Understanding Relationships in the Psychological Contracts of Indonesian Academics

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to present the results of exploratory research which analysed employment relationships using the lens of psychological contracts to understand the meaning Indonesian academics placed on relationships in their employment. Qualitative research in form of in-depth interviews was utilised in six universities in Indonesia. Findings indicate Indonesian academics perceive their relationship with their superior as partnership, friendship, rule bound and synergy. Where partnership was interpreted as friendship it resulted in Indonesian academics being willing to work beyond formal job descriptions. For rule bound relationships academics worked to the rule of 'Tugas Pokok dan Fungsi' (TUPOKSI), whilst for synergy relationships a need to support each other and work together in accordance with Indonesian Government Education Regulations was expressed.

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INTRODUCTION

Rousseau (1989) defines the psychological contract as individuals' belief in reciprocal obligations and promises of an exchange agreement between them and their organisation. Another view of the psychological contract is that it can be defined as the quality of the relationship between employees and employers (Lopez, 2008). Although there is growing interest in the body of theoretical and empirical research on psychological contracts, scholars have devoted limited attention to understanding the meaning placed on relationships, promises and obligations as perceived by employees. The quality of such relationships is very important to the success of organisations because they influence firm performance (Herrington, Scott & Johnson, 2005; Wang, Tsui, Zhang & Ma, 2003). Research suggests that negativity in the employment context contributes to relationship conflict (Ismail, Richard & Taylor, 2012). Within psychological contracts, there is therefore a need to understand employees' perceptions of their relationships at work (Dadi, 2012). The objective of this study is to explore the meaning placed on relationships between employees and employers in Indonesian Universities.

Human cognition that constructs the perceptions in psychological contracts varies in different contexts (Cassar & Briner, 2009). Research has therefore been conducted on psychological contracts in universities in numerous national settings (Abdullah, Hamzah, Arsyad, Mat Isa & Ghani, 2011; Aydin, Yilmaz, Memduhoglu, Oguz & Gungor, 2008; Dabos & Rousseau, 2004; Krivokapic-Skoko, O'Neill & Dowell, 2009; O'Neill, Krivokapic-Skoko & Dowell, 2010; Shen, 2010). Indonesian Universities provide a different study context as they rank poorly and are resource-poor by world standards and the employment environment is controlled by government regulations that specify the obligations of employers and employees. Understanding the

psychological contracts of Indonesian academics may also assist Indonesian universities to improve academics' productivity which may improve organisational performance (Shen, 2010).

We begin this article by explaining how researchers have conceptualized and studied psychological contracts and then we describe the study context and methodology. For findings and discussion, we explore the meanings placed on relationships in the psychological contracts of Indonesian academics. Following that, we conclude that Indonesian academics perceived their employment relationship as partnership, friendship, rule bound and synergy. Employees will perform beyond their main tasks or functions or 'Tugas Pokok dan Fungsi' (TUPOKSI) if there is a friendship relationship.

CONCEPTUALISING PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACTS

In 1960, Argyris used the term 'psychological work contract' to explain the relationship of a group of employees with their foreman. The study found that the foreman managed the employees so that they behaved in the desired manner by guaranteeing and respecting the informal employee culture. Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl and Solley (1962) discussed the concept of the psychological contract and posited that the components of it are the mutual expectations between employees and their employer. Employees' expectations refer to job satisfaction achieved through practicing their specific skills, attaining good social relations in the work place, job security and economic rewards, while employers' expectations are that employees should work so as to maintain cost efficiency, upgrade their skills to be positioned at supervisory level and demonstrate their flexibility to dedicate themselves to the company. Schein (1965) emphasized that both employees' and employers' expectations involved not only how much work should be performed in exchange for a determined amount of money, but also included rights, privileges and obligations between employees and their employer.

