Examining the employment relationship in UK higher education in a managerialist era

By

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Submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

2015

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SUMMARY

The research investigates academics’ perceptions of managerialist ideology and practice in universities, especially the growing expectations of the current prevailing ideology within the NHE context. The purpose of the research is threefold: first, it investigates academics’ perceptions of new managerialism and its practice in terms of their psychological contracts; second, it investigates values and practices associated with managerialist ideology and its effect on the ideological currency of academics’ psychological contracts, and third, it explores the state of academics’ psychological contracts in UK universities (especially in England) and how this differs from one type of university to another.

The boundaries for the research include the four main university types that constitute HE in England (i.e. ancient, red brick, plate glass and post-1992). The research uses a qualitative critical and extreme case of business academics, where the sample size consists of 32 academics. The data gathered from the interviews with academics from the four university types were first analysed thematically within each type, before the results of each were compared with the whole. The computing software package, MAXQDA is used for the data analysis.

The research findings provide evidence that the NHE context in England is deeply marked by a growing managerialist style and the expectation of meeting certain goals. The data show that the proliferating culture of accountability, audit and performance characterising this NHE environment is currently impacting on academics’ working lives. The findings add to the debate against new managerialism, by demonstrating that it is perceived by many academics to be on the increase and affecting their psychological contracts. In addition, these findings also indicate that the contemporary policies and practices of new managerialism in England negatively impact upon academics’ perceptions of the extent to which the ideological currency of their psychological contract is fulfilled. The research provides insights by showing how practice differs across the university types being compared. The four main university types under study demonstrate both the similarities and differences of the impact of managerialism on the academic environment in England.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank my supervisors, Dr Alfred Crossman and Dr Alex Bristow, for their mentorship, enthusiasm and guidance in supervising this thesis. Their continuous support was invaluable from the outset of their supervision, especially their constructive comments all through this thesis.

I would also like to thank all those who kindly accepted to take part in this research and for their significant contribution. I wish them a prosperous career in their academic life.

Lastly, and most importantly, I wish to thank my wife for her endless support from the beginning of my study.
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1.1 Introduction

This research seeks to explore those values and practices associated with the new managerialism in UK universities, which undermine the academic ethos and call into question the claims that such a culture is achieving its aspirations (e.g. improving the working lives of academics and the student experience). The aim of this research in particular is to make a contribution to the existing body of knowledge about the relationship between new managerialism and academics in English universities. This will be done by exploring business academics’ psychological contracts in relation to managerialist ideology and practice in universities. Unlike the legal-economic contract, the psychological contract is fundamentally shaped by a perception of reality which corresponds to the nature of an exchange relationship. It resides only in the mind of an individual, where a perception of mutuality and reciprocity is formulated (Rousseau and Tijoriwala, 1998).

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the overall research problem and present its significance through the aims and objectives pursued. It shall be organised as follows: Section 1.2 provides rationale for the research, and Section 1.3 provides a brief theoretical background of psychological contracts, academic professions and new managerialism. Section 1.4 introduces the aims and objectives of the research, while Section 1.5 presents the context in which the research was conducted, and Section 1.6 provides an overview of the structure and process of the subsequent chapters.

1.2 The Research Rationale

Given the scant attention awarded to exploring the psychological contract of academics in universities (Shen, 2010) and the fact that values and practices in UK universities, driven by new managerialism, are increasingly placing constraints and pressure on the working lives of academics (Kok et al., 2010), this research seeks to examine the relationship between new managerialism and the psychological contract of academics. This is also significant as the psychological contract has been regarded as an explanatory framework for the employment relationship (Rousseau, 1989; Shoe and Tetrick, 1994) and is viewed as a vital key to understanding employees’ behaviour and attitudes (e.g. Schein, 1980; Rousseau, 1996).
In addition, much of the research on the psychological contract has focused on either relational or transactional contracts overlooking the possible existence of other components in the psychological contract, namely ideological currency. This absence is clear in the limited studies available on the psychological contracts of academics. According to Thompson and Bunderson (2003), ideological currency plays an important role in the formation and reformation of individual expectations and obligations and so an examination of this concept could provide more insights into academics’ psychological contracts.

In the light of the above, the rationale for this research is the apparent gap in the literature to date and the potential for furthering our understanding of the relationship between academics and their management in universities, especially in relation to the psychological contracts of the former.

1.3 Overview of the Research
This research aims to investigate how academics perceive the current prevailing managerialist ideology within the context of the new higher education (NHE) (Jary and Parker, 1998), concerning their perceptions of growing expectations of the exchange relationship with management. Such expectations have been reshaped ‘around an idealised image of corporate efficiency [and] a strong managerial culture, and profit-making ideals’ (Winter, 2009, p. 121).

The literature suggests that, within the NHE context, managerialism has grown to become the dominant ideology controlling universities and their assets. This is evident in the tools embraced by proponents of managerialism to impose the external accountability to which academics must conform (the widespread use of league tables, performance indicators, target settings and performance management (Kirkpatrick and Lucio, 1998)). Such forms of control and practice are not only intended to monitor the performance of academics, but also to ostensibly reduce their power in public bureaucracy, while changing the way in which public services are provided and organised (Deem, 2004). This has, according to Trowler (1998, p. 50-54), lead to ‘work intensification and degradation, bureaucratization, power shift and surveillance.’

It appears that ‘the new cultural epoch of managerialism’ (Shore and Wright, 2000, p. 58) has affected the working lives of academics and the way in which perceptions of reality are constructed. The subsequent perception of this as being fair or unfair, regardless of its actual status, is what shapes the psychological contract; in other words, the argument over whether or
not a perception reflects reality in terms of promises kept or broken by the employer is not relevant. Residing only in the mind of an academic, the psychological contract can be defined as a psychological attachment between themselves and the organisation, whether directly or indirectly, where such a relationship exists with the university or through its agents. Fulfilment, breach and/or violation of the contract will be fundamentally determined by perceptions of reality as being either fair or unfair: judgements which exist ‘in the eye of the beholder’ (Rousseau, 1989, p. 123).

Therefore, this research seeks to extend the existing literature with an examination of the relationship between managerialism and the psychological contract of academics. It endeavours to investigate academics’ perceptions of reality regarding the growing bundle of constraints and obligations associated with NHE, such as the reduction of privileges, and its impact on their working lives. This research also aims to extend the debate over the impact of new managerialism upon academia and generate novel insights into the nature of its effects across the different types of universities in England today (i.e. ancient, red brick, plate glass and post-1992). Exploring how academics perceive the nature of the effects of managerialism across these four university types is important, as each type was established during a different historical era, for different purposes and according to a distinct ethos (Furlong and Cartmel, 2009; Wæraas and Solbakk, 2009).

In addition, this research aims to draw on psychological contract literature to examine the changing nature of academic work and this, from the much-overlooked ideological currency perspective. By so doing, an argument may be built around the potential causes and signs that might lead to academics perceiving an ideological breach of their psychological contract in the NHE context. In addition, this research aims to broaden the literature on academics’ psychological contract by developing a model that articulates the conditions under which the ideological breach of academics’ psychological contract is likely to occur.

Last but not least, there appears to be a dearth of empirical research focusing on the dynamic nature of the psychological contract of academics. Whilst there is concurrence among researchers that the contract is subject to change and development, limited studies have investigated how the exchange relationship between employers and employees advances (Parzefall and Hakanen, 2010) or how the contract actually constitutes an unfolding chain of events (Conway and Briner, 2005). The latter note the lack of research concerning such matters and continue by explaining that one example may be the overlooked emotions and behaviour
involved in a perceived breach and its outcomes. Therefore, this research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by venturing to offer a comprehensive framework that will illustrate the development of individuals’ psychological contracts throughout the employment relationship. It attempts to depict the on-going evaluation of perceived events that continue shaping perceptions of reality in ‘the eye of the beholder.’

1.4 Research Aims and Objectives
This thesis therefore aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge concerning the relationship between academics and their universities and its agents. The particular focus of the research is the relationship between managerialism and the psychological contract of academics in England today. With this research, the author hopes to contribute to descriptions of academics’ perceptions of reality in terms of managerialist ideology and practice in universities as it is conveyed by its proponents. Given the limited existing studies focusing on the psychological contract of academics in universities (Shen, 2010), the research is considered as exploratory.

Based upon the reviews of the literature on psychological contract, managerialism and professionalism, two research objectives have been formulated:

1. To investigate academics’ perception of new managerialism and its practice in terms of their psychological contracts, and how their perception differ across the different types of UK universities.

2. To investigate values and practices associated with managerialist ideology and its effect on the ideological currency of academics’ psychological contracts

1.5 The research Context
The boundaries for the research include the four main university types that constitute higher education in England (i.e. ancient, red brick, plate glass and post-1992). The research focuses exclusively on those members who work in the business schools of a university type. One reason behind limiting the scope of this study purely to business schools is the evidence suggested by the literature that business schools have suffered the most as a result of managerialist practices (Starkey and Madan, 2001; Starkey, Hatchuel and Tempest, 2004; Cornuel 2005). This research seeks to explore a management topic within management schools.
1.6 Research design
This research is qualitative and explorative in nature, using an in-depth, semi-structured interview technique. The sampling frame consists of a list of academics who, at the time of the interviews, were currently employed in business schools across the four historical types of university in the UK. The sample includes academics from ancient (n=5), red brick (n=10), plate glass (n=10) and post-1992 universities (n=7). The strategy adopted is purposive homogeneous sampling, which enables the researcher to study the group in great depth. In addition, the selection of a critical case sample of business academics was considered to be appropriate for addressing the research objectives. This is not only because such a design has the potential to offer a rich understanding of the NHE context in England today, but also because it helps capture the social exchange relationship between the management and academics in universities of each type.

The data gathered from the interviews with academics from the four university types were first analysed thematically within each type, before the results of each were compared with the whole. Furthermore, the research utilised a critical incident technique (CIT) for parts of the interviews, to seek more depth and help tap into any events which may have played a critical role in shaping the psychological contract of the participating academics. The computing software package, MAXQDA was then used to facilitate the organisation and coding of data during analysis.

1.7 Thesis structure
Following the Introduction chapter, chapter Two presents an argument that new managerialism has impacted the social exchange relationship between academic professionals. It starts by exploring the events which have been most influential in leading to the establishment of the NHE context. The rise of neoliberal governmentality, adopting quasi-market techniques, along with a commodification of the sector, has displaced the idea of the sector as a social institution and established it as an industry. In the midst of this historical landscape, new managerialism has penetrated UK HE, becoming the dominant ideology of the NHE. This is followed by highlighting the implications of managerialist practice for the academic professions, along with increased obligations stemming from increased accountability. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the impact of managerialist ideology upon the trust relationship between academics and their management.
Chapter Three examines the relevant literature in relation to the psychological contract. The chapter conveys the historical development associated with the psychological contract throughout the years. It reviews and discusses the literature of the psychological contract, along with related theories, such as Social Exchange Theory, the norm of reciprocity and Equity Theory. This is followed by a discussion of the characteristics of the psychological contract construct. The focus of the chapter then moves on to the factors that influence an individual psychological contract. The discussion emphasises the dynamic nature of the contract, which continues to evolve in response to various individual, organisational and environmental factors. A proposed model, built on the literature reviewed in the chapter, is then introduced. It illustrates the formation and development of an employee’s psychological contract in the course of the employment relationship. The final section in the chapter discusses the identity of the psychological contract. It addresses the question raised with regard to whether the psychological contract in its current form may be considered as a concept or a construct.

Chapter Four provides an account of the methodological approach for the research. It starts by reviewing the philosophical basis and the research approach for this study. This is followed by outlining the principles underpinning the study design and discussing the justifications for adopting an extreme and critical case. The next section discusses the method of conducting the research. Next, the chapter presents an explanation of the data collection process for the study. It includes the sampling frame and interview arrangements. The chapter subsequently provides a justification for the selection of a thematic method as a means of analysis. The chapter also addresses the ethical issues relevant to the research. It then closes by providing an argument concerning the robustness of the adopted qualitative research method.

Chapter Five presents and discusses the results of the qualitative data collected, after this had been analysed. It opens with the profiles of academics participating in this study. These are followed by an analysis of those areas affected by new managerialism and its practices in UK universities, which show an imbalance in the expectations driven by managerialist practices being imposed on academics in UK universities. Next, the chapter presents academics’ perceptions of the constraints and obligations driven by managerialist ideology, which affect the ideological currency of their psychological contracts. The chapter subsequently presents and discusses the state of academics’ psychological contracts, which will provide an account of academics’ sense of fairness and trust and their belief that their universities have delivered on the deal between them. Throughout the chapter, an argument is presented which shows how
practice differs across the four university types being compared and demonstrates the similarities and differences of the impact of managerialism on the academic environment.

The thesis concludes in chapter Six with an overall contributions and recommendations for further research. In addition, the chapter presents a discussion of the limitations of the research in terms of the process adopted and the findings generated.

1.8 Conclusion
This chapter has introduced the research by presenting the overall research problem. The chapter also provides a brief overview of the growing expectations of new managerialism in the NHE context, with particular emphasis on its impact upon psychological contracts. Moreover, it has presented the research aims and objectives. The context in which the research was conducted has been described, along with an overview of the structure of the subsequent chapters and how they will unfold.

The next chapter evaluates the relationship between managerialism and professionalism in higher education. It discusses the impact of market-oriented, neoliberal and managerial discourses in shaping the expectations of academics with regard to job entitlements. The effect of the changing context and conditions in the sector due to growing constraints driven by the current and prevailing managerialist regime is a central discussion in the chapter. Academics in this context and under these conditions are experiencing difficulties in adapting to the present regime.
Chapter Two
Changing contexts and the realm of UK higher education – neoliberal movements and the collision between managerialism and professionalism

2.1 Introduction
This chapter conveys an analysis of the changes and expansion of higher education (HE) in England since the mid-1970s. A number of significant political decisions from that time were made in the Thatcher era and have continued to shape HE policy up to this day. Throughout this chapter, the aim is to investigate the history of policy agendas along with its implications upon HE, especially managerialist ideology and practice in affecting the academics’ psychological contracts. By doing so, attempts to offer a meaningful context for empirical study ensue.

Evidently, the HE sector has not been isolated from the profound transformation worldwide, which has been instigated by the contemporary political movement of neoliberalism (that revolves around the adoption of market mechanism), where the sector has been conceived as a lucrative service in such a global and competitive market. Simkins (1999) notes that there is a marked inexorable link between both the micro-context of educational institutions and the macro-context of national policy.

This chapter tracks the evolution of most of the prominent political agendas affecting university governance over the last two decades or so, especially between the Robbins and Dearing Reports. Echoing the Slaughter and Leslie (1997); Marginson (2000); Marginson and Considine (2000); Delanty (2001); Noble (2002); Kolsaker (2008) approaches, this study points out the rise of neoliberal governmentality along with the impact of funding cuts upon the entire HE sector. It outlines the influence of market-oriented values and managerial practice in reconstructing the sector. The sequence of events conveyed here in relation to the development of HE confirms Birnbaum’s observation that ‘The idea of higher education as a social institution has been displaced by higher education as an industry’ (Birnbaum, 2000, p. 226).

The chapter, afterwards, turns its attention to the new doctrine that has spread throughout the ‘new higher education’ (NHE) (Jary and Parker, eds., 1998). Managerialist ideology has grown to become the dominant ideology controlling universities and their assets. This is evident in the tools embraced by proponents of managerialism to impose the external accountability to which
academics must conform (the widespread use of league tables, performance indicators, target settings and performance management (Kirkpatrick and Lucio, 1995)).

The chapter begins by offering a brief conceptualisation of the present NHE context, along with an enumeration of the most influential successive events to have led to the establishment of its present context. This is only to provide the reader with a quick overview of these events, and to kindle their curiosity about how the new context emerged. Subsequently, the chapter will present a detailed analysis of such events and the way in which they have shifted conventional HE towards NHE, where managerialism has pulled the rug from under professionalism. It is a phase that has been characterised by the reduction of professional power in public bureaucracy and the curtailing of the autonomy of academic professions. The chapter concludes by highlighting the implications of managerialist practice on academic professions, along with an increasing load of accountability obligations.

2.2 The present context of HE
Since the 1970s, UK HE has passed through a remarkable sequence of events that continue to shape its boundaries in many aspects. Besides the restructuring programmes instigated by neoliberalism and represented by ‘commodification’ (Willmott, 1995; Lawrence and Sharma, 2002), the ‘marketization’ (Selwyn and Shore, 1998; Muller-Camen and Salzgeber, 2005) and ‘commercialisation’ (Willmott, 2003) of academic work and knowledge, as well as the introduction of new forms of control into academia, highlight the changing character of HE. While some have defined these forms as the emergence of an ‘academic panopticon’ (Shore and Roberts, 1995; Amit, 2000), others view them as the introduction of the ‘audit culture’ into HE (Strathern, 2000). Jary and Parker (1998) point out that such steps have heralded the arrival of the ‘new higher education’ (NHE) (Bristow, 2008).

Represented by its current characteristics, NHE is placing great pressure upon academia, driven by its involvement in neoliberal governmentality and various technologies of surveillance and measurement. Managerialist ideology, within such a context, has penetrated UK HE, becoming its dominant ideology, and the framework controlling universities and their assets. However, prior to engaging in an analysis of the NHE context and its implications for academics, the chapter first conveys an analysis of the historical development of UK HE, during which the sector has gone through a shift within its context instigated by the aforementioned sequence of events over the last four decades.
2.3 Neoliberalism
Since the mid-1970s, economic strategies here in the UK have evolved by relying on fiscal and monetary policies, where the aim is to sustain a stable macroeconomic framework by maintaining inflation and keeping interest rates low. Policies have called on keeping a tight rein on public expenditure through the promotion of monetarism and anti-statism projects associated with Thatcherism. These have been continually applied since that particular era. Perhaps the rationale for nurturing such steps include a slowdown in growth, a steep rise in unemployment rates and high inflation across several developed countries, amongst which the UK has not been immune to such outcomes. A call to embrace a framework for remedying such a situation has been especially driven by noticeable failure on the part of Keynesian economics and aims to cope with the contradictory issues of concurrent rises in both unemployment and inflation (Teeple, 2000; Carroll and Ratner, 2005; Hursh, 2005).

Emerging from the Chicago School, neoliberalism has attained credibility following the collapse of the international monetary framework, the Bretton Woods agreement, in early 1971. In contrast to the declining welfare economy, particularly its maximisation of social welfare, neoliberal market mechanisms have attracted increasing interest in governing public sectors, including HE in the UK (Avis, 1996; Marginson, 1997; Deem, 2001). Thatcherite projects were based upon a neoliberal accumulation strategy, along with the ‘commitment to privatisation, deregulation and the introduction of commercial criteria into any residual state activities’ (Jessop et al., 1988, p. 171), as well as prioritising control over inflation, the elimination of public sector borrowing and the lowering of public expenses and taxation (Gamble, 2000, p. 123).

Harvey’s (2005, p. 2, 3) observations on the meaning of neoliberalism are worth quoting at some length,

‘Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices …There has everywhere been an emphatic turn towards neoliberalism in political-economic practices and thinking since the 1970s…Neoliberalism has, in short, become hegemonic as a mode of discourse. It has pervasive effects on ways of thought to the
point where it has become incorporated into the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world.'

This particular session, it can be seen that the move has become more widespread and pervasive, and this is also noticeable when looking at the movement of political parties since the 1970s. The following Figure demonstrates this growing dominance of neoliberalism ideas, whereby the shift of the main political parties has been in favour of economic neo-liberalism, as the Political Compass illustrates:

Figure 2.1 A Political Compass shows the political shift of the main English parties since the 1970.

The underlying principle of neoliberalism is the belief that the State should be regarded as an organisation operated by self-seeking politicians and bureaucrats rather than as an impartial
social guardian, where members not only have restricted ability to collect information and carry out policies but are also subject to pressure from interest groups (Chang, 2002, p. 540). In fact, it argues that the price driven by government failure shaped by regulatory capture and corruption is much greater than the price of market failure. Accordingly, the State should take on a far less active role, rather than making an effort to correct these failures.

The ascendancy of neoliberalism embedded in the marketisation, commodification and managerial governance of HE during the last four decades is evident in a number of approaches adopted in universities, for instance, competitive funding allocation, league tables, performance targets, the commodification of degrees and managerial practice. Evidence of the apparent presence of neoliberal ideology here in UK universities perhaps consists of the establishment of regulatory agencies in HE as represented by the State, namely the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in 1997 and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in 1992, along with initiatives such as peer review mechanism in 1989 and the National Student Survey (NSS) in 2005. For instance, one of the roles of the HEFCE regulatory agency is to advise the State on the sector’s needs and to ensure that universities are financially healthy and maintain an adequate level of quality in their academic programmes (HEFCE, 1999). The agency’s activities have revolved around the notion of ‘the state as an investor in and a procurer of higher education services for which institutions competed to supply’ (King, 2004, p. 23). The formula of allocating funds to universities has taken into account student numbers as it will contribute significantly to offset teaching costs.

This transformation period has been regarded as an ‘elite-mass paradigm shift’ (Scott, 1995), where it is argued that the emergence of a mass HE system has been built up from ‘a series of mutable modernisation- of society, economy, culture and science as well as academy’ (p. 168). He continues by explaining that such complex modernisation created within political and socio-economic contexts is shaping the evolution of state action and consequently, what universities have become. However, Edwards and Miller (1998, p. 50) argue that there seems to be an affinity between the clear reflexivity of universities and the State’s endeavour to institute an ideological shift away from the traditional liberal ideal of HE, towards a description of the economic ideology of education provided by Tapper and Salter (1994, p.12): ‘Its basic principle is that education is an economic resource which should be organised in a way that maximises its contribution to Britain’s industrial development. From this premise it follows that socially relevant, or applied knowledge is more important than pure knowledge, that HE institutions should be responsive to economic needs, and that it is the responsibility of the state
to ensure that these institutions are held accountable for carrying out their economic role correctly.’

Evidently, the introduction of such an ideology, along with attempts to employ educational power, have since strived to shift the ethos of universities as knowledge-based organisations, and more explicitly, in harnessing the activity of academic staff in the direction of market forces as a way of controlling their contribution to national economic performance (Prichard and Willmott, 1997).

2.4 The marketisation of the sector
Following the formation of a Conservative government in 1979, HE in the UK went through a marked change in terms of its political governance. The rise of neoliberalism paved the way for embracing quasi-market practice. Cost cutting and efficiency were two mechanisms introduced as a means of university retrenchment. The importance of economic outcomes was emphasised for the sociological axiom of HE, i.e. objective knowledge which is no longer related to any effectiveness for those institutions that disseminate autonomy, as proposed by Barnett (1990, p. 10) in his argument concerning traditional HE. The determination of success or failure has become contingent on market forces, whereby market standards and competition with other suppliers (educational institutions) turn out to be an inevitable choice (Bottery, 2000, p. 30)

The adoption of market ideology policies in HE has not been smoothly accommodated as the sector’s environment differs from that of a free market. Perhaps this is because the ‘market’ concept in HE is regarded as one consisting of multiple markets, where lecturers, research staff, students, donations, research grants, and graduate and training programmes compose such markets (Jongbloed, 2003, p.111). Besides, subsidy, value for money and the perception of value and satisfaction influence the price mechanism in HE rather than the supply and demand principles of the free market. However, this has not hindered decision makers from continuing to incorporate market policies in universities. The main rhetoric is to encourage HE providers to give more attention to students and to innovation in research and teaching, along with increasing efficiency. One example consists of different tuition fees introduced for undergraduate degrees, which has not only influenced consumer (student) choice, but also the supply of university courses to satisfy consumer tastes.

There is little argument that the Thatcher era placed considerable pressure on the HE sector, and more specifically, on universities. Shatock (1989, p. 34) notes that ‘Within three days of
Mrs Thatcher’s taking office in 1979, £100 million were cut overnight from the universities’ budgets, and, between 1980 and 1984, 17% was removed from the grants made by the governments to the UGC.’ An accumulation of consequent cuts in funds resulted in short-term upheaval. With the aim of short-term expediency, some universities laid off a good number of their staff at the time in order to save money. Then, after a few years, the same universities came back and employed staff qualified in the exact same subject areas (Moore, 1996, p.192). In fact, some universities found themselves in financial difficulties due to such financial cuts (e.g. Edinburgh and Lancaster (Thorley, 1998, p. 63, 84)). Such pressure has clearly generated a new attitude in the university atmosphere; not only did it contribute to the changing ethos within universities, but also to the relationship between universities as cuts vary based on a number of performance measures. Some of the instances of these measures include research quality, relevant student numbers on different courses, unit costs and the distribution of academics and their ages (Shattock, 2003, p.2). From a certain perspective, it is argued that things have gone from bad to worse; the publication of the Jarratt report in 1985, along with the ‘dual support’ decision by the University Grants Committee (UGC) have completely squashed some of the ambitious hopes to return to the pre-Thatcher era. The latter decision has changed the bases for allocating recurrent funding to a formula that consists of a qualitative assessment of research and a resource unit for teaching. Such decisions have signalled a shift in the normal relationship between the State and universities to one that views the latter as agents. In addition, the Jarratt report initiated a marked transition in the sector. Jackson (1999, p.142) notes that the report ‘in some ways marked a milestone for the management of UK universities.’ For the first time, universities were regarded as ‘corporate enterprises.’ Shore and Wright (2000, p. 67) explain that the report recommends universities to ‘introduce the language of new managerialism to the university sector.’ The report argues that universities are first and foremost corporate enterprises’ and that ‘[the] crucial issue is how a university achieves maximum value for money’ (Jarratt Report, 1985, p. 36, cited in Shore and Wright, 2000, p. 67). Besides, the report proposes that it is time to apply a human capital perspective as ‘the time of academic staff is the primary resource of a university and it needs to be managed and accounted for with appropriate skill and care’ (Jarratt Report, 1985, p.28, cited in Barry, Chandler and Clark, 2001, p. 89). The report has prepared the ground for the adoption of a new management approach within universities.

The last quinquennia of the 80s have continued to shift perspectives on managing universities, especially where funding and human capital resources were concerned. Following the steps of the Jarratt report and ‘dual support’, the NAB Good Management Practise Report (1987), the
Educational Reform Act of 1988 and the Review of the University Grants Committee (Crohan Report, 1987) have set the scene for bringing more business-like and private sector ideals to HE in general and universities in particular, as a response to government wishes (Peat Marwick McLintock, 1990, p. 3). Academic professions were hit hard as one of the clauses in the 1988 Education Reform Act introduced the demise of ‘academic tenure which had been lecturers’ guarantee of freedom of speech as well as job security’ (Shore and Wright, 2000, p. 68). What is more, the 1988 conflict between the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and Vice Chancellors about bringing in appraisal mechanisms amplified the strained relationship (Shore and Wright, 2000). Although some viewed such a situation as an instance of successful professional resistance to the more strident aspects of managerialism (e.g. Pollitt 1993, p. 80), the outcome agreement that ‘there was to be no linkage between appraisal, any process of target-setting, differential pay or promotion,’ became greatly compromised in practice (Shore and Wright 2000, p. 68). In their words, Shore and Wright portrayed a new picture of universities in relation to the impact upon academic freedom, as follows:

‘Although the introduction of audit culture into higher education in the early 1980s made some progress, it was not until the post-1987 wave of New Public Management reforms that, under the guise of ‘enhancing quality’ and ‘achieving cultural change’, the effect on the structure and the professionalism of individuals really began to bite’ (Shore and Wright, 2000, p. 69).

Clearly, such a sequence of events illustrated the government intentions in their emphasis on the role of universities, not only regarding their educational purposes, but also their seriousness about taking into account universities’ obligatory role in creating economic prosperity. A common link across these events is the call for more governmental control of the HE sector along with universities’ control of resources, whereby performance monitoring has subsequently accompanied universities, showing a transformation of the relationship between them and the State towards greater accountability.

In spite of the influence of the UGC in imposing measures for continuous cuts in funding during this period, politicians have argued against its performance. Williams (1999, p. 158) note that ‘the UGC was often considered to be the ideal model of public funding of universities. Its quinquennial grant system linked funding to institutional plans, but otherwise gave universities almost complete freedom in deciding on how to spend their money.’ In fact, Salter (2002, p. 249) points out that New Right politicians sought the abolition of the UGC as
they regarded its handling of the cuts in 1981 as ‘an exercise in the protection of academic value.’ Accordingly, the 1988 Education Reform Act replaced the UGC with the Universities Funding Council (UFC). Universities have since witnessed a shift in autonomy and freedom from their side to an increase in governance and control from the State side. There is a new framework, where the government has become more interventionist (Jongbloed, 2003). The arrangement of formula funding following the replacement of the UGC ensured that university income became largely dependent on student numbers.

Evidently, the changes in the way universities are regulated have enabled the government to retain overall control by delegating responsibilities using self-regulation, in order to give some space to universities (Lemke, 2001). This apparent paradox between neo-liberalist market-orientation and government control has been unpacked by Shore and Wright (2000, pp. 68-69) where they note that:

‘Audit heralded a significant break with the principle of academic autonomy. Rather than attacking university autonomy head on, the government concealed the extent of its intervention by recruiting a host of intermediary agencies and by mobilising academics themselves as managerial professionals and active accomplices in this process’ (Shore and Wright 2000, p. 68, 69, cited in Bristow, 2008).

The self-regulatory framework enables universities to a degree of self-management, such as by internally allocating resources. This framework and particularly the determination of resource allocation to universities, is monitored by the Quality Assurance Agency’s (QAA) teaching audit and the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). Deem (1998) notes that, among the restrictive conditions imposed on HE, the UK government has made several changes in funding structure monitored by a range of quangos, e.g. education funding bodies and the Quality Assurance Agency. This has led to a shift away from the conventional core of HE towards more quantifiable objectives and goals. Such an approach, along with increasing competition for funding has had implications for the culture within universities; this will be explored later in the chapter. Although the government has recognised the potential and vital role of universities in the national economy, it seems it has failed to formulate a holistic approach due to conflicting priorities and the drive to make these institutions more like private companies. Scott (1999, cited in Watson, 2000, p. 16) argues that this is perhaps due to political expediency rather than deliberate planning ‘Britain seems to have acquired a mass system of higher education in a fit of guilty absent-mindedness.’ Shattock (2006, p.138) supports such an
argument by explaining that no grand plan has ever been established to develop the HE sector; it has instead developed in a piecemeal way.

