarding the contract dimensions of scope and time frame. That is, they proposed that the more narrow and short term the contract is, the less likely the employee will commit to the employer. However, McLean Parks et al. (1998) did not offer empirical evidence and did not define commitment as multidimensional. Although Tsui, Pearce, Porter, and Tripoli (1997) were not specifically examining the features of psychological contracts, they did find that affective commitment ratings were highest among employees in employer-employee relationships that were characterized as being long term, compared to employees in relationships that were characterized as short term in nature. In the only empirical test of the relations between contract features and commitment, Sels et al. (2004) found that employees with high affective commitment also rated their employers' obligations as high on long term, broad, stable, tangible, and collective feature ratings. However, the study did not measure normative commitment or continuance commitment. Thus, research that explores the relation between all three commitment components and psychological contract features has yet to be conducted.

#### *Present Study*

Six contract feature dimensions were selected based on past research by Janssens et al. (2003) and Sels et al. (2004): level (collective and individual features), symmetry (equal and unequal features), scope (narrow and broad features), stability (stable and



flexible features), tangibility (tangible and intangible features), and time frame (long term and short term features). Three additional feature dimensions not captured by past research were also included for exploratory purposes: explicitness (explicit and implicit features), negotiation (negotiated and unilateral features), and basis (formal and mutual features). Based on my review of the psychological contract literature, I felt that these three dimensions might be important to the employer-employee relationship. Although explicitness had been mentioned in passing by Rousseau (2000) and Conway and Briner (2005), no specific propositions were made on its definition or relation with organizational commitment. Explicitness refers to the degree to which the commitments are clearly written or verbally discussed between parties (i.e., explicit) or are subjectively inferred from organizational policies and practices (i.e., implicit). In terms of negotiation, negotiated contracts are developed through formal negotiations with employees (e.g., unions), and unilateral contracts are determined solely by the organization. Basis refers to the commitments as being based on either formal agreements (i.e., formal features) and/or mutual trust between parties (i.e., mutual features).

The present study also considers the influence of perceived employer psychological contract fulfillment on the relation between psychological contract features, contract types, and organizational commitment. For example, it could be that employees who rate high on perceived employer contract fulfillment have a more positive view of their employer and therefore describe the contract as having more desirable features, compared to an employee who perceives the contract as being unfulfilled. As will be discussed shortly in the method section, partial correlations were calculated to control for the potential influence of employer contract fulfillment on relations between

contract feature ratings and commitment. It was expected that the predicted relations would hold true, independent of employer contract fulfillment effects.

*Contract features and contract types.* First, because examining contract features is a relatively new approach within the psychological contract literature, I will first make comparisons between the features approach and the traditional method of measuring contract types (i.e., relational and transactional). In line with Rousseau's (1995, 2000) definition of relational contracts, I predict that ratings on the relational contract measure will correlate positively with broad and long term feature ratings and negatively with narrow and short term feature ratings (see Table 1). I also predict that relational contract ratings will correlate positively with collective level and equal symmetry, and negatively with unequal symmetry. That is, employees who believe the employer treats all employees equally and views employees as equal partners in the relationship will be more likely to view their contract as one that is of a relational nature. Although Rousseau (2000) defined the relational contract as flexible and intangible, I believe employees' ratings on the relational contract scale will correlate positively with ratings of the stable and tangible features, and correlate negatively with the intangible feature ratings. That is, employees who feel their employers have a relational contract with them will see the contract as consistent and reliable over time. Morrison (1994) argued that stable contracts offer predictability. Consequentially, when an employer is predictable, he or she is perceived as being reliable and credible, which generates loyalty (Morrison, 1994).

Table 1

*Predicted Correlations Between Psychological Contract Features and Psychological Contract Types*

Psychological Contract Feature	Psychological Contract Type	
	Relational	Transactional
Level- Individual	0	0
Level- Collective	+	+
Exchange Symmetry- Equal	+	+
Exchange Symmetry- Unequal	-	0
Scope- Narrow	-	+
Scope- Broad	+	-
Stability- Stable	+	+
Stability- Flexible	0	-
Tangibility- Intangible	-	-
Tangibility- Tangible	+	+
Time Frame- Short	-	+
Time Frame- Long	+	-
+ = significant positive correlation predicted - = significant negative correlation predicted 0 = no correlation predicted		

Lastly, I have no theoretical reason to believe relational contract ratings will correlate significantly with individual level and flexible feature ratings. That is, employees with perceived high employer relational contracts could score either high or low on these features. In this sense, I do not make opposite predictions for the level (i.e., collective and individual features) and stability feature dimensions (i.e., stable and flexible features). Instead, I am expecting different relations with the features for these two dimensions (i.e., a significant correlation with one feature of the dimension, and nonsignificant correlation with the other feature of the dimension).

Consistent with Rousseau's (1995, 2000) definition of transactional contracts, I predict that ratings on transactional contracts will correlate positively with narrow, stable, tangible, and short term feature ratings and negatively with broad, flexible, intangible, and long term feature ratings. Similar to predicted correlations with relational contract ratings, I also predict that transactional contract ratings will correlate positively with collective and equal symmetry feature ratings. That is, because the transactional contract is well-defined and clearly specified (Rousseau, 2000), I predict that the contract will most likely also be perceived to be similar for all employees and as treating employees as equal partners in the relationship.

I have no theoretical reason to believe transactional contract ratings will correlate significantly with individual level and unequal symmetry feature ratings. An employee who perceives his or her employer as having a transactional psychological contract could see the contract as either high or low on the individual level and unequal symmetry features. In this sense, I do not predict opposite relations for the features of these two

feature dimensions. Instead I expect a significant correlation with one feature and a nonsignificant correlation with the other feature of the feature dimension.

Overall, opposite predictions are made for the relational and transactional contract types for scope and time frame feature dimensions. These predictions resemble Rousseau's (1990) view of relational and transactional types being on opposite ends of a continuum for these features (see Appendix A). I made similar predictions for the two contract types for level and tangible feature dimensions and the equal symmetry and stable features, arguing these features will be present in both contract types. In addition, I made mixed predictions for the unequal symmetry and flexible features stating only the unequal symmetry feature would correlate with relational contract type ratings and only the flexible feature would correlate with the transactional contract type ratings.

*Hypothesis 1: Employees' scores on the relational psychological contract measure will correlate positively with their ratings on the collective, equal symmetry, broad, stable, tangible, and long term feature measures, and negatively with their ratings on the unequal symmetry, narrow, intangible, and short term feature measures.*

*Hypothesis 2: Employees' scores on the transactional psychological contract measure will correlate positively with their ratings on the collective, equal symmetry, narrow, stable, tangible, and short term feature measures, and negatively with their ratings on the broad, flexible, intangible, and long term feature measures.*

To further examine the relation between psychological contract features and the contract types, a factor analysis of the features will be conducted for exploratory purposes. The purpose of the factor analysis is to determine whether the 18 features reflect an underlying set of contract characteristics and, if so, whether the factors

resemble the types (i.e., relational, transactional, and balanced) as identified by Rousseau (2000).

*Contract features and the components of commitment.* Recall that employees who feel affectively committed to their organizations remain because they have a desire to be organizational members. To determine which contract features may contribute to such a desire to commit affectively, I considered which work experiences have been theoretically and empirically linked to affective commitment. In addition, I considered the results of Sels et al. (2004). Because there is a negative correlation between affective commitment and role ambiguity (i.e., the employee is unsure of what is expected of him or her; Meyer et al., 2002), I predict contract features that clearly define the employees' responsibilities and duties (i.e., stable and tangible) will correlate positively with affective commitment. Affective commitment has also been positively linked with organizational justice and fairness (i.e., the employee perceives the policies and procedures of the organization as being fair; Meyer et al., 2002). Based on this finding, I predict a positive correlation between affective commitment and the collective level contract feature because contracts that have the same terms and conditions for all employees will most likely be perceived as fair.

There is also a strong positive correlation between affective commitment and perceived organizational support (see Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002, for a review). That is, employees who desire to remain with the organization perceive their employers as caring about their opinions, their well-being, and work activities. I predict affective commitment will correlate positively with contract features that are characteristic of organizational support: broad (i.e., considers the employees' personal and professional

lives), equal symmetry (i.e., considers the employees' opinions), and long term (i.e., a relationship that lasts for an extended period of time). In line with all the above positive relation predictions, I also hypothesize that affective commitment will correlate negatively with unequal symmetry, narrow, and short term feature ratings (see Table 2).

I have no theoretical reason to believe affective commitment will correlate significantly with individual, flexible, and intangible feature ratings. An affectively committed employee could have a contract that is either high or low on these three feature ratings. For example, an affectively committed employee could work in either a low or highly flexible work environment and perceive the contract as such.

*Hypothesis 3: Employees' affective commitment scores will correlate positively with their ratings on the collective, equal symmetry, broad, stable, tangible, and long term feature measures, and negatively with their ratings on the unequal symmetry, narrow, and short term feature measures.*

With respect to normative commitment, correlations with the feature ratings are predicted to parallel those of affective commitment because work attitude patterns of affective and normative committed employees are very similar (Meyer & Allen, 1997). One exception, I predict that there will be a significantly positive correlation between normative commitment and the individual feature rating. That is, employees with individualized contracts may feel morally obligated to remain because their employers have designed contracts specifically for them.

Table 2

*Predicted Correlations Between Psychological Contract Features and Organizational Commitment*

Psychological Contract Feature	Organizational Commitment		
	Affective	Normative	Continuance
Level- Individual	0	+	0
Level- Collective	+	0	+
Exchange Symmetry- Equal	+	+	+
Exchange Symmetry- Unequal	-	-	0
Scope- Narrow	-	-	+
Scope- Broad	+	+	-
Stability- Stable	+	+	+
Stability- Flexible	0	0	-
Tangibility- Intangible	0	0	-
Tangibility- Tangible	+	+	+
Time Frame- Short	-	-	0
Time Frame- Long	+	+	0

+ = significant positive correlation predicted

- = significant negative correlation predicted

0 = no correlation predicted



*Hypothesis 4: Employees' normative commitment scores will correlate positively with their ratings on the individual, equal symmetry, broad, stable, tangible, and long term feature measures, and negatively with their ratings on the unequal symmetry, narrow, and short term feature measures.*

Recall that continuance commitment is defined in the present study as a commitment to remain with an organization because too much has already been personally invested in the current position to leave the organization. Therefore an employee may be more likely to recognize the social and economic costs of leaving the organization when he or she perceives the contract as having the following features: collective, equal symmetry, stable, and tangible. In other words, when the contract is the same for all employees, treats employees as equal partners in the relationship, stable over time, and is clearly defined, the employee is aware of what the contract offers and may be less likely to leave such a fair and well specified contract. Unlike affective and normative commitment, I also predict a positive correlation between continuance commitment and the narrow feature rating (i.e., the contract will only focus on job responsibilities and duties, and will not consider the employees' personal lives and well-beings).

