

Psychological Contract of Healthcare Workers with Special Reference to Meenakshi Hospital, Thanjavur

M. Noorish Nihar¹, U. Vijay Shankar²

¹MBA Student, Department of MBA, PRIST University, Thanjavur, India

²Associate Professor, Department of MBA, PRIST University, Thanjavur, India

Abstract: In the present dynamic environment, the industry is witnessing a dynamic change in the HR approach for managing employee and employer relationship. Employee's retention has become the major concern for the management. The Psychological Contract has been of increasing interest for HR departments and also considered as the company's most valuable resource as it can be used to measure factors impacting behavior in the workplace.

This study assessed the psychological contract of health care workers with special reference to Meenakshi Hospital, Thanjavur. Specifically, the study sought to assess the transactional relationship, relationship contract, internal advancement, employee obligation and employer obligation. In the present study a sample of 100 healthcare workers from different departments working in Meenakshi Hospital, Thanjavur was taken up. Descriptive research design and stratified random sampling has been used to collect the data. The components of Psychological contract and their outcome were rated at 1 to 5 Likert scale. The results of study are discussed and implications for HR managers are highlighted in the research work.

Keywords: psychological contract, healthcare workers

1. Introduction

Managing human resource has become a great challenge because of its complexity. Service characteristics, such as intangibility, non-storability and the need for simultaneous production and consumption necessitating the co-location of producer and client support the view that services are non-tradable.

The empirical evidence and various research studies reveal that psychological contract is the most helpful in generating job satisfaction and improving employee's performance. Both academics and practitioners have acknowledged that the concept of the psychological contract can be applied to understand and manage the shifting employment relationships. The majority of research on psychological contract theory has been carried out on the dyad between the employer and the employee, and the reciprocal expectations and obligations they perceive. However, some researches state the importance of forming the psychological contract as an important tool of employee retention.

"The psychological contract is often used to describe the

expectations an employee has of the organization (salary, pay rate, working hours, benefits, privileges), the expectations the organization has of the employee (loyalty, confidentiality of sensitive information, or enhancing organizational image), or the expectations customers have of an organization. The idea, however, can apply to any relationship" (Schein, 1965; Wellin, 2007).

"Though it remains unwritten the psychological contract is a powerful determiner of behaviour in organizations" (Schein, 1965).

(Rousseau, 1995) defines the psychological contract as the beliefs of an individual as shaped by the organization in respect to the terms of agreement between them (individuals) and the organization. It is distinguishable from the formal written contract of employment which, for the most part, only identifies mutual duties and responsibilities in a generalized form.

It concerns:

- How the employee is treated by the employer?
- what the employee puts into the job

The Psychological Contract refers to the relationship between an employer and its employees, and specifically concerns mutual expectations of inputs and outcomes. It is hidden, unspoken and unwritten.

What employees and employers want?

The psychological contract is a way of interpreting the state of the employment relationship. It may provide some indication of the answers to the two fundamental employment relationship questions that individuals pose:

- 'What can I reasonably expect from the organization?'
- 'What should I reasonably be expected to contribute in return?'

(a) The aspects of the employment relationship covered by the psychological contract will include from the employee's point of view:

- How they are treated in terms of fairness, equity and consistency
- Security of employment
- Scope to demonstrate competence

- Career expectations and the opportunity to develop skills
- Involvement and influence
- Trust in the management of the organization to keep their promises.

(b) From the employer's point of view, the psychological contract covers such aspects of the employment relationship as competence, effort, compliance, commitment and loyalty.

Every organization recognizes the importance of its key asset, its employees. The majority of organizations seek to maintain a low turnover rate by reducing undesired voluntary turnover by employing the appropriate retention strategies. Rousseau adds that in the event that the employees perceive that their psychological contract has been violated, there is likelihood of increased staff turnover, reduced employee commitment and motivation; this may have negative effects on the quality of healthcare service delivery. The present research work aims at examining the psychological contract among the healthcare workers in Meenakshi Hospital, Thanjavur.