The 1990s proved to advocate consumerism from the side of the State, during which political agenda called for higher service standards in the sector (Salter, 2002, p. 250). Such political expediency in the name of students’ interests sought to impose greater accountability. More and more emphasis on high quality and value for money was the main thrust for speeding up steps to cope with the competitive global market. Operating from a neoliberal perspective, universities were obliged to offer a high quality product at a price that consumers (students) were prepared to pay. In so doing, it would keep them successful and at the same time attract more consumers (students) than other competitors (institutions) who overlooked such formulae. Naidoo and Jamieson (2005, p. 270) point out that below standard services in HE would be rejected, which means that providers of these services would lose both customers and revenue. Such logic can lead to the assumption that this formula encourages competition between universities, resulting in a more efficient, effective and equitable HE system, especially as there are only limited resources (Naidoo and Jamieson, 2005, p. 270). However, the aforementioned simulation of free market principles in HE behaviour would seem implausible. This is because the HE market consists of a number of influential factors within its boundaries, such as external intervention from various agencies and councils and the fact that such a market is artificially created. In spite of this, endeavours to embrace market-oriented ideology were evident in replacing the UFC with the Higher Education Funding Councils for England (HEFCE). The 1992 Further and Higher Education Act required this new non-departmental public body to establish Quality Assurance Committees (QACs), through which it decided that any subsequent funding related decisions would be informed by the outcomes of quality audits. Salter (2002, p. 249) observes that the State started at that point to view itself as acting on behalf of the consumer (students) in order to hold greater control upon the public sector, especially HE.

It was then that worries begin to arise about the increasing trend towards maintaining control over universities. The establishment of the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) from the universities’ side was an attempt to seize back some control over the quality assurance regime. This is because universities started to notice that quality assurance language had become a hot topic in relation to educational governance in 1995. As a result, and for the sake of retaining some control from their side, a new group of managers was introduced to show the universities’ goodwill in intending to apply the new quality assurance procedures (Salter, 2002). Perhaps such capitulation, driven by government pressures, inaugurated the
managerialist ideology that has grown ever more persuasive and entrenched in university culture ever since. This has paved the way towards empowering more bureaucratic control to regulate processes in universities. An example would be the replacement of the traditional ethic of collegiality and professional discretion with regulatory bureaucratic processes and objectives. Again, the State has succeeded in retaining its control over universities, as McNay (1999, p. 37) argues, since the increase in bureaucratic procedures has provided more political control, whereby a sense of disempowerment across workers in the sectors has spread.

The noticeable increase in the number of students indicated in the Dearing Report in 1997 has attracted a great deal of attention since it illustrates the sector’s capacity to contribute more to both society and the economy. The report notes that the number of students had more than doubled over the previous two decades, signalling an expansion of the sector and more importantly, a transformation into a mass system of HE in Britain (Scott, 1998, p. 38). The report emphasises the fact that ‘higher education is fundamental to the social, economic and cultural health of the nation.’ It identified two prerequisites for the sector to be able to attain success and prosperity. One concerned a diverse range of well-managed, autonomous institutions displaying a commitment to meeting their established and distinctive objectives. The second involved professional and committed staff, who were trained, rewarded and respected for their work (Dearing Report, 1997).

Of particular interest to this study are the findings of work conducted in the Dearing Report. The respective section discusses the impact of changes in HE upon academic staff. The findings of the conducted research highlight an increasing feeling of stress and sense of disillusionment across staff (Dearing Report No. 3, 1997). Such impact and others will be discussed later on in this chapter.

2.5 The commodification of the sector
As HE has continued to be governed by political discourse favouring market orientation, university education has been gradually redefined as a tradable market. The main theme of knowledge production has been characterized by greater prioritization of research for commercial advancement, along with a transfer from the academic to the commercial sector (Naidoo, 2003, p. 254). Contrary to traditional education, the commodification of HE places an emphasis on economic values as a primary objective and use-value as secondary. Values start to be measured in terms of an institution’s value to society and the value of academics in terms of their value to their institution, and then the market value of the degree provided. Besides,
mechanisms of performativity are implemented to ensure the maximization of individuals’
values. Olssen, Codd and O’neill (2004) notes that such practice has not only shifted the worth
and purpose of education from its intrinsic and immeasurable value, but also devalues
individuals, as measurements are determined according to economic, rather than intrinsic
value. Naidoo and Jamieson (2005, p. 279) support this argument by explaining that such
practices may hinder creativity and innovation as they threaten academics’ privileges and
challenge their standards.

A significant impact of commodification in HE is the growing trend to view academics on the
basis of economic criteria. As part of neo-liberal governmentality, commodification has
affected the way in which academics are assessed and identified. Rather than being
acknowledged and rewarded as producers of knowledge, academics are now recognised and
valued as producers of commodities in the form of publications (Willmott, 2003). The level of
funding from the State which is allocated to universities has become largely determined by
tangible and measurable commodities. Willmott (2003, p. 135), for example, notes that, ‘The
value of an academic’s knowledge (e.g. the contents of a publication) is increasingly assessed
in terms of its contribution to corporate earnings (is it a ‘5’ or does it have lesser income
potential?) rather than its contribution to collective learning.’

Besides the above, the established association between academic excellence and high-ranking
journal publications has influenced the characteristics of academics and the way in which they
prioritise their practice in fulfilling the requirements of these journals (Harley and Lee, 1997;
Judge, Cable, Colbert and Rynes, 2007). Such a mechanism for measuring the research
productivity of academics has to some certain extent circumvented the full exercise of their
freedom (Wicks, 2004).

In addition, the impact of commodification has cast its shadow over the relationship between
academics and students. Sacks (1996) notes that whilst students view themselves as consumers
with entitlements and rights, academics suffer through a loss of entitlement. As education as a
whole becomes a mechanism of performativity (Barnett, 2000), students and academics are
placing greater emphasis on measurable results instead of on intrinsic values. Perhaps such an
entitlement view from the student side is now intensified due to the recent dramatic increase in
tuition fees in English universities, which might accordingly exert pressure on academic staff at
some point in the future.
Related to the above, but from a different angle, Willmott (1995, p. 1002) argues that the growing reference to students as ‘customers’ perpetuates the notion that a degree is a commodity to be replaced for a job, instead of a ‘liberal education that prepares students for life, citizenship, or the continuation and enrichment of a cultural heritage.’

The on-going changes in HE governance, leading to the commodification of the sector and increased bureaucracy in the name of accountability, have since affected academia. On one hand, students are learning to be more customer-minded and have growing expectations of the quality of teaching and services. This is due to the clear marketisation of the HE sector, along with increasing tuition fees. In addition, it seems rational that the quality of the students’ learning experience may become negatively affected due to the various quality systems academics have to adhere to, or perhaps due to being denied many positive university experiences, such as interacting at an intellectually stimulating level with academics. The new obligatory duties and expectations that staff are obliged to fulfil - to be discussed in more detail later in the chapter - may force them to shift their priorities towards increasing productivity in other tasks.

On the other hand, academics’ expectations have been significantly influenced by such policies, undermining the privileges they once enjoyed. Besides, the expansion in student numbers, accompanied by heavier workloads, has continued to challenge university academics, shaping their expectations in some instances and having a negative impact in others. For example, Houston, Meyer, and Paewai (2006) note that recent dialogue in relation to the place of universities in the knowledge society has not necessarily reflected upon the effect on workloads, challenging academics with regard to work-life balance and stress.

2.6 Managerialism and the NHE

As expressed earlier in this study, UK HE has gone through a remarkable sequence of events that continue to shape its boundaries in many aspects. Besides the restructuring programmes instigated by neoliberalism and represented by ‘commodification’ (Willmott 1995; Lawrence and Sharma, 2002), ‘marketization’ (Selwyn and Shore, 1998; Muller-Camen and Salzgeber, 2005) and ‘commercialisation’ (Willmott, 2003) of academic work and knowledge, as well as the introduction of new forms of control into academia, highlight the changing character of HE. Bristow (2008) notes that some have defined these forms as the emergence of an ‘academic panopticon’ (Shore and Roberts, 1995; Amit, 2000), or even as the introduction of the ‘audit culture’ into HE (Strathern, 2000). Jary and Parker (1998) point out that such steps have
heralded the arrival of the ‘new higher education’ (NHE). The restructuring of the sector is constructed around a neo-Taylorist and neo-Fordist model of production (Parker and Jary, 1995; Shore and Wright, 2001), involving ‘McDonaldization’ (Ritzer, 1996, 1998) or ‘bureaucratization’ (Furedi, 2002) and ‘massification’ (Fox, 2002) of HE (Bristow, 2008).

Not only does the new arrangement of NHE have a profound effect on the way in which academics perform their tasks, together with expected roles, but also on knowledge production and justification practices. Shore and Wright (2000) provide a holistic analytical view, in which they relate such an arrangement to three interrelated developments. According to these authors, the first characteristic is concerned with ‘the emergence of new discourses and the ‘semantic clusters’ from which they are constituted’; the second is about the manifestation of ‘new kinds of practices associated with these discourses, and the new institutions, norms, and areas of expertise that they hail into existence, and through which they are implemented’; and the third and last characteristic is related to the ‘effect of these norms and practices – embedded in mundane routines and duties – on conditions of work and thought and… on the way in which individuals construct themselves as professional subjects’ (Shore and Wright, 2000, p. 58). Such developments have been especially instigated by the arrival of ‘the new epoch of new managerialism’ (Shore and Wright, 2000, p. 58).

Despite all of the above, managerialist practice had already existed to some extent in the education and health sectors during the early 1980s. An example would be the introduction of general management into the NHS after the Griffiths Report of 1983 (Cutler and Waine, 2000), and furthermore, the changes in HE connected with ‘new managerialism’ in the early 1980s (Deem, 2004).

2.6.1 The new managerialist ideology

As NHE in the UK has expanded in extent, justifying the expenditure of public funds and demonstrating 'value for money' is increasingly obligatory. The prevailing government, along with council funding policies, has placed considerable pressure on universities to meet annual 'efficiency gains'. This is represented by raising the standards of educational gains and learning, as well as research outcomes, with a decline in resources per student taught and equipment available. Legrand and Bartlett (1993) comment that operating under quasi-market conditions, driven by an emphasis on competition between universities for students, academic research 'stars' and research income have amplified this issue. The public sector in general and the NHE in particular in the UK have gone through numerous government policy changes to governance
their services. The main driver has been to bring new dynamics into this rapidly growing industry (Henkel, 2000; Davies and Thomas, 2002). New managerialism has attracted more attention since it showed increasing success in the private sector some time ago, especially in its ability to align efficiency and effectiveness with fewer resources (Leys, 2001). Since then, decision makers have opted for managerialism to impose accountability and monitor money input and output in HE institutes (Hood, 1995). Parker and Lewis (1995, p. 212) note that,

‘The philosophy of economic 'managerialism' and its associated philosophy of 'managerialism' have become endemic in the discourse and orientation of contemporary government and business. They have influenced management, accounting and accountability through an advocacy of formal rational management, corporate strategic plans with specified objectives, as well as internal and external accountability systems oriented towards the measurement of efficiency and effectiveness.’

Echoing Deem and Brehony’s (2005) Marxist position, managerialism is conceptualised in this study as an ideology - that is to say, a faith that constitutes a way of looking at things: a set of ideas and beliefs introduced by the dominant class of a society to all other members of this society, whereby it serves to promote interests and maintain relationships based on power and domination.

Bottery (2000, paraphrasing Pollitt, 1992, p. 2) also describes managerialism as an approach that aims to build up a labour force who recognise the significance of productivity from an economic perspective. He continues by explaining that managerialism grants managers the right to proactively manage the available resources (i.e. human and material) in institutions as a means of supervising and delivering such corporate and productive aims (Bottery, 2000).

In addition, Deem (1998) regards it as a complex ideology that demonstrates a strong inclination towards many of the values and practices of the private-for-profit sector particularly those that call for excellence, efficiency and continuous improvement.

While the aforementioned authors define managerialism in ideological terms, others analyse it using a Foucauldian concept of discourse. For example, Clarke and Newman (1997, p.148) explain that,
Managerialist discourse offers particular representations of the relationships between social problems and solutions. It is linear and oriented to ‘single goal’ thought patterns. It is concerned with goals and plans rather than with intentions and judgements. It is about action rather than reflection. [and] offers a technicist discourse which strips debate of its political underpinnings, so that debate about means supplants debate about ends.’

Deem and Brehony (2005) comment (in their critical discussion of the ‘new managerialism’ in HE), that even though the adopted view regards managerialism as an ideology, it still acknowledges a connection with discourse and language. They base their analysis on work by Eagleton (1991), where the latter argues it is best to view ideology, ‘less as a particular set of discourses than as particular effects within discourses’ (Eagleton, 1991, p. 194).

There appears to be some competition between the two related concepts of ‘new managerialism’ and ‘new public management’ (NPM) (Deem and Brehony, 2005). NPM is concerned with new forms of administrative orthodoxy in relation to the management and regulation of public services. Debates about NPM tend to ‘focus on advocating and developing less bureaucratic forms of public service organisation and introducing quasi-markets for public services’ (Deem and Brehony, 2005, p. 219). In contrast, new managerialism is an ‘ideological configuration of ideas and practices recently brought to bear on public service organisation, management and delivery, often at the behest of governments or government agencies’ (Deem and Brehony, 2005, p. 219). Besides, whilst NPM is concerned with ‘the implementation of a particular form of regulatory governance of public services by state agencies’, new managerialism is concerned with an ‘ideological approach to managing public services connected to state regulation of and manager power over such services and their employees’ (Clarke and Newman, 1997; Exworthy and Halford, 1999; Farrell and Morris, 2003, cited in Deem and Brehony, 2005).

Therefore, and because this study is particularly curious about the consequences of managerialist ideology upon academics and their working lives in universities, the focus will purely be on managerialist ideology and its practices.

As Reed and Anthony (1993) and Clarke, Cochrane and McLaughlin (1994) explain, imposing managerial techniques associated with medium and large ‘for profit’ business onto the public sector and voluntary organizations represents an attempt at managerialism. Such terminology encompasses several techniques, all of which illustrate the dominance of this approach in daily
life, for instance, the marketisation of public sector services, fostering competition among employees and measuring outcomes and individual staff performance by monitoring their efficiency and effectiveness.

Groves, Pendlebury and Stiles (1997, p. 295, 296) highlight such a management style in the quotation below,

‘Quality management has become the chosen vehicle by which macro-policy is used to ensure more effective strategic management within HE institutes. It is directed at the audit, assurance and enhancement of both teaching and research quality, perceived by the 1992 Act as the twin primary goals for universities. In essence, the emphasis on externally-defined quality criteria for research and teaching has meant that these items have to be given strategic priority by the institutions themselves. Some manoeuvrability is allowed in deciding upon a strategic balance between the objectives of research and teaching.’

Managerialism can be categorized as a style of management that has emerged in the UK since the early 1980s, from where it has gradually spread throughout the public sector. According to Metcalf and Richards (1987), it started with the Financial Management Initiative and the Civil Service in the wake of the Rayner Scrutinies. In general, it refers to the adoption of organizational forms, management practices, technologies and values that more commonly exist in the private sector (Deem, 1998). It undermines the assumptions that ‘good management’, will deliver the three 'E's of economy, effectiveness and efficiency in public services: principles adopted from the private sector and indicating that management is superior to traditional ‘administration’ in the public sector (Kirkpatrick and Lucio, 1995). By doing so, such strategies will eliminate waste as well as ensure value for taxpayers’ money (Metcalf and Richards, 1987).

In an attempt to look at this in depth, Trow (1994, p. 11) distinguishes between 'soft' and 'hard' managerialism, particularly in HE. He states that utilising improved managerial techniques to obtain productivity gains without compromising university autonomy is called 'soft' managerialism, whereas in his opinion, 'hard' managerialism is rooted in the belief that, in order for universities to improve managerial effectiveness, external controls are essential. Apparently, the latter type has been considered 'hard' due to a complementary financial rewards system for achieving objectives as well as penalties for failing to do so. Kirkpatrick and Lucio
(1995), Power (1997) and Deem (2006) explain that several tools have been utilised to facilitate or even blend managerialism into the daily life of academic work, for instance, imposing external accountability, as with the widespread use of league tables, performance indicators, benchmarking, target settings and performance management. In addition, new government policies for widening participation have created other national competition between universities as they increase the promotion and marketing of new courses (Dearlove, 2002).

For universities, managerialism has signalled a noteworthy increase in the political weight and emphasis of accountability and quality. This was instigated by the growing belief, from the government’s side, that education should be considered as a driver for the knowledge economy. Walsh (1995, p. 30) argues that the ideological goal was to go beyond structural and operational changes, where the real intention was to change attitudes and values, actions and thought processes. In fact, McMenemy (2007, p. 446) comments,

‘This targets driven philosophy has been introduced largely as an underpinning of ideology rather than through any evidence that it is fit for purpose. This makes it potentially dangerous to services as well as the role of professionals, as flawed measurement can produce flawed results that lead to flawed decision-making.’

This poorly formulated philosophy that aims to establish ideological managerialist practice for political and economic purposes in universities has had implications for the working environment. Flawed measures are affecting what are to be considered universities’ strongest assets: academics.

2.6.2 The impact of managerialism
Perhaps one of the reasons that managerialism as an ideology has survived throughout the consequent changes in the public sector is mainly due to its flexibility as political currency. This is clear in its adaptability to both the Thatcher’s New Right and Blair’s New Modernisers. Such a mechanism has built up an audience of both supporters and detractors, evoking strong feelings towards this prevalent ideology. Nevertheless, it is clear that both sides agree on the fact that managerialism has led to a far more hands-on approach to the management of public services, along with an ideological obsession with the advantages of quantitative measurement for determining service quality.
On one hand, some claim that the movement towards managerial culture in the public sector is crucial in the pursuit of discipline and rationality. As a form of economic rationalism, managerialism aims to legitimatise limited beliefs concerning allocated efficiency and policy effectiveness in the sector (Fitzsimons, 2011). Dowding (1995) explains that good management; in the eyes of managerialism, should provide important productive efficiencies that at the same time involve a constant search for better and newer methods of organising service delivery in the public sector. Pollitt (1993, p.1) regards managerialist ideology as an optimal choice that ‘will prove an effective solvent for a wide range of economic and social ills.’ In education, for example, it places an emphasis on transparent budgeting, clear vision for specific objectives, and value for money, through which it stresses upon short term efficiency and profit rather than on long term individual and societal benefits (Marginson, 1993).

A number of researchers are of the opinion that the adaptation of market mechanisms in terms of delivery and management style within social and public services will lead to strategic effectiveness, along with operational efficiency, unlike rigid professional monopolies and corporate bureaucracies (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992; Du Gay, 1994, 2000; Maddock and Morgan, 1998). In local government (Walsh, 1995), education (Rustin, 1994; Cowen, 1996; Dearlove, 1997) and health and social care (Pettigrew, Ferlie and McKee, 1992; Ferlie, Ashburner, Fitzgerald and Pettigrew, 1996; Dent, O'Neill and Bagley, 1999; Flynn, 1999; Maddock and Morgan, 1998) such mechanisms deemed to be the legitimating discourse driving organisational restructuring have identified the introduction of market, or at least quasi-market, mechanisms as the solution to bureaucratic rigidity and professional intransigence. Reed (2002, p. 166) argues,

‘By imposing market competition through political dictate and administrative fiat, the ideology of 'new managerialism' attempted to destroy, or at least weaken, the regulatory structures that had protected unaccountable professional elites and their monopolistic labour market and work practices across the full range of public sector service provision throughout the 1980's and 1990's.’

Moreover, Davis (1996, p. 305) explains that managerialism has swept aside ‘an idyllic older bureaucratic world … reducing every relation to a mere money exchange.’ On the other hand, trying to maintain an ideological approach under managerialism has placed great pressure on roles and individuals in UK HE (Deem, 1998). Opponents of such an ideology view it as representing a type of imposed governance project aligned with neoliberalism, through which it
politicises and enacts technical reforms imbued with market values. Lynch, Grummell and Devine (2012, p. 3) note that managerialism,

‘is not a neutral management strategy, it is a political project... [which] heralds a new mode of governance that provides a unique type of moral education for businesses and organizations modelled on businesses. It represents not only a change in management but a new form of capitalism... Market-led models of control and regulation become the prototype for work organisations both inside and outside capitalism.’

The adoption of the ideas and language of the private business sector are evident in managerialist approach practice, especially when managing the resources of public sector institutions. Clarke and Newman (1997, p. 147) comment in this regard that the main orthodoxy of managerialism tends to be,

‘decentralisation, devolution, internal purchasing and charging division between strategic and operational management, and the re-engineering of organisations around notions of ‘core business’, with the outsourcing of activities defined as non-core. Internal management processes... [and] linked to target setting and performance management, and the building of corporate commitment to a specific organisational ‘mission’ and purpose.’

In Miliken and Colohan’s (2004) view, the monitoring and reporting system embraced by managerialism is ill-conceived and unfit for purpose. They criticise the shortcomings of the whole system and deem policy-makers to be ‘prima-donnas who are intent on forcing their will on others regardless of the consequences on the main stakeholders – namely, students and academic staff’ (Miliken and Colohan, 2004, p. 389). Bottery (2000, p. 63, 67) supports such a view by explaining that the ideological orientation of this approach is economistic, directive, controlling, as ‘it sees human being as resources for its defined ends’, and ‘...influences the actions of the state, in that it acts as an ideological conduit through which decisions are made.’

Another vital element that is considered to have been impacted by such managerialist practice is the trust relationship between management and staff. It is considered that monitoring and a quality system upon academic staff carries with it implied criticism of the quality of their performance, along with a lack of trust (Harvey, 1995). Trow (1994) supports such an argument by explaining that monitoring performance mechanisms substitutes trust and creates
alienation between civil servants and government as well as between citizens and government. In Hood’s (2001) view, demands for greater accountability implies a diminishing trust towards civil servant actions.

At an organisational level, Deem (2004) defines managerialism as touching upon three overlapping elements. The first one consists of a narrative of strategic change that ‘persuades others towards certain understandings and actions’ (Barry and Elmes, 1997 cited in Deem, 2004, p. 110). In addition, distinctive emergent new organisational forms provide the administrative mechanisms and managerial processes through which this theory of change will be realised’ (Barry and Elmes, 1997, cited in Deem, 2004, p. 111). The third and last element consists of ‘practical control technologies ... [that] can all be used to transform strategies into practices, techniques and devices that challenge existing system of ’bureau professionalism’ (Mintzberg, 1983, cited in Deem, 2004, p. 111). Of particular interest to this study is the third critical element; the collision between professionalism and managerialist ideology. Deem (2004) notes that HE had acted in response to changes that demanded greater accountability with the adoption of more controlling mechanisms to manage academic staff.

Although the implications of managerialist practice can be seen across faculties and departments, especially in the way in which universities operate, business schools have particularly demonstrated a more harmful role in the pursuit of such ideology (Currie, Knights and Starkey, 2010; Khurana and Penrice, 2011; Locke and Spender, 2011; Pearson, 2012). According to Locke and Spender (2011, p. 2), ‘no aspect of that harm is more pernicious than the role business schools have played in reinforcing [the specific managerialist attributes that managers share] and the legitimacy of its predatory instincts done in the name of good management’. The authors continue by explaining that such a managerialist culture has resulted in the ‘renunciation of [business schools’] moral and political responsibilities to society as they train those entering the management caste’ (Locke and Spender, 2011, p. 27). Alajoutsijärvi, Juusola and Siltaoja (2014) support this argument, referring to business schools as ‘cash cows’ for universities and as ‘providing much-needed funding for their more traditional departments’. Administrators in those environments are often looking to extract ‘the maximum commercial benefit from courses such as the MBA, regardless of what it means for pedagogy and learning’ (Starkey and Tiratsoo, 2007, p. 8). Therefore, it appears that such an aggressive and harmful approach in implementing managerialist values in business schools is not only affecting the relationship between academics and management, but also impacting the working lives of the academics working there.
The subsequent section goes into much more detail within the boundaries of HE institutions, and aims to define the relationship between the agents of both parties.

2.7 Professionalisation

Throughout the years, professionalism as a concept has gone through a number of continuous disputes, where three main schools of thought have emerged (Freidson, 1994). One suggests that a transformation is evident in terms of professional labour, as it becomes increasingly dependent on employment in bureaucracies (Oppenheimer, 1973, cited in Exworthy and Halford, 1999, p. 15). Thus, according to Exworthy and Halford (1999), it is losing its independence and just like any other occupational group, will be subject to the rule of managers. On the other hand, a second school of thought argues that deprofessionalization has been taking place for a long time (Haug, 1973). It states that professionals are losing their cultural authority in terms of prestige and trust. Elston (1991) supports this argument by explaining that this is due to several broad social changes, for example, public concerns about privileges accorded to professionals (status, pay, etc.), consumerism and an increased general level of education that might reduce the gap in knowledge between lay people and professionals.

However, Freidson (1994) points out that both schools fail to convince him as they lack specificity in terms of process and outcome. He continues by explaining that the coherence holding a given profession together may be undermined or even vanish as shared interests are no longer common between members. This is mainly because of the increased bureaucratization of professional associations as well as the greater emphasis on specialization within individual professions, thereby causing them to fragment internally.

Besides, scholars have attempted to define professions in terms of their characteristics (Wilensky, 1964; Elliott, 1972). For example, Jarvis (1983) describes how every occupation that claims professional status will be primarily underpinned by knowledge and application. However, professionalism is still a challenging concept for researchers as, according to Kolsaker (2008), it is perhaps inherently difficult to differentiate its constitution from its characteristics. This is clear in Freidson’s (1994) argument in relation to the complexity involved, including the problems of epistemology, variability of practice, time and place, the lack of sound theory and interpretation of trends. In addition, according to Friedson, such different views of profession as a concept are the result of each attempt to treat it as a generic rather than changing historical concept (Freidson, 1994). He comments,
‘The definitional problem that has plagued the field for over half a century is not one created by squabbling pedants, to be solved by eschewing definition entirely… The problem I suggest lies much deeper than that. It is created by attempting to treat profession as if it were a generic concept rather than a changing historic concept with particularistic roots in those industrial nations that are strongly influenced by Anglo-American institutions’ (Freidson, 1988, p. 31, 32).

Since it can be argued that the field of professionalism is still open and complicated, a rational view should be adopted for the separation of certain occupations and their behaviour (Torstendahl, 1990). For Torstendahl (1990), professionalism is determined by how knowledge is used as social capital, and not only for reasons related to problem solving. Cruess, Johnston and Cruess (2004) support his view by explaining that a profession is defined as a vocation holding a body of knowledge and skills put into service for the good of others. They continue by explaining that a member of a profession is governed by codes of ethics, whereby integrity, morality, altruism, competence, and the promotion of public good are complementary elements to be pursued. Additionally, and most importantly, as they argue on the basis of a social contract between the professional and society, fulfilling such elements grants the former the right to considerable autonomy in practice and the privilege of self-regulation (Cruess, Johnston and Cruess, 2004).

2.7.1 Academic professionalism

Not only is there a growing debate over the definition of professionalism, but also over which occupations may be considered to be professions. On one hand, some literature has specified medicine and law as the only actual professions (Causer and Exworthy, 1999). This argument is based on work by Weber (1918, cited in Cheng, 2009), where the latter points out that academic work is not a profession and may be accurately considered as a vocation or secular calling. Nonetheless, others argue that old and new professions have been identified within the past couple of decades. The former give entitlement to medicine and the law as actual professions while the latter have been embedded in both public and private bureaucracies (Causer and Exworthy, 1999).

The second philosophy, on the other hand, has attracted more attention among scholars, where a good number represent academic in HE (Halsey, 1992; Enders, 1999; Henkel, 2000). Freidson (1994), for example, explains that among those occupations which resemble an ideal
model of professionalism, come scholars and scientists. Wilson (1942) supports such an argument by explaining that there are three main reasons underpinning the perception of academic work as a profession. Firstly, there are a number of attributes that distinguish a profession which are inherent in academic work, such as moral integrity, special expertise and control over practice. These are, to a large extent, similar to attributes traditionally associated with professions, namely law and medicine. Another reason is that academics have deep roots in terms of their professional ethos. Last but not least, traditional professions are closely associated with universities.

In a view that is consistent with the above argument, Reiss (1955, p. 109-38) proposes a typology that classifies professions in connection with a body of knowledge and its application. According to the proposed typology, as described below, academic professions could be regarded either as new professions or semi-professions, based upon the discipline.

i) Old established professions- founded upon the study of a branch of learning, e.g. medicine.
ii) New professions- founded upon new disciplines, e.g. chemists and social scientists.
iii) Semi-professions- based upon technical practice and knowledge, e.g. teachers and nurses.
iv) Would-be professions- having familiarity with modern practices in business, e.g. personal directors, engineers, etc.
v) Marginal professions- based upon technical skill, e.g. technicians and draughtsmen.

In this study, professionalism is approached from a constructive perspective, whereby it focuses only on one of the members of the occupational group; this labels itself ‘the academic profession.’ It aims to explore academic professionalism as a response to managerialist ideology and to analyse its implications for profession territory along with changing expectations and obligations between academics and managers.

2.7.2 Academic professionalism in the NHE

Notwithstanding growing evidence that academic work amounts to a crucial element of professional terminology, a number of researchers (Halsey, 1992; Enders, 1999; Beck and Young, 2005; Cheng, 2009) point out that the professions are endangered and threatened. They argue that changes in HE, such as a decline in the socio-economic status of universities, the expansion of student numbers and increasing marketisation and managerialism have had a considerable impact on academics and threaten the survival of this concept in universities. As some of the traditionally enjoyable aspects of academia are changing, alongside a degradation
of job quality, almost a third of staff currently consider quitting the sector (Baty, 2003). Smith and Webster’s (1997, p. 100) note,

‘These and other changes have placed enormous pressures on the university system. They have certainly resulted in a noticeable shift in the ‘feel’ of university life. For many academics this has been experienced as an appreciable loss of control over what they do, initiatives coming from the central management teams that drive the organisation and from politicians from without the university. A result is that institutions are experienced more as places of ‘work’ than the community of scholars that motivated many academics to choose their vocation.’