Rousseau's (1989) ground breaking work on the psychological contract contributed significantly to current understanding of the concept and has been widely accepted in both academic and practitioner literatures (Bankins, 2011; Roehling, 2008). Rousseau's reconceptualization identifies psychological contracts as individuals' beliefs of an exchange agreement between them and their organisation. It marks a shift in emphasis from expectations to promises and obligations. Rousseau discusses two types of promises: explicit (verbal or written and therefore obvious) and implicit promises that are said to arise out of repeated behaviours over time. Obligations arise through a party's contributions and actions leading to a requirement for reciprocity on the part

of the other party. The norm of reciprocity is an explanatory mechanism for understanding the employment relationship (Shore & Tetrick, 1994). Hu, Tetrick and Shore (2011) define employee's and employer's perceptions of promises and obligations in the typical employment relationship as being that employers provide money and other compensation along with job security and training in exchange for employee's time, expertise and effort. Tekleab and Taylor (2003) argue that a quality relationship between employers and employees needs to exist in which there is a high level of communication about reciprocal promises and obligations so as to enhance the level of agreement on these promises and obligations. The better the quality of the employer-employee relationship, the better information that is shared on reciprocal promises and obligations and the less likely violations of the psychological contract will occur. In other words, the existence of good relationships is crucial to a good work environment (Herrington et al., 2005).

Failure to fulfil reciprocal obligations creates violations or breaches. Breaches of psychological contracts occur when an individual believes that the organisation or employee has failed to respond to one's contribution in the exchange relationship within the psychological contract (Rousseau, 1989). Common reactions when the psychological contract is violated are employee's negative work attitude and behaviour (DelCampo, 2007; Morrison & Robinson, 1997) and often departure from the organisation (Turnley & Feldman, 1999). Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2000) emphasized that disagreement may occur when employers and employees have different understandings of the promises made and reciprocal obligations between them thus it is important to understand what is understood by these concepts. Whilst, there has been significant literature and research about promises and obligations, few studies actually differentiate the concepts well (Conway & Briner, 2005; Guest, 1998; Sutton & Griffin, 2004). Further, McCourt & Eldridge (2003) identify that management concepts applicable in developed, western economies need to be tested and assessed critically in other settings. The exploration of the psychological contract construct in Indonesian academics provides such an opportunity.

As noted above, research has been conducted on psychological contracts in universities in several national contexts (see, for example, Abdullah et al., 2011; Aydin et al., 2008; Dabos & Rousseau, 2004; Krivokapic-Skoko et al., 2009; O'Neill et al., 2010; Shen, 2010). Abdullah et al (2011) and Dabos and Rousseau (2004) emphasized that mutuality and reciprocity should exist where employees and employers have the same beliefs and understanding of their exchange obligations, so there will be beneficial outcomes for both in their employment relationship. Krivokapic-Skoko et al (2009) identified the need for universities and academics to be

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sensitive to possible differences in their exchange obligations to prevent breaches of psychological contracts. Further, studies by O'Neill et al (2010) identified the existence of quite divergent views of obligations as perceived by academics and the university while Aydin et al (2008) and Shen (2010) identified that these divergent views let to the psychological contracts of academics being violated by the university because the university did not meet the implicit terms of the exchange relationship.

THE STUDY CONTEXT: HIGHER EDUCATION AND ACADEMICS IN INDONESIA

Indonesian universities rank poorly in the Quacquarelli Symonds index. The University of Indonesia is Indonesia's highest ranked university at 309 globally (QS World University Rankings, 2013). The low quality of education in Indonesia is a complex issue with a number of contributing factors including the limited qualifications held by teachers and lecturers, lack of education facilities (such as up-to-date library books), low salaries of teachers and lecturers, low achievement of students, and increasing tuition fees (Ikhwan & Masjid, 2006; Ramadhan, 2013). As a response to low wages, many Indonesian academics have jobs outside their universities and therefore have considerable workloads (Ramadhan, 2013; Setiawati, 2009). Only 5.2% of Indonesian academics have Doctorates and 32.8% and 62% of Indonesian academics respectively have Masters Degrees and Bachelor Degrees as their highest qualification (Arisbudi, 2011). Most Indonesian academics have poor English language skills; insufficient access to research funding, poor academic support facilities (Idrus, 1999; Lisnayetti, 2006), a lack of information communication technology (ICT) skill and infrastructure (Gultom, 2005; Marginson & Sawir, 2005) and internet speed connection in Indonesia is the slowest in the Asia Pacific region (Deliusno, 2012).