Based on the above positive relation predictions, I also predict continuance commitment ratings will correlate negatively with broad, flexible, and intangible feature ratings. In addition, I have no theoretical reason to believe the following features will influence perceptions of the costs of leaving the organization: short term, long term, individual, and unequal symmetry. In other words, any level of these four features could be present with a high rating of continuance commitment.

*Hypothesis 5: Employees' continuance commitment scores will correlate positively with their ratings on the collective, equal symmetry, narrow, stable, and tangible features, and negatively with their ratings on the broad, flexible, and intangible features.*

*Contract features and commitment profiles.* The correlations between commitment profiles and psychological contract features have not been empirically examined nor theoretically discussed to date in the literature. Given commitment profile research is a relatively new concept within the commitment literature, identifying the features that are associated with the “optimal” profiles would be beneficial, particularly compared to the least desired profiles.

According to recent research (Gellatly et al., 2006), the best commitment profiles from an organization's perspective include high levels of both affective and normative commitments (i.e., Profile 1 and 2). The least desired commitment profiles include employees who demonstrate only high continuance commitment (i.e., Profile 7) or are uncommitted (i.e., Profile 8). Wasti (2005) found that individuals with the least desired commitment profiles had the highest work withdrawal behaviours (e.g., taking long breaks) and turnover intentions and lowest organizational citizenship behaviours (e.g., helping coworkers) compared to those individuals who scored high on affective and normative commitments.

My commitment profile predictions are based on my previous hypotheses for the relations between the contract feature ratings and three commitment components. I predict, compared to the purely continuance committed and uncommitted employees, employees who desire to remain in their organizations and feel morally obligated to do so will perceive that their employers have provided them with contracts that consider both

parties' needs and well-being, is stable, well-defined, and long term in nature. In contrast, these highly committed employees will not perceive their employer contracts as focusing only on the employers' needs or the job, be ambiguous or short term in nature.

*Hypothesis 6: Compared to employees who have profiles that reflect strong continuance commitment alone (Profile 7) or are uncommitted (Profile 8), employees with profiles reflecting high levels of affective and normative commitment (i.e., Profiles 1 and 2) will have higher ratings on the equal symmetry, broad, stable, tangible, and long term contract features, and lower ratings on the unequal symmetry, narrow, intangible, and short term feature ratings.*

In summary, the goals of this research are twofold. First, I wish to explore how psychological contract feature ratings correlate with the traditional approach of psychological contract types. Second, the present research will provide a clear understanding of the relations between psychological contract feature ratings and organizational commitment, thereby further advancing both literatures, conceptually and empirically.

## Method

### *Sample and Procedure*

Participants were recruited through *StudyResponse*. *StudyResponse* is a research project designed to assist academic researchers with online survey research by connecting them with a large and varied sample of participants.<sup>1</sup> I selected this particular sample because participants represent a variety of occupations and employers, as opposed to a

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<sup>1</sup> *StudyResponse* is hosted by Syracuse University, School of Information Studies. In exchange for assisting researchers with obtaining participants, *StudyResponse* researchers are able to examine all of the studies used in the project to identify study characteristics that encourage quality responding in online surveys (e.g., survey length and incentives).

single organization sample. *StudyResponse* randomly selected 1918 individuals from their pool of participants to receive a recruitment email that included a website link to the online survey for the present study (see Appendix B). The only requirement for receiving the recruitment email was that the individual currently be working for an employer (i.e., not unemployed or self-employed). Of those who received the survey request, 317 individuals completed the survey, for a response rate of 16.5%.<sup>2</sup> In exchange for participating, participants were automatically entered into a random draw to win one of eight gift certificates to an online book retailer (i.e., Amazon.com). Participants were given two weeks to complete the survey and received a reminder email after one week. To gain access to the survey, participants entered ID numbers assigned to them through *StudyResponse*.

#### *Demographics of Participants*

All participants had previously completed demographic information when they registered to be part of the *StudyResponse* project. Information with respect to age, gender, employment status (i.e., full time or part time employed), education level, work experience, and occupation type were obtained from a *StudyResponse* administrator. The participants' unique ID numbers assigned to them were matched with their demographic information to maintain anonymity. Two additional demographic pieces of information were included in the present survey: workplace size (e.g., number of employees who work in the office or manufacturing plant) and organization size (e.g., number of employees who work for the entire organization, if the organization had more than one workplace location).

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<sup>2</sup> The response rate for the present study falls within the normal range (10-30%) for *StudyResponse* projects (<http://istprojects.syr.edu/~studyresponse/studyresponse/researcherFAQ.htm#f>).

The mean age of participants was 37.29 ( $S. D. = 10.57$ ) with 54.5% of participants being male. The majority indicated they worked full-time (68.3%). The participants possessed a variety of educational backgrounds: less than high school (0.8%), high school (24.5%), associates degree (i.e., a college degree that is less than four years) (11.4%), some college (22.4%), four year college degree (22.9%), some graduate school (4.1%), master's degree (13.1%), and other advanced degrees (e.g., PhD) (0.8%).

A variety of workplace and organizational sizes was also present. The number of employees in the participants' workplace was fairly evenly distributed: 2-10 employees (25.0%), 11-50 employees (21.9%), 51-100 employees (16.4%), 101-250 employees (12.1%), 251-500 employees (6.3%), and over 500 employees (18.4%). Approximately 81% of participants indicated they worked for an organization with more than one workplace, with 43.7% of those participants stating the organization had over 500 employees. The average length of time in the current workplace was 6.4 years and the average length of time in current profession/occupation was 9.4 years.

#### *Identifying Outliers and Non-purposeful Responders*

One concern with online survey research is that individuals do not read the questions carefully (Stanton, 2006). Two methods were used to identify possible non-purposeful responders in the present study. First, the length of time to complete the survey was examined. Individuals who took less than four minutes, the length of time it generally took to read the survey, were eliminated from analyses. This method identified 32 participants as non-purposeful responders.

The second method involved examining the difference scores between positive keyed items and negative keyed items on the affective commitment measure and three

bipolar psychological contract feature dimensions (i.e., symmetry, negotiation, and explicitness). For example, if an individual's difference score on the symmetry feature ratings was zero (e.g., scored high on the equal symmetry rating and low on the unequal symmetry rating), the participant responded consistently on this measure. However, if the participant indicated the contract was both of equal and unequal symmetry, there was reason to believe the individual did not read the questions carefully. Scores were standardized and participants with at least two of the four difference scores being equal or greater than two standard deviations from the mean (i.e., 0) were eliminated from the analyses. Eighteen participants were identified as non-purposeful responders using this method.

Two additional participants were removed from the analyses because there was reason to believe they should not have received the recruitment email based on their primary occupation title (e.g., retired). In addition, seven individuals only completed the first section of the survey, organizational commitment, and thus were removed from analyses. There was also a duplicate *StudyResponse* ID number in the sample. As recommended by Enanoria (2005), the first survey received was kept as the eligible one, with the other one being removed from the analyses. Based on the above procedures, approximately 81% (i.e., 257) of the received surveys qualified as being useable for data analyses, making the response rate for usable responses 13.4%.

#### *Representativeness of Sample and Non-Response Bias*

Another concern with respect to online survey research is that the study sample represents the population of interest (Simsek & Veiga, 2001). Following recommendations of Stanton (2006), a leading researcher in online surveys and the

director of *StudyResponse*, the representativeness of the present sample was examined by making demographic comparisons between the target population (i.e., the U.S. working population using 2005 United States Census Bureau statistics) and sampling frame (i.e., *StudyResponse* participants who received the recruitment email). Overall, gender, education level, and occupation type were roughly proportioned. The sample had a lower percentage of full time employees (68.3%) compared to the working population (81.9%). With respect to age, the study sample appears to be younger than the working population. For example, 53.9% of the sample was between the ages 25-34, compared to only 22.7% of the working population. In addition, 18.7% of the sample was between the ages 45-65, compared to 38.4% of the working population.

I also compared demographics of responders and non-responders to determine whether non-response error was of concern (Newell, Rosenfeld, & Harris, 2004; Rogelberg, 2006). Independent sample t-tests illustrated no significant difference between the two groups on gender, education level, employment status, or occupation type. However, responders were significantly older,  $t(1889) = 3.27, p < .01$ , had worked in their current job longer,  $t(1678) = 2.08, p < .05$ , worked in their job profession longer,  $t(1779) = 2.43, p < .05$ , and had more total work experience,  $t(1862) = 2.45, p < .05$ , compared to non-responders.

The presence of non-response bias was also considered. Non-response bias is present when the demographics that the responders and non-responders significantly differ on are systematically related to the study variables (Rogelberg & Stanton, 2007). Demographics were correlated with the study variables (i.e., commitment components, contract features, and contract types) to determine if the demographic characteristics were

systematically related to the study variables. Non-response bias may be present because time in current job correlated significantly with continuance commitment ( $r = .18, p < .01$ ), and two contract feature ratings: negotiated ( $r = .20, p < .01$ ) and equal symmetry ( $r = .15, p < .05$ ). In addition, time in current profession also correlated significantly with equal symmetry ( $r = .13, p < .05$ ).

### *Measures*

*Organizational commitment.* Organizational commitment was measured using Meyer, Allen, & Smith's (1993) affective ( $\alpha = .81$ ) and normative commitment ( $\alpha = .85$ ) measures and Powell and Meyer's (2004) continuance commitment measure ( $\alpha = .85$ ). Employees were asked to respond to six statements for each commitment component using a seven-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Sample items included "*I would be happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization*", "*I would not leave my organization right now because I have a strong sense of obligation to the people in it*", and "*I have invested too much in this organization to consider working elsewhere*" (see Appendix C).

All components correlated significantly with each other: affective and normative commitments,  $r = .77, p < .01$ , normative and continuance commitments,  $r = .69, p < .01$ , and affective and continuance commitments,  $r = .53, p < .01$ . The correlations between continuance commitment and the other commitment components were higher compared to past research (Meyer et al., 2002). In a meta-analysis by Meyer and colleagues' (2002), the weighted corrected correlation between affective and continuance commitments was .05, and .18 for normative and continuance commitments. The correlation for affective and normative commitments was similar to the present study ( $\rho = .63$ ). A possible



explanation for the higher correlations with continuance commitment may lie in the measure. The original continuance commitment measure included items pertaining to personal sacrifices associated with leaving the organization, as well as lack of alternatives. The Powell and Meyer (2004) measure included only personal sacrifice items. In the Meyer et al. (2002) meta analysis, it was found that the personal sacrifice subscale of continuance commitment correlated positively with affective and normative commitments and the low alternatives scale correlated negatively with affective and normative commitments. Therefore, including only personal sacrifice items is likely to be at least partially responsible for the increased correlation between continuance commitment with affective and normative commitments.