Such changes in the academic landscape have considerably affected the nature of academic employment, particularly the relationship between academics and their management. The forms of control and practice (e.g. the widespread use of league tables and performance indicators) embraced by proponents of managerialism, not only monitor the performance of academics, but also reduce their power in public bureaucracy, while changing the way in which public services are provided and organised (Deem, 2004). Trowler (1998, p. 50-54) supports the above argument by pointing out the key effects of managerialism as ‘work intensification and degradation, bureaucratization, power shift and surveillance.’ Since then, the involvement of interrelated organisational, managerial and cultural changes established by the prevailing managerialist ideology have initiated a new departure in HE, leading to a tightly integrated regime of managerial discipline and control (Reed, 1999) which is totally different from bureau-professionalism (Clarke and Newman, 1997).

Although these changes can be detected in several locations as organisational forms, narrative and management technologies of organisations and cultures (Clark and Newman, 1997), professionals have been profoundly affected. This is clear in the loss of power in academic course decision-making, control in practice, and in the prioritising of research over teaching and autonomy (Clarke, Gerwitz and McLaughlin, 2000; Deem, 2004). Consequently, there is a growing view claiming that such adopted corporate values and practices have encouraged the ‘deprofessionalisation’ or ‘proletarianisation’ of the academic profession (Halsey, 1992).

2.7.2.1 The implications of managerialist ideology for academic profession

It has been claimed, from the politicians’ side, that the professions, being knowledge-based, are difficult to control and unpredictable, and the government has to place an emphasis upon
practical aspects of professionalism. Therefore, bureaucratic systems of managerial control
have been established as a means of reducing such unpredictability. Perhaps the reason behind
this decision is the fact that knowledge and skill can be intangible and difficult to measure,
whereas targets and performance indicators can evaluate professional practice more practically.
However, and regardless of the veracity of such claims (which only aim to justify the practices
of this new regime in HE), monitoring benchmarking, targets, and public reporting are simply
symptomatic of neo-liberal patterns of authority, oriented towards accountability and
on practical aspects of professional practice is considered an assault upon professionalism.

Since universities, to certain extent, have accepted managerialist ideology as governing their
departments, professional managers have demonstrated a firm approach in terms of cost
efficiency, wasted resources and power. Bryson (2004) argues that one of the damaging effects
from such an approach is the transfer of power from academic autonomy to managerial
prerogatives. He continues by explaining that the quality of work may deteriorate as academics
lose ideological control and most importantly, he believes that this will lead to lower morale
and higher instrumentalism when accompanied by work intensification (Bryson, 2004). Deem
(2004, 2006) support this argument and comment that the entry of manager-academics into HE
institutions has evidently reinforced this debate. She states that academics are actively given
official managerial duties in staff development and finance management, together with other
administrative duties while they are involved with teaching and research. Hence, academic
autonomy and freedom has been lessened owing to these additional duties. Kok et al. (2010)
contribute in this area, emphasizing that changes in values and norms in HE which are driven
by managerialism as well as increased competition for funding have moved autonomous
institutions towards more business-like and private sector ideals.

One of the instruments imposed on academia is the RAE (now the Research Excellence
Framework (REF)). According to Duff and Monk (2006), it is considered as one of the most
chronicled sources of job dissatisfaction in the UK. It is believed that it has had a negative
impact on job quality, placing research above student interaction (Brinn, Jones and Pendlebury,
2001; Davies and Thomas, 2002), and having a ‘negative impact on the status of teaching’
(Harley, 2002, p. 196). According to the latter, ‘universities have become sites of contested
identity’ whereby the ‘research-active are defined as ‘unproductive’ in relation to the ‘real’
work of teaching and the necessity to do administration’ while the ‘research-active are given
grounds for dismissing the less active as disgruntled individuals with a personal axe to grind’
Harley, 2002, p. 203). It is clear, however, that universities are obliged to conform to this condition as funding allocation relies intensively on research results (Brinn, Jones and Pendlebury, 2001).

The RAE (now REF) not only impacts current academics leading to schisms in their identities (Winter, 2009), but also places great pressure on new recruits who would often find it difficult to establish the research record required to join departments with a higher research rating (Brinn, Jones and Pendlebury, 2001). Even though this is more practical for all the wrong reasons in the short term, promoting the recycling of academia by favouring those who have experience and skills can potentially affect the quality of teaching and research in the long term.

This impact and pressure of journal rankings upon business academics has been intense, where the application of the ‘one size fits all’ logic of the Association of Business Schools (ABS) ‘Journal Guide’ has been adopted as the ‘de facto standard’ (Mingers, Watson and Scaparra, 2012, p. 3). Besides the negative effect of the ABS ‘Journal Guide’ on the direction and range of business and management research (Kelly et al., 2009; Willmott, 2011), the list has become an influential factor in decisions over recruitment, promotion, tenure and the selection of academics for submission to evaluation exercises in UK business schools (Mingers and Willmott 2013). Tourish (2010) condemns the use of such a list and calls for serious attention to the ‘spectre’ haunting business schools and the way in which it demotivates and demoralises academics, especially in the UK.

An additional negative impact of this management style: the ‘ABS ‘Journal Guide’ is the substantial decline of collegiality among staff in universities. As Deem (1998) indicates, the greatest pressure from managerialism seems to arise at the lowest levels of management, where staff are exhorted to teach more students with fewer resources, while at the same time producing high quality research. Apparently, the control and regulation of academic labour have replaced collegiality, professional discretion and trust. For academic professionalism, however, perhaps one of the major concerns in relation to managerialist practice and imposed duties is the erosion of private space. Olssen (2002, p. 55) comments that private space is now threatened by managerialist monitoring and performativity,

‘With the erosion of liberal spaces in terms of which free professional conduct can be practiced, so also there is a demise in the immanent basis, a basis in the conception of
autonomy and freedom, in terms of which criticism and resistance can be sustained and mounted. Put another way, as the possibilities for disinterested academic enquiry are replaced by the professional requirements of the new functionalism, the provision built in to liberal rule, whereby it provided reflective space for its own criticism and rules for its own transformation, is eroded away.’

In fact, Barry, Chandler and Clark (2001) describe the effects of the erosive element in a way that academic labour is becoming an ‘academic assembly line’ or ‘academic production line’ (Parker and Jary, 1995). For Schapper and Mayson (2004, p. 196) both terms ‘have been used to convey the sense of de-skilling and deprofessionalisation of academics in today’s factories of learning.’

The literature suggests that academics working in business schools have suffered the most as a result of the market-focused ethos of neoliberalism, performance-obsessed ideology and managerialist values and practices (e.g. Wilson and McKiernan, 2011; Alajoutsijärvi, Juusola and Siltioja, 2014; Butler and Spoelstra, 2014; De Vita and Case, 2014). According to Wilson and McKiernan (2011) and Alajoutsijärvi, Juusola and Siltioja (2014), business academics are now subject to ever-increasing demands and performance pressures, stringent management styles and control mechanisms, pushing them to compete in ‘the regime of excellence’ (Butler and Spoelstra, 2014), as their institutions scramble for top positions in national and international league tables, in pursuit of ever-diminishing funding. Starkey, Hatchuel and Tempest (2004, p. 1526) point out that “The business school has been most exposed to consumer voice, embodied in the proliferation of league tables which now ‘measure’ and compare on a global basis”. This managerial anxiety amongst business school leaders, represented in the increasingly intensified audit and performative culture, especially in the UK (Mingers and Willmott, 2010) is placing great pressure and tension on UK business academics (Clarke, Knights and Jarvis, 2012).

Drawing on Ghoshal’s ‘smell of the place’ metaphor and in an interesting depiction of the organisational climate within UK business schools, De Vita and Case (2014) describe working conditions under new managerialism as resonating with the oppressive ‘Calcutta-in-summer’ atmosphere. The authors use this metaphor to argue that the heavy presence of new managerialism in UK business schools is generating a climate of mistrust and alienation amongst academics.
2.8 Trust and the managing expectations of academic professions within the NHE

What is clear, however, is that the shifting terrain in HE has created a new kind of expectation. Managerialism has established new roles and obligations that academic professions have to obey. Deem, Hillyard and Reed (2008) note that one of the aims of new managerialism is to change the way in which academic knowledge work is led and managed. The new culture of surveillance and compelling decisions has impacted academic professions and the way in which they perform daily duties and perceive decisions. Academics may find themselves in a forced pursuit of certain objectives in which they have little confidence, causing resentment and frustration. Johnson (1994, p. 379) condemns such prescriptive coercion,

‘It no longer matters how well an academic teaches or whether he or she sometimes inspires their pupils; it is far more important that they have produced plans for their courses, bibliographies, outlines of this, that and the other, in short, all the paraphernalia of futile bureaucratisation required for assessors who come from on high like emissaries from Kafka’s castle.’

Apparently, the increasing load of expectations driven by the changing practices and ideals of academic work, sometimes unjustifiable from the academics’ view, plays a vital role in the perception and acceptance of managers’ decisions. Whether or not future management decisions serve managerialist targets, academic professions may view them in a sceptical manner. Flynn (2002, p. 35) states that one of the factors that has fuelled the present conflict is the lack of trust between management and individuals. Perhaps another factor that enhances such a feeling is that managers may show some favouritism to certain groups or individuals in the workplace who are keen to deliver specific measurable outcomes. The existence of such idiosyncratic ideals may instil a perception of unfairness across others in the workplace, thus affecting their trust relationship with the management, and becoming likely to influence their behaviour and attitudes (Guest, 2004).

Besides, the existence of a fragile relationship generated by weak communication and interaction is further influenced by unfulfilled gaps between them. According to Flynn (2002, p. 35), this is established through managerialist ideology, which empowers the formation of a bureaucratic hierarchy. Establishing a harmonious environment through instilling confidence in such an inconsistent relationship is something that must be considered.
2.9 Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to provide some context for the empirical research presented in Chapter Four and to venture that new managerialism has impacted academics’ psychological contracts. Following the opening introductory section, the second section presented a brief conceptualisation of the present NHE context. It explored the most influential successive events to have led to the establishment of its present context. The rise of neoliberal governmentality, adopting quasi-market techniques along with a commodification of the sector, has displaced the idea of the sector as an industry as opposed to a social institution. In the midst of this historical landscape, managerialism has penetrated UK higher education, becoming the dominant ideology of the NHE.

The chapter discusses the implication of managerialist ideology upon professionalism, with particular reference to academics as the members most affected by the former group. The colonization of the activities of academic professionals has been defined by managerialist ideology, along with the imperatives that aim to serve external accountability. In addition, the impact on the daily life of academics and their perception of daily managers’ decisions is examined.

The chapter argues that although the impact of managerialist ideology has cast its shadow over all faculties and departments in UK universities, business schools appear to be especially affected by such ideology and its associated values and practices. The heavy presence of new managerialism in UK business schools, represented in the increasingly intensified audit and performance-based culture, is placing great pressure and tension on UK business academics.

The next chapter reviews and discusses the literature of the psychological contract, along with related theories, such as Social Exchange Theory, the norm of reciprocity and Equity Theory. It aims to provide a lens for understanding the phenomena discussed within it and their impact on academics’ psychological contracts in general, as well as specifically on the ideological currency of academics’ psychological contracts. In addition, it explores the factors shaping individuals’ expectations in a work environment and the dynamic nature of the psychological contract.
Chapter Three
Investigating the dynamics of the psychological contract: The on-going evaluation process in shaping an individual perception of reality

3.1 Introduction
The purpose of this chapter is to examine the relevant literature on the psychological contract and highlight its significance as an explanatory framework for the employment relationship and for understanding business academics’ behaviour and attitudes. This is of particular relevance to the previous chapter on new managerialism in UK HE, as it gives an insight into how the values and practices associated with new managerialism in UK NHE could significantly affect the academic environment, particularly the social exchange relationship between the academic professions.

The chapter has been structured so that it will first convey the historical development associated with the contract and thus help permit the identification and evaluation of diverse interpretations across research throughout the years. It is not only possible for the author to construct a coherent argument by examining the roots and early development of psychological contract, assessing current confusion and disagreement associated with the term, but also by tracing the subsequent progress of the contract. The early development of psychological contract is considered vital, as most debates, particularly in recent years, are rooted in early philosophical arguments.

It might be argued that the historical development consists of two periods organised in relation to Rousseau’s (1989) seminal reconceptualization (Roehling, 1996). The first period (pre-Rousseau) covers the origins of psychological contract and its early development from 1938 up to 1988, while the second starts with Rousseau’s key reconceptualization in 1989, and continues to the present day. On one hand, the former is characterised by rather sporadic theoretical development, the involvement of a fair number of various disciplines and sub-disciplines and virtually no empirical work. Conversely, the second period is characterised by a relatively small number of profound theoretical developments, encompassing a considerable body of, mainly quantitative empirical work and a narrowing of the discipline. Most of the researchers in the second period have embraced and adopted Rousseau’s reconceptualization.
There has been on-going debate in psychological contract research as to whether it merely surrounds individuals and their perceptions, or all parties engaging in the reciprocal relationship, including the organisation or the agents that represent it. Some of the most commonly applied definitions in the literature that support the former argument derive from Rousseau’s (1995) explanation. She describes it as ‘individual beliefs, shaped by the organization, regarding terms of an exchange agreement between the individual and their organization’ (Rousseau, 1995, p. 9), whereas, others who support the argument that the psychological contract involves both the employee and the employer include a number of researchers, such as Levinson et al. (1962), Schein (1980), Herriot and Pemberton (1997) and Guest (1998). Schein (1980, p. 22) explains ‘The notion of a psychological contract implies that there is an unwritten set of expectations operating at all times between every member of an organization and the various managers and others in that organization.’ Herriot and Pemberton (1997, p. 45), in addition, view it as ‘The perceptions of both parties to the employment relationship, organization and individual, of the obligations implied in the in the relationship.’

Besides, a variety of elements have been used to define the psychological contract ranging from expectations, promises and the extent of its implicit beliefs, perceptions and obligations (Conway, 1996; Guest, 1998). However, the psychological contract can also be defined as a psychological attachment between the individual and their organisation, either directly or indirectly, where such a relationship exists with the organisation or through its agents.

Throughout its historical development, the psychological contract has gone through a paradigm shift instigated by external pressures from economic and political agenda. Changes have continued to affect its realms and the balance of the reciprocal agreement between the employee and the employer. Common characteristics that used to be associated with jobs appear to no longer be in evidence. Driven by such conditions, and particularly when losing interest in examining the agent party in the relationship, the psychological contract has been thrown into a crisis model. By adopting a Kuhnian view of scientific advancement, the author argues that the redefinition of the term establishing the start of the second period has accelerated its progress in the Kuhn Cycle Model and is now in a Model Revolution stage.

It seems, in addition, that divergence in approaching the psychological contract is apparent between the two periods. Whilst the early period tends to explore the psychological contract from a constructive approach, the current period is more conceptual. The first period (pre-Rousseau) was concerned around the construct of the psychological contract, whereby most of the theoretical research focus was upon the constructing elements and facts. The latter period
has tended to revolve around the visualisation of the relationship an individual has with the other party, as the psychological contract resides in the mind. The large number of quantitative empirical work in that period has contributed significantly to an exploration of how psychological contract enriches the conceptual view, and succeeds in conceptualising it into four particular types, namely relational, transactional, transitional and balanced. Rousseau (2012) supports such an argument by explaining that the psychological contract ‘is both [a construct and a concept], and as a construct (meaning a scientific construct composed of facts and subject to rules of evidence) it can be operationalized.’

The chapter reviews and discusses the literature of the psychological contract along with relating theories, such as social exchange theory, the norm of reciprocity, and equity theory. It explores the factors that shape individuals’ expectations in a working environment and the dynamic nature of the contract. A discussion of the outcomes of the perception of either fulfilment or breach and/or violation of the psychological contract will be taken into account, whereby emphasis is placed upon the cognitive thinking that determines such perceptions. Of central interest is how managing the content of the contract, along with effective communication can obtain effective results in managing the two aspects of the contract (construct and concept). A conceptual model is proposed at the end of the chapter, which builds on the discussion throughout it. It seeks to illustrate the development and dynamic nature of the psychological contract in the course of the employment relationship.

The chapter opens with an overview of the ambiguity surrounding interpretations of psychological contract identity. A discussion will follow that aims to assimilate the most influential early texts to have made a fundamental contribution to the development of psychological contract, and which have set the scene for to its development throughout the years. An analysis of the formation of a contract that involves a cognitive process is currently being identified, which argues that there is a sense-making process which individuals adopt in developing their perceptions of expectations and obligations throughout their employment relationship. The chapter subsequently offers an analysis of the changes that have occurred in the realms of the psychological contract, instigating a paradigm shift in its identity and leading to the conception of new elements and views of the contract. It continues by analysing the new elements that have been added to the psychological contract, redefining it as involving both construct and concept elements, rather than purely construct elements. By illustrating the core element of the sense-making process in the construction and reconstruction of the psychological contract, relevant literature and models will be discussed to build up a proposed
comprehensive framework, seeking to trace the journey that forms and develops the psychological contract. The chapter then closes with proposing a heuristic model that articulates the conditions under which an ideological breach of academics’ psychological contract is likely to occur.

3.2 The definitional ambiguities of the psychological contract

Unlike a number of existing concepts and constructs in organisational psychology, such as leadership, motivation, culture and stress, the psychological contract as a term is not used in daily language but is rather adopted by researchers. Up until now, there is no single broadly agreed definition or authoritative statement that describes the psychological contract in the literature.

Perhaps an obvious rationale behind these various definitions in the literature is that both scholars and practitioners who are interested in the psychological contract look at it from different perspectives, seeking to explain very different phenomena, such as in the case of Argyris (1960) and Menninger (1985). The mutuality element is a central aspect that potentially nurtures such diversity in psychological contract construct definitions. In particular, the question is whether it should comprise a mutual agreement between both parties’ perceptions of their mutual obligations (Herriot, Manning and Kidd, 1997). A good reason for such confusion is the lack of clarity surrounding the mutuality definition. In most dictionaries, the term would suggest that it entails the involvement of an agreement between two or more parties in a relationship, at least initially. The Oxford Dictionary of English (2010), for instance, describes mutuality as ‘a feeling or action experienced or done by each of two or more parties towards the other or others: a partnership based on mutual respect and understanding.’ While a strong form of mutuality would involve the agreement of both the existence of the psychological contract and its terms, a weaker form would merely claim the existence of the contract without such an agreement of its terms. Apparently, the latter form was assumed in most of the early work. For instance, Levinson et al. (1962), Schein (1965) and Kotter (1973) describe what constitutes the agreement between parties in broad terms. Rousseau (1990, p. 391) subsequently adopts a similar approach in her statement ‘Two parties to a relationship, such as an employee and employer, may each hold different beliefs regarding the existence and terms of a psychological contract . . . Mutuality is not a requisite condition.’ Then again Robinson and Rousseau (1994, p. 246) point out that ‘Each party believes that both parties have made promises and that both parties have accepted the same contract terms. However, this does not necessarily mean that both parties share a common understanding of all
contract terms. Each party only believes that they share the same interpretation of the contract.’ Hence, as far as the approaches adopted across researchers are concerned, mutuality as a defining element of the psychological contract has become a variable that assimilates different scenarios.

Another aspect that has created debate in terms of understanding and defining the psychological contract construct is the implicit dimension of promises in constituting it, that is, the extent to which promises must be implicit. While a good number of scholars argue that psychological contract is composed mainly of implicit promises (Levinson et al. 1962; Schein 1965, 1980; Guest 1998; Meckler, Drake and Levinson, 2003), others believe that all contracts can be viewed as being fundamentally psychological (e.g. MacNeil, 1985; Rousseau 1995). According to the latter view, even quite explicit promises are open to interpretations of what make up an exchange, along with its timing. Perhaps this approach of injecting explicit promises into the shaping of the psychological contract makes it more viable for management.

3.3 The antecedents of the psychological contract
Notwithstanding the fact that the term ‘psychological contract’ was not coined until 1960 by Argyris, the construct has a much longer and deeper pedigree. It is actually the conceptualisation of an interdependent and cooperative relationship that can be tracked to the work of Barnard, and more broadly, to the human relations movement of the 1930s, in particular to its employee-focused approach. The ‘Cooperative Systems View’ of organisational behaviour proposed by Barnard (1938) argues that employees can be persuaded to pledge allegiance to an organisation’s goals in return for remunerative, social and psychological incentives. He continues by explaining that the balance of such a pivotal mechanism through both parties’ input is vital to the success of an organisation.

Barnard (1938, p.141) also argues that an organisation can encourage efforts on the part of the employee that are necessary for meeting objectives and this may be achieved by offering objective inducements and/or ‘changing states of mind.’ Barnard goes on to explain that the provision of objective inducements may involve: communion (e.g. social support); material recompense (e.g. financial remuneration); personal non-material opportunity (e.g. the investment of status); a desirable working environment, and enlarged participation.

Barnard (1938) also adds that an individual is more willing to contribute efforts to an organisation in return for net satisfaction. In Barnard’s view, net satisfaction is an equation where the positive advantages awarded to an individual rise above the disadvantages. He points
out, moreover, that by either strengthening the positive inducements or reducing the disadvantages, the overall net satisfaction of an individual will be increased. Barnard’s Equilibrium Theory (1938) recapitulates his argument; he suggests that an employee’s continued participation relies upon adequate rewards driven by his/her needs in terms of the organisation. Here lies the notion of reciprocal exchange underlying the organisation-employee relationship.

Barnard also describes how one of the crucial functions of the executives (or management) is to elicit quality and quantity of effort from organisational contributors (1938). Executives therefore play a key role in eliciting such efforts through managing the ‘exchange of utilities’. In addition, he draws attention to the fact that such an exchange will probably have to pass through continual adjustments and changes. This is because of changing individual needs and states of mind throughout the appraisal process.

Barnard’s contentious mirror somehow offers a definition of the psychological contract as an embodiment of the exchange relationship that exists between parties. However, his argument is only concerned with tangible exchange. This relationship tends to be dynamic and open to negotiation and renegotiation over time (Herriot, Hirsh and Reilly, 1998; Herriot and Pemberton, 1995, 1996). Nevertheless, while Barnard’s focus unequivocally rests on individuals along with their changing needs, contemporary research puts more emphasis on the changing economic and business environment and its implications, especially the instability generated in the exchange relationship.

To a certain extent, Barnard’s propositions echo contemporary psychological contract research. This can be seen from an overview of the wide range of terms that individual employees have to look for as representing the organisation's side of the expected employment 'deal' (Rousseau and McLean Parks, 1993; Rousseau, 1995).

Twenty years later, March and Simon’s (1958) contribution-inducement model extended Barnard’s Equilibrium Theory, discussing in more depth the nature of the resources exchanged. Their model argues that employees’ continued participation depends largely on their perception of whether the inducements offered by the organisation equal or exceed their actual contribution. According to this model, an organisation stays solvent, or in equilibrium, through ensuring that its employees’ contributions adequately surpass whatever inducements are offered to them.
It is clear that the notion of the psychological contract was analysed prior to introducing the construct, highlighting its significance in the working environment. A good example of this argument is the striking similarity between the March and Simon model and the psychological contract construct, especially the notion that the exchange of contributions for incentives is ‘defined both explicitly and implicitly by the terms of the employment contract’ (March and Simon, 1958, p. 90). Barnard, as well as March and Simon, had a great influence on shaping the psychological contract thereafter, but a number of influential early texts have been thought to have made a fundamental contribution to the development of psychological contract, even though they did not explicitly address the construct, i.e. the social exchange theory of elementary forms, and the norm of reciprocity and equity theory. Such established theoretical perspectives seem to be the most pertinent in understanding psychological contract.

3.3.1 Social Exchange Theory
Social exchange theory is considered as one of the most prominent conceptual paradigms for understanding workplace behaviour. It draws upon a number of distinct theoretical works in the social sciences, namely: social behaviourism, functionalism and utilitarianism (Turner, 1986). Its venerable pedigree can be traced back to the work of Mauss (1925) and Malinowski (1922), although social exchange theory has also been characterised by the seminal works of Homans (1958) Blau (1964) and Gouldner (1960) where it moved both parallel to and independently of the early development of psychological contract. In fact, Schein (1980, p.22) and Roehling (1997) indicate that historically, the psychological contract is characterised as an extension of philosophical concepts of social contract theory. Blau (1964) and Organ (1988) support this argument by explaining that the psychological contract is largely derived from social exchange theory. For instance, social exchange theory emphasises the fact that social relationships have always consisted of the distribution of unequal power resources and unspecified obligations.

In the context of how individuals interact within groups, Homans (1958) introduces the theory of exchange into mainstream sociology, proposing that it sets sights on understanding human social behaviour in economic undertakings. Homans (1961, p.13) states that exchange theory is devised on the basis that human behaviour or social interaction is essentially an exchange of activity, whether tangible or intangible, with costs or rewards surrounding at least two parties. Based on such a rationale from one of the most ambitious theories, it may serve as a general paradigm for anthropology, social psychology and sociology. The basic assumption of
exchange theory is that an individual establishes and maintains a social relationship based on the expectation that it will be mutually advantageous.

A key distinctive characteristic of Homans’ perspective (revised in 1974) is the reliance on the language and propositions of behavioural psychology. The utility of such a perspective at the time infused its early controversy across sociologists. This is due to the use of operant psychology as the behavioural basis for exchange theory. It is particularly the statement that laws of social behaviour could be ‘reduced to’ the underlying propositions of psychological behaviourism that precipitates such a dispute. For an example, see Deutsch, 1964, who claims that ‘the general propositions we shall use in explanation are psychological in two senses: they refer to the actions of individuals and they have for the most part been formulated and tested by persons who have called themselves psychologists’ (1974, p. 12).

Homans (1961, 1974) in his theoretical formation, makes five main propositions, where he argues that behaviour is a function of its payoffs: consequent rewards and punishments. The first is called the ‘success proposition’, which indicates that the more often an activity is rewarded, the more likely its performance (Homans, 1974, p.16). In other words, a positive outcome generated by an individual’s behaviour creates a tendency towards such a pattern of behaviour. The second proposition is ‘stimulus proposition’, which stipulates that similar surrounding circumstances will stimulate behaviour that has been rewarded during similar past events (Homans, 1974, p.23). In this tendency to extend behaviour to similar situations, Homans allows for the generalisation of behavioural responses to ‘new’ situations.

The third proposition is identified as the ‘value proposition’ where it is denoted that the more valuable the result of an action is to a person, the more likely that action is to be performed (Homans, 1974). He points out that rewards are actions that generate positive values, whilst punishments are actions with negative values. This proposition is qualified by a subsequent theoretical proposition in his basic framework, which introduces the general notion of diminishing marginal utility. According to the fourth proposition ‘deprivation-satiation’, the more often an individual has received a particular reward for an action in the recent past, the less valuable a further unit of that reward will be (Homans, 1974). Therefore, the effectiveness of certain rewards over time diminishes in securing specific actions. However, this is less likely to be the case for generalised rewards, namely money.
The fifth proposition, ‘frustration-aggression,’ signifies the circumstances under which persons are likely to react emotionally to various reward situations (Homans, 1974). Based on the work of Miller and Dollard (1941), this proposition has two parts. It proposes that an individual who does not receive what is anticipated is expected to be angry, and is more likely to behave aggressively, whilst an individual who receives greater reward than expected, or who does not receive anticipated punishments will be pleased and will behave approvingly. The implications of this proposition, especially its connotations that an engaging employee in a work relationship tends to demonstrate approving behaviour when he/she perceives that the employer is going the extra mile, provides us with a concrete foundation to our later discussion concerning the potential for managing the psychological contract.

From a philosophical perspective, Homans (1961, 1974) applies these sets of theoretical notions to elucidate a number of phenomena, for instance, the exercise of power and authority, conformity and competition, cooperation, status and influence, structures of sentiment and interaction, satisfaction and productivity, leadership, the emergence of stratification, and distributive justice. By doing so, he addresses the aforementioned social phenomena, primarily with regard to the nature of the interpersonal relations surrounding them. He additionally emphasises ‘elementary’ forms of behaviour, or what he regards as the ‘sub-institutional’ level of analysis. Homans (1974, p. 356) explains that ‘We gain our fullest understanding of the elementary features of social behaviour by observing the interactions between members of small, informal groups.’ Clearly, by investigating such forms of behaviour, Homans hopes to illuminate the elementary, informal sub-institutional bases of more complicated forms of social behaviour, which are frequently more formal and institutionalised. Modern-day sociology undoubtedly recognises his input, not only because of his particular form of theorising, but also because of his particular prominence in identifying the micro-foundations of social structures and social change. It his crafted portrait that has formulated the original core set of thoughts concerning what has come to be recognised as social exchange theory.

Despite the fact that Homans has set the scene, it is Blau (1964) and Gouldner’s (1960) work which is regarded as representing the foundational ideas of social exchange theory. Whilst in the latter work, the norm of reciprocity marks the author’s presence in advancing the theory, the former is considered as having the primary influence. Blau (1987, p. ix) explicitly rejects Homans’ reductionist strategy, where he states that his ‘theory is rooted in the peculiarly social nature of exchange, which implies that it cannot be reduced to or derived from psychological principles that govern the motives of individuals, as Homans aims to do.’ He continues
pursuing his intentions by assuming that social structures have ‘emergent’ properties that cannot be explained by processes or characteristics that encompass only the subunits.