Indonesian academics are currently being called on by their Government to improve the quality not only of teaching, researching and serving society, but also to improve verbal and non-verbal communication skills, develop better ICT skills, develop wider networking, and become more outward looking (DGHE, 2010) so as to improve the quality of Indonesian universities (Rachman, 2003). These performance pressures, particularly demands for skill development in a resource poor environment, are likely to place significant pressure on Indonesian academics providing a practical reason for this study so that academics can be better managed, be more motivated and potentially perform better (Holland, Hecker & Steen, 2002; Rousseau, 1995; Westerman & Yamamura, 2007).

Indonesian academics therefore work in constrained circumstances. Further, they are instructed by their state philosophy known as Pancasila that they should prioritize their obligations more than their rights (Giblin, 2003; Suryopratomo, 2011). Given the explicit meaning placed on obligations, Indonesia therefore provides a very different context in which to explore the employment relationship. This paper addresses the question of how Indonesian academics understand the nature of relationships and consequently, the meaning placed on obligations and promises within the psychological contract.

RESEARCH METHOD AND RESPONDENT ORGANISATIONS

The research presented in this paper draws on data from a larger project on mental models of psychological contracts of Indonesian academics, involving exploratory qualitative research in six higher education institutions (3 public and 3 private) in Manado city, Indonesia. Qualitative research is considered useful to understanding the meaning of experience, actions and events perceived by people in relation to the complexity of their natural behaviours (Pidgeon & Henwood, 1996), and is particularly useful in areas where little is known of the phenomenon under investigation. As there is little understood of psychological contracts in the context of Indonesian higher education, a qualitative approach was justified.

The research utilised four methods of data collection: (1) interviews (2) drawings of academics' perceptions of their psychological contracts (3) descriptions of their drawings and (4) field notes (Ryan, 2012; Zhang, 2008a; Zhang, 2008b). As psychological contracts are individually constructed, forty seven individual interviews were undertaken (Brantley, 2009; Conway & Briner, 2005; Guo, 2009, Mao & Liu, 2008). Interviewees were drawn from all levels of the universities including two Rectors, one Vice Rector, three Deans, two Vice Deans, two Directors, eight Heads of Disciplines, five Heads of Study Programs, one Faculty Senate Member, three Secretary of Disciplines, one Secretary of Study Program, one Secretary of Vice Rector, seven Senior Lecturers, eight Lecturers and three part time lecturers. Respondents were asked about their employment relationship, not their psychological contracts as the term is not widely used or understood in the workplace (Dadi, 2012). Brief field notes were written during the data collection period to describe the individuals met and the more detailed information related to interview answers, for instance university's statutes, the vision and mission of the university or faculty and the university's teaching subjects (Ryan, 2012).

To reveal a more complete picture of perceptions, respondents were asked to draw and describe their perceptions of their employment relationship (Labedz & Lee, 2011; Zhang, 2008a; Zhang, 2008b). The justification for drawings is that they are useful to elicit and illustrate structural aspects of people's perceptions (Gray, 1990; Vosniadou & Brewer, 1994; Zhang, 2008a), to determine people's mental representations that rely on their knowledge (Storey, Fracchia & Muller, 1999) and understanding the meaning placed on relationships (Oliver & Hannafin, 2001). Participants were asked to draw with paper and pen and to describe their employment relationship drawings verbally (Coll & Treagust, 2001). The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and imported to NVivo software along with drawing interpretations. Interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was useful for reporting the experiences, meanings and the reality of participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Descriptions provided along with the drawings were used to interpret the drawings correctly (Zhang, 2008b). The respondents' drawings were grouped or coded into themes or categories which the drawings represent (Zhang 2008a; Zhang 2008b).