*Psychological contract type.* A revised version of the Psychological Contract Inventory (PCI) developed by Rousseau (2000) was selected to measure the participants' perceptions of their employers' relational ( $\alpha = .80$ ) and transactional ( $\alpha = .65$ ) psychological contracts. The measure was reduced to eight items (i.e., four items for each contract type) and the wordings of items were modified slightly. The participants were asked to respond to each item on a five-point scale (1 = not at all, to 5 = to a great extent) to the following question: "*Consider your relationship with your current employer. To what extent has your employer made the following commitments to you?*". Sample relational contract statements included "*To be concerned about my long term well-being*" and "*To provide wages and benefits I can count on*". Transactional contract statements included "*To provide a job that is limited to specific, well-defined responsibilities*" and "*To provide me with a job for only as long as the employer needs me*" (see Appendix D).

The coefficient alpha reliability estimate for the transactional measure was below the recommended .70 (Nunnally, 1982), but is consistent with past research that has used the PCI (King, 2003; for a review of the measure's reliability across studies see Rousseau, 2000). I will discuss the reliability of the measure in more detail later.

*Psychological contract fulfillment.* Participants were asked to think about whether they felt they had fulfilled their promises to their employer ( $\alpha = .83$ ) and whether their employer had fulfilled their promises to them ( $\alpha = .90$ ) by responding to four questions on a five-point scale (1 = not at all, to 5 = to a great extent) (Rousseau, 2000, see Appendix E).

*Psychological contract features.* The psychological contract feature measure was developed for the current study and included nine contract feature dimensions, each with two features: level (collective and individual), exchange symmetry (equal and unequal), scope (narrow and broad), stability (stable and flexible), tangibility (intangible and tangible), time frame (short term and long term), explicitness (explicit and implicit), negotiation (negotiated and unilateral), and basis (formal and mutual) (see Appendix F). Participants responded to a list of 18 feature items on a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The feature items each began with the following statement: "*The commitments (explicit or implicit) made by my employer...*" Similar to Rousseau and Tijoriwala (1999), participants were reminded that the statements reflect perceived commitments and not whether those commitments should be obligated: "*Note that we are **not** asking what you think the commitment **should** be. We are interested in how you would describe the commitment **as it is**.*"

Due to a wording error in the survey, the formal feature item of the basis feature dimension was removed from the analyses.

### *Statistical Analyses*

To determine whether the factor structure among the 18 psychological contract features resembled the types identified by Rousseau (2000), a factor analysis was performed for exploratory purposes. To test Hypothesis 1 to 5, zero-order and partial correlations were computed between the features and contract type ratings (Hypothesis 1 and 2) and commitment components (Hypothesis 3 to 5). Recall that partial correlations were calculated to determine whether partialling out employer contract fulfillment made a difference in the analyses. With respect to commitment components, multiple regression equations for each component were calculated, for exploratory purposes, to determine which contract features contributed uniquely to the prediction of affective, normative, and continuance commitments.

To determine if employees with desired commitment profiles differed from the least desired committed profiles on the feature ratings, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed (Hypothesis 6) followed by ANOVA and the appropriate comparison of means for each feature across commitment profiles. Further explanations of the analyses are provided in the results section.

## Results

### *Factor Analysis*

The factor structure of the contract feature measure was not known a priori, and because I wished to understand the latent structure of the variables, I conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Specifically, a Principal Axis Factor Analysis with an

oblique Promax rotation was done. Based on the examination of the scree plot, four factors were extracted and rotated, and labeled: relational-exchange focused (I), minimal involvement (II), employer focused (III), and formal (IV) (see Table 3). The total common variance captured by the four factors was 39.56%.

The first factor is labeled relational-exchange focused and is defined as broad, mutual basis, and equal symmetry. This factor somewhat resembles Rousseau's (2000) relational psychological contract type because it focuses on mutual loyalty and respect. The second factor, labeled minimal involvement, contains narrow, stable, and tangible features. That is, the contract relates only to the job, is stable, and well-defined. This factor resembles a relationship that may exist between an employer and a part-time employee, and that involves limited contact between the parties.

The third feature was labeled employer focused and somewhat resembles Rousseau's (2000) transactional contract type. It included unequal symmetry and short term features that are characteristic of transactional contract types. This factor also included implicit, flexible, intangible, unilateral, and individual features, suggesting the employee may view the contract with uncertainty and that the contract is changing with the employer's interests coming first. The last factor was labeled formal because it included features that would be present in a formal work environment: explicit, collective, negotiated, and long term. The factor scores from the above analysis were computed for use in subsequent exploratory analyses involving the contract types and the three commitment components.

Table 3

*Factor Loadings for Psychological Contract Features*

Psychological Contract Features	Factors			
	I	II	III	IV
Scope- Broad	<b>.76</b>	.32	.07	.30
Basis- Mutual	<b>.68</b>	.38	-.01	.18
Exchange Symmetry- Equal	<b>.65</b>	.45	-.11	.37
Scope- Narrow	.41	<b>.76</b>	.12	.32
Tangibility- Tangible	.30	<b>.74</b>	-.10	.44
Stability- Stable	.32	<b>.58</b>	.12	.47
Exchange Symmetry- Unequal	-.11	.04	<b>.61</b>	.25
Explicitness- Implicit	-.05	-.12	<b>.57</b>	-.19
Stability- Flexible	.45	.33	<b>.51</b>	.38
Tangibility- Intangible	.26	-.10	<b>.44</b>	-.13
Time Frame- Short	-.18	.04	<b>.42</b>	.00
Negotiation- Unilateral	.01	-.30	<b>.41</b>	.03
Level- Individual	.23	.09	<b>.36</b>	-.06
Explicitness- Explicit	.28	.39	.02	<b>.67</b>
Level- Collective	.29	.43	-.06	<b>.55</b>
Negotiated- Negotiated	.00	.28	-.01	<b>.47</b>
Time Frame- Long	.33	.10	.06	<b>.43</b>

*Note:* Correlations among the factors are the following: Factors I and II (.40), Factors I and III (.09), Factors I and IV (.29), Factors II and III (.01), Factors II and IV (.50), and Factors III and IV (.06). The eigenvalues for the rotated factors are the following: 2.41 (Factor I), 2.48 (Factor II), 1.69 (Factor III), and 2.20 Factor IV).

### *Contract Feature Ratings and Contract Type Ratings*

Appendix G includes the means, standard deviations, and correlations for all study variables (i.e., employee commitment, contract types, contract fulfillment, and contract features). The zero-order and partial correlations (i.e., controlling for employer psychological contract fulfillment) specifically for psychological contract type and the individual feature ratings are presented in Table 4. For Hypothesis 1, I predicted and found significant positive correlations between relational contract ratings and the following feature ratings: equal symmetry ( $r = .52, p < .01$ ), broad ( $r = .42, p < .01$ ), collective ( $r = .33, p < .01$ ), stable ( $r = .29, p < .01$ ), long term ( $r = .23, p < .01$ ), and tangible ( $r = .22, p < .01$ ).

I also predicted and found negative correlations between relational contract ratings and the short term ( $r = -.25, p < .01$ ) and unequal symmetry feature ratings ( $r = -.17, p < .01$ ). Contrary to predictions, I did not find a negative correlation between relational contract ratings and the narrow and intangible feature ratings. Instead, relational contract ratings correlated significantly positive with the narrow feature rating ( $r = .25, p < .01$ ) and did not correlate significantly with the intangible feature rating. Finally, although I did not expect that relational contract ratings would correlate significantly with the flexible feature rating, a positive correlation was found ( $r = .19, p < .01$ ).

Partial correlation analyses revealed that the majority of correlations between relational contracts and the feature ratings decreased in magnitude, with the exception that the correlation with the individual level feature remained the same. In addition, relational contract ratings no longer correlated significantly with unequal symmetry,

Table 4

*Correlations Between Psychological Contract Features and Psychological Contract Types*

Psychological Contract Features	Psychological Contract Type			
	Relational		Transactional	
	Prediction		Prediction	
Level- Individual	0	.03 (.03)	0	.01 (-.02)
Level- Collective	+	.33** (.17**)	+	.29** (.23**)
Exchange Symmetry- Equal	+	.52** (.29**)	+	.21** (.02)
Exchange Symmetry- Unequal	-	-.17** (-.06)	0	.05 (.13*)
Scope- Narrow	-	.25** (.08)	+	.23** (.13)
Scope- Broad	+	.42** (.23**)	-	.16** (.01)
Stability- Stable	+	.29** (.12)	+	.18** (.08)
Stability- Flexible	0	.19** (.08)	-	.20** (.15*)
Tangibility- Intangible	-	-.02 (.03)	-	.00 (-.01)
Tangibility- Tangible	+	.22** (-.03)	+	.21** (.05)
Time Frame- Short	-	-.25** (-.15*)	+	.13* (.24**)
Time Frame- Long	+	.23** (.08)	-	.11 (.00)
Basis- Mutual	NP	.44** (.30**)	NP	.16** (.12)
Explicitness- Explicit	NP	.25** (.03)	NP	.21** (.09)
Explicitness- Implicit	NP	-.12 (.02)	NP	.02 (.07)
Negotiation- Unilateral	NP	-.19** (-.16*)	NP	.06 (.12)
Negotiation- Negotiated	NP	.14* (.04)	NP	.15* (.10)

*Note.* The numbers in parentheses are the partial correlations controlling for employer contract fulfillment. \*  $p < .05$  (2-tailed), \*\*  $p < .01$  (2-tailed), predicted direction of the correlations: + (significant positive correlation), - (significant negative correlation), 0 (no correlation), NP (no prediction)

narrow, stable, flexible, tangible, and long term feature ratings when employer contract fulfillment was partialled out.

Although no predictions were made, relational contract ratings correlated significantly positive with the mutual basis ( $r = .44, p < .01$ ), explicit ( $r = .25, p < .01$ ), and negotiated feature ratings ( $r = .14, p < .05$ ), significantly negative with unilateral negotiation ratings ( $r = -.19, p < .01$ ), and nonsignificantly with the implicit feature ratings. When employer contract fulfillment was partialled out, all correlations decreased in magnitude. In addition, the explicit, implicit, and negotiated feature ratings no longer correlated significantly with relational contract ratings.

For Hypothesis 2, as predicted, positive correlations between transactional contract ratings and the following feature ratings were found: collective ( $r = .29, p < .01$ ), narrow ( $r = .23, p < .01$ ), equal symmetry ( $r = .21, p < .01$ ), tangible ( $r = .21, p < .01$ ), stable ( $r = .18, p < .01$ ), and short term ( $r = .13, p < .05$ ). Contrary to expectations, I did not find a negative correlation between transactional contract ratings and broad, flexible, intangible, or long term feature ratings. Instead, transactional contract ratings correlated positively with flexible ( $r = .20, p < .01$ ) and broad feature ratings ( $r = .16, p < .05$ ), and correlated nonsignificantly with the intangible and long term feature ratings.