Blau (1964, 1987) moves beyond the micro-level adapted by Homans to the institutional level in his particular focus on elementary forms of behaviour and the sub-institutional level of analysis. This is accomplished by dealing with power and authority, change, and conflict in the context of institutionalised systems of exchange. Blau’s (1964) framework was built upon linking micro- and macrostructures through processes of social exchange, whereby he argues that societies are formed from substructures that hold individuals or groups and these combine to compose the macrostructure of a society. Drawing on Simmel’s understanding of social life, Blau points out that psychological processes are merely the root of the structure of social associations, for example, approval, cohesion, attraction, and rational conduct. Group formation, reciprocation and social integration, as well as processes of opposition, conflict, and dissolution are clarified with regard to social exchange processes. Over time, these types of social association forged by exchange processes come to compose very complex social structures (and substructures). Blau draws our attention to the fact that such complex compositions are formed and altered by power processes and the dynamics of legitimation and political opposition. Indirect exchanges are potentially generated by mediated common values, and therefore the coordination of action in large collectives. Furthermore, he indicates that they ‘legitimate the social order.’ (Blau, 1964)

Blau (1964) and subsequently, Emerson (1962, 1972), treat power as the key focus of analysis. The former treats power, opposition, legitimation and authority as the main theme in his argument of macro-structures and the dynamics of structural change. Besides this, he partially incorporates the latter’s theory of power-dependence relations within his treatment of power imbalance and the conditions of social independence. Then again, Emerson (1962) considers these strategies as power-balancing mechanisms, where he defends himself, explaining that power, categorised in relational terms, is a function of the dependence of one actor on another. In an exchange relationship that consists of two parties, the function of the dependence of one party on another exemplifies their power. Here, dependence is a function of the value one party places on the resources (or valued behaviour) mediated by the other party and the availability of these resources from substitutive sources. His observed inverse relationship approach which addresses the availability of resources in relation to the dependency factor signifies two key features of power. Firstly, it considers power as relational and as a distinctive attribute of a social relationship, not simply a tool controlled by one party. Secondly, it considers power as a
potentially exercisable right. This relational conception of power has grown to be the starting point for most subsequent work on exchange and power.

In another noteworthy contribution to social exchange theory, Blau offers an evaluative contrast of social and economic exchange along a number of dimensions, namely: timeframe, the norm of reciprocity and the specificity of obligations. According to Blau, ‘the basic and most crucial distinction is that social exchange entails unspecified obligations’ (1964, p.93). He continues by explaining that only social exchange ‘involves favors that create diffuse future obligations . . . and the nature of the return cannot be bargained’ (p. 93). Furthermore, ‘only social exchange tends to engender feelings of personal obligations, gratitude, and trust; purely economic exchange as such does not’ (p. 94). He also points out that ‘the benefits involved in social exchange do not have an exact price in terms of a single quantitative medium of exchange’ (p. 94), denoting that social exchanges generate enduring social patterns. Conversely, obligations formulated by each party in economic exchange are specified; the formal contract is the mechanism of ensuring the fulfilment of obligations and the exchange has a limited timeframe (Blau, 1964).

### 3.3.2 The norm of reciprocity

According to Blau (1964, p. 6), ‘Social exchange as here conceived is limited to actions that are contingent on rewarding reactions from others’. He continues by explaining that, in terms of social exchange theory, a participant that engages in a relationship will try to maintain a degree of balance between the input and the rewards received as a means of maintaining the on-going relationship. However, the strain here lies heavily in reciprocity. Drawing upon this argument, Shore and Barksdale (1998) explain that the existence of a degree of balance in terms of the perceived obligations between an employer and employees will enhance productivity in the working environment. In such an atmosphere, employees will be inclined to contribute through freely exchanged skills, effort and commitment in return for favourable benefits and socio-emotional rewards provided by the organisation (Meyer and Allen, 1997). Anderson and Schalk (1998, p. 640) point out that, ‘An employee weighs his or her obligations towards the organisation against the obligations of the organisation towards them as an employee and adjusts behaviour on the basis of critical outcomes’.

Homans (1974) supports this argument, indicating that in a social exchange, individuals go into relationships with others to maximise their benefits. The resources exchanged within this framework may be impersonal, such as the provision of information or money (Foа and Foа,
1974), or socio-emotional, as in the communication of caring or respect. Gouldner (1960) explains that through obligating the reciprocation of desirable treatment, the norm of reciprocity serves as a starting mechanism for interpersonal relationships. He continues by explaining that when one party benefits from another, they become indebted to them, whereby an expectation of repaying the donor with desirable resources will be established. According to Gouldner, over time, such a perceived on-going pattern where two parties possess, and are willing to bring to the table, valuable elements sought by the other, will largely strengthen the exchange relationship. In fact, this plays a vital role in the advancement of social exchange relationships by perpetuating the continuous fulfilment of obligations and strengthening indebtedness. The norm of reciprocity is universal, dictating that parties engaging in a social exchange relationship should return the help received and should not injure those who have previously helped them (Gouldner, 1960). It is a fundamental norm of cooperative exchange relationships (Gundlach, Achrol and Mentzer, 1995), in which partners are motivated to maintain or end relationships through observable reciprocated actions (Axelrod, 2006, Falk and Fischbacher, 2006). A failure to reciprocate a party that has fulfilled its side of a deal in relation to obligations or expectations erodes the quality of the exchange relationship (Cotterell, Eisenberger and Speicher, 1992; Morrison and Robinson, 1997; Rousseau, 1995).

In its focus on actions performed, equivalence reciprocity prescribes the comparability between an initial action and its response. Gouldner (1960) distinguishes between two types of reciprocity in terms of the resources exchanged: heteromorphic and homeomorphic. Equivalence in the former means that these recourses are distinctly different but equal in value. For instance, an organisation that has internalised this equivalent norm would reciprocate flexibility in response to a partner’s conformity. However, equivalence in homeomorphic reciprocity means that exchanged resources ‘should be concretely alike, or identical in form’ (Gouldner, 1960, p. 172), such as reciprocating information between two parties.

It is clear that reciprocity is regarded as an integral ingredient in social relations as its conducted norms not only contribute to the social stability of balanced relationships, but also, to some extent, determine the success or failure of these relationships. Perhaps, in some circumstances, potential achievements may be hindered between partners and so reciprocity performs a stabilising role in an environment that lacks transparently assigned duties.

As detailed in chapter Two, the noticeable changes within working environments since the introduction of managerialist ideology in the UK have attracted a great deal of attention to
research into the employment relationship. One of the illustrative frameworks that have been used in researching and evaluating social relationships (including the relationship between an employee and their employer) is the psychological contract. Perhaps one of the driving forces that nurture success in this domain is the apparent shift in the balance of the reciprocal agreement between employees and employers (Anderson and Schalk, 1998). A constructive psychological contract between two parties essentially requires a reciprocal contribution for mutual benefit (Rousseau, 1995) where an imbalance in such norms provides a source of conflict in the psychological contract (Kessler and Undy, 1996). Its mutual interdependence in social relationships has grown to be the underlying tone behind much of the theoretical grounding.

One of most common measures of the norm of reciprocity in organisational research is perceived organisational support. Developed by Eisenberger and colleagues (1986), perceived organisational support refers to an employee’s perception of the degree that their organisation cares about their well-being and values their efforts (Eisenberger et al. (1986). According to Eisenberger et al. (2001), employees perceiving support from their organisation will be inclined to reciprocate by helping the organisation accomplish its objectives. Besides, a history of treatment by the organisation plays an influential part here in employees’ reactions (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Psychological contract corresponds to perceived organisational support in its reliance on the norm of reciprocity as an explanatory mechanism for its impact on individuals’ behaviour and attitudes. Examining the employee-employer relationship in terms of perceived organisational support has attracted more attention among researchers of psychological contract over recent years (Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000, 2002; Tekleab, Takeuchi and Taylor, 2005; Guerrero and Herrbach, 2008). Aselage and Eisenberger (2003, p. 492), for example, suggest that the psychological contract and perceived organisational support are mutually interdependent constructs as both:

‘...assume that employees increase their efforts carried out on behalf of the organization to the degree that the organization is perceived to be willing and able to reciprocate with desired impersonal and socioemotional resources.’

Therefore, an individual will perceive an organisation that deals fairly and considerately with its workers (e.g. by offering training and career development opportunities, and good working
conditions) as an organisation that has fulfilled its contractual obligations to them according to the psychological contract (Eisenberger et al., 1990). Such a positive state of mind leads an employee to be more likely to reciprocate feelings of perceived organisational support by helping his/her organisation to achieve its objectives.

3.3.3 Equity Theory

Another theory that has contributed to organisational behaviour research and touched on significant aspects of the psychological contract construct is the theory of equity. The commonalities shared by both can be seen in a number of features, for instance, the idiosyncratic perceptions of an individual, building upon the notion of exchange and reciprocity, and construing the exchanges and implicit nature of the exchange relationship between parties. Drawing from social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) and developed by Adam (1963), equity theory has accompanied the development of the psychological contract in attempting to understand the subjective evaluation process, along with its influencing factors. In particular, this concerns the external influences that operate in the work setting (e.g. human resource practices, social cues) and the internal predispositions (e.g. self-schema, cognitive styles). A central assumption underlying equity theory is that an individual strives for justice in their social relations, whereby unjust relationships will lead to a feeling of anxiety (Adams, 1963; Homans, 1961; Walster, Walster and Berscheid, 1978). A fair balance between input and output is its fundamental formula, that is, an individual is likely to be demotivated towards both management and the job when the input they bring to a job (loyalty, hard work, effort, adaptability, social skills, flexibility, commitment etc.) is greater than the output (recognition, salary, sense of achievement, benefit, health care, etc.) received.

Rousseau (1995) points out that the psychological contract is akin to equity theory, where employees’ perceptions of the reciprocal contributions between them and the employer are taken into account. Arnold (1996) argues that many of the issues that researchers face with regard to the psychological contract were encountered long ago in equity theory. Although in his article, Arnold (1996) has offered a constructive review of the construct; it is tempting to challenge him in his aforementioned statement. Equity theory does not add to the advancement of psychological contract. It may have helped establish important grounds but has not had any effect since then. This is due to two reasons; not only did the theory rule out psychological variables that may affect an individual’s perceptions of interactions and fairness in the working environment, but most importantly, it failed to consider the external influence of the overarching system to determine input and output, hence affecting the perceived
equity/inequity amongst employees. To support this argument, the latter point has been a critical factor in the paradigm shift of psychological contract, particularly within the last decade. Changes occurring as a result of economic and political factors have altered employees’ perceptions. The overarching system of authority imposed by managerialism has been overlooked by equity theory and seems to miss the advancement of the construct as well as the fact that it has gone through a paradigm shift. Therefore, and going back to Arnold’s statement, it is perhaps true that equity theory has encountered many of the issues surrounding the psychological contract, but not since managerialist ideology became evident in both the private and public sectors here in the UK.

3.4 Constructing the psychological contract
Menninger (1958) is generally credited with the introduction of the notion that the psychological contract is involved in a range of interpersonal exchanges in that it focuses mainly on the explicit and hidden contract between the patient and psychotherapist. He is particularly concerned with the influence of unconscious motives upon psychological contract behaviour. In fact, his work is considered to have contributed considerably to the origins of the psychological contract construct (Levinson et al., 1962). He points out that not only do contracts and contractual relationships involve the exchange of tangibles (e.g. services, money, goods), but also intangibles. Additionally, he argues that in order for a contractual relationship to be sustainable, it is required that the existing exchange between both parties results in the reciprocal satisfaction of needs, as he notes: ‘In any engagement between two individuals in which a transaction occurs, there is an exchange, a giving and a gain of something by both parties with a consequent meeting of the needs in a reciprocal way, mutual way. When this balance is not achieved, either because one does not need what the other has to offer or because one does not give what the other needs or because there is a feeling on the part of one that the exchange is not a fair one, the contract tends to break up prematurely’ (Menninger, 1958). By giving an example of a man purchasing apples from a vendor, and the barber-client relationship, Menninger illustrates his point that the needs of an exchange relationship between two parties can be met in a variety of intangible and tangible ways (e.g. the pleasure of companionship). His arguments concerning the intangible aspects of the contractual relationship between psychoanalysts and patients has been referred to in his book as the ‘psychotherapy contract’ (Menninger, 1958, p. 21).

An additional interesting observation by Menninger is that, in order for a contractual relationship to be maintained throughout an exchange, the reciprocal satisfaction of both parties
must be established, and yet it is not clear from Menninger’s writing what is meant by ‘satisfaction.’ He continues by explaining that the continuation of the contract rests on the patient remaining in some way reliant on the therapist’s services. Once a decision is made by the patient that he or she is capable of managing alone, the contract is expected to terminate. This is interesting as Conway and Briner (2005, p.9) have noted that the central distinction between the content of the construct (i.e. what is exchanged) and the process (how the exchange is managed) is evident even in this early research. This is clear in how Menninger has approached and analysed the contractual relationship. In spite of this, he does not explicitly mention the term ‘psychological contract’ until the reissue of his book in 1970 (Menninger and Holzman, 1973).

The term ‘psychological work contract’ was first coined by Argyris (1960) to encapsulate the unspoken expectations and obligations driven by a mutual agreement between a group of employees and their foreman. He describes it as an evolving relationship, whereby each party is expected to behave in a certain way. A foreman that seeks to maintain the informal employee culture and respect its norms will probably influence employees to sustain high production, low grievance, etc. (Argyris, 1960, p. 97).

Argyris also argues that, although an employer would not necessarily approve the behaviour and cultural norms of his/her employee group, it is unwise to challenge such behaviour or norms as this could lead to reduced effort from the group’s side. This is interesting as it emphasises that maintaining a successful healthy on-going relationship necessitates some kind of compromise from both parties. Employees’ behaviour inside the working environment does not matter when they are doing their job and performing in a satisfactory manner. Likewise, it is only when the employer keeps his/her side of the deal that employees will be prepared to work productively. However, Argyris’ view of the contract is simple and effective for both parties. He views the psychological contract as an important construct, but no detailed analysis or empirical investigation has been carried out on his part. In addition, Argyris (1960) uses the term ‘psychological work contract’ to portray the embeddedness of the power of perception and the principles adopted by both an individual and his or her organisation for the employment relationship.

As suggested by Conway and Briner (2009) in their overview of the historical development of the psychological contract, the next noteworthy milestone is the work produced by Levinson et al. (1962), who has produced an entire book devoted to the application of the psychological
contract as a means of better understanding staff well-being. Based on Menninger’s analysis of the intangible features of contractual relationships, Levinson et al. (1962, p.21) have put forward a definition that mutual expectation is its cornerstone: ‘A series of mutual expectations of which the parties to the relationship may not themselves be dimly aware but which nonetheless govern their relationship to each other.’ The central notion here is that an exchange relationship exists between the employee and the organisation, as previously conceptualised by March and Simon (1958) and developed in social exchange theory and equity theory (Homans, 1961; Adams, 1965).

Roehling (1997) explains that Levinson et al. (1962) were amongst the first scholars to use the term ‘psychological contract’, through which they explicitly identify the dynamic relationship of the construct (i.e. a contract evolving over time due to the changing needs of both parties). These unconsciously driven expectations are largely implicit and normally formed prior to, or outside the existing employment relationship (Levinson et al., 1962). Levinson and his colleagues’ argument is that individuals in a working environment will initiate and develop interdependent relationships driven by their needs, whereby each party acts to fulfil the needs of the other. This framework captures both parties’ expectations and constitutes the psychological contract.

Perhaps the main distinguishable aspect that differentiates this early construct from contemporary approaches is the central role of the concept of needs. According to the needs approach, organisations meet employees’ needs and as a sense of obligatory reciprocation, the employee tries to fulfil the organisation’s needs. In this sense, the obligations that formulate psychological contract are to a large extent related to need, as Levinson et al. (1962, p.36) indicates: ‘It is as if both employees and company are saying to one another, ‘You must, for I require it’’, whereas the employee-employer relationship can be viewed as, ‘the process of fulfilling a contractual relationship in which both parties seek continuously to meet their respective needs.’ In addition to the above, this early construct places an emphasis on the unconscious motives that control individual expectations, whereas contemporary approaches highlight the importance of conscious expectations that shape behaviour.

3.4.1 Viewing the contract from a different perspective
Both Argyris (1960) and Levinson et al.’s (1962) work has mainly applied the psychological contract as a framework, rather than as a construct referring to the inference of the exchange relationship between both parties (Millward and Brewerton, 1999). However, their definitions
have remained problematic, giving rise to quite a few revisions over the years (Herriot and Pemberton, 1995). For instance, Meckler, Drake and Levinson (2003) state that the unfolding reciprocation process examined by Levinson’s work is rather hit-and-miss and potentially painful during the renegotiation and reciprocation process. This is because, according to them, while both parties are trying to alter their psychological contract to better fulfil their own needs, they might impede the fulfilment of the other’s needs.

Schein (1965), on the other hand, who explores the psychological contract from a constructive perspective, regards it as a key technique for understanding the employment relationship. He also explains that the psychological contract implies a variety of expectations from both parties, whether organisational or individual. He continues by expounding that, although such expectations are not written into any formal agreement, the psychological contract is a powerful determinant of behaviour. He cites both Argyris (1960) and Levinson et al. (1962, p. 11) in his original discussion of the psychological contract, where he notes that,

‘The notion of a psychological contract implies that the individual has a variety of expectations of the organisation and that the organisation has a variety of expectations of him. These expectations not only cover how much work is to be performed for how much pay, but also involve the whole pattern of rights, privileges, and obligations between worker and organisations. For example, the worker may expect the company not to fire him after he has worked for a certain number of years and the company may expect that the worker will not run down the company’s public image or give away company secrets to competitors. Expectations such as these are not written into any formal agreement between employer and organization, yet they operate powerfully as determinants of behavior’.

There is little doubt that Schein’s work has broadened our understanding of the construct by drawing attention to the significance of viewing the relationship from both sides, i.e. from both the employee’s and employer’s perspectives. More emphasis is placed on the latter in the psychological contract and how it can be communicated through organisational culture, more specifically through line management.

Based on Etzioni’s (1964) typology of coercive, non-native and utilitarian cultures, as well as assumptions made on the management of people (e.g. Theory X and Theory Y (McGregor, 1960)), Schein’s hypotheses on the psychological contract are likely to arise from different
types of organisational culture. For example, taking into account Theory X assumptions, ‘If employees are expected to be indifferent, hostile, motivated only by economic incentives, and the like, the managerial strategies used to deal with them are very likely to train them to behave in precisely this fashion’ (Schein, 1965, p.49). Additionally, Schein (1965, p.65) states one key aspect, which has been problematic in previous scholars’ work on psychological contract, as mentioned earlier, and that is that on-going renegotiation is fundamentally affected by explicit communication channels and enactment power. He explains that ‘Both individual employee and manager forge their expectations from their inner needs, what they have learned from others, traditions and norms which may be operating, their own past experiences, and a host of other sources’ (Schein, 1980, p. 24). On the other hand, Schein (1980, p. 77) also notes that the relationship between an employee and his/her organisation is interactive, unfolding through mutual influence and bargaining to create a workable psychological contract construct. Due to the changing needs of both the employee and employer over time, the psychological contract has to be constantly renegotiated.

Despite all of this, questions have been raised that somehow undermine Schein’s (1965) hypothesis (Rousseau and Wade-Benzoni, 1994; Shore and Tetrick, 1994; Herriot and Pemberton, 1997; Lee, 2001). In particular, these refer to his proposition to treat management expectations collectively, e.g. who is a manager, and how can we take into consideration the various viewpoints of different managers? If the psychological contract is composed of all managers’ perspectives, then how do we decide if the contract has been fulfilled or broken? Clearly these, and similar observations, have generated many challenges for subsequent researchers on the subject over the years, for instance when trying to define, measure and or manage psychological contract.

The identification of one of the parties to the contract as ‘the organisation’ is relevant here. Clearly, a collective cannot negotiate or communicate; only its representatives can do so on its behalf. In the case of the employment relationship, different representatives may send different and even incompatible messages regarding what the organisation expects. For example, a line manager may indicate they want a subordinate to remain in his or her present job, while an HR manager may advise a move for development reasons. The consequence will be that the individual will receive unclear signals from ‘the organisation’ and thus hold a confused perception of the contract’s terms. Role sending has been ambiguous and it is likely that what is on offer will likewise be obscure.
In 1973, Kotter conducted a study of organisational socialisation, where he tested one of the earliest examples of empirical work on psychological contracts, namely Schein’s ‘matching’ hypothesis. In essence, it places an emphasis on matching the expectations of the organisation and the employee. The result of such matching, along with its fulfilment, plays a crucial role in attaining positive outcomes, such as commitment, performance, and job satisfaction. Kotter deduced a positive correlation between the extent to which the employee and employer’s expectations match, and the probability of employees reporting job satisfaction, productivity, and reduced turnover. ‘Matching’ signifies here the contrasting similarity of employee expectations concerning what they should perform and receive, to the organisation’s expectations and what they get in return. Unlike other conceptualisations that acknowledge the psychological contract, and which involve agreed expectations, Kotter introduces incongruent employer-employee expectations in the construct. He suggests a notion of matched and mismatched expectations that complement the construct, thereby minimising such mismatches between both parties and so positively retaining workers and establishing a successful organisation. Apparently, Kotter has thus laid a foundation for a large number of empirical studies on the violation and breach of psychological contract. For instance, recent research reports that the psychological contract breach is negatively associated with affective commitment (Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000), job satisfaction (Tekleab, Takeuchi and Taylor, 2005), in-role performance (Turnley and Feldman, 2000; Johnson and O’Leary Kelly, 2003), and organisational citizenship behaviour (Johnson and O’Leary Kelly, 2003), but is positively associated with turnover intentions (Lo and Aryee, 2003; Carbery et al., 2003; Lemire and Rouillard, 2005).

3.5 Psychological contract construct formation

In 1979, Weick examined the psychological contract construct with respect to an individual’s reasons for joining an organisation, viewing it as playing a central role in organisational behaviour. Roehling (1997) notes that Weick’s statement draws conclusions from both Schein’s definition of psychological contract and the argument that the construct plays a central role in organisational behaviour. In terms of psychological contracts, Weick (1979, p.19) explains: ‘Satisfaction, productivity, interpersonal ties, and the likelihood of leaving are all dependent on the terms of the contract and its fate at any given moment in time.’ In his study, Weick reported the significance of psychological contract formation prior to entry into the employing organisation, although little attention had been previously given in the literature concerning this area. The following discussion addresses the significant aspects surrounding psychological contract formation, but we have to bear in mind in this discussion that
organisations do not hold a psychological contract in the same way that employees do. Organisations only put forward a framework for the formation of psychological contract, in which representatives of these organisations can hold a psychological contract, perceiving and reacting accordingly (Rousseau, 1989).

Rousseau (2011) explains that psychological contract represents the employment relationship with regard to the subjective beliefs of an employee and his/her employer. Based on its definition, a psychological contract implies a subjective nature (Rousseau and Tijoriwala, 1998), which indicates a different world within every mind (Sparrow, 1996). A key issue in the construct within this context is the belief that certain types of promise are composed and a return is offered in exchange for it, binding both parties to a particular set of reciprocal obligations (Rousseau, 1989, 2011). However, newcomers will have formulated some type of expectation prior to joining an entity. Thomas and Anderson (1998) confirm that, based on conducted empirical work, a newcomer will have expectations regarding the job itself, the entity and the working relationship, and such established expectations will be considered as the basis on which the psychological contract is formed. In spite of the fact that not all expectations are contractual (Rousseau, 1990, 1995), it should be expected that quite a few actually are, and for that reason cannot be neglected during psychological contract formation. Such expectations may establish a starting point for an employee’s assessment of whether or not the organisation is able to fulfil contractual obligations and this might lead to a ‘reality shock,’ thus influencing his/her commitment. In fact, studies have consistently reported that an employee tends to change his/her perceived obligations towards an organisation as a function of evaluating the inducements and obligations it offers, and this in turn adjusts his/her psychological contract with the other party (Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2002; De Vos, Buyens and Schalk , 2003, and Tsai and Yang, 2010). What is more, expectations may tend to be revised contingent on the messages communicated by the contract makers; pre-entry expectations may or may not be fulfilled or indeed, may be over-fulfilled. Fulfilled and over-fulfilled expectations are incorporated into newcomers’ psychological contracts, particularly the ones that are actualised through explicit or implicit promises. On the other hand, the promises exchanged between an organisation and a newcomer concerning the employment relationship sets up the fundamentals of the focal individual’s psychological contract, as these consist of the key components of the unwritten agreement between both parties. Promises are the inherent property of psychological contract, whereby such messages are imbedded by an individual as promissory, signifying psychological contract formation (Rousseau, 2001, 2011).
Additionally, Rubin and Brown (1975) explain that promises indicate an intention to offer the other party some benefit, hence boosting the psychological attractiveness of the transmitter along with increasing the likelihood of reaching an agreement (Rubin and Lewicki, 1973). Promises not only create an obligation towards the other party, but also instil trust by providing information that individuals would otherwise possess regarding each party’s intention. Accordingly, this inherent property of the psychological contract upon entry is considered as the main ingredient of its formation (Rousseau, 2001, 2011). In addition to the promise factor, individuals develop their psychological contract based on their perceptions of the procedures, policies, practices and culture of the organisation (Turnley and Feldman, 1999). Furthermore, employees’ psychological contracts begin to formulate in the recruitment process and alter when he/she has accumulated more experience in the organisation.

Rousseau (2001) points out that psychological contract formation comprises of five phases. She explains that the first phase occurs prior to employment and is influenced by societal beliefs and professional norms. During such a phase, professional learning and media representation of some occupations may have an impact on the kind of schemata developed. Afterwards and during the recruitment process, the second phase would involve a process of active promise exchange by both the prospective employee and the employing organisation, through which both parties start to develop a perception of the promises on the table. Here, a previous experience from an old job, either positive or negative, will influence how a newcomer encodes and develops his/her expectations. Researchers into the topic of psychological contract state that throughout the recruitment and selection phase, employers can transmit messages (whether contrived or accidental) regarding future contractual obligations (Shore and Tetrick, 1994; Rousseau and Greller, 1994; Rousseau, 2001; Millward and Cropley, 2003). In cases where an applicant has inadequate information, they may count on an organisation’s image to make a decision on whether to continue an employment relationship with the focal organisation. For instance, an academic applying for a new job in a university may change his/her mind in pursuing the new job if the university image emphasises a certain type of agenda. Self-actualisation, of course, plays a determinant role in the final decision. Images may additionally assist prospective employees in upcoming events (Gatewood et al., 1993).

The third phase of contract formation takes place during early organisational socialisation, which involves a continuing promise exchange. Besides this, both parties in this phase will actively continue to seek information about each other from various information channels, such as from co-workers and line managers. Subsequently and during the fourth phase, less
information is sought and organisations make less effort to socialise employees who are no longer considered newcomers. However, changes that have occurred may become incorporated into the established psychological contract. The last phase encompasses assessment, revision and possible violation of the psychological contract. However, prior to engaging in these phases, an individual will develop some kind of generalised values about reciprocity and hard work, which may have been influenced by family, peer group, school and interactions with working people (Morrison and Robinson, 2004). Individuals may develop assumptions with regard to their prospective first exchange employment relationship, whereby they come to a decision over what to offer and receive, thus influencing subsequent interpretations of the signals and cues from the organisation.

Clearly, the aforementioned discussion of the fundamental grounds surrounding the creation of psychological contract signifies a sense-making process. It refers to situations where an individual employs a cognitive process in organisational settings and has been classified as a cycle of events taking place over time (Louis, 1980). This cycle commences when individuals are driven by both conscious and unconscious assumptions and expectations in relation to their future employment relationship. Weick (1995, p. 39) explains that sense-making is ‘a social process that acts as a constant substrate shaping interpretations and interpreting’. This relates to newly started and prospective employees trying to make sense of incomplete information they hold in relation to the terms of their employment relationship. Louis (1980) explains that such a process helps in the neutralisation of an individual’s perception of any undelivered promises or unmet expectations. Throughout the five phases of psychological contract formation, sense-making is a powerful tool used to assess subsequent events throughout the lifespan of the employment relationship.

### 3.5.1 The characteristics of the psychological contract construct

Notwithstanding the fact that each individual may have a different psychological contract, every psychological contract comprises of a number of elements shaping their perception of reality. These elements are: the implicit nature, exchange aspect and the dynamic nature of the psychological contract construct.

#### 3.5.1.1 The implicit nature of the psychological contract construct

Promises driven or inferred by explicit and implicit nature are usually considered as encapsulating psychological contracts. Explicit promises are made as a result of written or verbal agreements on the part of the organisation or one of its agents, for instance, a manager
making a promise as a kind of inducement, such as a promotion, in return for achieving a specific target. On the other hand, implicit promises are inferred through the ‘interpretations of patterns of past exchange, vicarious learning (e.g. witnessing other employees' experiences) as well as through various factors that each party may take for granted (e.g. good faith or fairness)’ (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994, p. 246). In addition, both parties’ conduct may play a considerable role in shaping the psychological contract. Observed behaviour and responses formulated through repetitive interaction between the employee and the employer create what the former perceives as an implicit psychological contract, through which a future relationship between both parties may be structured (Rousseau, 1990). An example would be an implicit promise created when an organisation sends extra thanks or messages of recognition to the employee, making him/her feel valued for extra effort. Consequently, in future events, an employee will expect a similar response from the other party for performing extra-role activities, i.e. being shown that he/she is valued, as the established psychological contract relates to this specific behaviour.

Nonetheless, there is a growing debate regarding the explicit and implicit promises that create a psychological contract. This surrounds the extent to which a particular promise needs to be implicit in order to be regarded as a component of the psychological contract. On one hand, some researchers argue that the psychological contract mostly comprises implicit promises (Levinson et al., 1962; Schein, 1965, 1980; Guest, 1998; Meckler, Drake and Levinson, 2003). Schein (1965, p.11), for example, points out that expectations held within the psychological contract ‘are not written into any formal agreement between employers and organisations, yet they operate powerfully as determinants of behaviour’. According to those researchers, promises or contracts at the explicit end of the continuum cannot be usefully classified as psychological contracts. On the other hand, all contracts may be viewed as being fundamentally psychological (see for example, Macneil, 1985; Rousseau, 1995). This is due to the fact that even explicit promises are open to interpretations of what makes up sufficient exchange and its timing. For instance, the relatively explicit promise of a reward for extra-role performance may raise more questions or interpretations surrounding the level and timing of the reward and the required extra role.

Explicit promises are believed to have much more influence over individuals’ feelings and behaviour than implicit promises (Rousseau, 1989). Such an observation is supported by social information processing theory (Rousseau, 1989), where it is stated that overt commitment exerts more influence over an individual’s behaviour and cognition than a subtle or covert one
Thus, the greater the number of explicit promises contained in the psychological contract, the more it turns out to be a powerful predictor of employee behaviour. Furthermore, in doing so, the more effectively the psychological contract may be managed (e.g. Herriot and Pemberton, 1995). However, it is not yet clear whether such a step would actually make the contract more manageable or just shift it to the realm of a formal contract.