FINDINGS: THE MEANINGS PLACED ON RELATIONSHIPS

A number of interviewees considered their employment relationship with their Dean as a partnership:

> I perceive my employment relationship with Dean is a partnership, there isn't any gap between us. We can argue and we don't always need to follow his instructions (Respondent 11, a Head of Study Program, permanent academic staff, Public University A).

Most literature points to partnership in the workplace as being about managing workplace employment relations for joint problem solving between employees and employers to attain mutual benefits (Dietz, Cullen & Coad, 2005). Employee respondents perceived partnerships as them being able to contribute their ideas, suggestions and thoughts to their employer so as to come up with mutually agreed decisions. The quality of such relationships in employment is very important because they contain the organisational values of a mutual commitment to achieve organisational success, mutual understanding of interests of management and employees, mutual high levels of trust to be committed in creating and maintaining good working relationships and cooperation to solve problems to achieve the success of the organisation (Dietz et al., 2005). These organisational values bring positivity to the employment relationship.

Supporting this finding, interviews in one public university indicated that there is a desire for the Dean to give his employees opportunities to express their ideas, suggestions and thoughts and that the Dean should

not be resistant to listening and considering the opinions of staff in his decision making. Employees considered that if the Dean accepts ideas, suggestions and thoughts, then employees will perceive that they have good relationships with him. They also think that by being able to contribute ideas, suggestions and thoughts, that they feel appreciated, trusted and could lead to increased innovation, creativity and a motivational working spirit. Moreover, partnership can be the essential factor to influence productivity (Gerardi & Wolff, 2008) because employees are willing to undertake additional tasks beyond their job descriptions. Similarly, Settoon, Bennet and Liden (1996) found that employees, with high levels of perceived organizational support from their employers within their exchange relationships, are willing to work beyond their formal employment contract.

In Indonesia, the main and functional tasks of employees are known as Tugas Pokok dan Fungsi (TUPOKSI). These are determined by each institution but based on regulations of the Indonesian Government Directorate General Higher Education (DGHE) or 'Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi' (DIKTI).

> My employment relationship with Dean tends to be a partnership. Hence, I do not mind doing other tasks although they are excluded in my TUPOKSI (Respondent 5, a Head of Study Program, permanent academic staff, Public University A).

Partnership was also perceived as friendship by this respondent who thought that if there is no employee-employer status gap between him and the Dean, they will be friends. This respondent is a well-respected academic and a long term colleague of the Dean. Sias & Cahill (1998) found that the opportunity to work together can develop workplace friendship between workplace peers and in superior-subordinate workplace relationships. The development of such relationships is highly probable in Indonesia given that government positions within public universities are highly prized as they provide long-term employment and many public university academics therefore work their entire careers in the same public university (Noviani, 2007). This respondent also indicated:

> A partnership means friendship system. It is not limited by my salary, facilities and so on. Sometimes we are motivated and happy to do something which is not actually our job because we are friends.

Whilst some respondents saw their relationship with their superior as that of friend and were therefore prepared to exceed their job descriptions, they were also motivated to do so on the basis that this may obligate the Dean to provide them with more opportunities to fulfil their 'Tri Dharma' such as undertaking training, attending seminars, receiving research grants and having grants to do community services. Tri Dharma is determined by Indonesian Government Regulations or Undang-Undang Number 12 year 2012 that Indonesian academics are obligated to teach, do research and to do community services (Handini, 2013).