2. Review of literature

Maria Eduarda Soares, Pilar Mosquera (2019) [1], (Universidade de Lisboa – ISEG Advance, Lisboa, Portugal) in their study highlighted that,

- Relational and Balanced contracts have a positive impact on work engagement.
- Transactional and Transitional contracts have a negative impact on work engagement.
- Contracts included in the long-term dimension lead to higher work engagement.
- Contracts that provide socio - emotional support lead to higher work engagement.

Cathy Sheehan, Tse Leng Tham, Peter Holland, Brian Cooper, (2019) [2] explained in their research work that, To ensure professional nurse retention, it is necessary to not just promise nurses interesting jobs and a supportive social atmosphere, but to manage nurse perceptions regarding the fulfillment of these promises.

The fulfillment of promises related to interesting job content and social atmosphere were negatively associated with intentions to leave the nursing profession, and these relationships were mediated by engagement. The fulfillment of promises related to career development, financial rewards and work-life balance were not associated with intentions to leave the nursing profession.

Abu Elnasr E. Sobaih, Yasser Ibrahim and Gaber Gabry (2019) [3], in their research article "Unlocking the black box: Psychological contract fulfillment as a mediator between HRM practices and job performance" highlight three important points,

1. Psychological contract fulfillment unlock the black box of human resources management practices-job performance link.

2. Psychological contract fulfillment mediate the relationship between human resources management practices and job

outcomes.

3. HR managers should endeavor to adopt high performance HRMP that ensure the abilities and motivation, and promote the opportunities for employees to use their skills to achieve the operational goals.

L.D. Sawithri, H.M. Nishanthi and K.G. Amarasinghe (University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka) 2017[4], in their research work concluded that, Employees would be much more committed to the organizations if they are led by maintaining proper relationships with their immediate superiors.

Further, if the employees can trust their senior management in treating them fairly as well as making the right decisions for the future which would benefit both the employer and employee their level of commitment would loss intern enhanced.so each and every organization should enhance their line manager relationship and trust in senior management, because there is a high impact of them on employee commitment

Most of senior management make sensible decisions for this organization and they would not be prepared to gain advantage by deceiving the workers. To maintain a strong relationship further, it is suggested to conduct events such as annual trips, annual sports meet, provide sufficient resources & better working environment, create friendly working conditions to increase commitment.

Dr. A. Savarimuthu and A. Jerena Rachael (St. Joseph's Institute of Management, Trichy) (2017)[5], stated in their research article that the psychological contract shapes the behaviour of the parties and also aids the management to effectively manage their employees. Being so, psychological contract turns out to be advantageous for both the employers and the employees. For a psychological contract to be fulfilled, and ascertaining vibrant and effective employees, the communication of expectations between either of the parties plays an important role.

Tracing the sustainability and consistency of preserving a contract implies on acting in good faith, respecting and sharing equal concern for each other's interests. This lies as an obvious requirement in a relationship. Saying thus, blind faith won't do as there has to be a proper and sufficient understanding of the nature of the business, its strategy, market conditions and financial indicators.

Employer and employee will have to create good intentions, confidence and feelings of attachment in the minds of each other which will in return strengthen their bond and also influence on how they intend to behave and reciprocate their mutuality towards each other.

3. Research methodology

Statement of the problem:

One of the major issues highlighted as facing the health workforce is dissatisfaction, as a result of perceived low salaries and allowances. Further observed that the inability of systems to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of health professionals, especially skilled workers, is one of the biggest challenges for

the health sector. The poor work conditions do not help matters in attracting staff or even motivate them to stay, contributing to the high staff turnover. The low morale further results into poor attitude of the health workers towards the patients (clients), increased absenteeism and low productivity.

The majority of organizations seek to maintain a low turnover rate by reducing undesired voluntary turnover by employing the appropriate retention strategies. Forming the psychological contract is an important tool of employee retention. When psychological contract has been violated, there is likelihood of increased staff turnover, reduced employee commitment and motivation; this may have negative effects on the quality of healthcare service delivery.