An examination of the partial correlations revealed a decrease in magnitude for the correlations between transactional contract and the feature ratings. An exception, the correlation between transactional contract ratings and the short term and unequal symmetry feature ratings increased in magnitude ( $r = .24, p < .01, r = .13, p < .05$ , respectively). In addition, equal symmetry, narrow, broad, stable, and tangible feature ratings no longer correlated significantly with transactional contract ratings.



Although no predictions were made, transactional contract ratings correlated significantly positive with explicit ( $r = .21, p < .01$ ), mutual basis ( $r = .16, p < .05$ ), and negotiated feature ratings ( $r = .15, p < .05$ ), with all correlations being nonsignificant when employer contract fulfillment was partialled out.

The correlations between psychological contract type ratings and the four factor scores were also computed for exploratory purposes (see Table 5). Of importance, the relational-exchange focused factor correlated significantly positive with both relational and transactional contract ratings ( $r = .54, p < .01, r = .19, p < .01$ , respectively), but only relational contract ratings when employer contract fulfillment was partialled out ( $r = .32, p < .01$ ). Although the minimal involvement and formal factors correlated significantly positive with both relational ( $r = .34, p < .01, r = .32, p < .01$ , respectively) and transactional contract ratings ( $r = .27, p < .01, r = .29, p < .01$ , respectively), only the correlations with transactional contract ratings remained significant when employer contract fulfillment was partialled out ( $r = .15, p < .05, r = .17, p < .01$ , respectively). With respect to the employer focused factor, there was a significant negative correlation with relational contract ratings ( $r = -.16, p < .05$ ) and a significant positive correlation with transactional contract ratings ( $r = .16, p < .05$ ) when employer contract fulfillment was partialled out.

#### *Contract Feature Ratings and Components of Commitment*

I predicted and found a positive correlation between affective commitment ratings and the following contract feature ratings: equal symmetry ( $r = .42, p < .01$ ), broad ( $r = .32, p < .01$ ), long term ( $r = .18, p < .01$ ), tangible ( $r = .18, p < .01$ ), and stable ( $r = .16, p < .01$ , see Table 6). I also predicted and found a negative correlation between

Table 5

*Predicted Correlations Between Psychological Contract Type Ratings and Psychological Contract Feature Factors*

Psychological Contract Feature Factor	Psychological Contract Type	
	Relational	Transactional
I- Relational-Exchange Focused	.54** (.32**)	.19** (.01)
II- Minimal Involvement	.34** (.10)	.27** (.15*)
III- Employer Focused	-.16* (-.06)	.08 (.16*)
IV- Formal	.32** (.09)	.29** (.17**)

*Note.* The numbers in parentheses are the partial correlations controlling for employer contract fulfillment.

\*  $p < .05$  (2-tailed)

\*\*  $p < .01$  (2-tailed)

affective commitment ratings and the short term ( $r = -.21, p < .01$ ) and unequal symmetry feature ratings ( $r = -.16, p < .05$ ). Contrary to prediction, no significant positive correlation existed between affective commitment and the collective feature rating. Also contrary to prediction, affective commitment correlated positively with the narrow feature rating ( $r = .18, p < .01$ ), not negatively.

When employer contract fulfillment was partialled out, the correlations between affective commitment and the contract feature ratings decreased in magnitude, with affective commitment ratings correlating significantly negative with collective level ( $r = -.13, p < .05$ ). In addition, affective commitment ratings no longer correlated significantly with the unequal symmetry, narrow, stable, tangible, and long term feature ratings when employer contract fulfillment was partialled out.

Although no predictions were made, affective commitment ratings correlated significantly positive with the mutual basis feature rating ( $r = .46, p < .01$ ) and negatively with the implicit feature rating ( $r = -.15, p < .05$ ). When employer contract fulfillment was partialled out, the only significant correlation that remained was between affective commitment and mutual basis ( $r = .35, p < .01$ ).

With respect to Hypothesis 4, I predicted and found that normative commitment ratings correlated positively with equal symmetry ( $r = .37, p < .01$ ), broad ( $r = .32, p < .01$ ), stable ( $r = .26, p < .01$ ), tangible ( $r = .24, p < .01$ ), individual ( $r = .17, p < .01$ ), and long term feature ratings ( $r = .15, p < .05$ , see Table 6). Also as predicted, normative commitment ratings correlated negatively with the short term feature rating ( $r = -.20, p < .01$ ). Although I also predicted that normative commitment ratings would correlate negatively with the unequal symmetry feature rating, the correlation was nonsignificant.

Table 6

*Correlations Between Psychological Contract Features and Organizational Commitment*

Psychological Contract Features	Organizational Commitment					
	Affective		Normative		Continuance	
	Prediction		Prediction		Prediction	
Level- Individual	0	.07 (.08)	+	.17** (.18**)	0	.15* (.18**)
Level- Collective	+	.08 (-.13*)	0	.13* (-.08)	+	.15* (.01)
Exchange Symmetry- Equal	+	.42** (.27**)	+	.37** (.22**)	+	.22** (.10)
Exchange Symmetry- Unequal	-	-.16* (-.10)	-	-.10 (-.04)	0	.03 (.09)
Scope- Narrow	-	.18** (.08)	-	.28** (.22**)	+	.21** (.17**)
Scope- Broad	+	.32** (.16*)	+	.32** (.16**)	-	.20** (.09)
Stability- Stable	+	.16** (.04)	+	.26** (.16*)	+	.22** (.15*)
Stability- Flexible	0	.06 (-.05)	0	.16* (.08)	-	.19** (.16*)
Tangibility- Intangible	0	-.06 (-.03)	0	-.01 (.03)	-	-.02 (.00)
Tangibility- Tangible	+	.18** (.10)	+	.24** (.17**)	+	.16** (.12)
Time Frame- Short	-	-.21** (-.14*)	-	-.20** (-.13)	0	.07 (.16*)
Time Frame- Long	+	.18** (.07)	+	.15* (.06)	0	.16** (.12)
Basis- Mutual	NP	.46** (.35**)	NP	.43** (.33**)	NP	.25** (.18**)
Explicitness- Explicit	NP	.12 (-.01)	NP	.12 (.00)	NP	.20** (.15*)
Explicitness- Implicit	NP	-.15* (-.10)	NP	-.10 (-.02)	NP	.00 (.06)
Negotiation- Unilateral	NP	-.12 (-.08)	NP	-.05 (.02)	NP	.05 (.11)
Negotiation- Negotiated	NP	.01 (-.10)	NP	.02 (-.09)	NP	.19** (.13*)

*Note.* The numbers in parentheses are the partial correlations controlling for employer contract fulfillment. \*  $p < .05$  (2-tailed), \*\*  $p < .01$  (2-tailed), predicted direction of the correlations: + (significant positive correlation), - (significant negative correlation), 0 (no correlation), NP (no prediction)

Contrary to prediction, normative commitment ratings correlated positively with the narrow feature rating ( $r = .28, p < .01$ ), not negatively. Although I did not expect normative commitment ratings to correlate significantly with flexible and collective feature ratings, both were found to correlate positively ( $r = .16, p < .05, r = .13, p < .05$ , respectively).

When employer contract fulfillment was partialled out, the correlations between normative commitment and the feature ratings generally decreased in magnitude. In addition, normative commitment ratings no longer correlated significantly with the collective, flexible, short term and long term feature ratings when employer contract fulfillment was partialled out.

Although no predictions were made, normative commitment ratings correlated significantly positive with the mutual basis feature rating ( $r = .43, p < .01$ ), even when employer contract fulfillment was partialled out ( $r = .33, p < .01$ ).

For Hypothesis 5, I predicted and found that continuance commitment ratings correlated positively with the following feature ratings: equal symmetry ( $r = .22, p < .01$ ), stable ( $r = .22, p < .01$ ), narrow ( $r = .21, p < .01$ ), tangible ( $r = .16, p < .01$ ), and collective ( $r = .15, p < .05$ , see Table 6). Contrary to expectations, continuance commitment ratings did not correlate negatively with broad, flexible, and intangible feature ratings. Instead, continuance commitment ratings correlated positively with broad ( $r = .20, p < .01$ ) and flexible feature ratings ( $r = .19, p < .01$ ), and did not correlate significantly with the intangible feature rating. Although I did not expect continuance commitment ratings to correlate with long term and individual feature ratings, positive correlations were found for both ( $r = .16, p < .01, r = .15, p < .05$ , respectively).

When employer contract fulfillment was partialled out, correlations between continuance commitment and the contract feature ratings decreased in magnitude. Two exceptions, the partial correlation between the continuance commitment rating and the short term feature ratings increased to significance ( $r = .16, p < .05$ ), and the correlation with the individual feature rating increased in magnitude ( $r = .18, p < .01$ ). In addition, continuance commitment ratings did not correlate significantly with collective, equal symmetry, broad, tangible, and long term feature ratings when employer contract fulfillment was partialled out. Although no predictions were made, continuance commitment ratings also correlated positively with mutual basis ( $r = .25, p < .01$ ), explicit ( $r = .20, p < .01$ ), and negotiated feature ratings ( $r = .19, p < .01$ ), with all remaining significant when employer contract fulfillment was partialled out ( $r = .18, p < .01, r = .15, p < .05, r = .13, p < .05$ , respectively).

The correlations between the commitment components and the four factor scores were computed for exploratory purposes (see Table 7). Affective commitment ratings correlated significantly positive with the relational-exchange focused ( $r = .44, p < .01$ ), minimal involvement ( $r = .26, p < .01$ ), and formal factors ( $r = .13, p < .05$ ), and significantly negative with the employer focused factor ( $r = -.19, p < .01$ ), but only the relational-exchange focused factor remained significant when employer contract fulfillment was partialled out ( $r = .28, p < .01$ ).

Normative commitment ratings correlated significantly positive with the relational-exchange focused ( $r = .47, p < .01$ ), minimal involvement ( $r = .36, p < .01$ ), and formal factor scores ( $r = .17, p < .01$ ), but only relational-exchange focused and

Table 7

*Predicted Correlations Between Organizational Commitment and Psychological Contract Feature Factors*

Psychological Contract Feature Factors	Organizational Commitment		
	Affective	Normative	Continuance
I- Relational-Exchange Focused	.44** (.28**)	.47** (.31**)	.27** (.16*)
II- Minimal Involvement	.26** (.10)	.36** (.22**)	.29** (.20**)
III- Employer Focused	-.19** (-.12)	-.08 (.01)	.11 (.17*)
IV- Formal	.13* (-.04)	.17** (.00)	.25** (.17*)

*Note.* The numbers in parentheses are the partial correlations controlling for employer contract fulfillment.