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Respondent 5 is the only respondent who called the partnership a friendship. However, another respondent indicated friendship in a different way. He explained that he has been close friends for more than a decade with his supervisor (the Head of Discipline) who has helped him to solve his marital problem because the problem can affect his job performance. They are close friends both in the working place and in their church. They are both actively engaged in their church ministry. His supervisor is one of the church minister (priest) members or "penatua" (in Manado language) in their church. He is the member of church's congregation, therefore his supervisor acts as the minister to serve him as her congregation. Literatures suggest that resolving employees' personal problems benefits the organisation (Bailyn, Fletcher & Kolb, 1997; Maslach & Jackson, 1984). Lin (2010) also considers that workplace friendship can have a positive impact on the working environment such as improving job performance. Workplace friendship can be in the form of peer relationships in which peer friends might spend more time with one another beyond the formal role relationship. As a result, a higher degree of mutual understanding in the employment relationship may occur (Sias & Cahill, 1998).

The perceptions of other interviewees suggested, however, that for them, the reality of their employment relationship was far from this partnership or friendship ideal:

> In a meeting, we must always agree to what Dean said. The meeting is becoming a place of rubber stamp to legitimate his decision. We just listen and can't go against his decision…. Dean only appreciates someone's opinion if the opinion is same as his opinion (Respondent 3, permanent academic staff, Public University A).

This respondent furthermore said that the Dean often listens to those employees that he considers as his 'friends'. To be his 'friend', however the employees must always agree with the Dean's opinions in the first place. Employees who constantly disagree with the Dean's decisions were said to be excluded from any elite structural position because the Dean would not assign them to such a position. The Dean was considered as arrogant because not all individuals can be friends with the Dean as demanded by the Dean due to personal differences, for example personality. Furthermore, all employees were not able to spend more time or effort to help the Dean. Due to employees are more likely to establish their employment relationship with organization members (Hui, Lee & Rousseau, 2004), employees therefore looked to establish relationships with others within the university. Employees will target their exchange relationship with someone else considered as their employer if that person has power or authority to fulfil the employer's obligations (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; Tomprou & Nikolau, 2011). For example, respondent 3 had compensated by establishing a close working relationship with Vice Rector 2 and identified that when the respondent had a problem they tend to discuss that

problem with Vice Rector 2. This respondent targeted Vice Rector 2 as his employer because Vice Rector 2 was able to fulfil the employer's obligations in their employment relationship. This respondent explained further that he appreciated Vice Rector 2 finally approving and reimbursing his salary payment although the Dean had not approved it in the beginning. The Dean declined to pay his salary because he had not finished his PhD study and he was therefore considered to be on study leave and ineligible to receive his salary payment. Despite this initial rejection, he was still committed to do his tasks at the faculty.

Interestingly, most respondents drew their employment relationship as a hierarchical organisational structure based on Indonesian Government Regulations, including those who perceived their employment relationship as a friendship. They explained that they could overcome the hierarchical structure through friendship. A permanent staff member and the Vice Dean for Student Affairs of a private university drew their employment relationship as a train. The train is supposed to know its destination because it is controlled by the driver. The carriages represent subordinates and the locomotive represents the supervisor. The respondent considered the Dean as his supervisor and that the supervisor needs to control, motivate and give directions to their subordinates to work together based on each individual's job description to achieve the organisation's goals. However, this respondent thought his supervisor kept changing the ongoing working programs; therefore he stated that although the train looked like it was moving, it was not going anywhere.

Whilst an employment relationship that was considered as a partnership or friendship was said to lead to a willingness to do a job beyond the formal job description, some interviewees described their employment relationship as being based solely or predominantly on their job descriptions. Schein (1980) described that the expectations of employees and employers may be based solely on formal agreement such as pay for performance. This implies that their psychological contracts are with a superior and are about obligations to do their job descriptions based on formal terms and often in relation to TUPOKSI:

> My employment relationship with Dean is fine and has been based on my job description (Respondent 27, the Head of Management Department, permanent academic staff, Private University B).

> Personally, I must work based on TUPOKSI ..… and I must be responsible to the Head of Department to report the teaching progress (Respondent 24, permanent academic staff, Public University B).