Therefore, the present research work aims at examining the psychological contract among the healthcare workers in Meenakshi Hospital, Thanjavur and give suggestions to improve the employment relationship.

Period of research:

From 01 March 2019 - 30 April 2019

Objectives of the research:

- To study the role of psychological contract in employee retention
- To understand the impact of psychological contract in contemporary employment relationship
- To evaluate the employee obligation and employer obligation in relation to the organizational context
- To find out the issues related to the organisational context in which psychological contract is retained or broken
- To analyze the level of satisfaction among the employees in respect of organization activities

Research Design:

In this study, Descriptive research procedure is used for describing the present situation in organization and Analytical research to analyse the result by using research tools.

Sample Design:

Sample size: 100 Healthcare workers covering various departments of the organization from the total population of 1250 healthcare workers.

Sampling technique: Stratified random sampling technique is used in the sample selection

Data Collection:

Primary Data:

The researcher made use of primary data, which was collected using informal interviews, observations and structured questionnaire which is distributed to 100 respondents sampled from the Meenakshi Hospital, Thanjavur.

The administered questionnaire were collected after completion by the respondents and their responses are used for analysis. The questionnaire had both close ended and open ended questions to enable guide the respondent through the

filling of the questionnaire as well as probe them for more information.

Secondary Data:

Secondary data is the information that has been gathered from already existing sources such as text books, articles, journals and websites

Statistical Tools:

The collected data have been analyzed with the help of

- Simple percentage Analysis
- Chi-square test
- Correlation
- One-way ANOVA

The following are the hypothesis of the study:

- a) Relationship between Gender and Respondents acceptance towards the statement "My organization promises to provide safe, secure job and work environment"
- b) Relationship between Age and feel as a part of team working towards the shared goals
- c) Relationship between Year of service and intention to leave this organization in future
- d) Correlation between Age and promise to work enthusiastically on jobs which others would prefer not to do
- e) Relationship between Education level and try to have the freedom to choose how to best perform my job

Scope of the research:

This study is confined to healthcare workers in Meenakshi Hospital, Thanjavur with a sample of 100 healthcare workers under 4 categories such as, Nursing, Paramedical, Supporting services, Administration. The attitude of healthcare workers towards the components of psychological contract are taken into account and the results are rated at 1 to 5 likert scale which gives deeper insight into the employee satisfaction and expectation towards their work as well as their organization.

This study gives the organization the direction, how to deal differently with different healthcare workers. It also helps to identify the present and future needs among the healthcare workers, which in turn enhance the quality of healthcare service delivery.

Limitations of the research:

- Interaction with the company executive was limited due to their busy schedule and some negotiates to answer
- As it was not possible to collect data from all the level of healthcare workers from all the departments, so, the true picture of working condition may not be reliable
- The information collected is mainly primary data and the accuracy is subject to the responses received
- The outcome of the study will be applicable only to these respondents
- Time constraint was also a major factor

4. Data analysis and interpretation

Table 1
 Chi-Square Test
 (a) Gender and safe, secure job and work environment

Gender	“My organization promises to provide safe, secure job and work environment”					Total
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Male	12	22	06	00	00	40
Female	38	18	04	00	00	60
Transgender	00	00	00	00	00	00
Total	50	40	10	00	00	100

Chi-square analysis

Group	Observed frequency (O)	Expected frequency (E)	O – E	(O – E) ²	(O – E) ² / E
Aa	12	20	-8	64	3.2
Ab	22	16	6	36	2.25
Ac	6	4	2	4	1
Ad	0	0	0	0	0
Ae	0	0	0	0	0
Ba	38	30	8	64	2.13333333
Bb	18	24	-6	36	1.5
Bc	4	6	-2	4	0.66666667
Bd	0	0	0	0	0
Be	0	0	0	0	0
Ca	0	0	0	0	0
Cb	0	0	0	0	0
Cc	0	0	0	0	0
Cd	0	0	0	0	0
Ce	0	0	0	0	0
				$\chi^2 =$	10.75