### 3.5.1.2 The exchange aspect of the psychological contract construct

There is an agreement across researchers that psychological contracts include an exchange relationship between two parties. In promissory terms, a psychological contract involves conditional promises, or what perhaps may be called reciprocal promises. Whilst an exchange often occurs in non-specific terms, along with a set of employer inducements presented as a 'package' in exchange for a 'package' of employee contributions, it seems that such an exchange is much more specific. Besides, there is consent across definitions that the exchange may involve any matters which, ‘not only cover how much work is to be performed for how much pay, but also involves the whole pattern of rights, privileges, and obligations between worker and organization’ (Schein, 1965, p. 11). It is much broader than an employment or legal contract and ‘may have literally thousands of items [...] although the employee may consciously think of only a few’ (Kotter, 1973, p. 92). Despite this, in practice, a psychological contract is distinctly regarded as encompassing the core resources for the employment contract.

A noticeable focus in the literature centres on a particular set of employee contributions (e.g. skills, effort, flexibility and creativity) and employer inducements (e.g. pay, respect, training and job security) which are assumed to be fundamental components of the employment relationship. The issue here, or perhaps the debate in relation to the exchange nature of the psychological contract, is the specificity of the exchange. In other words, it is not clear precisely how such an exchange occurs. Besides, some resources have been designated as more significant than others, such as psychological contracts formed during performance appraisals (Stiles et al., 1996) and psychological contracts in association with careers (Herriot and Pemberton, 1996). Such a focus on specific core resources has resulted in an abandonment of the wide and diverse scope of possible exchanges between the employee and employer on a daily basis.

### 3.5.1.3 The dynamic nature of the psychological contract construct

Psychological contracts are dynamic and naturally change over time, being driven by changing needs and relationships (Smithson and Lewis, 2003). Once formed, a psychological contract
does not remain static but constantly evolves during the employment relationship. It can change without any formal attempt to alter its terms (Rousseau, 1995) and this change can be either internal or external. While the former indicates a change or divergence in the meaning and fulfilment of the exchanged terms (contract drift), the latter indicates a change in the context in which the exchange terms are fulfilled.

In terms of changes in context or external change, psychological contract development can take two forms, namely revolutionary transformation and evolutionary accommodation (Rousseau, 1995). Revolutionary transformation is identified as a radical change in the nature of the relationship between both parties, where it redefines the relationship along with the terms of the contract. For example, an alteration in the reward system in a university, e.g. a budget allocation mechanism based on academic performance is replaced with one based on publishing research and this will then be regarded as a radical change in terms of the contract. Evolutionary accommodation, on the other hand, is identified as an adjustment within the framework of an existing psychological contract. Changes in the work schedule, such as when an employee starts and finishes, is an example of accommodation offered by Rousseau (1995). Schalk and Freese (1997) further explain that there are three likely outcomes of psychological contract evaluation based on the proposed 'change' model of the psychological contract, namely acceptance, revision, or breakdown of the psychological contract.

Acceptance is an outcome of the evaluation process, in which changes within the psychological contract are regarded as reasonable. This means a change in the contract can be accommodated within the current contract schema, and then acceptance is likely to take place. A revision outcome in the evaluation process will occur in cases where the existing psychological contract cannot be perceived by the employee as an anticipated step. With such a perception, the employee would not tolerate such changes and then a breakdown of the psychological contract would be a likely result. However, the interesting element of this proposed model is that it focuses on the revision of the psychological contract which may have taken place due to external factors. In other words, it focuses on changes in the context where the exchange relationship between both parties is embedded. McLean Parks and Kidder (1994) argue that changes in the context of the employment relationship would probably influence an employee’s perception of change in this relationship. An employee’s future contribution is in turn likely to be influenced by changes in organisational inducements.
This dynamic nature of the psychological contract, particularly surrounding the meaning ascribed to a variety of exchange terms, has been researched and empirically investigated by several researchers (Robinson, Kraatz, and Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau, 1995; Robinson, 1996). Robinson, Kraatz, and Rousseau (1994), for example, have discovered that the perceptions of obligations for both employees and organisations changes over a 2 year period. According to their findings, a new employee grows to feel that he/she has been over-fulfilling their obligations towards the organisation at the end of a 2 year period, while at the same time the organisation is believed to have under-fulfilled its obligations towards them.

3.6 Beginning of a new era: The redefinition of the psychological contract

During the early development of the psychological contract construct, a lack of interest in the construct was noticeable. This was perhaps due to the fact that Argyris, Levinson and Schein’s efforts in conceptualising the psychological contract were, to some extent, insufficiently subtle, casting doubt on ‘beliefs’ (e.g. obligations, expectations or needs) as components of the psychological contract. Conway and Briner (2009) indicate that just a few empirical studies in work settings on the psychological contract were published during this early period, where scholars were possibly deterred from examining the construct, owing to its emphasis on unconscious processes. They continued by explaining that this reluctance was probably not only because organisational research at that time was distinguished by advances in cognitive theories, such as goal-setting, but also because the existence of similarly well-explored and popular concepts during that era had assessed the affected outcomes, e.g. met expectations and need-satisfaction theories. However, psychological contract was redefined by 1989, representing a paradigm shift in boundaries that announced a curtain drawn on the first period and the birth of a new component. In addition to the construct elements that have shaped psychological contract identity from the first period, the second period has embraced a new identity that encompasses both construct and concept elements. The increasing interest in the conceptual model is apparent in the literature. Prior to engaging in an exploration of the boundaries of the new psychological contract identity, especially its concept elements, the following discussion aims to offer an in-depth analysis of the paradigm shift that has occurred and to identify the stages through which the psychological contract has travelled over the years.

3.6.1 A paradigm shift from a Kuhnian view

It can be argued that one of the most logical statements in many different societies is that individuals’ inner space, with all that this holds and influences in relation to nature, beliefs, principles and feelings regarding families, social relationships or working environments, is
affected by the external space. These may be largely driven by economics, environmental factors or sometimes the desire to serve a political agenda. Arguably, the reverse may also be true, and that is, that the world can also be influenced by an individual’s beliefs and contributions. The birth of new theories and the interpretation of natural phenomena and influential concepts may support, or even disclaim previous propositions or current convincing explanations. The impact of these actions on both worlds of an individual is the main interest here: to be precise, the amalgamation of their impact upon the principles, interests and priorities which drive an individual to accept or reject new paradigms.

Various political and economic objectives, especially from within the past two decades, have played a key role in the formation and alteration of policies and procedures in the UK’s HE sector. A number of significant consequences are noticeable and easily quantifiable, whilst others are subtle and less evident, for instance, the impact on organisational culture, values and work behaviour. These less noticeable changes are harder to recognise and communicate, as they resemble a basic shift in the environment. A good example in HE is the preference for more quantifiable objectives and goals and the adjustment in management practices towards fostering competition among employees and measuring outcomes and individual staff performance. The author believes these less noticeable, or qualitative changes, discussed in the previous chapter, exemplify a paradigm shift. According to Kuhn (1970, p.10) ‘After such revolutions, one conceptual world view is replaced by another’. Kuhn (1970, p.6) argues that this is because scientific advancement is not evolutionary but rather constitutes ‘a series of peaceful interludes punctuated by intellectually violent revolutions,’ which he describe as ‘the tradition-shattering complements to the tradition-bound activity of normal science.’ Kuhn (1970) also argues that just because one paradigm ultimately fails to adequately account for all of the observed phenomena, we find upheaval in the discipline concerned and a revolutionary conceptualisation of the phenomenon being studied. He further supports that an upheaval in the discipline, along with an examination of a revolutionary conceptualisation of a phenomenon, is an obvious indication of the fact that such a paradigm has not adequately succeeded in accounting for all of the observed phenomena.

Kuhn goes on to explain that a radical change in the mental framework for interpreting facts symbolises a paradigm shift, where a set of rules and regulations identify or shape boundaries and direct perceptions, behaviour and thoughts (Barker, 1992; Harmon, 1970; Kuhn, 1970; Smith, 1989). The existing paradigm(s), along with the values and assumptions embraced will no longer suffice as a reflection of the fundamental changes in society, whereby previously
existing paradigm(s) will not fully decipher or evaluate the nature and impact of the new situation. Consequently, and during such a phase, it becomes apparent that there is a crucial need to reassess existing paradigm(s) and develop new ones, with a new paradigm being traced within the peripheries of the existing doubtable one (Barker, 1992). Besides this, in the course of forming and developing a new paradigm, the various accepted aspects of both the previous and new paradigm(s) can be distinguished, namely values, norms, behaviour and the peripheries within which both paradigms exist (Spitzer, 1999).

To a remarkable extent, the intellectual history of psychological contract traces the pattern described by Kuhn in his theories of scientific advancement. Much of the marked emotional intensity that has accompanied the development of psychological contract can be viewed as a common element of science, rather than as something peculiar to psychological contract. In fact, if we adopt the Kuhnian view of scientific advancement, the psychological contract has passed under many different kinds of scrutiny since its conception in the 1960s. Since then, intellectually vigorous revolutions across both academic and practical fields have enriched psychological contract with regard to its definition and characteristics. This is perhaps because of unanswered questions or approaches from different perspectives. Going through such phases, as well as adopting and at the same time, challenging, new beliefs, illustrates the normal practice of any scientific paradigm which attempts to deal with the challenges it faces, once it becomes a leading intellectual framework for social relations in general and the employment relationship in particular.

Sims (1994) explains that in the traditional work paradigm that existed between the 1950s and 1980s, the psychological contract was straightforward. He argues that this was because characteristics such as stability, predictability and growth, which were common privileges for loyal employees in their ‘cradle-to-grave’ psychological contract, were no longer valid. Changes introduced afterwards were driven by external pressures instigated to shake the foundations of the paradigm (Herriot and Pemberton, 1997; Hiltrop, 1995; Pascale, 1995; Sims, 1994).

Following Kuhn’s view, the previous paradigm was not abandoned completely during that period, but rather redefined, even with contradictory observations. Arguably, from Kuhn’s observations, the psychological contract at this stage was justified by two significant developments; in essence, the paradigm did not represent the contemporary psychological contract, but the entire world view within which it existed, along with every implication that
accompanied it. This can be identified from researchers’ perceptions of the features of the knowledge landscape, based on the characteristics of the landscape that researchers see around them.

In addition, scientific discipline is thrown into a state of crisis once a certain number of noteworthy shortcomings and inconsistencies are pinpointed in an existing paradigm. During such a stage, new thoughts, possibly even some that have been previously expressed and rejected, are tested. By then, a new paradigm is formed with its own new adherents, thereby creating an intellectual battle between its followers and the advocates of the old paradigm. As a result, this chapter aims to highlight the battle in the intellectual arena which has surfaced since Rousseau’s reconceptualisation of the psychological contract in 1989.

Perhaps another rationale to support the view that psychological contract is currently at this stage is the fact that the process of paradigm shift is sociological in nature, and complex in terms of its policy, making it difficult to predict. In the context of the dynamics of paradigm change, Hall (1993, p. 280) explains that

‘Paradigms are by definition never fully commensurable in scientific or technical terms. Because each paradigm contains its own account of how the world facing policy makers operates and each account is different, it is often impossible for the advocates of different paradigms to agree on a common body of data against which a technical judgment in favour of one paradigm over another might be made.’

Evidently, since its conception, the definition of psychological contract has altered throughout the years, impacted significantly in its very essence by a paradigm shift. Perhaps an obvious sign is the acknowledgement of new aspects in its description and a recent loss of interest in examining the agent party in the relationship. These changes have been acknowledged in most subsequent contemporary research. This paradigm shift was instigated by Rousseau’s (1989) seminal reconceptualization of the psychological contract, in which she redefines it as a set of ‘individual beliefs in a reciprocal obligation between the individual and organization’. She explains that, based on the promissory nature of psychological contract, it is only the individual-centric view that shapes the formation of this hidden contract, as opposed to the dyadic relationship between an employer and their employees. The psychological contract since then, according to Kuhn’s Cycle Model (Figure 2.1), has progressed to the fourth stage (Model Revolution). This represents a move forward from an arena that had endured for quite
some time, and the psychological contract was thrown into crisis, giving rise to several disagreements over its definition and presenting different views of what it refers to. For instance, see Guest (1998), Meckler, Drake and Levinson (2003), Conway and Briner (2005), and Cullinane and Dundon (2006). These healthy competitive endeavours ultimately matured the contract to the next stage, even though the Model Revolution stage is still not yet complete and a new unified model has not been achieved.

Figure 3.1 Kuhn Cycle Model

Having followed and analysed the historical transformation and changing characteristics of psychological contract development to the present day from a Kuhnian view, it is relevant to address the rejection from amongst the scientific community of applying such a view in the context of social science. Not only is this derived from the fact that the application of Kuhn’s scientific paradigms on the social science context goes beyond his own usage: that is, the natural sciences, but also because of the extensive disagreement that distinguish the social science from the natural sciences and due to the fact that it employs different methods. Kuhn (1970, viii), for example, notes:

‘I was struck by the number and extent of the overt disagreements between social scientists about the nature of legitimate scientific problems and methods,’ whereas natural sciences, as he explains, ‘possess firmer or more permanent answers.’

Such a view is supported by the recurrent debate over whether a social science is really a science. Following Winch’s argument in challenging the appropriateness of viewing social
studies as a branch of science rather than philosophy, Hutchinson, Read and Sharrock (2008, p. 3, 4) argue:

‘... there is no such thing as a social science on the model of methodological or substantive reductionism, because to be committed to methodological or substantive reductionism is to be committed to a priorism; it is to be committed to something—a method or the relevant explanatory factors in one’s explanation of social action—prior to one’s investigation. The correct method, if one wishes to speak so, is read off the nature of the phenomena. To embrace a particular methodology from another domain of inquiry owing to its success in that domain is, one might say, ironically contrary to the scientific spirit: it is to fail to act in accordance with the intellectual virtues.’

Additionally, and based on the fact that social science to some extent shares the condition of multiplicity, along with its ‘problems’ that accompany the field of organisational studies, Hassard (1990, p. 225) notes that ‘the majority of commentators, including Kuhn, take the social sciences to be pluri-paradigmatic.’ Among other things, this has created the contentious character of social sciences along with their historical interpretations (Porter and Ross, 2003).

Nevertheless, this has not obstructed pluralists from expanding the use of the phrase ‘paradigm’ and applying it to organisational studies. Of the many models that have aimed to define paradigms in organisational and social studies, the one constructed by Burrell and Morgan (1979) has attracted the most attention (Louis 1983; White 1983; Morgan 1990). In their model, Burrell and Morgan (1979, p. 36) have developed a set of antithetical paradigms that coexist to understand organisations. In their opinion:

‘We are using the term 'paradigm' in a broader sense than that intended by Kuhn. Within the context of the present world, we are arguing that social theory can be conveniently understood in terms of the co-existence of four distinct and rival paradigms defined by very basic meta-theoretical assumptions in relation to the nature of science and society.’

They continue by arguing that what exists in parallel paradigms is considered to be: ‘contiguous but separate—contiguous because of the shared characteristics, but separate because the differentiation is ... of sufficient importance to warrant treatment of the paradigms as four distinct entities,’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p. 23).
According to their model, a matrix of two-by-two categorises social research with reference to the research goals or 'knowledge interest' (Habermas, 1971) on the one hand (sociologies of change vs. sociologies of order) and methodical assumptions on the other (subjective vs. objective). Their model identifies four paradigms of social research, namely functionalism, interpretivism, radical humanism and radical structuralism. While their framework is useful in categorising social research, an additional third dimension that involves an analytical level (e.g. society, industry, organisation, individual or group level) (Astley and Van de Ven, 1983; Pfeffer, 1982) has been argued as a useful framework for mapping strategic management research (Scherer, 1998).

Echoing Burrell and Morgan’s pluralist taxonomy of sociological paradigms in organisational analysis, Westwood and Clegg (2003, p. 4) emphasise that:

‘the apparent coherence of the field around structural-functionalist informed contingency theory was [...] an illusion,’ as ‘[t]here were always alternative and dissenting voices,’ where ‘[e]ven during the 1960s, when the structural-functionalist perspective occupied center stage, there coexisted major alternative approaches.’

Besides, such a perspective has attracted a lot of interest amongst those who support the pluralist prescription (in Knudsen’s (2003, p. 262) terms), for example, Grint (1991), Hassard (1993), Jackson and Carter (1991) and Clegg and Hardy (1996). Of Burrell and Morgan’s (1979) model, its famous component, incommensurability has instigated controversial debates across the pluralist community. A divergence in meta-theoretical interpretations of the multiplicity of the organisational studies field has build up a great deal of tension and contestation to the extent that scholars even speak of them as a ‘paradigm war’ (Jackson and Carter, 1993). Whilst Jackson and Carter (1991), Clegg and Hardy (1996) and Burrell (1996/1999) follow the steps of Burrell and Morgan’s adopted incommensurability argument, others have raised doubts concerning the applicability of the concept to and/or its fruitfulness in the field of organisational studies. In spite of its multiplicity, the field has demonstrated an acceptance of the latter argument; viewing movement and communication between paradigms as not only possible but also desirable (Willmott, 1990). This is because incommensurability unnecessarily constrains the research and theory development process (Willmott, 1993). However, these authors have varied with regard to their comprehension of the relative ease of such communication and movement, for example, the possibility of ‘paradigm mediation’ but with sufficient training (Hassard, 1990). Other writers point out the advantages of, or even the
need for ‘multiparadigm research’ (Gioia and Pitre, 1990; Martin 1990; Hassard 1988, 1991, 1993; Weaver and Gioia, 1994; Schultz and Hatch, 1996; Lewis and Grimes, 1999; Kelemen and Hassard, 2003). In addition to the above supporters of paradigm commensurability, Reed (1985) proposes a taxonomy of four prescriptions championed in the ‘paradigm wars’ - ‘imperialism’ (offering ‘total intellectual unification’ (e.g. Clegg and Dunkerley, 1980), ‘integrationism’ (integrating diverse paradigms, e.g. Pfeffer, 1982), ‘isolationism’ (emphasis on paradigm incommensurability, e.g. Burrell and Morgan, 1979), and ‘pluralism’ (as Burrell (1996, p. 651) describes it: ‘a thousand flowers bloom’ approach). Of those four positions, Reed (1985) adopts the ‘pluralist’ perspective as, according to him, it secures ‘intellectual freedom and choice’ (Reed, 1985, p. 201). It is clear, however, that among such perspectives, the first two, ‘isolationism’ and ‘pluralism’ are positioned in ‘pluralist’ prescription in Knudsen’s terms, and the last two perspectives, ‘integrationism’ and ‘imperialism,’ are positioned in the ‘unification’ prescription (Bristow, 2008).

It is evident that the approach espoused here in analysing the paradigm shift of a psychological contract demonstrates a commensurable orientation. This is because of the common theoretical language used, along with the retrofitted components throughout the development of the psychological contract. Different views and ways of understanding change in the world is perhaps an element that these paradigms provide.

3.6.2 Rousseau's seminal reconceptualization
Since its renaissance instigated by the seminal work of Rousseau in 1989, academics and practitioners have shown noticeably increasing interest in the psychological contract, driven by a desire for more innovative management practices. The current period has been fraught with a challenging work environment atmosphere in both the private and public sectors worldwide, as well as here in the UK, due to economic restructuring, political pressures and changing labour market dynamics. Perhaps the main remarkable features of this current period constitute debates and confusion among scholars, which is partially due to the diverse uses of the psychological contract during its historical development in the first period. For instance, some have returned to definitions from that period, arguing that these earlier definitions more validly encapsulate the ‘true’ meaning of the construct (see for example, Meckler, Drake and Levinson, 2003). This section aims to unpack some of the key terms associated with prominent definitions throughout this current period.
For example, Grant (1999) explains that there are currently two broad approaches to describing the psychological contract. According to him, the first approach introduced by Herriot (1995) as the ‘classic definition’ was based on the work of Argyris and Schein. This approach concentrates on both employee and employer perceptions of the exchange implied by the employment relationship, where the social processes that shape such perceptions are considered. The second approach designates the psychological contract within the mind of the employee (Rousseau, 1995).

Conceptualising the psychological contract at the level of the individual and as a cognitive-perceptual entity, Rousseau (1989) describes psychological contract as the set of beliefs held by individuals about the terms and conditions of the exchange agreement between them and other parties. She continues by explaining that a psychological contract emerges as parties assume future returns are being promised, based on their own efforts. Consequently, the other party is obliged to supply future benefits. Normally, obligations are imprecise and informal. This is because they are inferred from actions or previous experience, for example, performance appraisals and the recruitment process:

‘When an individual perceives that contributions he or she makes obligate the organization to reciprocity (or vice versa), a psychological contract emerges’ (Rousseau, 1989, p. 124) and involves around the ‘belief that a promise of future return has been made, a consideration or contribution has been offered (and accepted), and an obligation to provide future benefits exists’ (Rousseau, 1989, p. 126)

Rousseau's (1989) work is widely recognised as having had the greatest influence on psychological contract research since the contributions of Schein and Levinson. Not only has her paper marked a fundamental shift in understanding the psychological contract (most significantly in the meaning and functioning of the construct), but has also demonstrated how it can be operationalized and empirically investigated. Roehling (1996) posits that her article marks a 'transition' in psychological contract from the early period, to what we understand as contemporary research, where her work plays a vital role in the reinvigoration of the field. Rousseau's approach differs from previous work in four key ways. Whilst earlier work laid great emphasis on expectations, she emphasises the promissory nature of the psychological contract to a great extent. According to her, it represents ‘an individual’s beliefs regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between that focal person and another party’ (1989, p. 123). In other words, what does an employee feel that his/her organisation
promises him/her? Furthermore, which of these promises are implicit? Such an emphasis on a specific type of belief has distinctively differentiated between implicit and explicit promises. The former refers to an individual’s interpretations of consistent and repetitive patterns in an exchange with the employer, whereas the latter refers to an individual’s interpretation of written and verbal agreements. Rousseau's approach to embracing observable promises has made the psychological contract quantifiable and more accessible for assessment through traditional methods, e.g. questionnaire surveys. However, this emphasis on promises rather than on the obligatory quality of expectations has generated much debate in terms of defining promises, which will subsequently be discussed.

A second important contribution is her argument that the psychological contract should be viewed as one concerning the perspectives of two parties in a relationship, regarding it as an individual-level subjective stance ‘existing in the eye of the beholder’ (Rousseau, 1989, p. 123). Instead of adding emphasis to the nature of the agreement between the two parties, as was approached by researchers in the early period, Rousseau focuses largely on the individual employee's perceptions as the main generator of feelings, hence influencing behaviour and attitudes. She explains that a psychological contract ‘involves around the ‘belief that a promise of future return has been made, a consideration or contribution has been offered (and accepted), and an obligation to provide future benefits exists’ (Rousseau, 1989, p. 126). She continues by arguing that organisations cannot have psychological contracts with their employees as the construct can only be held by individuals and not by abstract entities: ‘The organization, as the other party in the relationship, provides the context for the creation of a psychological contract, but cannot in turn have a psychological contract with its members. Organizations cannot ‘perceive,’ although their individual managers can themselves personally perceive a psychological contract with employees and respond accordingly’ (Rousseau, 1989, p. 126). Organisations may consist of more than one agent with whom the psychological contract is formed, but such agents are not considered as proxies for the organisation. This is because of the possibility of differences in terms of both expectation and offers from one agent to another (Rousseau, 1995; Morrison and Robinson, 1997).

Perhaps another significant contribution for Rousseau is the idea of establishing violation as the main mechanism for various outcomes. While early research on psychological contract tended to concentrate on the extent to which an individual perceives a reasonable 'match' between his/her contributions, as compared with inducements offered by the organisation regardless of any promises, Rousseau introduces violation as a mechanism to explain how the psychological
contract affects behaviour. She defines it as the ‘failure of organizations or other parties to respond to an employee's contribution in ways the individual believes they are obligated to do so’ (Rousseau, 1989, p. 128). Based on the work of Bies (1987), she continues by explaining that violations are considered a far better parameter as they generate more intense responses than unmet expectations and inequality. This is because they have ‘a quasi-irreversible quality where anger lingers and ‘victims’ experience a changed view of the other party and their interrelationship’ (Rousseau, 1989, p. 129).

Evidently, Rousseau's ideas have profoundly influenced subsequent studies and interest in the psychological contract and this can be accounted for in several ways. An explanation for such an influence is Rousseau's careful demarcation of the construct, both from earlier conceptualisations and from related work. For instance, her contribution has given opportunities for exploration that turn into new and exciting ideas in relation to met expectations and equity (Conway and Briner, 2006).

Another compelling justification, according to Arnold (1996), Sparrow (1996), and Herriot, Manning and Kidd (1997), is the fact that psychological contract has been viewed as a useful instrument in understanding and managing noticeable changes surrounding employment relationships driven by political and economic pressure, for example, downsizing, demographic diversity and an increased reliance on temporary workers.

In her subsequent work (and the most accepted definition in the literature) Rousseau (1995, p.9) defines the psychological contract as the ‘individual beliefs, shaped by the organization, regarding terms of an exchange agreement between the individual and their organization’ (Rousseau, 1995, p. 9). She explains that beliefs encapsulate employees’ interpretations of both explicit and implicit promises. She also establishes a distinction between principals and agents in terms of contract makers. In her opinion, principals are individuals or organisations that form contracts with other parties on their behalf, while agents are individuals acting on behalf of principals (an example of an agent would be a line manager). Besides, promises from organisations are communicated to individuals via various channels, such as through human resources and personnel practices.

Rousseau indeed draws a further distinction between human (e.g. managers, co-workers, recruiters) and structural contract makers (e.g. training, benefits, compensation, career prospects). This range of human resource practices as contract makers communicates promises
to individuals in both implicit and explicit ways. The communication of the contents of the psychological contract through an explicit channel would encompass written communication, announcements, emails, statements, etc., while communicating in an implicit form would be complex and subtle, but no less powerful. For instance, the way in which a contract maker responds to a specific employee’s attitude is more likely to be significant in shaping the content of the psychological contract. A recruiter may learn a great deal about the mutual obligations and promises in an organisation through monitoring the behaviour and responses of other individuals and contract makers, e.g. line managers.

Guest (1998), on the other hand, has approached the psychological contract from a different angle and is more consistent with the conceptualisation of Levinson et al. Guest argues that influences on the psychological contract are viewed as residing either in the individual or in the organisation, but both will be influenced by various societal norms that may involve expectations (Guest, 1998). Herriot and Pemberton (1997); Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (1998) and Guest and Conway (2002) support his argument by emphasising that beliefs in the psychological contract involve both the employee and the employer. Guest additionally turns the focus towards the ‘state of the psychological contract’, where he highlights three components of the construct, namely trust, fairness and delivery of the deal. This is through his proposed model, where he considers the possible consequences for both the organisation and the individual.

Since Rousseau’s seminal work, the psychological contract research field has gained significant ground, not only from her work, but also from substantial and vigorous disagreement and diversity in approaching the construct. Different scholars have tended to embrace varying perspectives in relation to the definition and features of the psychological contract. Whilst some place an emphasis on the implicit obligations of one or both parties, others emphasise the need to understand individuals’ expectations from employment. Besides, another school of thought argues that reciprocal mutuality is a core determinant of the construct (Atkinson, Barrow and Connors, 2003; Tekleab and Taylor, 2003).

Guest (1998) criticizes Rousseau’s definition as being purely concerned with more pressing obligations and promises, as opposed to expectations. He argues that, although promises are related to relevant expectations, exchange-based promises are only relevant in a contractual context. He bases his judgment on work by Conway (1996), where the latter points out that promises are hard to identify due to their implicit nature. Guest (1998, p. 650) explains that
Rousseau’s definition ‘fits somewhat awkwardly within conventional psychological analysis. It is not a theory; nor is it a measure. Rather it is a hypothetical construct, drawn, probably inappropriately, from a legal metaphor.’

Guest (1996) also argues that the psychological contract should return to its origins in involving an ‘employer perspective’ so that the notion of mutual and reciprocal obligations can be fully assessed. Guest (2004) again emphasises that, in order for it to be applicable as a suitable tool for evaluating the employment relationship, psychological contract requires the assessment of two-way exchange, especially surrounding the perceptions of reciprocal obligations and promises of both parties. In an earlier paper, Guest (1997, p. 650) ventures that the psychological contract is ‘concerned with the interaction between one specific and another nebulous party’ which resides in the ‘interaction rather than in the individual or the organisation.’ He continues by explaining that such an approach has resulted in ‘an analytic nightmare’ (Guest, 1997, p. 650), in which arguments are instigated surrounding theoretical substance, measurement and operationalisation, thereby shifting the focus of the research area. Meckler, Drake and Levinson (2003, p. 217) support such an argument by explaining that ‘The concept of psychological contract has become detached from its historical grounding in clinical psychology.’ However, Rousseau (2003, p. 229) delineates the limitation of this argument, as ‘such an approach would make only a limited set of psychology’s potential contribution to psychological contract research stream.’ In addition, Anderson and Schalk (1998) support Rousseau’s argument by proposing that all previous descriptions and other definitions of psychological contract are relatively problematic because they mainly focus on the bilateral relationship, where expectations are compared at different levels. It is the author’s opinion, however, that Rousseau’s definition of the psychological contract provides a more comprehensive explanation, where the missing expectation element suggested by Guest is not an issue because the expectations and promises are related. This thesis adopts Rousseau’s approach in defining the psychological contract as one that resides within the mind of the employee (Rousseau, 1995). However, Guest’s argument, driven by Schein in the early period and Herriot (1995) thereafter, again states that the contract resides in the ‘interaction rather than in the individual or the organisation’ Guest (1997, p. 650). This is presented as crucial, not in describing the individual’s psychological contract itself, but in exploring the factors that may influence its state. In fact, Guest (2004) proposes a model that attempts to explain the associated internal and external factors influencing the state of the contract. This model will be adapted in the following section in a discussion of the associated internal factors shaping perceptions of the employee’s psychological contract.
3.6.3 The psychological contract from a conceptual viewpoint
Consistent with the emphasis on the subjective nature of the psychological contract, the components do not allude to actual exchanges between two parties, but rather to the individual’s perceptions of explicit and implicit promises in the context of contribution in return for inducement. This draws on March and Simon’s (1958) contributions—inducements model, where inducements are the expected input in the exchange relationship from the side of the organisation. Rousseau (1990, p. 393) defines the content as ‘expectations of what the employee feels he or she owes and is owed by the organization.’ McLean Parks, Kidder and Gallagher (1998, p. 725) further define it as what ‘employees expect to give or contribute and what it is that employees expect to receive in return—their entitlements’. A central aspect of the content of psychological contract is therefore reciprocity. In general, employees’ contributions involve a wide range of elements, for example, offering skills and knowledge, making sufficient effort, and demonstrating flexibility. For their part, the organisation, as well as in return for such contributions, seeks to provide, for example, training, promotion and respect.