Indonesian academics fall back on the formal written contracts because they believe if they do their tasks and jobs based on these they will automatically create good relationships with their employers. In order to maintain their good relationships with their employers, they must continue to do their tasks and jobs well.

There was an indication that multiple psychological contracts existed because many of the interviewees saw their relationships as formal, not only with the universities but also with the Indonesian Government (Marks, 2001). The academics interviewed viewed their psychological contracts not only as an exchange agreement between themselves and two other parties but sometimes three parties: the Dean, university and Indonesian Government in the form that they have a direct relationship with the Dean and indirect relationships with the university and Indonesian Government. Some interviewees identified rules or regulations within their employment relationship. An academic elite explained:

> As a subordinate (to the Rector), I have to maintain the synergy between me and Rector. I must maintain a good relationship by properly carrying out the mandate based on rules (Respondent 9, the Dean, permanent academic staff, Public University B).

Organisations consist of people with different talents and experiences including different levels in the hierarchy. It is important to bring together these diverse talents and experiences through sharing perceptions, ideas and knowledge, known as synergy, in order to maximise organisational effectiveness (Harris, 1981). 'Synergy' is derived from the Greek word that means 'working together' (Trofino, 1995). Positive synergy relationships may be understood as employers and employees being committed to work together for organizational success (Nasurdin, Hemdi & Guat, 2008). To support this, the respondent described this synergy as a need to support each other and be committed to develop the faculty in accordance with Indonesian Government Education Regulations. To some extent, there is authority within task execution:

> My employment relationship with Dean is lini or command line, whatever Dean has assigned me some tasks, I must do and report them to Dean (Respondent 44, the Head of Study Program, permanent lecturer, Public University A).

Obedience is commonly recognized as a part of Indonesian culture (Lidyasari, 2012). These findings in regard to obedience suggest that subordinates need to participate actively to maintain the positive synergy relationship with their supervisors by doing their mandates and obeying the supervisors.

Psychological contracts are also understood as employees perceiving they have obligations toward their employer organization and the organization having obligations toward them (Rousseau, 1989). Moreover Rousseau (1995, p. 9-10) emphasized "a key feature of the psychological contract is that the individual voluntarily assents to make and accept certain promises as he or she understands them". The terms obligations and promises, when used in conjunction with the concept of psychological contracts, are sometimes used interchangeably (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). However, psychological contracts are perceived differently by

individuals from different cultures (Rousseau & Schalk, 2000). For example, promises contain obligatory commitment for future actions within the US context (Rousseau, 1995), whilst in Malta, promises become obligations if ratified in a mutual agreement (Cassar & Briner, 2009). Interviewees were asked to identify if they perceived any differences between obligations and promises and their understandings of obligations and promises. They defined obligations as being more committed-oriented behaviours than promises:

> An obligation is an absolute, must be done. It is related to supervisor and subordinate relationships. A promise is not an absolute because we can break or postpone our promise. We may break the promise due to some barriers, for example we can't keep our promise by doing it now, but we can do it later. We still keep fulfilling our promise although not on the right time (Respondent 7, the Head of Study Program, permanent academic staff, Public University B).

Obligations were often perceived as the academic's role as Government employees to do their tasks and obey their supervisors. Doing tasks is a must, related to TUPOKSI. The respondents largely indicated that they would like to be appreciated if they performed well. The form of appreciation could be in official recognition and give them more opportunities to fulfil their Tri Dharma requirements. If their employers are able to fulfil these, they would be satisfied, motivated and have less conflict. They would not leave the university because as Government employees, they would be assigned to work there for the rest of their academic career life.