Table 3
 Chi-Square Test

(b) Age and feel as a part of team working towards the shared goals

Age	“I feel as a part of team working towards the shared goals”					Total
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Under 21	00	00	00	02	00	02
21 – 34	26	40	10	06	00	82
35 – 44	06	02	02	00	00	10
45 – 54	02	00	00	00	00	02
55 or older	02	02	00	00	00	04
Total	36	44	12	08	00	100

Alternate hypothesis (H1): There is a relationship between Gender and Respondents acceptance towards the statement “My organization promises to provide safe, secure job and work environment”

Null hypothesis (Ho): There is no relationship between Gender and Respondents acceptance towards the statement “My organization promises to provide safe, secure job and work environment.”

Calculated Value of $\chi^2 = 10.75$; Degree of Freedom = (R-1) × (C-1) = (3-1) × (5-1) = 8

Table value of chi-square for 8 degree of freedom at 5 percent level of significance is 15.507

Inference: Calculated value of chi-square is less than the table value, so the null hypothesis (H0) is accepted and the alternate hypothesis (H1) is rejected. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between Gender and Respondents acceptance towards the statement “My organization promises to provide safe, secure job and work environment.”

Alternate hypothesis (H1): There is a relationship between

Age and feel as a part of team working towards the shared goals

Null hypothesis (Ho): There is no relationship between Age and feel as a part of team working towards the shared goals.

Calculated Value of $\chi^2 = 32.7445184$

Degree of Freedom = (R-1) × (C-1) = (5-1) × (5-1) = 16

Table value of chi-square for 16 degree of freedom at 5 percent level of significance is 26.296

Inference: Calculated value of chi-square is more than the table value, so the alternate hypothesis (H1) is accepted and the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected. Hence it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between Age and feel as a part of team working towards the shared goals.

Alternate hypothesis (H1): There is a relationship between Year of service and no intention to leave this organization in future

Null hypothesis (Ho): There is no relationship between Year of service and no intention to leave this organization in future.

Calculated Value of $\chi^2 = 18.8636364$

Degree of Freedom = (R-1) × (C-1) = (3-1) × (5-1) = 8

Table value of chi-square for 8 degree of freedom at 5 percent

Chi-square analysis

Group	Observed frequency (O)	Expected frequency (E)	O - E	(O - E) ²	(O - E) ² / E
Aa	0	0.72	-0.72	0.5184	0.72
Ab	0	0.88	-0.88	0.7744	0.88
Ac	0	0.24	-0.24	0.0576	0.24
Ad	2	0.16	1.84	3.3856	21.16
Ae	0	0	0	0	0
Ba	26	29.52	-3.52	12.3904	0.419729
Bb	40	36.08	3.92	15.3664	0.425898
Bc	10	9.84	0.16	0.0256	0.00260163
Bd	6	6.56	-0.56	0.3136	0.04780488
Be	0	0	0	0	0
Ca	6	3.6	2.4	5.76	1.6
Cb	2	4.4	-2.4	5.76	1.30909091
Cc	2	1.2	0.8	0.64	0.53333333
Cd	0	0.8	-0.8	0.64	0.8
Ce	0	0	0	0	0
Da	2	0.72	1.28	1.6384	2.27555556
Db	0	0.88	-0.88	0.7744	0.88
Dc	0	0.24	-0.24	0.0576	0.24
Dd	0	0.16	-0.16	0.0256	0.16
De	0	0	0	0	0
Ea	2	1.44	0.56	0.3136	0.21777778
Eb	2	1.76	0.24	0.0576	0.03272727
Ec	0	0.48	-0.48	0.2304	0.48
Ed	0	0.32	-0.32	0.1024	0.32
Ee	0	0	0	0	0
				$\chi^2 =$	32.7445184

Table 4
 Chi-Square Test
 (c) Year of service and no intention to leave this organization in future