In an attempt to identify the content of psychological contract, Herriot, Manning and Kidd (1997) posit 7 categories of employee obligation and 12 categories of organisational obligation. They utilise a critical incident method with both parties participating in an exchange employment relationship. Obligations described by both employees and their organisation are shown in the following table.
Table 3.1  Categorisation of employee and organisational obligations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee Obligations</th>
<th>Organisational Obligations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Work</td>
<td>Training Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Honesty</td>
<td>Fairness, Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hours</td>
<td>Consultation, Loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Loyalty</td>
<td>Needs, Honesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Self-presentation</td>
<td>Humanity, Self-presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Property</td>
<td>Discretion, Property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Security</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Herriot, Manning and Kidd (1997)

According to their findings, the most important organisational obligations for an employee would be pay, environment, and security. Organisations, on the other hand, would tend to emphasise recognition, benefits and humanity. In terms of employee obligations, employees mention property and self-presentation more frequently than the organisation group, who stress loyalty. Despite this, Herriot, Manning and Kidd’s (1997) framework offers broad headings, and highlights the fact that the perception of obligations and expectations differs from one employee to another. For instance, one employee may place more emphasis on a certain aspect than would another.

In an alternative approach, Conway and Briner (2005) suggest that the contents of psychological contracts consist of two different types of information. The first one is concerned with the list of things each party is prepared to bring to the table. In other words, what kind of resources does each party to the psychological contract promise to provide the other? The second type is much more concerned with the exact links between items that each party offers. It relates to the basis on which the exchange between the employee and employer takes place. According to Conway and Briner (2005), this type is more central as it seeks to address the more complex concerns of exactly how such an exchange will work: What are the exact links
between the offers introduced into the deal from each party? This type provides a much clearer basis for understanding reciprocity and prediction surrounding the deal, although most research discussing the contents tends to emphasise only the first type of information.

However, the most enduring and widely accepted method of categorising the contents of a psychological contract has been the transactional/relational distinction. Proposed by Rousseau (1990), this method is considered as one of the most significant studies on content. The study she conducted sought to investigate the obligations of graduate recruits during selection. Consistent with the results of a factor analysis from Macneil’s (1974, 1980) legal work and Blau’s (1964) parallel distinction between social and economic exchange, Rousseau surveyed the sample target based on responses from human resource managers.

Relational and transactional psychological contracts concepts can be distinguished based on their timeframe, focus, scope, stability, and tangibility. The former type of contract involves highly tangible exchanges, characterised as economic in focus. The scope of this contract is narrow and the terms and conditions remain static over the timeframe of the relationship. It also involves engaging with personal issues, long-term job security and career development, while the latter relates to quick advancement, merit and high wages (Robinson, Kraatz and Rousseau, 1994). Drawing on the work of Rousseau and Mclean Parks (1993), Thompson and Bunderson (2003, p. 574) explain that ‘Organisational inducements within transactional contracts are calculated to fulfil the minimal narrowly specified requirements to receive those economic rewards. Because employees are concerned about themselves as the primary beneficiaries of the exchange, transactional contracts imply an egoistic or instrumental model of human nature’.

Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (1998) suggest that an employee who tries to adopt a more instrumental perspective in order to reduce their obligations by maintaining their relationship with their employer is seen to value transactional obligations, whereas employees might seek a long-term relationship with the employer if they value relational obligations. Relational contract involves intangible and tangible exchanges. It is open-ended, and the terms of the contract are dynamic, occurring over a non-specific time limit with a broad scope. Making sure to incorporate equity and fairness in the process is an important factor in maintaining this type of contract, with the nature of beliefs becoming more clearly defined as they are evaluated throughout the relationship (Herriot and Pemberton, 1996). Such contracts are characterised by trust and a belief in fairness and sincerity of intention; they involve exchanges over long
periods, for example, the exchange of commitment from the employee side for job security (Rousseau, 1990). A key distinction in the relational contract is that both parties involved in the exchange relationship pay attention to the fairness of the process instead of the fairness of the outcomes (Herriot and Pemberton, 1996). This is vital in the retention of key employees. The difference between relational and transactional contract concepts may revolve around the way individuals view their work. Perhaps this is considered as a key element for the psychological contract of a professional worker. Based on their findings, Wrzesniewski et al. (1997) explain that individuals tend to regard their work as a career, a job, or a calling.

In contrast, individuals with a ‘job’ orientation regard work as an opportunity for economic advancement or maintenance, which can be viewed as consistent with the transactional contract. Individuals with a ‘career’ orientation, on the other hand, concentrate on pursuing opportunities for status development, establishing connections, and taking pleasure in integrating into an occupational community. This occupational community might exist at either professional or organisational levels. Thompson and Bunderson (2003) point out that it can be viewed as the core aspect of the relational contract. A more detailed analysis of the influence of career orientation upon psychological contract will be discussed later in the chapter.

The analysis conducted by Rousseau (1990) confirms a correlation between the transactional or relational contract with a certain set of elements. On one hand, obligations postulated by a transactional employer are associated with transactional employee obligations. An example of such an exchange would be an employee engaging in voluntary extra-role activities, with the promise that working overtime, along with achieving high performance, will be rewarded with higher pay, training and development from the employer. On the other hand, obligations postulated by a relational employer are associated with relational employee obligations, such as job security and a commitment to stay for a short period in the organisation in return for loyalty. Such results verifying that the resources exchanged are similar support Gouldner’s (1960) work on homeomorphic reciprocity. Perhaps a significant aspect for consideration in such a study is the fact that the type of psychological contract concepts matters in terms of identifying the potential list of items to be exchanged and the nature of those items.

A good number of researchers have adopted this methodological distinction when examining psychological contract contents (e.g. Robinson and Rousseau, 1994; Millward and Hopkins, 1998; Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000; Bunderson, 2001; Hui, Lee and Rousseau, 2004; Raja, Johns and Ntalianis, 2004; De Cuyper and De Witte, 2006, and Grimmer and Oddy, 2007).
Nonetheless, the empirical evidence is not so clear-cut as to be able to support such a distinction between both types. Perhaps this is because investigators may have approached and operationalized the psychological contract with regard to certain kinds of obligation and besides, adopting a feature-based measurement may furnish the results that support Rousseau’s distinction. Arnold (1996) upholds this argument as the findings of his study indicate that training may be accounted as either a relational or transactional item. In addition, Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler’s (2000) study confirms that training is an independent dimension. Another example that refutes the distinguishing aspect of both types is the pay item. This could be considered as part of a relational or transactional contract, depending on the context. Notwithstanding that pay would normally be identified as an ingredient of the transactional contract, the constant awarding of such an item on a fair basis along with making an effort to protect and enhance this reward from the organisation’s side during difficult times would construct this item as an ingredient of a relational contract. Therefore, it could be argued that attempts to classify the content of the psychological contract according to contract type have not achieved consistent results.

Rousseau (1990) emphasises that relational and transactional components indicate opposite ends of a continuum, which correspond to social and economic exchange, and therefore this does not produce a convincing argument. This is not only because some components of the psychological contract can either be relational or transactional, depending on the context, but also because employees may hold both types of the contract at the same time. An employee who works for pay and at the same time offers loyalty for the inducement of job security may hold both a relational and transactional contract. An academic may maintain some aspects of the relational contract towards his/her vocation while at the same time retaining some transactional relationships with the agents representing the university. Arnold (1996) supports such an argument by explaining that the employment relationship may encompass elements of both. Perhaps a large number of academics in HE institutions driven by managerialist ideologies now hold a third type that consists of elements of both transactional and relational contracts. In her later work, Rousseau (2000) adds two further dimensions, namely ‘balanced’ or ‘hybrid’, and ‘transitional’ (Figure 2.2). All four types of psychological contract are applied, based on the timeframe of the employment relationship and the degree of specificity of performance terms.
Rousseau (2000) places each dimension of the psychological contract into ‘sub-divisions’, where she describes a range of specific components within each (Table 2.2).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of psychological contract</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transactional sub-division</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Narrow: Employee: is obligated to perform a limited number of tasks as specified in the employment contract in return for a commitment from the employer to offer long-term employment and stable wages.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short-term: Employees have no obligations to either remain with the organization or commit to long-term employment.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relational sub-division</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stability: The employee is obligated to continue in the organization and to perform what is required to hold the job in return for a commitment from the employer to offer long-term employment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loyalty: The employee is obligated to support the organization and act as a good organizational citizen in return for a commitment from the employer to offer long-term employment and stable wages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistrust: The employee mistrusts the organization due to the inconsistency of messages transmitted to him/her along with information withheld by the organization. The organization also mistrusts its workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty: The employee is uncertain about the nature of the obligations towards the organization and of the organization towards the employee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erosion: The employee expects to receive fewer returns for his/her contribution to the organization in comparison with previous events. The employer has reduced employee pay and benefits and considerably reduced the quality of working life.</td>
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Source: Rousseau, 2000
A balanced contract encompasses both transactional and relational contracts to the extent that the terms of exchange comprise well-specified performance from the employee, however, this contract must also be open-ended to facilitate the attainment of a competitive advantage for these. The organisation's obligations to the employee comprise training, career support and development. Balanced contracts combine commitments from the side of the employer to develop employees, while anticipating flexibility from the side of the employees, i.e. that they are willing to adjust if economic conditions change. An important trait of this emerged type would be the continuous renegotiation between the employee and employer over time. Economic and political factors, along with trying to make sense of the surrounding conditions, render this type of contract more attractive across workers.

In a transitional contract, however, it ‘... is not a psychological contract from itself, but a cognitive state reflecting the consequences of organisational change and transitions that are at odds with a previously established employment arrangement’ (Rousseau, 2000, p. 3). This type of contract involves no performance requirements or specific timeframe. It prominently features uncertainty with regard to reciprocal obligations, along with inconsistency in the encoded and decoded messages transmitted by the organisation, leading to an overarching sense of mistrust in the exchange relationship. In an interesting observation, Crossman (2007, p.100) questions the validity of this dimension in his comment ‘... change is a constant reality within organisations, managers and structure changing, it seems curious that such a fluid concept has been awarded ‘contract’ status.’

3.7 Factors that influence the contract

Guest and Conway (1997) present a conceptual model as a representation of what takes place in the workplace, based on how academics believe their universities have met their promises and obligations, provided fairness and engendered trust (Figure 2.3). The model divides the psychological contract into three discrete stages: causes, content and consequences. Guest and Conway (1997) regard the nature of the organisational climate and involvement climate as significant causes that positively form the psychological contract. According to the authors, the organisational climate includes two aspects, namely the involvement climate and the rules climate. While the former comprises ‘involvement, communication and flexibility’, the latter stresses on ‘the bureaucratic adherence to rules and procedures’ (Guest and Conway, 1997, p. 7).

In addition, the components of causes include human resource policies and practices that influence employee behaviour, such as job involvement, training and development. The model
also argues that the components of causes include employment experience (security and job stability), expectations (job security) and alternatives (the ability to negotiate alternative career options).

Figure 3.3  A model of the psychological contract

In more recent work and derived from Guest and Conway’s (1997) model, Guest (2004) argues that the psychological contract rests at the heart of issues associated with flexible employment contracts, with consequences resulting from individuals’ behaviour and attitudes. He argues that the disposition of an individual towards their psychological contract will be impacted directly by contract-related, organisational and wider contextual factors. By definition, the psychological contract of an employee may differ from that of his/her colleagues as it is subjectively understood.

This is the case even if the organisation endeavours to provide the 'same' deal to all. Making sense of an existing exchange relationship will be influenced by several internal and external factors. An individual will construct and reconstruct his/her contract based on existing stimuli. Here we adopt Guest’s (2004) model to explore the internal factors influencing the psychological
contract and its state, as we are interested in examining academics’ psychological contracts from a micro level (Figure 2.4).

Figure 3.4 Employment contracts, the state of the psychological contract and employee outcomes


In his model, Guest identifies four contributory factors that shape the state of the psychological contract, namely individual, contract-related, organisational and in relation to wider textual factors. These factors play a directly influential role within the state of the psychological contract and an indirect one within attitudinal and behavioural psychological contract outcomes. The model has contributed substantially to an understanding of the surrounding factors that may influence the psychological contract, although it seems there are a number of weaknesses in the model. Firstly, it offers no cyclical dimension, and neither does their 1998 model, in terms of how attitudinal and behavioural outcomes might influence individual factors. For instance, Wanous et al. (1992) argue that unmet expectations may reduce organisational commitment, therefore leading to a tendency to leave work. Sturges and Guest (2001) support this argument by explaining that career progression expectations influence employees’ intentions to leave their jobs. Besides, the sense of a decline in trust in an organisation, or in its agents, might affect organisational citizenship behaviour. Braun (1997, p.94), for example, reports that ‘… respondents who suffer a contract breach were likely to lower their contributions to the offending
organisation because they felt they could no longer trust their employers.’ Therefore, the model does not provide a comprehensive exploration of the dynamic work of the psychological contract.

3.7.1 Individual factors shaping psychological contract
Since it resides in the eye of beholder, psychological contract is shaped considerably by individual factors. Such factors influence how an individual construes his/her psychological contract. Emotion, career orientation and subjectivity are perhaps the most influential factors in developing individual expectations.

3.7.1.1 Emotional responses
In general, emotions are relatively short-lived negative or positive evaluative states that have cognitive and neurological elements (Izard, 1991, Schachter and Singer, 2001). They represent the complex psychophysiological experiences of individual states of mind when interacting with external and internal influences (Myers, 2004). Consequently, an emotion can be viewed as an internal state which is not under the full control of an individual and which can be observed in the context, process and results of an exchange relationship. Lawler and Yoon (1996) and Weiner (1986) explain that an individual may feel good, relieved, satisfied, excited, angry, disappointed, etc. as a result of an exchange process. Such a variety of emotional responses, either positive or negative outcomes, may have an influence individuals’ perception of subsequent positive/ negative events. As emotions are not under the control of an individual, his/her perception of positive or negative decisions from their organisation may be influenced from within. From a social cognitive approach, an emotion adjusts or modifies a cognition central to the exchange processes. It is within such a process that an emotion has a signalling function for self and others, and it may bias how the individual perceives others in the same working environment or events in present and subsequent interactions. In fact, an employee with a positive mood perceives, interprets, remembers and encodes events in a more positive fashion than do employees with a negative mood (Isen et al., 1987; Bower, 1991). Isen and colleagues (1978) support such an argument by explaining that individuals with a positive mood tend to have better recall for positive feature adjectives such as ‘friendly’ or ‘kind’ noted at an earlier period. Based on a study conducted by Wright and Bower (1992), whilst an individual in a positive mood tends to overestimate the probability of a positive action and underestimate the probability of a negative action, another in a more negative mood may overestimate the probability of a negative action and perceive a positive action as less likely. An emotion is
therefore an influential factor that may alter the perception of subsequent decisions from the other party in an exchange relationship.

Saunders and Thornhill (2006) explain that emotional responses (e.g. anger, disappointment) may allow for the possibility of differential influences upon transactional and relational psychological contracts. This is perhaps considered as a critical factor that shapes the psychological contract between couples, but the question here remains whether emotion will still be an influential factor for academics in their exchange relationships with managers and the institutions they work for.

### 3.7.1.2 Career orientation

One of the personal factors likely to shape individuals’ expectations is that of their individual career-related needs. Career orientation reflects the preferences of an individual in relation to certain career-related inducements and career types (Briscoe, Hall and DeMuth, 2006; Gerber, Wittekind, Grote and Staffelbach, 2009). It is defined as ‘attitudes expressed by superordinate intentions of an individual that will influence career-related decisions’ (Maier, Rappensperger, Rosenstiel and Zwarg, 1994, cited in Gerber, Wittekind, Grote, and Staffelbach, 2009). In addition to the ‘old’ traditional career type, ‘new’ forms of career orientation have emerged within the last couple of decades, namely ‘boundaryless’ and protean careers. Whilst the ‘old’ traditional type is concerned with loyalty and job security, or a desire for professional advancement, or else hierarchical progress within an institution, the ‘new’ forms are concerned with career self-management and commitment to oneself rather than to the employer (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; DeFillippi and Aruthur, 1996; Hall, 2002).

The expectations adopted by career-oriented employees in the workplace may vary from one to another, along with their responses to unmet expectations. Granrose and Baccili (2006, p. 167), for example, note that the assumptions surrounding these ‘new’ forms (boundaryless and protean careers) may largely shape the content of an individual’s psychological contract. Based on the work of Hall (2002), they argue that an employee with a boundaryless career-orientation will reciprocate commitment to the organisation on the basis of the provision of meaningful interesting work or skills development to enable him\her to find a future job (Granrose and Baccili, 2006). Besides, the literature suggests distinct relationships between the career orientation adopted and individual motives (power, attachment and performance) as well as various work attitudes, such as work satisfaction, affective commitment, and intentions to quit
(Gerpott, Domsch and Keller, 1988; Guest and Conway, 2004; Gerber, Wittekind, Grote and Staffelbach, 2009). These relationships might explain why individuals react differently towards management actions and unmet expectations.

More recently, and based on the work of Guest and Conway (2004), Gerber, Wittekind, Grote, and Staffelbach (2009) propose four types of career orientation, namely independent, disengaged, traditional/promotion, and traditional/loyalty career orientations. In their view, individuals with an independent career orientation (boundaryless) tend to demonstrate little loyalty towards their organisation, with a preference for career self-management and a shift in jobs or disciplines, rather than structured hierarchical moves within one organisation (Gerber, Wittekind, Grote, and Staffelbach, 2009). In terms of expectations, individuals with such a career orientation do not regard job security as that important; they instead strive for support in their career and skills development (Guest and Conway, 2004). Employees with disengaged career orientation, on the other hand, demonstrate a strong tendency towards work–life balance, rather than career success and vertical career advancement (Igbaria and McCloskey, 1996; Gerber, Wittekind, Grote and Staffelbach, 2009). High employability and intentions to quit are characteristics of those with this kind of career orientation (Gerber, Wittekind, Grote and Staffelbach, 2009).

In a study that explores the moderating role of career orientation in relation to psychological contract, Gerber, Grote, Geiser and Raeder (2011) note the influence of chosen career types upon individuals’ perception of management actions. Whilst their results suggest a strong relationship between employees with a traditional/loyalty career-oriented type in moderating an instance of breach of security and retention, and the intention to exit the organisation, employees with a disengaged career-oriented type display no interaction between an actual breach in their psychological contract and their career orientation. In addition, employees with a traditional career-oriented type show a growing interest towards content that involves participation in decision making and opportunities for organisational careers (Gerber, Grote, Geiser and Raeder, 2011). They comment based on their findings:

‘Employees with ‘new’ versus traditional types of career orientation react in different ways to perceived contract breaches. Thus, career orientation is associated with both the magnitude and the type of employee response after perceiving breach of particular contract contents’ (p. 216).
Therefore, it seems reasonable to consider career orientation as an influential factor shaping an individual’s expectations, along with responding to new events that may involve challenges to their traditional identity.

3.7.1.3 The subjectivity surrounding psychological contract
Because psychological contracts are inherently perceptual, the interpretation of the terms and conditions of obligations may differ from one party to another. Hence, one employee may not have the same expectations as other employees (McLean Parks and Schniedemann, 1994). Perhaps one factor that influences employees’ psychological contract is the degree to which they endorse reciprocity (Clark and Mills, 1979; Murstein, Cerreto and MacDonald, 1977). Such a degree may affect employees’ involvement in their organisation, whereby, according to their study, those who are high in an exchange orientation would seek to track obligations, whereas those showing low exchange orientation are less concerned about obligations and are less likely to be concerned if exchanges are not reciprocated.

Individuals indeed differ in their perception of particular situations. One person’s judgment of a given piece of information or decision may vary in comparison with another or may perhaps vary according to the source of such a decision. Cognitive biases in individual elements may shape both the formation and interpretation of promises (Rousseau, 2001). For instance, an individual may tend to be overoptimistic and promise too much in an explicit manner. Moreover, cognitive biases can be self-serving, that is, individuals are more likely to ascribe their accomplishments to personal, internal features. For example, someone would attribute their success to their abilities or to how hard they have worked, while others may ascribe failures to external-situational factors, such as to a lack of support from their organisation. Robinson, Kraatz and Rousseau (1994) support this argument by explaining that these self-serving biases cause an overestimation of one’s contribution, while at the same time underestimating the inducement provided by the organisation, along with its costs. In other words, an employee who has such biases may perhaps perceive that his/her hard work is considerable while he/she still gets little value in return. Accordingly, the more an individual is affected by such perceptual distortion, the more he/she will feel entitled to an inducement. This may not only influence individuals’ perception of obligations to reciprocate, but also their psychological contracts, as they may feel unappreciated for their overestimated effort.
Perhaps another mind pattern that affects individual perceptions of psychological contract is conscientiousness. According to their study, Orvis, Dudley and Corlina (2008) point out links between turnover intentions following levels of conscientiousness and psychological contract breach. Individuals who were low in conscientiousness appeared to increase their intentions to leave work to a greater degree as a result of psychological contract breach in comparison with those who were high in conscientiousness.

Changes that occur in the maturity of an individual also influence the evolving nature of the psychological contract. Guest and Conway (1997) explain that there is a tendency across young employees to be more mobile and move positions many times in their career. This is because fewer organisations, or educational institutions, offer tenure or permanence of employment, thereby influencing psychological contract and the sense of commitment and obligation to an organisation. The length of service in a certain job may therefore affect how an employee perceives psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995). Starting with relatively simple mutual obligations in an exchange relationship, an employee’s psychological contract over time turns out to be more complex as the employment relationship develops (Shore and Tetrick, 1994). Rousseau (2001) argues that the longer an employment relationship exists, the greater the likelihood of organisational commitment, along with an increased tendency to opt for a relational contract.

Employees coming from different backgrounds may perceive the same message from their organisation in different ways. Cultural differences are perhaps considered as an influential element in individual perceptions of psychological contract. Thomas et al. (2003) explain that employees’ interpretations of organisational messages may vary from one employee to another due to their different cultural backgrounds. Rousseau and Schalk (2000) support this argument by reporting that, whilst some psychological contracts, for example in Japan, are supported by a sense of social harmony and attachment, those in other countries, such as France, tend to be conflict-based.

Rousseau (1995) additionally explains that individuals’ psychological contracts may be influenced more by the way organisational messages are interpreted than by the messages that are actually sent. This is significant as values will tend to influence an individual’s perception under conditions of ambiguity or uncertainty. Ravlin and Meglino (1987, p. 667) for example, argue that,
‘The influence of values on perception and behavioral choice may, however, be enhanced by situational moderators. For example, prevalent social norms and situational uncertainty are thought to be key elements influencing the perceptual and choice processes.’

Perhaps another personal trait that shapes psychological contract is whether someone is an individualist or collectivist. The former refers to the inclination to regard oneself as independent of others and to tend to be more concerned with the consequences of their behaviour in fulfilling personal goals. On the other hand, the latter refers to an individual who views the exchange relationship as a longer term arrangement, and a collectivist will believe that their organisation will take care of them in exchange for loyalty (Hofstede, 1980). A collectivist is therefore more likely to ascribe unfulfilled expectations to factors outside of organisational control, while an individualist is less likely to trust the organisation to fulfil agreement terms (Robinson, 1996; Cavenaugh and Noe, 1999; Brockner et al., 2000). For instance, a collectivist might attribute an unfulfilled expectation of promotion to the difficulties of assessing all the required information and the unavoidable subjectivity of all personnel decisions, while an individualist might blame his/her manager and organisation for using an inadequate performance assessment process. In fact, Thomas et al. (2003) explain that collectivist cultural values will influence an employee in holding a more relational contract to enhance his/her interdependent self. They continue by explaining that individualist cultural values also inspire an employee to hold a more transactional psychological contract for enhancing the independent self.

3.7.2 Organisational factors shaping psychological contract

Within organisations, many interrelated elements play an influential role in the construction and reconstruction of an employee’s psychological contract throughout the employment relationship. Expectations are continually being shaped by management style and ethics, the prevailing organisational culture (Grant, 1999) and the organisational environment and norms (Thomas and Anderson, 1998). Most importantly, the perceived fairness from the employee side as a result of all these factors. Masterson et al. (2000, p. 740) argue, ‘Employees perceive acts of fairness to be contributions that enhance the quality and desirability of their on-going relationships.’

3.7.2.1 Procedural and Interactional Justice

In any social relationship, perception plays a vital role in how an individual reacts to decisions or behaviour. The notion of ‘fairness’ is no exception here as it depends on subjective perceptions,
which may vary from one person to another. From the point of view of the employee, the extent
to which behaviour or decisions are accepted in a work environment depends on the perception
of whether or not they are ‘fair’. It is likely that employees will accept responsibility for
problems if they believe a decision is fair (Leventhal, Karuza and Fry, 1980). Along these lines,
Kickul (2001) has conducted a study involving three hundred and twenty-two employees from
various organisational settings, in which she reports that justice plays a key moderating role in
employee attitudes, behaviour and the psychological contract. Thompson and Heron (2005,
p.387) reinforce this argument by suggesting that ‘Perceptions of fairness are inextricably bound
up within the notion of the psychological contract because, in a sense, the contract reflects
employees’ views of the extent to which justice has been done. Workers have expectations of
what the organization should do in relation to the distribution of resources such as reward,
careers and development and when these expectations are not met, they perceive this as
injustice’. Clearly, the nature of fairness and justice has complemented the development of the
psychological contract over the years, whereby different forms of justice have presented an
interface that demonstrates the interplay between them.

The ideals of justice have attracted social scientists’ interests in what they offer as a basic
requirement for both the effective functioning of organisations and employee satisfaction (Okun,
1975; Moore, 1978). They have employed these early theories of social justice as a potential tool
for understanding behaviour in organisations, although their scope has purely involved the
examination of principles of justice around social interaction in general, and not specifically in
organisations. Hence, limited success has been achieved in evaluating various forms of
organisational behaviour (Greenberg, 1987). Researchers have sensed this gap and striven to
develop models that are more sensitive to issues and variables in relation to how well
organisations function. The complex change process, along with the challenges of implementing
its techniques within organisations, has inspired a number of theorists (Greenberg, 1987;
Tornblom, 1990) to establish the actual philosophical basis for justice and fairness in the work
environment. Originating in equity theory, Greenberg introduced the term organisational justice
in 1987, where it represented individuals’ perceptions and responses to fairness in their
organisations. Moorman (1991, p. 845) defines it as ‘The ways in which employees determine if
they have been treated fairly in their jobs and the ways in which those determinations influence
other work related variables.’
Three different types of organisational justice have been proposed, namely distributive, interactional and procedural. The last two are more relevant to organisational change and psychological contract research than distributive justice. Perhaps one common element is the likelihood of providing opportunities for mitigating some of the adverse effects of change. This is of course applicable when employees perceive fair practice and the fulfilment of their psychological contracts. In addition, fairness may be associated with outcome decisions and distribution of resources, which covers a type of distributive justice that is excluded from this study as it is not relevant: the macro level beyond the control of the universities is outside our scope.

Procedural justice resembles a perception of fairness in terms of the procedures and policies adopted in composing decisions that concern outcome distributions (Greenberg 1990; Tyler and Bies, 1990). For example, independently of a fair reward allocation, an employee may look into understanding the process through which a decision like this is made. Mostly, this is the case if he/she has perceived unfair practice or an unfavourable outcome. An employee’s sense of a fair process may mediate the perception of an unfair outcome (Greenberg, 1990), build a satisfying relationship, develop a commitment to the organisation (Folger and Skarlicki, 1999), and promote the acceptance of change, while showing resistance (Cobb et al, 1995). Similarly, in the same scenario, an employee perceiving the fulfilment of his/her psychological contract or even efforts on the part of management to compensate for shortcomings driven from their side or externally will mediate such perceptions and facilitate the implementation of such decisions. This may be an opening for making the psychological contract more manageable under the present ideology. Understanding the mediating factors that may influence academics’ psychological contract, although these are subjective, may to a large extent alleviate any perceived reluctance to work with the management and hence, step forward and manage the exchange relationship.

Another vital aspect of procedural justice in relation to the psychological contract is the social norm of trust. Barber (1983) and Gambetta (1988) explain that trust that already exists in a social relationship on the individuals’ side is based on the implicit assumption that others have concern and respect for their welfare. Such an assumption is presumed from the beginning of the relationship and would not usually be acknowledged until violated (Luhmann, 1979; Zucher, 1986). Trust developed between management and employees may greatly smooth the implementation of new change and secure a transitional period as the existing one in UK higher
education. Research in this area (Inglehart, 1997; Tyler, 2001; Tyler and Huo, 2002) point out that trust in terms of decision making procedures plays a key role in sustaining democracy, confidence in the authority and willingness to obey the rules. Morrison (1994) reports that among other factors, trust is essential for a continued harmonious relationship between employees and their organisations. A convincing therapeutic rationale fostering employee participation in processes that have previously resulted in an unfavourable outcome is the belief that in future, event procedures might be in their favour.