\*  $p < .05$  (2-tailed)

\*\*  $p < .01$  (2-tailed)

minimal involvement when employer contract fulfillment was partialled out ( $r = .31, p < .01, r = .22, p < .01$ , respectively). There was no significant correlation between normative commitment and the employer focused factor, regardless of whether employer contract fulfillment was partialled out. Similar to normative commitment, continuance commitment ratings correlated significantly positive with the minimal involvement ( $r = .29, p < .01$ ), relational-exchange focused ( $r = .27, p < .01$ ), and formal factor scores ( $r = .25, p < .01$ ). When employer contract fulfillment was partialled out, continuance commitment ratings correlated significantly positive with all four factors: minimal involvement ( $r = .20, p < .01$ ), employer focused ( $r = .17, p < .05$ ), formal ( $r = .17, p < .05$ ), and relational-exchange focused ( $r = .16, p < .01$ ).

For exploratory purposes, multiple regression analyses were computed to determine what features accounted for the unique variance in each commitment component (see Table 8). With respect to affective commitment, equal symmetry ( $\beta = .29, p < .01$ ), mutually basis ( $\beta = .28, p < .01$ ), and collective features ( $\beta = -.22, p < .01$ ) contributed significantly to prediction,  $F(17, 217) = 6.76, p < .01$ , with 35% of the variance accounted for by all variables.

Mutual basis ( $\beta = .25, p < .01$ ), equal symmetry ( $\beta = .18, p < .05$ ), collective ( $\beta = -.16, p < .05$ ), and short term features ( $\beta = -.14, p < .05$ ) contributed significantly to the prediction of normative commitment,  $F(17, 217) = 6.18, p < .01$ , with 33% of the variance accounted for by all variables.. The only feature that uniquely contributed to the prediction of continuance commitment was mutual basis ( $\beta = .17, p < .05$ ),  $F(17, 217) = 2.51, p < .01$ , with 16% of the variance accounted for by all variables.



Table 8

*Multiple Regression Analyses of Organizational Commitment Components*

Psychological Contract Features	Organizational Commitment					
	Affective		Normative		Continuance	
	$\beta$	$t$	$\beta$	$t$	$\beta$	$t$
Level- Individual	-.02	-.30	.07	1.02	.09	1.26
Level- Collective	-.22	-3.10**	-.16	-2.20*	-.06	-.80
Exchange Symmetry- Equal	.29	3.87**	.18	2.34*	.04	.50
Exchange Symmetry- Unequal	.03	.49	-.02	-.36	-.04	-.55
Scope- Narrow	.00	.00	.10	1.46	.07	.84
Scope- Broad	.05	.67	.00	.00	-.03	-.37
Stability- Stable	.08	1.13	.13	1.70	.08	.99
Stability- Flexible	-.09	-1.18	.03	.37	.08	.97
Tangibility- Intangible	-.05	-.81	-.04	-.53	-.07	-1.01
Tangibility- Tangible	.08	1.06	.08	1.03	.02	.17
Time Frame- Short	-.07	-1.06	-.14	-2.11*	.09	1.24
Time Frame- Long	.10	1.50	.05	.69	.09	1.26
Basis- Mutual	.28	3.88**	.25	3.41**	.17	2.03*
Explicitness- Explicit	.03	.38	.01	.15	.10	1.23
Explicitness- Implicit	-.05	-.73	-.03	-.46	.01	.13
Negotiation- Unilateral	-.12	-1.86	-.02	-.33	.03	.43
Negotiation- Negotiated	-.13	-1.95	-.09	-1.31	.04	.57
R <sup>2</sup>	.35**		.33**		.16**	
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.30		.27		.10	

Note: standardized coefficients are reported, \*  $p < .05$  (2-tailed), \*\*  $p < .01$  (2-tailed)

### *Contract Feature Ratings and Commitment Profiles*

To create commitment profile groups, individuals were first assigned as either high or low for each commitment component, based on his or her score in comparison to the median score (affective: 4.33, normative: 4.17, continuance: 4.00). As mentioned previously, employees assigned as high on affective, normative, and continuance commitments were categorized as Profile 1, and those assigned as high on affective and normative commitments and low on continuance commitment were categorized as Profile 2. The remaining profile groups contained the following affective, normative, and continuance commitments combinations, respectively: Profile 3 (HLH), Profile 4 (HLL), Profile 5 (LHH), Profile 6 (LHL), Profile 7 (LLH), and Profile 8 (LLL). The majority of individuals belonged to either Profile 1 ( $n = 74$ ) or Profile 8 ( $n = 67$ ). The remaining participants belonged to the following profiles: Profile 2, ( $n = 21$ ), Profile 3 ( $n = 10$ ), Profile 4 ( $n = 17$ ), Profile 5 ( $n = 11$ ), Profile 6 ( $n = 10$ ) and Profile 7 ( $n = 22$ ). Recall that only Profiles 1, 2, 7, and 8 were of interest in the present study because these profiles include the most desired committed individuals (i.e., Profiles 1 and 2) and the pure continuance committed (i.e., Profile 7) and uncommitted individuals (Profile 8), identified in Hypothesis 6.

A significant MANOVA illustrated an effect of profile membership across the nine features of interest for Hypothesis 6,  $F(27, 495) = 2.24, p < .01$ . With respect to the individual ANOVAs, significant differences across Profiles 1, 2, 7, and 8 were observed for the equal symmetry,  $F(3, 171) = 14.26, p < .01$ , narrow,  $F(3, 171) = 9.25, p < .01$ , broad,  $F(3, 171) = 7.08, p < .01$ , tangible,  $F(3, 171) = 5.75, p < .01$ , stable,  $F(3, 171) = 5.03, p < .01$ , long term,  $F(3, 171) = 3.56, p < .05$ , and short term feature ratings,  $F(3,$

171) = 3.21,  $p < .05$  (see Table 9). There were no significant differences between the four commitment profile groups on unequal symmetry and intangible feature ratings.

As expected, I found Profile 1 individuals had significantly higher ratings on equal symmetry and broad features, and significantly lower ratings on the short term feature, compared to Profile 7 individuals (all correlations significant at  $p < .05$ ).

Contrary to prediction, Profile 1 individuals scored significantly higher, not lower, on the narrow feature, compared to Profile 7 individuals ( $p < .05$ ). There was no significant difference between Profile 1 and Profile 7 individuals on the stable, tangible, and long term feature ratings.

Compared to Profile 8 individuals, as expected, Profile 1 individuals had significantly higher ratings on equal symmetry, broad, stable, tangible, and long term features ( $p < .05$ ). Contrary to predictions, Profile 1 individuals scored significantly higher, not lower, on the narrow feature rating compared to Profile 8 individuals ( $p < .05$ ). There was no significant difference between Profile 1 and Profile 8 individuals on the short term feature rating.

As expected, Profile 2 individuals had significantly higher ratings on broad features ( $p < .05$ ) and marginally significantly higher ratings on equal symmetry, compared to Profile 7 individuals ( $p < .10$ ). Profile 2 individuals also had significantly lower ratings on short term feature ratings, compared to Profile 7 individuals ( $p < .10$ ), as predicted. There was no significant difference between Profile 2 and Profile 7 individuals on the narrow, stable, tangible, and long term feature ratings.

Table 9

*Analysis of Variance Results for Organizational Commitment Profiles and Psychological Contract Features*

Psychological Contract Features	Commitment Profile				Significant comparison of means
	1 (HHH)	2 (HHL)	7 (LLH)	8 (LLL)	
Exchange Symmetry- Equal F (3, 171) = 14.26, $p < .01$	3.58	3.25	2.50	2.64	1 > 7** 1 > 8** 2 > 7* 2 > 8*
Exchange Symmetry- Unequal F (3, 171) = .66, <i>ns</i>	3.14	3.20	3.50	3.27	
Scope- Narrow F (3, 171) = 9.25, $p < .01$	3.54	3.10	2.80	2.86	1 > 7** 1 > 8**
Scope- Broad F (3, 171) = 7.08, $p < .01$	3.70	3.60	2.80	3.02	1 > 7** 1 > 8** 2 > 7** 2 > 8*
Stability- Stable F (3, 171) = 5.03, $p < .01$	3.38	3.00	2.95	2.75	1 > 8**
Tangibility- Intangible F (3, 171) = .64, <i>ns</i>	3.10	3.30	2.90	3.14	
Tangibility- Tangible F (3, 171) = 5.75, $p < .01$	3.62	3.25	3.10	2.98	1 > 8**
Time Frame- Short F (3, 171) = 3.21, $p < .05$	2.49	2.50	3.25	2.88	1 < 7** 1 < 8* 2 < 7*
Time Frame- Long F (3, 171) = 3.56, $p < .05$	3.58	3.45	3.20	3.06	1 > 8**

Note : \*  $p < .10$  (2-tailed), \*\*  $p < .05$  (2-tailed)

Profile 2 individuals had marginally significantly higher ratings on equal symmetry and broad features, compared to Profile 8 individuals, as predicted ( $p < .10$ ). Contrary to predictions, Profile 2 and Profile 8 individuals did not significantly differ on the feature ratings for narrow, stable, tangible, short term, and long term.

### Discussion

A primary goal of this study was to identify which psychological contract features are associated with the most desired commitment forms (i.e., affective and normative commitments) and commitment Profiles (i.e., Profiles 1 and 2). In addition, being a relatively new way of assessing psychological contracts, the features approach I presented was also compared with Rousseau's (2000) relational and transactional psychological contract types. In the following paragraphs, findings that pertain to these goals will be highlighted. I will also discuss the implications of the findings for both academic researchers and practitioners.

Before reviewing the findings as they relate to my hypotheses, I wish to comment briefly on whether the findings parallel those of past research on commitment components and contract types. Similar to King (2003), I found a positive correlation between relational contract ratings and all three commitment components (affective commitment:  $r = .45, p < .01$ ; normative commitment:  $r = .48, p < .01$ ; continuance commitment:  $r = .24, p < .01$ ). In terms of transactional contract ratings, recall that King found a significant negative correlation with affective commitment, no correlation with normative commitment, and a significant positive correlation with continuance commitment. In the present study, however, transactional contract ratings did not correlate significantly with affective commitment, and correlated positively with

normative ( $r = .15, p < .05$ ) and continuance commitments ( $r = .11, p < .05$ , one-tailed).

The inconsistency among findings might be attributed to the fact that different items were used to measure transactional contract type. For example, King (2003) did not include any items in the measure that reflected a short term time frame. Unfortunately, no other studies have examined the two constructs together, making it difficult to truly understand the differences of the findings.