Year of service	"I have no intention to leave this organization in future"					Total
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Less than 1 year	02	04	08	00	02	16
1 – 3 years	06	12	12	12	02	44
More than 3 years	12	04	18	06	00	40
Total	20	20	38	18	04	100

Chi-square analysis

Group	Observed frequency (O)	Expected frequency (E)	O - E	(O - E) ²	(O - E) ² / E
Aa	2	3.2	-1.2	1.44	0.45
Ab	4	3.2	0.8	0.64	0.2
Ac	8	6.08	1.92	3.6864	0.60631579
Ad	0	2.88	-2.88	8.2944	2.88
Ae	2	0.64	1.36	1.8496	2.89
Ba	6	8.8	-2.8	7.84	0.89090909
Bb	12	8.8	3.2	10.24	1.16363636
Bc	12	16.72	-4.72	22.2784	1.33244019
Bd	12	7.92	4.08	16.6464	2.10181818
Be	2	1.76	0.24	0.0576	0.03272727
Ca	12	8	4	16	2
Cb	4	8	-4	16	2
Cc	18	15.2	2.8	7.84	0.51578947
Cd	6	7.2	-1.2	1.44	0.2
Ce	0	1.6	-1.6	2.56	1.6
				$\chi^2 =$	18.8636364

level of significance is 15.507

Inference: Calculated value of chi-square is more than the table value, so the alternate hypothesis (H1) is accepted and the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected. Hence it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between Year of service and no intention to leave this organization in future.

Alternate hypothesis (H1): There is a significant correlation between Age and promise to work enthusiastically on jobs

which others would prefer not to do

Null hypothesis (Ho): There is no significant correlation between Age and promise to work enthusiastically on jobs which others would prefer not to do

Inference: From the table 5, it is inferred that, Age and promise to work enthusiastically on jobs which others would prefer not to do which is significant at 0.86 which is higher than the significant level of 0.05 i.e. $p > 0.05$. The alternative

Table 5
 Correlation
 (d) Correlation between Age and promise to work enthusiastically on jobs which others would prefer not to do

		Age	Promise to work enthusiastically on jobs which others would prefer not to do
Age	Pearson Correlation Co-efficient (r)	1	0.0183*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.86
	N	100	100

Table 6
 One-Way ANOVA
 (e) Relationship between Education level and try to have the freedom to choose how to best perform the job

ANOVA: Single Factor						
SUMMARY						
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance		
Education	100	312	3.12	0.914747		
Try to have the freedom to choose how to best perform the job	100	218	2.18	0.795556		
ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	44.18	1	44.18	51.66336	1.31E-11	3.888853
Within Groups	169.32	198	0.855152			
Total	213.5	199				

hypothesis (H1) is rejected and null hypothesis (H0) is accepted.

Alternate hypothesis (H1): There is a significant relationship between Education level and try to have the freedom to choose how to best perform the job.

Null hypothesis (H0): There is no significant relationship between Education level and try to have the freedom to choose how to best perform the job.

Inference: Table 6 shows, the calculated p-value (1.31 E-11) is larger than the significant value α (0.05). The alternative hypothesis (H1) is rejected and null hypothesis (H0) is accepted.

5. Findings and suggestions

A. Findings

According to my survey,

- Most of the respondents are female (60%)
- Majority of the respondents (82%) belongs to the age group of 21 – 34 years
- Majority of the respondents (42%) are undergraduate
- Most of them are in mid-level position (40%)
- Majority (44%) of the respondents are working in this organization for 1 – 3 years

Based on my survey, it is inferred that for transactional relationship:

- Majority (36%) agree that their salary is very fair as it matches with their responsibilities
- Majority (48%) agree and believe that they will get enough recognition i.e. Promotion, if they exhibit good work performance
- Though there is a good transactional relationship, majority 36% and 40% also agree that they do only what is actually required and prefer to work in a strictly defined set of working hours respectively
- Most of the respondents are neutral in their opinion

to leave the organization in future which indicates that they may leave if they get a better career opportunity

For relational contract:

- Majority 44% and 54% agree that they feel as a part of team in the organization working towards the shared goals and committed to develop their skills to perform in an effective manner respectively.
- Most of the respondents i.e. Healthcare workers (48%) agree that they are always ready to do the task outside their job requirements voluntarily, which shows their involvement in their job.
- Majority 56% and 42% promise themselves to turn up for work on time and work extra hours, if necessary, which shows their good level of commitment and loyalty towards the organization.