The trust factor might present a kind of dilemma here in this study. The noticeable tendency towards a bottom up approach in managing and regulating both the activities of academics and associated resources might push out any potential for trust in the academic working environment; of course this will be the case if any of the academics taking part in the study hold a relational psychological contract. It is based on Rousseau’s (1990) argument that trust and belief in good faith and fairness are among the characteristics of relational contracts. Maguire (2003) supports this argument by explaining that an employee with a relational contract will reciprocate trust with contribution. However, one common element of all types of psychological contract is the fact that trust plays an important part in the subjective experience of breach of psychological contract on the part of employees (Robinson, 1996). By integrating a number of definitions of trust (Frost, Stimpson and Maughan 1978; Barber, 1983; Gambetta, 1988), Robinson introduces her own definition, explaining that ‘One’s expectations, assumptions or beliefs about the likelihood that another’s future actions will be beneficial, favourable, or at least not detrimental to one’s interests’. She argues that an employee experiencing a low level of trust is likely to be more vigilant in identifying and perceiving breach. She continues by explaining that this is the case even when there is no breach, as the employee may sense that it would be consistent with a low level of trust, therefore, losing confidence in the reciprocal relationship of promises in return for a contribution. Such perceptions will of course be influenced as an employee will compare how management behaves towards him/her in contrast with how they are with other employees. Trust will be influenced either positively or negatively, according to the output of the social relationship factor. Therefore, trust is a powerful tool that should be taken very seriously in the management of the psychological contract and its state.

Interactional justice, on the other hand, relates to employees’ perception of the quality of treatment in the course of implementing organisational procedures (Bies, 1986). This type of justice is concerned with social sensitivity, for instance, treating employees with respect and
dignity, offering adequate reason for decisions and showing empathy. Communication with employees by offering explanations in an honest but sensitive manner demonstrates treatment with dignity and respect, thereby strengthening employees’ perceptions of interactional justice (Greenberg, 1990). Folger and Skarlicki (1999, p. 45) argue that ‘As organizations continue to change, and as psychological contracts are changed, we think that people will judge the changes according to implications for human dignity.’

All of the aforementioned desirable outcomes driven by the implementation of either procedural or interactional justice in a social relationship will develop initially in the mind of the individual. This will subsequently formulate a perception of reality as being fair or unfair, regardless of its actual status.

3.7.2.2 The multiplicity of relationships in organisations
Although Rousseau (1995) and Morrison and Robinson (1997) accept the argument that an organisation consists of multiple agents with whom the psychological contract is formed, these are not deemed as proxies for the organisation, as each one of them may make different offers or have different expectations from other agents. Apparently, there is a common reluctance to anthropomorphise the organisation, although it cannot be denied that organisations are comprised of agents with potentially divergent principles, ideals and needs, as explained by Shore and Tetrick (1994) and Lee (2001). Accordingly, employees may regard actions executed by those agents as actions of the organisation itself (Levinson, 1965; Guest, 1998). Eisenberger et al. (1986, p. 504) support this argument by explaining that: ‘.... employees personify the organisation, viewing actions by agents of the organisation as actions of the organisation itself.’

The multiplicity of relationships that might exist in any organisation, represented by more than one agent dealing with an individual employee, may help clarify organisational communications (Guest and Conway, 2000), however, such themes may contribute to the perception of breach or violation of an individual’s psychological contract (Grant, 1999; Greene, Ackers and Black, 2001). The accumulation of promises and expectations of an employee will be shaped by these agents, such as recruiters, managers and direct supervisors (Feldman, 1976).

Additionally, there is a potential danger arising from the conflict between different organisational agents and their perception of organisational interest (Herriot, Manning and Kidd, 1997). Lee (2001, p. 7) explains that ‘different employer agents may present differing messages
to employees as they represent the organisation.’ Such differences in the sources of information sources may cause inconsistency, where an employee may expect certain results from one agent while receiving other, perhaps contradictory results, and therefore a perception of breach or violation of psychological contract may arise. Rousseau (2004, p.121) points out that ‘when information source convey different messages, it erodes the mutuality of the psychological contract.’

Perhaps what further complicates matters is the fact that these agents also have their own active psychological contracts with both their managers and employees. In their findings regarding post-merger psychological contract, Bligh and Carsten (2004) observe that managers spoke primarily of two broad types of psychological contract: contracts with supervisors and top management (upward contracts), and contract with their employees (downwards contracts). Being ‘caught in the middle’ as Coyle-Shapiro (2001) refer to it, is perhaps a source of tension as he/she is expected to simultaneously fulfil the designated priorities and satisfy the terms of an employee’s psychological contract.

Notwithstanding the fact that an employee’s psychological contract can exist with different agents representing the same organisation, it is believed that such a contract resides only in the mind of an individual, where a perception of mutuality and reciprocity will be formulated (Rousseau and Tijoriwala, 1998). An individual will construct his/her perception of reality driven by the outcomes of the state of the psychological contract (Sparrow and Cooper, 1998). Accordingly, perceptions of certain actions of a number of agents will be interpreted differently from one individual to another.

3.7.2.3 Employees’ organisational roles and positions
Employees’ informal and formal standing, as well as their power, will also proportionately influence their experience in employment relations (Ho, Rousseau and Levesque, 2006). According to Burt (1992), having an influential position can offer an employee access to valued resources, such as information and status, thus fulfilling their demands and needs. For instance, the expectations of an executive member who is part of the strategic decision making team within an organisation may be based around knowledge of the organisational constraints and recourses, and so his/her expectations can be moderated in that sense. Arguably, a decision maker’s formal standing and power in an organisation might to some extent influence their experience in a way that will reflect positively upon their psychological contract.
In a similar vein, psychological contracts can be influenced by employment status. According to their findings, Conway and Briner (2002) explain that, although participating part-time employees in one study held a higher rating of job satisfaction, they demonstrated low commitment and less willingness to demonstrate organisational citizenship behaviour.

In comparison with a full-time or permanent employee, temporary and part-time employees’ psychological contracts tend to be more transactional in nature (Rousseau and McLean Parks, 1993). Therefore, continuing employees are more likely to have a relational psychological contract.

Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) also argue that there is a relationship between an informal network position and PC beliefs. According to them, this builds on the social information processing perspective. An informal network position provides certain employees with information that differs from that of other colleagues in terms of their relationship with the institution. In fact, it provides them with social cues promoting their social construction of the employment relationship with management and other organisational members (Weick, 1995). Such cues can play a vital internal role in getting things done and anticipating rewards, thus consequently shaping academics’ work-related perceptions as well as good citizenship behaviour (Ho, Rousseau and Levesque, 2006). On the other hand, counterparts who receive fewer positive cues would probably develop more negative work-related perceptions (Smith-Doerr, Manev and Rizova, 2004).

3.7.2.4 The organisational structure
Another key factor in the formation or reformation of the psychological contract is the structure of an organisation. Different structures might have different influences on an employee’s psychological contract. While a conventional structure denotes a visible relationship, a ‘virtual’ one would denote the prevalence of technology-mediated relationship. In comparison to a remote work environment, the implantation of benchmark methods in a conventional organisation structure might lead to a less personal and idiosyncratic relationship between an employee and the organisation. For instance, the psychological contract of an individual, especially the trust dimension, might be impacted by geographic fragmentation and Web-based communication technology (Jarvenpaa and Leidner, 1999; Nandhakumar, 1999; Lee-Kelley and Crossman, 2001).
3.7.3 Environmental factors shaping the psychological contract
Changes in the values and expectations of employees in the working environment have continually been shaped by the surrounding circumstances in business. The state of the labour market, for example, has shown an impact upon expectations and negotiation styles (Smithson and Lewis, 2000). Employees during recession may lower their expectations due to high levels of competition for work and labour supply. Environmental factors play a role in influencing the psychological contract and might possibly have a moderating effect. Csoka (1995, p. 23) notes that ‘The most significant effect of the dramatic restructuring and downsizing, global competition and technological changes has been a rethinking of the employer-employee work relationship.’

Contrary to a number of proposed models (e.g. Guest and Conway, 1997), Turnley and Feldman (1999) have introduced a model that argues that labour market forces might have a moderating influence in employees’ responses in relation to psychological contract violations (Figure 2.5).

Figure 3.5 Discrepancy in psychological contract violations

Besides, studies show that not all negative results produced by the employer would be regarded as a breach of psychological contract. The existence of environmental factors may influence
employees’ interpretation of certain incidents. Similarly, the perception of a breach in psychological contract does not always lead to the perception of a violation.

3.7.3.1 Social comparison process
Driven by its dynamic nature, the psychological contract continues to evolve and adjust from the beginning of the early socialisation period in a working environment (Ashforth and Saks, 1996; Bauer and Green, 1994), during which, a newcomer is more inclined to seek additional information to ‘complete’ their psychological contract, in which any ambiguity surrounding the exchange relationship is reduced. This is because most newcomers have only a limited or incomplete picture in relation to the terms of their employment relationship (Rousseau, 2001). Employees in this period start to develop perceptions of any required duties through knowledge acquisition (Thomas and Anderson, 1998). Tekleab (2003) reports that higher levels of socialisation reduce an employee’s perception of his/her employer’s obligations during the first three months of the relationship. This period contributes to the clarification of any differences between what has been anticipated prior to starting the job and the reality. Adapting an on-going sense-making process will continue to shape new employees’ understanding of how to interpret and respond to such a new environment (Louis, 1980). In their study of newcomers’ psychological contract during the socialisation period, De Vos, Buyens and Schalk (2003) note that there is evidence that employees alter their psychological contract without reference to the employer, which in turns supports the adoption of a sense-making process in the working environment. De Vos, Buyens and Schalk (2003) supports such an argument and notes in his findings that newcomers alter their perceptions of organisations’ promises during their first year based on what they have received in relation to what they have contributed to the relationship. In addition, a key element of sense-making theory is the description of organisational life from the employee’s perspective (Weick, 1995), which resonates with the notion that a psychological contract resides in the ‘eyes of the beholder’ (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994, p. 246). By adopting such a process, newcomers start eliminating any potential feelings of unmet expectations or unfulfilled promises initiated by pre-entry thought (Louis, 1980). In fact, such clarification and the fact of having a clearer picture may also have an important influence on job satisfaction, performance, commitment and turnover (Ostro and Kozlowski, 1992; Chao et al., 1994; Major, Kozlowski, Chao and Gardner, 1995; Ashforth and Saks, 1996). Not only does social comparison take place as a planned activity, where a manager evaluates an employee’s performance in relation to that of others (Mumford, 1983), but also occurs naturally on those
occasions when an employee may realise by chance how his/her salary compares to that of others (Bylsma and Major, 1994).

In her comprehensive framework, Rousseau (1995) describes the way in which employees create their own psychological contract through experience and over time (Figure 2.6). As she illustrates, social cues somehow interrupt the employee’s decoding of a particular message, and this may influence their understanding of the whole picture, thus shaping their interpretation of an institution’s actions.

Figure 3.6 Rousseau’s psychological contract framework

![Rousseau’s psychological contract framework](source: Rousseau, 1995, p.33)

In a study of fulfilment evaluations, Ho (2002) found that employees depend on different social networks for competitive and non-competitive resources in assessing whether the organisation has fulfilled its obligations towards them. Employees rely on such tools to assess the fairness and equity of treatment, whether procedural or distributive, surrounding their contract (Herriot, 2001) and aid in establishing the basis of future actions to remedy any perceived imbalance (Crossman, 2007, p. 90). Formal and informal social networks provide an opportunity for workers to evaluate their present situation in relation to others.

Organisational socialisation plays an important role in reducing any mismatch between obligations and expectations held by newcomers, and most importantly in helping them to
integrate more easily into the working environment. An organisation will explicitly negotiate terms and obligations with a new employee as a means of facilitating learning and knowledge, and to insure that he/she will have a stable psychological contract (Louis, 1980, Nadler, Hackman and Lawler, 1983).

Organisational socialisation factors comprise orientation programs, training, social support and mentoring programs. Feldman (1989, p. 399), for example, describes formal training programmes as the main socialisation process for many newcomers, where he explains that ‘the overall training program plays a major role in how individuals make sense of and adjust to their new job settings.’ In addition, realistic job previews are considered as an effective instrument in providing new employees with more realistic and knowledgeable perceptions of their new working environment (Premack and Wanous, 1985).

While on one hand, informal socialisation in a working environment refers to engagement with co-workers, where a newcomer starts to accumulate cues and information offered through this socialisation opportunity as a means of coping with surprising events, learning appropriate attitudes and norms along with how to interpret future events (Louis, 1980, 1990). In fact, such sources of information are considered more accessible and helpful than any formal induction procedures the organization might offer as they provide newcomers with a clear picture of the practices and procedures being implemented (Louis, Posner and Powell, 1983; Nelson and Quick, 1991). Observations of social cues deduced from such interaction play a key role in shaping the new employees’ psychological contract. (Rousseau, 1995, p. 39) explains that they provide ‘… messages for contract creation, conveying social pressure to conform to the group’s understanding of the terms, and shaping how individuals will interpret the organization’s actions’. An employee continues to compare their own ‘contributions and outcomes with those of others to determine distributive justice’ (Chan, 2000, p. 72), i.e. the multiplicity of coexisting psychological contracts in a working environment offers an opportunity to compare and assess any perceived breach or violation. Such socialisation factors have a significant influence upon newcomers, for example, a highly motivated and committed newcomer entering a new job may reappraise such attitudes when he/she observes how other employees in the same environment display disappointment in the way managers treat them or appear disinterested in their work. This process of ‘equality matching’ is discussed by Herriot (2001, p.123) who explains that, ‘.... we may look at others whom we perceive to be in a similar relationship. If our cost-benefit ratio
is less favourable, or indeed if it is more so, than these comparisons then we may feel either angry or guilty and seek to redress the balance accordingly.’

However, an individual cannot always infer that another co-worker is potentially a party to comparable psychological contracts with his/her employer. This is especially in relation to organisations that consist of employees in diverse job categories and from different backgrounds. In her study of the role of social influence upon an individual’s psychological contracts, Ho (2005, p. 123) argues that ‘Prior research in the psychological contract literature has generally focused on co-workers as a broad category of social referent (e.g., Rousseau and Greller, 1994), with the underlying assumption that social influence from one co-worker is the same as that from another.’ She continues, arguing against such broad assumptions by explaining that ‘... an employee can be influenced by different co-workers under different circumstances and in different ways.’ (Ho, 2005, p. 123) Research into social network subjects support her argument by identifying two distinct mechanisms through which social influence in organisations takes place. Scholars refer to these two mechanisms as cohesion and structural equivalence, and therefore referents can be categorised as ‘cohesive others’ or ‘structurally equivalent others’ (e.g. Friedkin, 1984; Burt, 1987; Marsden and Friedkin, 1993).

Following the above argument, Ho (2005) contributes to psychological contract literature by introducing a model that discusses the role of social influence upon an individual’s psychological contract (Figure 2.7). She discusses the influence of social actors in terms of evaluating the fulfilment of psychological contract, and most necessity of choosing the right type of referent for the comparison. In her estimation, the choice of referent is determined largely by the domain of promises, via which an employee may have the opportunity for an accurate evaluation in relation to the fulfilment of promises by the organisation (Ho, 2005).
Cohesive others influence other co-workers with whom they have close interpersonal ties (Shah, 1998). Their social proximity to these co-workers is best captured by face-to-face, direct interaction (Burkhardt, 1994; Coleman, Katz and Menzel, 1966), which leads to socially constructed perceptions (Ibarra and Andrews, 1993). The frequent and intense interaction possible between such actors permits more repetition of information than with non-cohesive actors, and therefore increases the chances of transmitting social cues (Rice and Aydin, 1991). The influence mechanism stemming from this choice of referents is cooperative in nature, as in Shah (1998, p. 250), individuals ‘rely on direct ties to reduce uncertainty’. For instance, they tend to discuss innovation and help formulate opinions in their interaction amongst themselves (Shah, 1998). Discourses exchanged directly with a cohesive referent would involve informal norms, values and information in relation to the organisation’s rules and politics, in which they serve as important channels for communicating norms and enforcing behaviour (Krackhardt and Kilduff, 1990). Additionally, they are considered as an important source of social, normative, and technical information (Morrison, 1993), whereas the term ‘structurally equivalent others’ refers to individuals in relation to whom they have similar positions in the social structure (Burt, 1987; Friedkin, 1998). Equivalents occupying similar positions regard each other as substitutes with similar roles, experiences, and information (Sailer, 1978). They view each other as a ‘frame of reference for subjective judgments’ (Burt, 1982, p. 1293) and evaluate their standing.
accordingly. Structurally equivalent others will be of particular interest to an individual if the information required relates to a position or role.

Hence, structurally equivalent others are the best social referents for those who are looking for job-relevant information. However, Ho (2005) points out that some employees seeking job-related information may hesitate to approach a structural equivalent other due to the fear of looking incompetent as the latter will be considered a competitor. She explains that an employee may therefore seek another method of acquiring the required information, such as monitoring.

Therefore, and during informal socialisation, a newcomer tries to ‘complete’ their psychological contract by assimilating information here and there, whereby the type of information he/she seeks will determine the choice of referent. Regardless of whether it constitutes job-related or organisation-wide information, the choice should be a structural equivalent referent or a cohesive referent, respectively. This is particularly important because, throughout the process of the formation and development of an employee’s psychological contract he/she will opt for a choice of referent when a breach or violation in the psychological contract is perceived. Besides, seeking information with such a method is sometimes far more preferable for employees than information presented in formal practice, such as performance appraisal interviews and development exercises (Allcorn et al., 1996; Petty and Wegener, 1998). This is because, according to them, employees may be sceptical and question the validity of information designed to be explicit and available for them. Having said that, the quality of co-workers’ relationships with each other may hinder the extent of the information shared, for example, trust, the degree of interaction, and identification with co-workers (Nahapiet and Ghosal, 1998).

3.8 Psychological contract is about perceptions of reality
As has been argued throughout the chapter, an individual’s psychological contract refers purely to a perception of reality. Feelings of satisfaction, discontent or anger that influence the attitudes and behaviour of individuals are all a result of perceptions of reality that exist ‘in the eye of the beholder’ (Rousseau, 1989, p. 123). The results of such perceptions will either represent be fulfilment, breach and/or violation of the psychological contract.

3.8.1 The perceived fulfilment of psychological contract
A growing body of research points to the association of individual psychological contract and outcomes using social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity (Turnley et al., 2003). The
underpinning notion here is that when an individual satisfies his/her obligations towards the organisation and therefore their side of the deal in the psychological contract, the organisation is also expected to do its part (Rousseau, 1995). If the organisation fails to do so, then the individual might react by reducing future efforts. Based on social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity, an individual in such a case would perceive an imbalance in the exchange relationship and pursue further steps to restore the missing balance (Blau, 1964). An employee’s perception of reality in terms of his/her organisation providing what has been promised is regarded as the fulfilment of psychological contract. Empirical evidence suggests that keeping promises create a feeling of being valued among employees, increasing trust (Robinson and Morrison, 1995; Conway and Briner, 2002), the experience of emotional ’uplift’ (Lawler and Yoon, 1996), therefore resulting in positive affective outcomes (Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000). In addition, they are associated with job satisfaction (Turnley and Feldman, 2000), organisational citizenship behaviour (Hui, Lee, and Rousseau, 2004) and in-role performance (Dabos and Rousseau, 2004). Therefore, it is conceivable that the outcome of the exchange relationship, when it goes smoothly and as expected by both parties, will lead to a stable relationship.

The subject of psychological contract fulfilment has attracted a great deal of attention in academic literature due to the changing employer-employee relationship in recent years. Major transformation in the workplace has greatly altered the organisational context (Ghoshal and Bartlett, 2000), along with employees’ perceptions of their entitlements. Long-term relational psychological contract, founded on job security, loyalty and trust, are being replaced by one that is more short-term and transactional and which is exchanged for training/development and high pay. Smithson and Lewis (2000, p. 694) explain that there is evidence ‘... to support the view that younger workers’ expectations of employers are changing and that they do not always perceive insecure work as a violation of the psychological contract, as older, established workers appear to do.’ The so-called ‘old deal’ in the employment relationship where loyalty is exchanged for job security is mostly viewed as wishful thinking in today’s workplace environment (McLean, Parks and Kidder, 1994, p. 112). Employees amend their perceptions of psychological contract fulfilment as a means of bringing their expectations in line with reality, and therefore reducing any potential of feelings of unmet expectations or broken promises (Louis, 1980).
A common theme between the process of evaluating the fulfilment of psychological contract and socialisation periods is the adoption of a sense-making process in dealing with the information collected. An employee continues to adopt such a process in evaluating the fulfilment of his/her psychological contract as a means of ascertaining the extent to which there has been a revision in what the agent of the organisation provides (Chaudhry, Wayne and Schalk, 2009). In their view, this involves a decision-making process, where an employee views and processes such revisions and then decides on how to respond, for instance, by changing the extent to which he/she fulfils obligations to the employer. Chaudhry, Wayne and Schalk (2009) have introduced an interesting model, in which sense-making theory is incorporated with its theoretical framework. Their proposed model attempts to examine employee evaluation of psychological contract fulfilment during organisational change (Figure 2.8).

Figure 3.8 A sense-making model of employee evaluation of psychological contract fulfilment

[Diagram]

Source: Chaudhry, Wayne and Schalk (2009).

Drawn from Louis and Sutton’s (1991) model of cognitive processing, the model argues that an employee who perceives unfavourable outcomes due to changes in their employment relationship would be more likely to engage in a systematic cognitive process so as to be able to understand 'why it occurred' and 'how it affects me.' Louis and Sutton (1991) argue that individuals encountering changes and perceiving them as negative rather than positive will switch their cognitive mode from automatic to the conscious stage. The latter is referred to as a
‘systematic cognitive mode.’ Experimental research gives evidence that individuals experiencing such situations will make an effort to make sense of them, and will attribute responsibility wherever there are any feelings of frustration or of the failure to achieve desirable goals (Wong and Weiner, 1981). In the model, Chaudhry, Wayne and Schalk (2009) argue that there are two cognitive factors considered to be relevant to psychological contract fulfilment in the context of a deficiency, namely attributions of responsibility and cognitions of relative deprivation. Both factors will come into play as a reaction to a deficiency rather than to an excess in an employee’s psychological contract fulfilment.

Based on the work of Heider (1958) on attribution theory, Chaudhry, Wayne and Schalk (2009) discuss three types of responsibility assignment as an influence upon employee evaluation of psychological contract fulfilment. This is based on Heider’s (1958) argument that an individual will attribute responsibility for a perceived negative effect either to environmental pressures or to the organisation. The first type is the attribution of intentionality, where an organisation will be regarded as responsible to the extent that the observed outcome was the result of its intentional actions. Secondly, an organisation will be regarded as responsible for the observed outcome to the extent that its action was not intended to cause it, however, such an outcome should have been foreseen and anticipated by the organisation. In the case of a breach, for example, their model argues that an employee will only blame his/her organisation to the extent that the change is attributable to causes that his/her organisation should have predicted and accordingly provided for. The third and last influence on the perception of psychological contract fulfilment is the attribution of justification. The organisation is not accountable for an outcome in cases of a justifiable reason on their part. On the contrary, justifiable reasons play a part in allaying the negative effect of change context on an employee’s attitude where there is an unfavourable employment relationship, thus mitigating its effect on his/her psychological contract fulfilment (Chaudhry, Wayne and Schalk, 2009). Rousseau and Tijoriwala (1999) support such an argument by explaining in their findings that managerial justifications and excuses play a role in employee acceptance of the need for change.

The second cognitive component, according to the Chaudhry, Wayne and Schalk (2009) model, as a relevant factor in psychological contract fulfilment is relative deprivation. An employee’s feeling of satisfaction in relation to an outcome depends more on subjective than on objective standards (Stouffer et al., 1949). Deprivation refers to the state of tension held by an individual generated by the discrepancy between what is expected and actual delivery. However, the basis
of this type of cognitive component has long been debated with limited consensus (Crosby, 1976; Gurr, 1970). Therefore, and despite the influence of relative deprivation, the model suggests that the three aforementioned types of responsibility assignment play a key role in shaping negative relationships between deficiency in psychological contract fulfilment and employee reaction.

This cognitive thinking in response to change has been investigated in other research, which refer to it as ‘counterfactual thinking.’ Folger and Cropanzano’s (1998) fairness theory argues that an individual who encounters a surprise event will adopt a sense-making process in order to engage in counterfactual thinking, where they will try to understand the reasons for the event and evaluate how the organisation could have acted differently. Kickul (2001) explains that in this case, an employee will be vulnerable and might suffer feelings of injustice. She continues by explaining that an employee replays the sequence of events perceived as a breach but may recall them in a different scenario. By so doing, he/she will decide on an appropriate response to the event, based on his/her judgment of the fairness of the organisation’s procedures (Kickul, 2001). In their study on the relationship between organisational change and schemata, Bartunek and Moch (1987) emphasise the efficacy of a cognitive sense-making framework as a means of clarifying and resolving issues associated with organisational change interventions. An employee’s cognitive thinking is considered to be a vital element in shaping future responses in cases of perceived negative impact on the psychological contract, and therefore in the evaluation of contract fulfilment.

3.8.2 Perceived breach\violation of psychological contract
A growing body of literature notes that changes in organisational contexts triggered mainly by major transformations in the workplace (Ghoshal and Bartlett, 2000), have impacted negatively upon employees’ perceptions of the extent of their psychological contract fulfilment (Ghoshal and Bartlett, 2000). This perception that organisations are failing to fulfil their obligation towards employees has been attributed largely to the introduction of programmes, such as downsizing, outsourcing, in-source aspects parts of operations and the growing use of contingent work arrangements (Beaumont and Harris, 2002, Crossman, 2007). Perhaps this is the reason for increasing interest across researchers within the last decade to explore breach and violation of psychological contract (e.g. Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000; Tekleab, Takeuchi and Taylor, 2005; Turnley and Feldman, 2000; Johnson and O’Leary Kelly 2003; Johnson and O’Leary,
Robinson (1996, p. 576) defines breach of psychological contract as

‘...a subjective experience based not only (or necessarily) on the employer’s actions or inactions but on an individual’s perceptions of these actions or inactions within a particular social contact.’

In psychological contract literature, both breach and violation are terms that are sometimes treated interchangeably, although Morrison and Robinson (1997) emphasize the different grounds between these terms, where one is emotional and the other is cognitive. According to Morrison and Robinson (1997, p. 230), psychological contract breach is

‘... the cognition that one’s organization has failed to meet one or more obligations within one’s psychological contract in a manner commensurate with one’s contributions’, whereas they define violation as ‘...the emotional and affective state that may, under certain conditions, follow from the belief that one’s organization has failed to adequately maintain the psychological contract.’

Therefore, feelings of frustration, disappointment and anger emanating from a perceived breach in psychological contract may or may not result in a perception of violation. However, if it leads to such a perception, downward adjustments in various individuals’ emotions, attitudes and behaviour will follow, including increased turnover intentions (Maertz and Griffeth, 2004; Zhao et al, 2007), organisational commitment and effectiveness (Lester et al., 2002; Lemire and Rouillard, 2005), reduced organisational citizenship behaviour (Hui, Lee, and Rousseau, 2004), and increased deviant behaviour (Kickul, 2001).

Thompson and Bunderson (2003) extend the above view by noting that it is not only unmet personal entitlements that may produce a perception of psychological contract breach and/or violation, but also the fact that some organisations may abandon an espoused principle or ideological position. Taking into account the consequences of ideology-infused contracts, Thompson and Bunderson (2003) propose a model that discusses a number of relationships and conditions through which an ideological breach and violation can arise (Figure 2.9).
‘Intentional reneging’ refers to situations where individuals perceive that actions executed by their organisations deliberately seek to deviate from the cause. This is consistent with Morrison and Robinson’s (1997, p. 244) argument that,

‘...if the employee perceives that an organisational agent was aware that an agreement was being broken and that the breach was a purposeful act (rather than an honest oversight), feelings of violation will be intensified.’

They continue by explaining that organisations might act deliberately in such a manner due to a number of factors, namely external pressures, the adoption of new philosophies and managerial greed. Although these different motives may influence the interpretation of a breach, the experience of breach still remains (Thompson and Bunderson, 2003).
The second antecedent of ideological breach in the model is incongruence, which may originate in both parties. From the side of the employee this might result from a mismatch existing between his/her expectations in relation to the reality, while it may occur from the organisation’s side, as suggested by Thompson and Bunderson (2003) due to an ‘aspiration rather than reality’. Morrison and Robinson (1997, p. 244) support such an argument by arguing that ‘If an employee perceives that a breach was due to his or her own misperceptions, the employee is less apt to ‘blame’ the organisation for the apparent breach and will experience less intense feelings of violation.’

Another component in Thompson and Bunderson’s (2003) model is perceived ‘goal displacement.’ It refers to the emphasis of administrative efficacy upon core ideals. An employee seeking an espoused cause may perceive a threat from the primarily attended objective which will in turn lead to a perception of breach in his/her psychological contract. In addition, an individual might perceive a psychological contract breach on the basis of perceived value interpenetration as his/her organisation engages in a relationship with another organisation that is not committed to the same ideology or values.

In relation to ideological breach - violation, Thompson and Bunderson (2003) explain that while short-term perspectives are applied to relational and transactional contracts, an ideological contract represents features of employees who are more willing to ‘wait out’ a short-term breach if they believe the organisation remains committed to the long-term objective. According to the above model, an employee’s attribution of a breach to contextual contexts (e.g. social and economic factors) may alleviate its impact on violation. Hence, the contextual attributions component may moderate the relationship between ideological breach and violation. This observation is supported by Morrison and Robinson (1997) and is consistent with the arguments of Chaudhry, Wayne and Schalk’s (2009) sense-making model of employee evaluation of psychological contract fulfilment, which was discussed earlier in this chapter.

Another interesting observation from Thompson and Bunderson (2003, p. 582) is that ‘individuals in boundary-spanning or management roles may be slower to translate breach into violation, because their in-depth appreciation of the difficulty of preserving ideological integrity amidst a maelstrom of competing external forces predisposes them to attribute ideological breaches to external causes.’ This observation supports our earlier discussion of the influence of employees’ organisational roles and positions on their psychological contracts.
Robinson (1996), in her definition of psychological contract breach (quoted earlier) sets the grounds of just the significant central parameter as she explains that a breach actually occurs when an individual perceives it. In other words, whether or not a promise has actually been broken is not that relevant, so much as whether it is perceived as a reality in the mind of the individual (Rousseau and Tijoriwala, 1998; Sparrow and Cooper, 1998). This is because processing information takes place in an idiosyncratic way (Turnley and Feldman, 1999).