Recall, the only previous study to examine psychological contract features and commitment was by Sels et al. (2004). That is, affective commitment ratings significantly correlated with broad, long term, stable, tangible, and collective feature ratings. My results paralleled the findings of Sels et al. (2004), except I did not find a significant correlation between affective commitment and the collective feature ratings.

An additional comparison with past research involves psychological contract fulfillment. Although not a main focus in the present study, correlations did support past research (e.g., Sturges, et al., 2005) that found a strong positive correlation between perceived employer psychological contract fulfillment and affective commitment ( $r = .46, p < .01$ ). In contrast to past research, however, a positive correlation was also found between perceived employer contract fulfillment and continuance commitment ( $r = .27, p < .01$ ), not a negative correlation as found previously (Sturges, et al., 2005). Recall that the continuance commitment measure used in the present study only contained personal sacrifice items. The differences in findings between the present study and Sturges et al. (2005) may be attributed to the fact that I only included personal sacrifice items, and not both personal sacrifice and low alternative items, as did Sturges et al. (2005).

*Contract Features and Contract Types*

Results pertaining to Hypothesis 1 revealed the features that correlated with relational contract ratings parallel much as how Rousseau (2000) had conceptualized relational contracts (e.g., long term). In addition, the present study found additional features that correlated positively with the relational contract ratings (e.g., collective, equal symmetry, mutual, and negotiated) and have not been captured by Rousseau's definition. Contrary to Rousseau's definition of relational contracts, I predicted and found a positive correlation between relational contracts and ratings of the stable and tangible features. Recall, she had originally described only transactional contracts as stable and tangible. As I will discuss shortly, the difference between the relational and transactional contract types may not be as distinct as Rousseau originally conceptualized.

Parallel to Rousseau's (2000) definition of the transactional contract type, transactional contract ratings correlated significantly with narrow, stable, tangible, and short term feature ratings. However, contrary to Rousseau's (2000) definition, there was also a positive correlation with broad and flexible feature ratings. Recall that Rousseau (1990) considered these features as part of relational contracts, not transactional contracts. The above finding suggests that there is a strong positive correlation for both relational and transactional contract ratings on both features of the scope (i.e., narrow and broad) and stability dimensions (i.e., stable and flexible). These findings support my decision to measure the contract dimensions as two separate features, contrary to Janssens et al. (2003) and Sels et al. (2004). My findings also support propositions by Leanna and Rousseau (2000) who argued that the employer-employee relationship should be both stable and flexible. That is, the relationship needs to be stable in the sense that it

is predictable and reliable over time, but that it also needs to be flexible to respond well to changes in the environment.

In light of the above findings, I reviewed the correlations between all feature ratings and the two contract types and found 13 of the 17 features correlated similarly (i.e., significantly positive, significantly negative, or nonsignificant) with both relational and transactional contract type ratings. In addition, 10 of the 17 partial correlations were similar for the relational and transactional contract type ratings. Of the features that were considered by Rousseau (scope, stability, tangibility, and time frame; see Appendix A), six of the eight features correlated similarly for the two contract types, and four when employer contract fulfillment was partialled out. This suggests that the distinction between the two contract types may be less clear than Rousseau (1990) initially described them. That is, Rousseau had considered them as bipolar types with opposite features. However, the present study findings suggest the majority of features correlated similarly with both contract types. Of the features that did correlate differently with the two contract types (i.e., unequal symmetry, unilateral, short term and long term), only the time frame dimension was considered in Rousseau's definition of types, thus further supporting the benefits of examining the features to fully understand the nature of psychological contracts.

It is also worth noting that only 6 of the 14 feature ratings that correlated significantly with relational contract ratings remained significant when contract fulfillment was partialled out. Similarly, only 3 of the 11 significant correlations between transactional contract ratings and the feature ratings remained significant when employer contract fulfillment was controlled. These findings suggest that employer fulfillment



ratings may have been influencing the relation between the contract types and the majority of the contract feature ratings. Employees who perceived their employers as fulfilling the contract may have had an overall positive bias towards the employer and thus rated the contract features as high, regardless of whether the features were present.

I wish to comment briefly on the three feature dimensions included in the study for exploratory purposes. I had chosen to assess the explicitness, negotiation, and basis of the contracts. With respect to contract type ratings, mutual basis, explicit, and negotiation all correlated significantly with the two contract types. The only feature that was different between the two contract type ratings was unilateral negotiation. That is, there was a significant negative correlation with relational contract type ratings, but not with transactional type ratings, suggesting unilateral negotiations may play a more important role on perceived relational obligations, compared to transactional ones.

I was also interested in whether the factors underlying the feature ratings resembled the existing contract types identified by Rousseau (2000). The factor analysis results did illustrate some, but not much, resemblance to Rousseau's contract types. The four factors accounted for a relatively small percentage of the variance (i.e., 39.56%), suggesting that the feature measures are relatively unique. In addition, 13 of the 17 communalities were below .50. It is possible that, because of the diversity in employer-employee relationships across work settings, psychological contracts today are too diverse to be categorized. Therefore, examining the individual contract features may be more beneficial than contract types for describing psychological contract characteristics.

*Contract Features and Components of Commitment*

Hypotheses 3 (affective commitment), 4 (normative commitment), and 5 (continuance commitment) were generally supported with respect to the correlations between the feature ratings and the three commitment components. As expected, affectively and normatively committed individuals perceived their employers as entering into contracts that considered both parties (i.e., the employer and employee) equally, focused on the mutual well-being of the employee and employer, were stable, well-defined, and long term in nature. Contrary to the hypotheses, these individuals also perceived the terms of the contract to be of direct relevance to the job (i.e., narrow scope). Rousseau (1990) viewed narrow and broad features as bipolar features on the scope dimension. However, affectively and normatively committed individuals perceived the contract as both narrow and broad, suggesting a narrow contract (i.e., job focused) does not rule out the possibility of the contract also being broad (i.e., considers the employees' personal lives). More on the narrow feature will be discussed shortly.

Although affective and normative commitments correlated similarly with the feature ratings, the regression analysis did illustrate that one feature, short term, contributed uniquely to the prediction of normative commitment, but not affective commitment. Results illustrated that the short term feature negatively predicted normative commitment, suggesting short term commitments may play a more important role in employees' obligations (i.e., normative commitment), compared to their desire to remain with the organization (i.e., affective commitment). This finding makes sense given that short term commitments made by the employer would not likely create high obligations on the part of the employee.

With respect to continuance commitment, individuals who scored high on this component perceived the employer contract as collective, employees as equal partners, was related directly to the job, stable, and well-defined, all as predicted. Although not as predicted, continuance committed individuals also perceived the contract as being broad, flexible, and long term. In other words, employees are more likely to feel too much would be sacrificed if they left the organization when they also perceive the contract as flexible and mutual accommodating. Compared to affective and normative commitment ratings, a reason why continuance commitment ratings correlated similarly with the broad and long term features may be due to my use of the continuance commitment measure developed by Powell and Meyer (2004). Recall that the continuance commitment measure correlated highly with both affective and normative commitments and only measured personal sacrifices associated with leaving the organization.

With respect to the exploratory contract features I included (i.e., explicitness, negotiation, and basis feature dimensions), the mutual basis feature correlated significantly with all three commitment components. In fact, mutual basis was the only feature that significantly correlated with normative commitment, suggesting the explicitness and negotiation feature dimensions have no relation with normative commitment. One final note, the continuance commitment rating correlated strongly with the explicit and negotiated features. This finding suggests that when an employee perceives the contract as explicitly stating the terms (e.g., benefits) and believes the terms were negotiated, the employee is aware of the social and economic costs of leaving the organization.

### *Contract Features and Commitment Profiles*

The goal of Hypothesis 6 was to identify which features differentiated between the affectively and normatively committed individuals (i.e., Profile 1 and 2) and the pure continuance committed and uncommitted individuals (i.e., Profile 7 and 8). Recall that Profile 1 and 2 are the most desired forms of commitment because individuals in these profiles typically demonstrate high organizational citizenship behaviours and low turnover intentions, compared to individuals in Profile 7 and 8 (e.g., Gellatly et al., 2006; Wasti, 2005).

As expected, Profile 1 individuals had higher ratings on equal symmetry, broad, stable, tangible, and long term features, compared to Profile 8 individuals. Profile 2 individuals had marginally significantly higher ratings on the equal and broad features compared to Profile 8 individuals. However, marginally significant results should be interpreted with caution given the number of comparison tests that were calculated. The results suggest that those in Profile 1 differed from the uncommitted more clearly on these features, compared to Profile 2 individuals. A similar pattern emerged with respect to the comparisons between Profile 1 and 2 individuals with the pure continuance committed individuals (i.e., Profile 7). Profile 1 individuals had significantly higher ratings on equal symmetry, broad scope, narrow scope, and significantly lower ratings on the short term feature, compared to Profile 7 individuals. However, Profile 2 individuals had significantly higher ratings on only the broad feature and marginally significantly higher ratings on the equal symmetry feature ratings.

Contrary to expectations, the most desired committed individuals (i.e., Profile 1 and 2) also perceived the contract as narrow in scope, compared to pure continuance

committed and uncommitted individuals (i.e., Profile 7 and 8). Therefore, Profile 1 and 2 individuals see the employer as being concerned about their well-being (i.e., broad scope) but also having a contract that is of direct relevance to the job (i.e., narrow scope). As will be discussed shortly, the narrow scope measure may be problematic, thus explaining the unexpected findings. Overall, with the exception of the narrow feature, all hypotheses were in the direction as predicted, although not always significant, suggesting the two most desired commitment profile groups do differ from the pure continuance committed and the uncommitted individuals in terms of their perceptions of the psychological contract.

An additional note on the comparison of profile groups for the two remaining features (i.e., unequal symmetry and intangible) is worth addressing. I found no significant difference between the four groups on these two feature ratings. Recall that there was also no significant correlations between the three commitment components and these feature ratings, when employer contract fulfillment was partialled out. Because there is no relation, we can conclude that unequal symmetry and intangible features do not influence the commitment components or commitment profiles.

#### *Limitations and Future Research Considerations*

Although the present study contributes to both psychological contract and organizational commitment research, a few limitations need to be addressed. First, *StudyResponse* was chosen as a source of participants to ensure a variety of employer-employee relationships would be present. As well, Rogelberg, Luong, Sederburg, and Cristol (2000) stated that using internet samples is beneficial because relatively uncommitted employees typically do not complete organizational surveys for their

employers. Nevertheless, this approach to sampling did have some disadvantages. Concerns about internet research were addressed previously, particularly non-purposeful responding and the representativeness of the sample. Although various methods were used to identify any non-purposeful responders (e.g., time to complete the survey), there is no guarantee these methods accurately captured all non-purposeful responders that were present.