For internal advancement:

- Majority 52% believe that their organization provides career opportunities and the career paths are clearly mapped out for them.
- Majority 54% agree that they always try to have the freedom to choose how to best perform their job by believing that their organization encourage them to participate in decision making.
- Majority 58% agree that they always try to seek job assignments that would enhance their role as well as to exceed the performance expectations in their job.

For employee obligation:

- Majority 54% and 38% agree and promise themselves to work enthusiastically on jobs which others would prefer not to do and ready to accept the internal transfer respectively.
- Majority 44% promise themselves to respect the rules and regulations of the organization.
- Majority 54% and 36% agree that they are concerned about the firm, even after working hours

and commit themselves to work even at the time of illness

For employer obligation:

- Majority 50% strongly believe that their organization is providing safe and secure environment (violence and harassment free environment).
- Majority 68% and 54% believe that their organization provide possibilities to work together in a pleasant way and also provide challenging and interesting work in that results in organizational as well as personal growth respectively.
- Majority 54% and 58% believe that their organization ensures its employees fair treatment by managers and supervisors and also solves the grievances of the employees and take care about their personal problems respectively.

B. Suggestions

For a better psychological contract, it is recommended that

- Progressive leadership is the best way to receive employee commitment through human potential recognition and empowerment rather than positional authority which may extract compliance but not commitment.
- Before selecting a candidate for the organization, it is also important to observe the steadiness with their earlier employment and their contribution in line with experience whether the candidate is career or money oriented. They should be equipped for the organization in line with “training within industry” which helps to establish co-operative association between employees and employer.
- Organization should assign each new employee to a senior employee, termed a counselor. It creates a positive relationship developed quickly with the counselor, despite the fact that the organization was large and turnover was high within the department.
- Encourage open communication by suggesting that employer representatives who are in supervisory roles should receive training on the general importance of the psychological contract, how it influences work attitudes and behaviors, and how they can communicate the terms of the relationship with employees.
- Tracing the sustainability and consistency of preserving a contract implies on acting in Good faith, respecting and sharing equal concern for each other’s interests. This lies as an obvious requirement in a relationship. Saying thus, blind faith won’t do as there has to be a Proper and sufficient understanding of the nature of the business, its strategy, market Conditions and financial indicators.

- Management should meet with employees, continuously throughout their tenure, to determine how they view the employer-employee relationship through the supportive organizational programs. Desirability for a psychological contract decreases as tenure increases.

By meeting with employees regularly, management can gain a better perspective about how these desires change over time and also can use the revised feature based measure as a complementary tool to gain greater insights on their employees’ perceptions, along with face-to-face interactions.

6. Conclusion

Psychological contracts are a key component in understanding employee work behaviors and a variety of work outcomes that’s leads toward affective commitment which increase employees’ satisfaction and reduce intention to quit.

From the study, it is concluded that psychological contract is good at Meenakshi Hospital, Thanjavur as the healthcare workers in that hospital have sense of belongingness and loyalty by promising themselves to contribute their efforts towards the organizational goal. They believe that the employer obligations will definitely fulfilled by the organization especially in the aspects of safety, security, career development, recognition and grievance handling etc., Though they have a slight intention to quit the job in future, in case of better career opportunities but they are concerned about the firm even after working hours and ready to do whatever the task required

For a betterment, it is recommended that employer and employee will have to create good intentions, confidence and feelings of attachment in the minds of each other which will in return strengthen their bond and also influence on how they intend to behave and reciprocate their mutuality towards each other, which will go a long way in creating a motivated and satisfied employees.

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