Within this study context, most respondents were from private universities, and all private universities in the study were Christian universities. Religion plays a central role also in public universities because, to be an Indonesian Government employee, you must possess a religion. Indonesia's national ideology called Pancasila has as its number one principle that Indonesians have belief in the one and only God (Hoon, 2009). Lippman & Keith (2006) found that 100% of Indonesian young adults considered that religion was very important. Perceptions here are formulated through religion and beliefs in God. Ideological values then can be carried into psychological contracts which can lead to loyalty to execute promises and obligations (Cassar & Briner, 2009). Respondents considered that the undertaking of their tasks was a service to God. There was a tendency by academics to prioritize that they have made their promises to God, therefore they were less inclined to emphasize the resource-poor environment in which they worked. An exploration of the influence of religion is beyond the scope of this paper. It is notable; however, that 'spirituality' has tended to displace organised religion as a focus of organisational studies in western societies. Compared to western societies, the institutionalisation of religion in Indonesia creates a different context in which to consider the meaning and influence of religion and spirituality.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to present the results of exploratory research which analysed employment relationships using the lens of psychological contracts to understand the meaning Indonesian academics placed on relationships. Indonesian academics perceived their employment relationship as partnership, friendship, rule bound and synergy. Employee respondents perceived partnerships in the form of them being able to contribute their ideas, suggestions and thoughts to their employer. If their employers accepts and consider their opinions, employees will feel be appreciated, trusted and could lead to increased innovation, creativity and a motivational working spirit. These feelings may lead employees to work beyond their formal employment contract. Some employees perceived their partnerships as friendships in which they did not constrain their efforts based on salary, facilities or prescribed tasks. Friendships are likely to occur given the probability of life-long employment within a single university. Friendships allowed them to reduce the influence of the hierarchical organisational structure and they also were prepared to exceed their job descriptions. However, some employees were motivated to do so on the basis that this may obligate their employer (the Dean) to provide them with more opportunities to fulfil their Tri Dharma requirements. Whilst an employment relationship that was considered as a partnership or friendship was said to lead to a willingness to do a job beyond the formal job description, some interviewees described their employment relationship as being based solely or predominantly on their job descriptions and TUPOKSI. They were rule bound. This implies that their psychological contracts are perceived as obligations to do their job descriptions and TUPOKSI: formal and in written terms. Another aspect of employment relationship identified was synergy. The respondents described relationships based on synergy as a need to support each other and be committed to develop the workplace while still being in accordance with Indonesian Government Education Regulations. These findings in regard to obedience suggest that subordinates need to maintain a positive synergy relationship with their supervisors by doing their mandates and obeying the supervisors. These understandings placed on relationships indicate there is an existence of mutual reciprocity within exchange relationships between employees and employers. The importance of studying psychological contract fulfilment depends on employees and employers agreeing such reciprocity and mutuality (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004). Employees perceived their psychological contracts as being with organizational members with whom their preferred exchange relationship could be fulfilled. Multiple psychological contracts at different levels within and external to the organisation exist within this study context. Further, the findings indicate that,

for a number of reasons, violations or breaches of psychological contracts may be less likely to occur within the Indonesian university context. First, respondents perceived that in undertaking their tasks they provided a service to God. Academics tended to prioritize that they have made their promises to God and they were therefore less inclined to emphasize the lack of resources or the broken promises made by their employers. Second, the findings of this study suggest that in Indonesia, the psychological contract is constructed within a well understood, formal framework. Prior studies of the psychological contract in academic settings highlight the implicit nature of obligations and promises leading to risks of misunderstandings and breaches. In Indonesia, however, the promises and obligations between employer and employee are more explicit arguably leading to opportunities for more collaborative relationships because both employer and employee can rely on TUPOKSI as the basis of their mutual obligations and promises. This framework may have positive implications due to the establishment of a clearer understanding in regard to promises and obligations resulting in less chance that the psychological contract is breached. For further research, there is a need to understand the perceptions of Indonesian academics in regard to their psychological contract fulfilment, elements and the influence of religion. Given the limited equipment, education and compensation provided to Indonesian academics to fulfil their roles, it will be important to understand whether the quality of the personal relationship between employer and employee is sufficient reciprocity to increase productivity and commitment.

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