With respect to representativeness of the sample, recall that the sample was younger than the general U.S. working population. As well, responders were significantly older and had more work experience (i.e., in current job, profession, and total work experience) compared to non-responders. As I reported earlier, because time in current job and profession correlated significantly with key study variables (e.g., equal symmetry), non-response bias could be present. However, it is important to note that only four out of a possible 96 correlations between the demographic and study variables were significant. Regardless, and in line with the recommendations of Simsek and Veiga (2001), it is best if multiple survey modalities are used when collecting data. Therefore, I recommend the present study be replicated with another sample, preferably not recruited from an internet population.

A few notes on the measures are worth addressing. As discussed earlier, there was concern that continuance commitment was highly correlated with affective and normative commitments. One explanation offered was the continuance commitment measure only included personal sacrifice items, and not also low alternative items. Future research could include the original continuance commitment measure that includes both personal sacrifices and lack of alternatives (e.g., Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993).

In terms of the contract type ratings, the reliability of the transactional scale was low ( $\alpha = .65$ ), yet comparable to past research using the PCI ( $\alpha = .63$ , Rousseau, 2000). Numerous psychologists have cited concerns with respect to the reliability of the PCI type measure (e.g., King, 2003), including Rousseau herself (2000). Nevertheless, results with respect to the contract types in the present study are limited by potential problems with the PCI type measure.

With respect to the contract feature items, the formal basis feature wording error prevented me from including it in the analyses. Future research could include the correct formal basis statement to determine whether this feature correlates with the contract types and organizational commitment. The statement reflecting the narrow scope feature will also need to be further examined. I had anticipated that the features on the scope dimension (i.e., narrow and broad) would be perceived by individuals as opposite features. However, results illustrated that individuals felt the contract terms could be both narrow and broad. In future research, I suggest the narrow feature be reworded to reflect a contract that is overly narrow and focuses exclusively on the job (i.e., does not include the employees' personal needs). Lastly, the psychological contract feature measure was designed for the present study and thus warrants further validation. Replicating the study with another sample would allow the opportunity to confirm the factor structure of the features and evaluate whether similar patterns of the factor relations with the contract features and commitment components are found. In addition, the three new feature dimensions (i.e., explicitness, negotiation, and basis) did illustrate a few significant correlations with the contract types and commitment components, thus warranting being included in future contract feature research.

In terms of the design of the present study, there could be concern that common method variance is present because all measures were self-reported. However, given the nature of the constructs I was interested in (i.e., employees' perceptions of the contract and their organizational commitment), this measurement approach seemed most appropriate.

Another concern with the design of the study is that the psychological contract measures were only measured at one time, preventing the opportunity to examine relations over time and to model varying causal relationships. To fully understand the exchange relationship between an employer and employee, the relationship must be examined over time (Conway & Briner, 2002, 2005). Similar to other relationships (e.g., between family members), the exchange between an employer and employee is comprised of a series of interdependent interactions (Coyle-Shapiro, Morrow, & Kessler, 2006; Dabos & Rousseau, 2004; Gouldner, 1960; Herriot & Pemberton, 1997). That is, the exchange is a set of repeated cycles of the employer and employee fulfilling their commitments to one another (Conway & Briner, 2005; Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003). With this in mind, it makes intuitive sense to examine the psychological contract over time.

A longitudinal analysis that may be applicable is latent growth modeling (LGM). LGM allows the examination of intraindividual (within individual) changes over time and the interindividual differences in these changes (Chan, 2002; Chan & Schmitt, 2000). Although never previously applied in psychological contract research, LGM has been successfully used in commitment research to examine its relation to turnover (Bentein, Vandenberg, Vandenberg, & Stinglhamber, 2005). Future research, for example, could



examine the relation between affective commitment and a specific contract feature (e.g., equal exchange symmetry) to determine whether the relation changes over time (e.g., increases, decreases, or remains the same), both within and between individuals.

### *Practical Implications*

Despite its limitations, the present study highlights the importance of psychological contracts and provides guidance on managing these contracts effectively in organizations. The psychological contract has been criticized for not being an easily applied concept for practitioners (Conway & Briner, 2005). However, Guest and Conway (2002) found that 90% of human resource practitioners consider the psychological contract a useful concept to further understanding the employer-employee relationship. One reason why psychological contract research has not been readily applied in the field is because there is no widely used measure (Conway & Briner, 2005). Typically, each researcher develops a set of contract obligations that he or she sees fit for the given sample. The measure developed for the present study focuses on the features of the contract, eliminating concerns that the measure may not be generalizable. With a measure appropriate for various occupations and work settings, practitioners now have the tools needed to measure psychological contracts across samples.

The correlations between the feature ratings and commitment components also provide guidelines for practitioners. Conway and Briner (2005) argued that one solution to making psychological contracts more applicable in work settings and more manageable is to make all commitments explicit. That is, managers should communicate all commitments formally and in writing. This contract was identified in the present study and was labeled the formal factor. However, when employer contract fulfillment was

partialled out, affective and normative commitments, the desired forms of commitment, did not correlate positively with this factor; only continuance commitment correlated with scores on the formal factor. This finding suggests those who are affectively and normatively committed to the organization do not perceive their employers' commitments as being completely formalized. Before managers implement practices to ensure the contract is perceived as more explicit and formal, practitioners need to consider the present study's findings.

The presented findings also have practical implications for "I-Deals" (i.e., Idiosyncratic-Deals, Rousseau, 2005). Recently, Rousseau (2005) has argued for the value of individualistic contracts in today's work environment, termed I-Deals: customized arrangements between an employer and employee. It is defined as a personalized agreement that allows the employee to negotiate with the employer special conditions that would benefit both parties. The present study was the first to examine the relation between individualized contracts and employee commitment empirically. Results from the present study illustrated a positive correlation between the individual level feature rating and normative and continuance commitments. In other words, employees who perceive the contract as unique are committed because of moral obligations and the awareness of the costs associated with leaving such an individualized contract. However, a desired form of commitment, affective commitment, did not correlate significantly with individualized feature ratings. This finding suggests that employees who are affectively committed to the organization do not necessarily perceive the contract as being unique.

The results from my profile comparison analyses also provide guidelines for practitioners and managers. I identified features that correlate with the most desired (i.e.,

Profile 1 and 2) and the least desired commitment profiles (i.e., Profile 7 and 8). For example, we know that those who are committed because they desire to be (affective) and feel morally obligated to (normative) perceived their employers' contracts as more broad and of equal symmetry, compared to the pure continuance committed (i.e., Profile 7) and uncommitted individuals (i.e., Profile 8). This finding is in line with recent comments by Klein (2007). Klein stated that a new trend in organizations is that employers are becoming involved in their employees' personal lives (e.g., health and family issues) and are considering their viewpoints. I presented empirical evidence that these features are highly associated with affective and normative commitments. Management can use my findings and Klein's recommendation by implementing contracts that reflect these desired features. Rousseau and Greller (1994) also reminded practitioners that once the desired contract features are in place, management must ensure employees perceive the contracts as such, through open communication and human resource management practices.

### *Conclusions*

The goals of the present study were to explore the relations between psychological contract features with the traditional approach to measuring psychological contracts (i.e., contract types) and organizational commitment. If researchers and practitioners want to fully understand the nature of the relationships between employers and employees, the contract feature approach provides a much more thorough picture, compared to the traditional approach (i.e., contract types). As illustrated in the factor analysis, the variety of employer-employee relationships that exist today may not be adequately captured when grouping psychological contracts into types. The feature

approach also allowed me to identify empirically which contract characteristics correlated with the most desired commitment profiles and the least desired commitment profiles. But most importantly, by developing a measure that focuses on the contract features, practitioners now have a more general tool to evaluate psychological contracts in any work setting. Undoubtedly, what both employers and employees commit to each other is of value in today's work environment. The present study examined these commitments and provided some needed clarity and insights into the complexity of psychological contracts.

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## Appendix A

## A Continuum of Psychological Contract Terms

<i>Transactional Terms</i>		<i>Relational Terms</i>
Economic	<b>FOCUS</b>	Economic, emotional
Partial	<b>INCLUSION</b>	Whole person
Close-ended, specific	<b>TIME FRAME</b>	Open-ended, indefinite
Written	<b>FORMALIZATION</b>	Written, unwritten
Stable	<b>STABILITY</b>	Dynamic
Narrow	<b>SCOPE</b>	Pervasive
Public, observable	<b>TANGIBILITY</b>	Subjective, understood

*Adapted from Rousseau (1990)*

## Appendix B

## Recruitment Email: Letter of Information and Informed Consent

Dear StudyResponse Project Participant:

You are being invited to participate in a research study exploring employer-employee relationships. As you know, work relationships are changing and we are interested in how you and others like yourself view your current relationship with your employer. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to respond to a survey, entitled "Employee Commitment and Employer Obligations", that will take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete. If you choose not to respond within the first week, we will send you a reminder in one week. If you decide to participate, you will be entered into a random draw for one of several gift certificates to Amazon.com.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw at any time. All responses are strictly confidential and your name will not appear anywhere on the questionnaire.

Your StudyResponse ID number is [ ] (also shown in the subject line of this message). This ID must be entered on the survey to be eligible for the random draw. The draw will be conducted by StudyResponse on or about February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2007.

Your participation in this project would be gratefully appreciated. If you have read the above information and agree to participate in the survey, please click on the web-link below to begin the survey.

**<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=808013083578>**

Note that instructions on how to discontinue your participation in StudyResponse and stop receiving emails from us appear at the end of this message.

If you have any questions regarding the survey, please feel free to contact the researcher, Kate McInnis. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact the Director of the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Western Ontario (ethics@uwo.ca or 519-661-3036).

Sincerely,  
Kate McInnis  
Industrial/Organizational Psychology  
University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada  
kmcinni3@uwo.ca

## Appendix C

### Organizational Commitment

#### Affective Commitment (*Meyer & Allen, 1997*)

- 1) I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization.
- 2) I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.
- 3) I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization. (R)
- 4) I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization. (R)
- 5) This organization has a great deal of personal meaning to me.
- 6) I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization. (R)

#### Normative Commitment (*Meyer & Allen, 1997*)

- 1) I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer. (R)
- 2) Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now.
- 3) I would feel guilty if I left my organization now.
- 4) This organization deserves my loyalty.
- 5) I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.
- 6) I owe a great deal to my organization.

*Note: items labeled (R) were reverse coded.*

Appendix C continued:

Continuance Commitment (*Powell & Meyer, 2004*)

- 1) I have invested too much time in this organization to consider working elsewhere.
- 2) Leaving this organization now would require considerable personal sacrifice.
- 3) For me personally, the costs of leaving this organization would be far greater than the benefits.
- 4) I would not leave this organization because of what I would stand to lose.
- 5) If I decided to leave this organization, too much of my life would be disrupted.
- 6) I continue to work for this organization because I don't believe another organization could offer the benefits I have here.

## Appendix D

### Psychological Contract Types

#### Relational Psychological Contract

- 1) To be responsive to my personal concerns and well-being.
- 2) To be concerned about my long term well-being.
- 3) To provide me with secure employment.
- 4) To provide wages and benefits I can count on.

#### Transactional Psychological Contract

- 1) To provide me with a job for only as long as the employer needs me.
- 2) To provide a job that requires limited involvement in the organization.
- 3) To provide a job that is limited to specific, well-defined responsibilities.
- 4) To provide a job that requires me to perform only a limited set of duties.

*Adapted from Rousseau (2000)*

## Appendix E

### Psychological Contract Fulfillment

#### Employer Commitments (*Rousseau, 2000*)

- 1) Overall, how well does your employer fulfill its commitments to you?
- 2) In general, how well does your employer live up to its promises to you?

#### Employee Commitments (*Rousseau, 2000*)

- 1) Overall, how well have you fulfilled your commitments to your employer?
- 2) In general, how well do you live up to your promises to your employer?

## Appendix F

## Psychological Contract Features

***The commitments (explicit or implicit) made by my employer...***

## Level

- 1) ...vary from person to person. (*individual*)

(e.g., "Given your unique situation, this is what we promise you.")

- 2) ...are the same for all employees in comparable positions. (*collective*)

(e.g., "We make the same commitments to you that we make to all of our employees.")

## Exchange Symmetry

- 1) ...signal that employees are considered equal partners in the relationship. (*equal*)

(e.g., "We are in this together and your needs are as important as ours.")

- 2) ...signal that mutual obligations favour the employer. (*unequal*)

(e.g., "We will look after you when we can, but our interests must come first.")

## Scope

- 1) ...focus on issues of direct relevance to my employment. (*narrow*)

(e.g., "We promise you X if you do Y.")

- 2) ...focus on the mutual well-being of the employer and employee. (*broad*)

(e.g., "We will show consideration for your personal needs and expect you to consider ours.")

## Time Frame

- 1) ...are time limited and could end or be withdrawn at any time. (*short term*)

(e.g., "Our commitment to you is for the short term only.")

- 2) ...should last for several years or more. (*long term*)



Appendix F continued:

***The commitments (explicit or implicit) made by my employer...***

Stability

- 1) ...include promises that will remain in effect over time. (*stable*)  
(e.g., "We promise you X today, next month, and next year.")
- 2) ...include promises that stay the same in principle but adapt to changing conditions.  
(e.g., "We promise to meet your needs for X, but may have to be flexible in our methods.") (*flexible*)

Tangibility

- 1) ...involve general promises without providing details or setting limits. (*intangible*)  
(e.g., "We promise to provide what you need.")
- 2) ...specify clearly what I can expect. (e.g., "We promise you X, Y, and Z.") (*tangible*)

Explicitness

- 1) ...have been specified verbally or in writing. (*explicit*)
- 2) ...were not clearly stated and had to be inferred from organizational policies and practices and/or interaction with agents of the organization. (*implicit*)

Negotiation

- 1) ...were determined through formal negotiation with employees. (*negotiated*)
- 2) ...were determined by the organization itself, without input from employees.  
(*unilateral*)

Basis

- 1) ...are based on formal agreement with terms that can be monitored. (*formal*)
- 2) ...are based on mutual trust between the organization and its employees. (*mutual*)

# Appendix G

## Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Correlations among Study Variables

Study Variable	Mean	S. D.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Affective Commitment	4.38	1.20	(.81)						
2. Normative Commitment	4.07	1.26	.77**	(.85)					
3. Continuance Commitment	3.88	1.28	.53**	.69**	(.85)				
4. Relational Contract Type	3.39	.93	.45**	.48**	.24**	(.80)			
5. Transactional Contract Type	2.92	.87	.08	.16*	.11	.39**	(.65)		
6. Employer Contract Fulfillment	3.59	1.01	.46**	.46**	.27**	.71**	.40**	(.90)	
7. Employee Contract Fulfillment	4.22	.81	.27**	.20**	.12*	.31**	.13*	.43**	(.83)
8. Individual Contract Level Contract Feature	3.24	.98	.07	.17**	.15*	.03	.01	.03	-.01
9. Collective Contract Level Contract Feature	3.20	1.07	.08	.13*	.15*	.33**	.29**	.25**	-.01
10. Equal Exchange Symmetry Contract Feature	3.11	1.04	.42**	.37**	.22**	.52**	.21**	.45**	.01
11. Unequal Exchange Symmetry Contract Feature	3.29	.99	-.16*	-.10	.03	-.17**	.05	-.15*	.00
12. Narrow Scope Contract Feature	3.16	.98	.18**	.28**	.21**	.25**	.23**	.28**	.04
13. Broad Scope Contract Feature	3.40	.92	.32**	.32**	.20**	.42**	.16**	.37**	.06
14. Stable Contract Feature	3.11	.97	.16**	.26**	.22**	.29**	.18**	.27**	-.01
15. Flexible Contract Feature	3.37	.87	.06	.16*	.19**	.19**	.20**	.18**	.16**
16. Intangible Contract Feature	3.15	.91	-.06	-.01	-.02	-.02	.00	-.04	-.06
17. Tangible Contract Feature	3.26	.93	.18**	.24**	.16**	.22**	.21**	.32**	.07
18. Short term Contract Feature	2.71	1.11	-.21**	-.20**	.07	-.25**	.13*	-.20**	-.14*
19. Long term Contract Feature	3.38	.97	.18**	.15*	.16**	.23**	.11	.25**	-.06
20. Mutual Basis Contract Feature	3.36	.96	.46**	.43**	.25**	.44**	.16**	.35**	.08
21. Explicit Contract Feature	3.31	1.00	.12	.12	.20**	.25**	.21**	.28**	.09
22. Implicit Contract Feature	2.93	.94	-.15*	-.10	.00	-.12	.02	-.17**	-.04
23. Unilateral Contract Feature	3.14	.98	-.12	-.05	.05	-.19**	.06	-.16*	-.05
24. Negotiated Contract Feature	2.71	1.17	.01	.02	.19**	.14*	.15*	.13*	-.10

Note:  $p < .05$  \* (two-tailed),  $p < .01$  \*\* (two-tailed), alpha reliability coefficients are reported along the diagonal in brackets.

Appendix G continued:

*Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Correlations among Study Variables continued:*

Variable	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.
8. Individual Contract Level Contract Feature									
9. Collective Contract Level Contract Feature	-.18**								
10. Equal Exchange Symmetry Contract Feature	.09	.37**							
11. Unequal Exchange Symmetry Contract Feature	.18**	.02	-.19**						
12. Narrow Scope Contract Feature	.17**	.28**	.34**	.04					
13. Broad Scope Contract Feature	.19**	.28**	.47**	-.06	.29**				
14. Stable Contract Feature	.12*	.38**	.23**	.11	.50**	.31**			
15. Flexible Contract Feature	.25**	.25**	.24**	.37**	.28**	.38**	.27**		
16. Intangible Contract Feature	.18**	-.05	.05	.15*	.12	.14*	-.02	.24**	
17. Tangible Contract Feature	.00	.26**	.36**	.00	.54**	.24**	.40**	.22**	-.09
18. Short term Contract Feature	.14*	-.05	-.11	.26**	.05	-.14*	-.08	.11	.16*
19. Long term Contract Feature	.08	.17**	.21**	.07	.15*	.27**	.26**	.14*	.16*
20. Mutual Basis Contract Feature	.16*	.18**	.57**	-.15*	.35**	.48**	.19**	.29**	.14*
21. Explicit Contract Feature	-.01	.35**	.35**	.08	.26**	.27**	.27**	.26**	-.05
22. Implicit Contract Feature	.26**	-.11	-.11	.31**	-.01	-.07	-.01	.19**	.31**
23. Unilateral Contract Feature	.07	-.04	-.01	.23**	.01	.06	.03	.13*	.24**
24. Negotiated Contract Feature	-.03	.25**	.20**	.09	.12*	.05	.23**	.09	-.18**

Note:  $p < .05$  \* (two-tailed),  $p < .01$  \*\* (two-tailed)

Appendix G continued:

*Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Correlations among Study Variables continued:*

Variable	17.	18.	19.	20.	21.	22.	23.	24.
17. Tangible Contract Feature								
18. Short term Contract Feature	-.04							
19. Long term Contract Feature	.09	-.14*						
20. Mutual Basis Contract Feature	.29**	-.07	.22**					
21. Explicit Contract Feature	.40**	-.01	.32**	.17**				
22. Implicit Contract Feature	-.18**	.25**	-.07	.04	-.17**			
23. Unilateral Contract Feature	.05	.28**	.10	-.01	.09	.19**		
24. Negotiated Contract Feature	.19**	.17**	.22**	.09	.34**	.03	-.09	

Note:  $p < .05$  \* (two-tailed),  $p < .01$  \*\* (two-tailed)

## Appendix H

## Ethics Approval Form



**Department of Psychology** The University of Western Ontario  
 Room 7418 Social Sciences Centre,  
 London, ON, Canada N6A 5C1  
 Telephone: (519) 661-2067 Fax: (519) 661-3961

**Use of Human Subjects - Ethics Approval Notice**

<b>Review Number</b>	07 01 08	<b>Approval Date</b>	07 01 18
<b>Principal Investigator</b>	John Meyer/Kate McInnis	<b>End Date</b>	07 04 30
<b>Protocol Title</b>	Employee commitment and employer obligations		
<b>Sponsor</b>	n/a		

This is to notify you that The University of Western Ontario Department of Psychology Research Ethics Board (PREB) has granted expedited ethics approval to the above named research study on the date noted above.

The PREB is a sub-REB of The University of Western Ontario's Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects (NMREB) which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. (See Office of Research Ethics web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/research/ethics/>)

This approval shall remain valid until end date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the University's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the protocol or consent form may be initiated without prior written approval from the PREB except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to the subject or when the change(s) involve only logistical or administrative aspects of the study (e.g. change of research assistant, telephone number etc). Subjects must receive a copy of the information/consent documentation.

Investigators must promptly also report to the PREB:

- a) changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
- b) all adverse and unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected;
- c) new information that may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study.

If these changes/adverse events require a change to the information/consent documentation, and/or recruitment advertisement, the newly revised information/consent documentation, and/or advertisement, must be submitted to the PREB for approval.

Members of the PREB who are named as investigators in research studies, or declare a conflict of interest, do not participate in discussion related to, nor vote on, such studies when they are presented to the PREB.

Clive Seligman Ph.D.

Chair, Psychology Expedited Research Ethics Board (PREB)

The other members of the 2006-2007 PREB are: Mike Atkinson, Bertram Gawronski, Rick Goffin, and Jim Olson

CC: UWO Office of Research Ethics

*This is an official document. Please retain the original in your files*