When employees perceive breaches of contracts by agents of organisations, they perceive an inconsistency between the agents’ words and actions. Consequently, the employees lose confidence that the contributions made will be reciprocated, as promised, by the agents in future. Such feelings nurture a loss of trust between employees and their organisations (Robinson, 1996). Additionally, the trust factor plays an important role in shaping future perceptions of breaches of individuals’ evaluations of psychological contract fulfilment. Whilst an employee with high initial trust in his/her employer may have disregarded or forgotten actual breaches by his/her employer, another employee with low initial trust may actively look for or recall incidents of breach, even though none have actually taken place (Robinson, 1996). She explains that ‘Employees with low prior trust were more likely than those with high prior trust to blame their employer for the perceived breach.’ (Robinson, 1996, p. 594) Dulac et al. (2008) and Bal et al. (2010) support her argument in their findings which show that the level and quality of trust in a social exchange relationship have an impact on how an employee evaluates a contract breach and the extent to which he/she reciprocates in future events.

Evidence suggests that when there is a perceived breach, the resultant damage to respect and trust may not be easily rectified (Conway, Guest and Trenberth, 2011). Trust is an explicit element that can be swiftly destroyed but necessitates considerable time to re-build (Kramer and Tyler, 1996). In an interesting observation, Conway, Guest and Trenberth (2011) argue that any attempt to reverse the perception of a breach through psychological contract fulfilment may only have therefore likely limited success.

3.9 Managing the psychological contract
The subject of managing the psychological contract has instigated little writing or research, and no particular approaches have been suggested. Conway and Briner (2005, p.161) note that none of the literature on this point has been met with great enthusiasm or success. To explore the
subject, two main areas of the psychological contract have been approached, namely content and breach. In terms of the latter, a number of elements are involved in managing the contract, for example, monitoring psychological contract to ensure the deal between the parties is delivered and setting up strategies to deal with a contract breach. Managing the contract through such an approach may, to some extent, ensure that both parties in an exchange relationship keep their part of the deal, and therefore the negative consequences of breach are minimised. Additionally, positive results may be maximised. Nevertheless, it seems that managing the psychological contract with the breach/fulfilment approach may not always obtain satisfactory results for two reasons. According to their findings, Conway and Briner (2002) explain that broken promises have a greater influence than exceeded promises on the results of daily mood. Lambert, Edwards and Cable (2003), Montes and Irving (2008) and Conway, Guest and Trenberth (2011) support this argument by explaining that influences upon attitudinal results were much greater when promised inducements exceeded delivered inducements, in contrast to situations where delivered inducements exceeded promised inducements. Besides, the breach/fulfilment approach arguably requires additional efforts and resources to mitigate the negative effects. Shifting the focus on human resource management to redress or compensate for breaches in employees’ psychological contracts would consume money and other resources within an organisation for trying to rectify the situation. Conway and Briner (2005, p.172) explain that organisations may sometimes have to compensate for losses resulting from breach in their employees’ psychological contracts by offering more of another inducement and ensuring procedural justice.

On the other hand, attempts to manage the contents of psychological contract may involve several different approaches, such as change, determining the type of promises that should be perused in the exchange relationship between parties, and how the psychological contract can be negotiated and renegotiated. Interest in managing psychological contract through content is due to certain ways of changing content that are likely to lead to more or less positive results for both the employer and employee (Conway and Briner, 2005, p. 159). While imposing change or participating in negotiation may yield good results, the interest here is the on-going communication that clarifies the promises expected from employees and what the employees can expect in return. Conducting such an approach would contribute to the development of a clear understanding of employees’ psychological contracts, in which any confusion or uncertainty in relation to exactly what the deal is will be reduced (Conway and Briner, 2005, p. 165). This is supported by Guest and Conway (2002) as they explain that, based on psychological contract’s grounds regarding the exchange of perceived promises and commitments, effective
communication plays an integral part in illuminating any potential mismatch between parties. They point out that

‘...effective communication reduces perceived breach of the psychological contract and is associated with better employee-related outcomes from management of the contract’ (Guest and Conway, 2002, p. 35).

3.9.1 Communicating the psychological contract

Schalk and Rousseau (2001, p. 141) argue that the management of psychological contract is a core task for both parties in an exchange deal, for ‘...firms that attempt to develop ‘people-building’ rather than ‘people-using’ organisations, in an organisational climate characterized by trust’, and for ‘.... workers themselves, who seek to meet their own needs in active individual and group-level negotiations with their employer.’ (Schalk and Rousseau, 2001, p. 141) The role of psychological contract management rests heavily with both sides, whereby effective communication conducted by each contributes to a stable, manageable exchange relationship. The literature draws attention to the importance of communicating the psychological contract during the recruitment process (Robinson and Morrison, 2000), the on-going interaction between the employee and the employer with regard to the job, to personal issues such as development, workload, career prospects and work-life balance (Herriot and Pemberton, 1997; Stiles et al., 1997), and to statements of future intent, direction, and top-down communication. Guest and Conway (2002, p. 22) argue that the ‘Effective use of these forms of communication is associated with what managers judge to be a clearer and less frequently breached set of organisational promises and commitments, as well as with a fairer exchange and a more positive impact of policies and practices on employee attitudes and behaviour.’

In terms of the early stages of the relationship between the employee and the employer, Morrison and Robinson (1997) explain that any potential incongruence that may subsequently arise would be reduced through the establishment of effective communication. According to them, the more an employee discusses and interacts with his/her employer or with the agents representing the organisation before joining, the more likely it is that both the employer and organisation agent(s) will lessen any inconsistency in perceptions with regard to the promised obligations between them. Accordingly, subsequent perceptions of breaches of psychological contract from the side of the employee will be minimised. This is consistent with the argument that an employee who has a realistic preview of his/her job during recruitment is less likely to experience subsequent
unfulfilled expectations (Wanous et al., 1992). Besides, studies on newcomer sense-making support such arguments that suggest individuals who obtain more information have a better chance of gaining an accurate sense of their surroundings than those who obtain less information (Reichers, 1987; Miller and Jablin, 1991).

Communicating psychological contract on a daily basis is an important element of maintaining a stable relationship between the employee and the employer. Establishing an open communication will help in two ways; not only will it increase the probability of having employee expectations and efforts match what the organisation desires, leading to a healthy exchange relationship, but it will also provide the employer with a chance to offer an explanation in situations where factors have led to a perception of breach beyond the organisation’s control (Rousseau, 1995; Morrison and Robinson, 1997), for instance, in the performance appraisal process, informal day-to-day interaction, dealing with non-work responsibilities and training and development.

Formal top-down communication, in addition, is considered an important channel as an employee picks up messages that shape the implicit promises he/she holds. Turnley and Feldman (1999) emphasise the importance of such communication for psychological contract, such as the mission statement. Smidts, Pruyn and Riel (2001) explain that extensive top-down communication will increase organisational identification, along with positive consequences for organisational commitment, self-esteem, and cooperative behaviour.

As mentioned earlier, an employee may have a relationship with more than one agent representing the organisation he/she works for. In that respect, managing the psychological contract would seem problematic as sometimes, this may cause inconsistency in the messages received by the existing multiple agents, which will in turn negatively affect the effectiveness of the two-way communication between the parties. Unclear signals due to different sources may lead to employees holding a confused perception of their psychological contract terms (Herriot and Pemberton, 1997).

Moreover, the way employees perceive the fairness of the process is an important aspect in communicating psychological contract. Robinson and Morrison (2000) note that even if employees blame their organisations for perceived breaches in their psychological contracts,
perceptions of violation will be less intense if they feel they were treated with honesty, fairness and respect.

3.9.2 Motivation and psychological contract
It can be argued that individual needs become a variable element reformed from time to time as a result of pressures driven by managerialist instruments, for instance, professional managers are brought in from the private sector to manage academics along with resources in universities. Echoing Herzberg’s (1968) argument on the differentiation of motivation and movement, the motivation for the controlled movement of academics in the present regime is largely geared towards the implementation of a package of set-up goals. It is possible that this scenario surrounding professionals in general and academics in particular, is a portrait that simulates Herzberg’s argument. The prevalence of managerialist ideology with the loss of privileges from the side of employee necessitates consideration of the actual act of motivating rather than moving employees towards set up goals.

An interesting argument introduced by McGregor (1960) is that motivation is a double-edged sword. He refers to the peculiarity that even though employees with met needs are still dissatisfied with their jobs. He believes that the key to understanding such failure from the management side rests on the presumed assumptions or mental models conducted by managers for interpreting employee actions and behaviour. These can result in counterproductive behaviour (McGregor, 1960). He particularly notes that such behaviour rests on the degree of autonomy or control given to an employee over others, which is reflected positively on his/her motivation towards the job. Conversely, others who are not given the same privileges may express dissatisfaction (McGregor, 1960). Based on such an analysis, McGregor deduces that those who are not given the same privileges may express dissatisfaction (McGregor, 1960).

McGregor (1960, 1967) continues by explaining that a manager who opts for a Theory Y orientation will adopt strategies that promote collegiality and empowerment to employees, or at least will enhance a reciprocal relationship with them, rather than implementing a directive management style. On one hand, managers need to stimulate the optimality of a workplace by facilitating creativity, morality, problem solving, spontaneity and a lack of prejudice as a way of achieving self-actualisation. On the other hand, managers need to encourage confidence, respect for others, self-esteem, achievement and respect from others as these relate to esteem needs.
One important factor to be considered at this present time concerning the motivation of employees is the apparent preference for a transactional psychological contract rather than a relational one across employees. Kunreuther, Kim and Rodriguez (2008) note that ‘millennials’ are not interested in having a job for life, unlike many of their parents. Even if they are satisfied with their job, employees seem to prefer remaining plugged into the job market. A feeling that their job no longer provides them with opportunities or training, or perhaps constrains their innovation in certain fields, will enhance an inclination towards Generation Y (millennials) commitment. Exploring preferable mechanisms for motivation methods is considerably significant. This is because management may make an effort to compensate for certain behaviour in order to motivate employees, although a feeling of dissatisfaction might still exist.

3.10 Proposing a conceptual model

In this thesis, the author builds on the literature and models that have been discussed here and seeks to incorporate the dynamic nature of the psychological contract to improve both Guest and Conway’s (1997) and Guest’s (2004) linear models, as outlined earlier in the chapter. Figure (2.10) illustrates the proposed framework for the formation and development of psychological contract. It synthesises the components and factors that accompany psychological contract throughout its journey from its initial stages outwards, where some aspects, as discussed earlier, may impact upon individuals’ perceptions of encountered events, thus exercising a moderating effect. Here, the author approach psychological contract from the employee’s perspective, starting with the creation of expectations that comprise individual psychological contract, along with components that lead to a perception of reality, and finally to the behavioural and attitudinal consequences. Through the latter, a number of factors will prompt counterfactual thinking to demonstrate the evolving nature of the contract. The emphasis here is on psychological contract’s constant state of flux and re-evaluation, whether conscious or subconscious, by individuals, in the wake of direct and indirect events. This is simply noted by Meckler, Drake and Levinson (2003, p. 223), in their reference to a reciprocation component as ‘... the process of working through a series of unfolding psychological contract in efforts to meet the expectations and concerns of the parties. It is not just a single episode.’
Figure 3.10 A proposed model illustrates the development of psychological contract
The following discussion aims to explain the model and several relationships are proposed within it, along with links between different components and events occurring throughout the development of psychological contract. Relationship 6 indicates that managing psychological contract through content, rather than breach/fulfilment, involves understanding the type of contract an individual holds, which will set the scene for the most effective on-going communication method. As a result, it will facilitate the delivery of the deal, the perception of fairness and an investment of trust throughout the employment relationship (Guest, 2002; Conway and Briner, 2005).

Relationship 9 argues that, regardless of the reality in terms of the delivery of the deal or its fairness, the perception held by an individual is what matters (Rousseau and Tijoriwala, 1998; Sparrow and Cooper, 1998).

Relationship 14 suggests that the perception of discrepancy may in turn lead to a perception of breach, which will serve as a trigger for cognitive thinking. Accordingly, the employee is going to consider how well each of the parties has upheld its respective promises (Louis, 1980; Weick, 1995); whereas individuals in stable conditions are unlikely to switch their cognitive mode from the automatic to the conscious stage (Relationship 12), they tend to make internal attributions when outcomes are consistent with their expectations and external attributions when outcomes are not (Nisbett and Ross, 1980; Regan, Straus and Fazio, 1974; Louis and Sutton, 1991; Aggarwal and Bhargava, 2009).

Throughout the process of evaluating perceived actions that individuals engage in counterfactual thinking, which might moderate the link between perceived contract breach and violation (Relationships 16 and 17), both cognitive components and comparison with choices of referents based on the domain of promises are involved. The judgment surrounding both components may vary as they are inherently subjective and prone to cognitive and perceptual bias (Shaw and Sulzer, 1964; Louis and Sutton, 1991; Folger and Cropanzano, 1998; Ho, 2005). This re-evaluation process that is triggered by the systematic cognitive process, may subsequently lead to the perception of fulfilment of an individual’s psychological contract in comparison with the intensity of breaches or violations according to co-workers (Relationships 18 and 19).

Besides, a perception of the attribution of intentionality, for example, may either eliminate any feelings of unmet expectations or broken promises, or reduce the intensity of the negative
feelings purely in relation to the perception of violation or breach (Louis, 1980; Morrison and Robinson, 1997; Chaudhry, Wayne and Schalk, 2009).

Relationships 15 and 20 point out that both breach and fulfilment of the psychological contract have a negative and positive effect upon trust, respectively (Robinson, 1996, p. 593; Conway and Briner, 2002; Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2002).

As the psychological contract continues to evolve, an individual within it may seek to redress the imbalance ‘by increasing the perceived entitlements or decreasing perceived obligations’ (Robinson, Kraatz and Rousseau, 1994, p. 141). Relationship 25 consequently refers to the impact upon an individual’s psychological contract.

Whilst the aforementioned relationships play a core role in shaping someone’s psychological contract, any perceived violations or breaches that are observed as occurring in other co-workers’ psychological contracts may also affect him/her (Relationships 27 and 28). For example, individual ‘A’, who has previously trusted the organisation and felt secure, might revise this after a co-worker, individual ‘B’, has been dismissed or disciplined (Umphress et al., 2000; Crossman, 2004).

In addition, the multiplicity of agents that exist in an organisation contribute to the development of the psychological contract (Relationships 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34 and 35). For example, individual ‘A’ has two information sources that convey messages: Agent ‘B’ and ‘C’. Individual ‘C’ also receives messages from Agent ‘A’ and ‘C’.

It is clear that employees vary in the way they perceive organisational decisions and there are a number of dimensions that might influence their perceptions, such as ‘Is it fair?’, ‘Am I entitled to other things?’ or ‘Should I be disappointed?’ There are many questions that might enter an employee’s mind if they believe that something is suspicious. Such perceptions, either positive or negative, have been formulated through the surrounding factors that accompany an individual in the employment journey. The literature has paid a great deal of attention to the associated factors that influence the development of a psychological contract. Researchers have investigated these factors in an attempt to remedy the potential impacts upon the contract once it has been breached or violated, trying to focus predominantly on the pathology of a phenomenon rather than on the aetiology. This may be due to the fact that the psychological contract construct has been developed by researchers rather than practitioners (Arnold, 1996;
Cullinane and Dundon, 2006). Arguably, managing the psychological contract through content in its early phases is far more attainable and perhaps leads to fewer perceptions of breach or violation in cases of unmet expectations. In so doing, an organisation will kill two birds with one stone; having both a satisfied employee and avoiding the hassle (e.g. organisational attention and resources to enhance organisational commitment and morale) of rectifying any breach later on in the employment relationship. This matter needs more focus from the organisation’s side, particularly in unstable transitional periods. Enticing employees to amalgamate in a favourable organisational atmosphere could be an influential factor in shaping the psychological contract and ensuring an easier journey thereafter. The proposed model illustrates the significance of this component (i.e. managing the content of the psychological contract) operating to filter the actual obligation and promises to both parties in the exchange relationship. On one hand, the employer will take into account the valued obligation from the employee side based on the type of the contract. On the other, the employee will communicate to verify the perceived promises in order to reduce any potential breach or violation of psychological contract.

Having presented above a conceptual framework that describes the formation and development of an individual’s psychological contract in general, the following section focuses on the academic context and proposes a heuristic model, purely relevant to such a context.

### 3.11 A Model of Ideological Breach in Academia

Taking into account the influence of the ideological currency dimension in shaping academics’ perceptions of any breaches encountered as regards their psychological contract is significant, since, according to Thompson and Bunderson (2003), it plays an important role in the formation and reformation of individual expectations and obligations. The inclusion of such a dimension, which recognises the importance of an academic’s credible commitment to pursue a principle, or a valued cause which may not be limited to self-interest (Thompson and Bunderson, 2003), has been overlooked in the literature on academics’ psychological contract. Examples of such principles or valued motives that can attract academics to become involved in their discipline in the first place and which motivate them in their educational journey include autonomy, flexibility, peer recognition and teacher–student relationship elements (Lyons and Ingersoll, 2010). In addition, it would appear that the values and practices associated with managerialist ideology in UK universities, as suggested by the literature reviewed in chapter Two, are not only affecting the way in which academics perform their tasks and fulfil their expected roles, but are also negatively impacting upon their perceptions of
how far the ideological currency of their psychological contract is fulfilled. This is particularly evident in business schools, where academics working there seem to suffer the most as a result of the market-focused ethos of neoliberalism, performance-obsessed ideology and managerialist values and practices. Therefore and based on the Thompson and Bunderson (2003) model, this research addresses a gap in the literature by proposing a heuristic model which is unique to the academic environment (Figure 2.11). It articulates the conditions under which an ideological breach of academics’ psychological contract is likely to occur. The model is considered as an initial starting point for the researcher to use as a lens when forming ideas which will integrate the data to be revised and added, following data analysis.

Figure 3.11  A model of ideological breach in an academic environment

According to the above proposed model, academics’ expectations and obligations may revolve around several areas in the relationship with their university. This is based on the scant existing studies that have contributed to the psychological contract of academics, namely Newton (2002), Dabos and Rousseau (2004), Shen (2010) and the work at Australasian universities (Tipples and Krivokapic-Skoko 1997; Tipples and Jones 1998; Tipples, Krivokapic-Skoko, and O'Neill 2007; Krivokapic-Skoko and O’Neill 2008; O'Neill, Krivokapic-Skoko and Dowell 2010). These studies present an interesting argument about the type of expectations and obligations that academics may perceive as important in the relationship with their university. This is particularly important as an academic psychological contract has academic-specific items deemed to be relevant to the HE context (Shen 2010).
In their study examining academic psychological contracts at a New Zealand University, Tipples and Krivokapic-Skoko (1997) report that the expectations of academics mainly centre around job satisfaction, career development, good pay, long term job security, promotion and support with personal problems. Conversely, academics believe that their obligations towards their university involve loyalty, work outside ordinary office hours, volunteering for non-contractual tasks, giving advance notice of leaving, being willing to accept transfers within the university, and spending at least a minimum period of time on their work at the university.

In contrast, Newton (2002) utilises the psychological contract as a framework for evaluating academics’ views of higher education policy and change at a UK HE college. In his opinion, the expectations of academics revolve mainly around four key factors: mutual trust, reciprocity, collegiality and accountability. In addition, and in a more recent study, O’Neill, Krivokapic-Skoko and Dowell (2010) examine the content of academics’ psychological contracts at an Australasian university. In their findings, academics identify three perceived obligations towards their university, namely, meeting academic expectations, commitment, and going ‘above and beyond’. Meeting ‘academic expectations’, according to the authors, relates to meeting certain expectations in relation to teaching, research and associated administration. The second obligation, ‘commitment’, refers to the extent that academics are committed to remaining employed by the university for several years, to traveling for work, and to acting collegially. The last factor indicated above, ‘above and beyond’, is concerned with ‘the completion of tasks beyond the typical job description, including commitment to quality teaching and student development in the face of competing demands on time’ (O’Neill, Krivokapic-Skoko and Dowell 2010, p. 18). However, according to the same study, academics’ subjective perceptions of their expectations from the university revolve around fair treatment in promotion; staff development and support; good management and leadership; academic life (e.g. collegiality, autonomy, freedom and acting ethically); fairness and equity; appropriate remuneration, reward performance, and good workplace relations.

In addition, Shen (2010) contributes to this area by explaining that academics in HE may view a number of elements as relevant to the HE context and consequently, this will shape their psychological contracts. He explains that among the suggested expectations of an academic’s psychological contract are fair promotion, more support for doing research, recognition of their skills and talent, a safe workplace, training and career development, and workload.
The findings of the above studies are relevant as they show a new kind of expectation and obligation emerging as a result of current managerialist values and practices. In terms of their psychological contracts, academics now might regard support for doing research, fair promotion, performance rewards and workload as more significant than, for example, long term job security, support with personal problems and good pay. Therefore, the proposed model above (Figure 2.11) illustrates these expectations and obligations suggested by the scant aforementioned studies which have researched the psychological contract of academics.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented a discussion of various aspects relating to the psychological contract construct and concept. After the opening introductory section, the chapter begins with a discussion of the paradigm shift, where psychological contract has passed through a model crisis. It identifies a change in contract identity as redefined in 1989. There is a noticeable incoherent discourse in the literature over the interchangeable use of concept and construct terms in describing psychological contract.

The chapter explores the definitional ambiguities of psychological contract, where some aspects surrounding the contract are referred to as contributing to such situations. The definition of mutuality is considered as a main source of confusion in defining psychological contract.

The work of a number of researchers that have discussed the notion of psychological contract construct prior to its introduction in 1960 is explored. The literature identifies several influential early texts that have made a fundamental contribution to the development of psychological contract, namely the social exchange theory of elementary forms, and the norm of reciprocity and equity theory.

Unconscious motives can play an influential role in shaping an individual’s psychological contract, as their expectations can be steered by such motives. The literature suggests an involvement of both employee and employer perspectives in the psychological contract construct. There is a debate over matching employee and employer expectations, and the probability of employees reporting job satisfaction, productivity, and reduced turnover as a result of this.
The chapter also explores the way in which the psychological contract construct has been established and developed. It explores how expectations in different phases of the employment journey are shaped. This section also emphasises the significance of the sense-making process throughout the formation of psychological contract, in order to fill any existing information gaps. It further examines the influence of external factors in constructing expectations, and therefore in the formation process. In addition, the characteristics of psychological contract construct are explored. These include: the implicit nature, the exchange aspect and the dynamic nature of the psychological contract construct. Such characteristics have an impact on shaping an individual’s perception of reality.

The redefinition of the psychological contract has transformed it from being a mere construct to having both construct and concept elements. There is an exposition of the debate created with regard to the emphasis on the promissory nature as opposed to the obligatory quality of expectation. The chapter adopts the argument that an organisation’s perceptions are channelled solely through its agents, as only the latter can personally perceive a psychological contract with other individuals. From a conceptual point of view, the section investigates four categories of psychological contract, namely relational, transactional, balanced and transitional.

The surrounding factors in someone’s life can also shape their psychological contract. This is because of their influence on perception and expectations. Such factors may be personal, individual, organisational and environmental, and may continue to shape an individual’s psychological contract throughout the employment relationship, for example, as in the impact of the multiplicity of relationships that exist in some organisations. The chapter discusses the significance of the social comparison process in influencing perceptions of reality, which will subsequently determine the outcome of either fulfilment or breach of psychological contract. A particular emphasis on cognitive components in shaping the perception of organisational actions is argued, as is the importance of referent choice in filling the gaps with accurate information.

The chapter places an emphasis on the centrality of the role of perceptions of reality in psychological contract. The argument over whether or not a perception reflects reality in terms of promises kept or broken by the employer is not relevant. Through exploring the dimensions of perceived fulfilment and breach and/or violation of psychological contract, a discussion is presented on the vital role of cognitive components in influencing the fulfilment of psychological contract, in relation to organisational and environmental factors. These
components include the attribution of intentionality, foreseeability and justification. Additionally, the role of making sense of contextual contexts (e.g. social and economic factors) is analysed. Such a role may alleviate the impact of breach leading to violation.

Managing the psychological contract is argued as an important element in maintaining a healthy exchange relationship. The literature suggests that this can be achieved through either the content or breach aspects. The chapter expounds on the role of effective communication in illuminating any potential mismatch between parties involved in an exchange relationship. There is also an examination of the importance of motivation in satisfying individuals with unmet needs, with particular emphasis on identifying the preferred methods for motivating them.

Two proposed models, built on the literature reviewed in the chapter, are introduced. The first model articulates the conditions under which the ideological breach of academics’ psychological contract is likely to occur. According to the model, an academic will experience an ideological breach as a result of several conditions encountered, namely intentional reneging and the perception of goal displacement or value interpenetration. The second model illustrates the formation and development of an employee’s psychological contract, whereby expectations are shaped through a number of components. Counterfactual thought on the matter, comprising both cognitive components and social comparison is argued to have a direct influence on perceptions of organisational actions, and how they continue to shape expectations in subsequent events. The model highlights the dynamic nature of psychological contracts as they continue to evolve in response to various specific factors.

The chapter provides a lens for understanding managerialist ideology, as discussed in chapter Two. It gives an insight into how the associated values and practices of such ideology in UK NHE could significantly affect the academic environment, particularly the psychological contracts of business academics.

The next chapter addresses the methodological aspects of the present research. It provides a description of the methodological approach and sampling strategy adopted for conducting the research. In addition, the chapter presents an explanation of the data collection process, including the sampling frame, interview arrangements and justification for the selection of a thematic approach to analysis.
Chapter Four
Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction
The purpose of this chapter is to provide an account of the methodological approach and the data collection method adopted in the research. It comprises the following Sections: Section 4.2 will review the philosophical basis for this study; Section 4.3 will describe the research approach; Section 4.4 will discuss the Sampling strategy and justify the selected method of developing the research design, and Section 4.5 will describe the adopted method for collecting data for the research. Next, Section 4.6 will provide an explanation of the data collection process, and Section 4.7 will give an account of the analytical research method used for addressing the questions and objectives of this research. In addition, Section 4.8 will address the ethical issues relevant to the research, and Section 4.9 will provide an argument concerning the robustness of the adopted research method of this research.

4.2 Research Philosophy
Prior to embarking on this research, the researcher considered it important to fully understand the underlying foundations of the research philosophy. Developing an understanding of the parameters encapsulating philosophical assumptions is a key ingredient of guiding the researcher from the design stage through to conclusion; it helps formulate ‘an interpretive framework’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003) and in this way, clarifies ‘the research design and facilitate[s] the choice of an appropriate one’ (Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler, 2008, p. 19). Three major aspects of my research philosophy revolve around ontology, epistemology and axiology (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2008), each of these aspects containing important assumptions which have been translated into my methodology (Crotty, 1998).

In terms of the researcher’s ontological stance and assumptions about reality, this study focuses on academics and the way in which they attempt to interpret and understand current NHE doctrine. The aim is to offer insights into academics’ views and experiences of managerialist ideology. Based on the work of Johnson and Düberley (2003), the research applies a subjectivist ontological view in the sense that the nature of the psychological contract consists of an evolving dynamic which exists ‘in the eye of the beholder’ (Rousseau, 1989, p. 123). As Morgan and Smircich (1980, p. 492) explain, the core of such a philosophical assumption lies in the fact that ‘reality is a projection of human imagination.’ The view here regards reality as an output of academics’ cognitive processes, which rejects any assumptions that social or
natural reality have an independent existence prior to their cognition (Johnson and Duberley, 2000).

In addition, the research is associated with a social constructionist view, as social interaction plays a vital role in shaping perceptions of reality, and therefore the contract (Burr, 2003). As argued in preceding chapters, academics’ actions may be viewed by others during socialisation periods as being meaningful in the context of these socially constructed meanings and interpretations. Burr (1995) supports such a position by explaining that it reveals ways in which individuals and groups contribute to the creation of knowledge as they form their own reality. Academics’ minds construct and reconstruct reality through interaction with the external world (Talja, Tuominen and Savolainene, 2006). In other words, meaning is not discovered, but constructed, and academics can construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same management actions, and consequently shape their psychological contracts.

In terms of my epistemological position and the type of knowledge which can be gained through research, the study of academics’ experiences could only be captured by listening to their stories and experiences in relation to managerialist values and practices. Remenyi (1998, p. 35) emphasise that it is crucial to ‘look beyond the details of the situation to understand the reality or perhaps a reality working behind them’. The espoused constructionist view of this research is allied with the epistemological position of interpretivism, as ‘reality’ or ‘truth’ is not absolute, but decided by the judgment of the individual. This is because the world is subjective and composed of multiple external realities (Carson, 2001). The perception of reality academics hold cannot be measured or understood objectively. They can attribute different meanings to the same actions from managerialist ideology, and thereby create multiple realities. To understand these realities, the research depends on academics’ interpretations of how they experience their world and interact within the context of managerialism (Neuman, 2000; Creswell, 2009). Taking into account this epistemological stance that enables academics to possess knowledge (Childers and Hentzi, 1995) is pivotal in understanding the meanings people attach to different events within a particular context (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2012). It is central to the researcher’s understanding of the meanings and motives behind academics’ interpretations of daily events encountered in the course of the employment relationship.

Espousing an interpretivist epistemological position, however, denotes that reality cannot be separated from our knowledge (Weber, 2004). Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991, p. 15) support
such an argument by noting that ‘researchers' prior assumptions, beliefs, values, and interests always intervene to shape their investigations.’ The researcher’s axiological assumptions played an integral role and influenced his own research process (Smith, 1983; Bryman, 2004). In addition, his choice of data collection techniques was a reflection of his values. The researcher decided that a semi-structured interview technique was the most appropriate, as it would offer an exploration of academics’ perceptions of reality and the beliefs surrounding the psychological contract.

However, according to Popay, Rogers and Williams’s (1998), the provision of sufficient detail in qualitative research, provided throughout this chapter, would compensate for such criticism in that it would enable the reader, ‘...to interpret the meaning and context of what is being researched... and exposes the experience as a process’ (Popay, Rogers and Williams, 1998, p. 347). According to them, the question is not so much one of whether the data are biased through the researcher’s involvement, but rather concerns the extent to which ‘the researcher rendered transparent the processes by which data have been collected, analysed and presented’ (Popay, Rogers and Williams, 1998, p. 348). By adhering to the quality criteria for enhancing the trustworthiness of the research, which will subsequently be discussed in this chapter, any potential influence of the researcher’s subjectivity upon the research process will be minimized (Koch, 1994).

Another point that supports the research position in embracing interpretivism is the surprising dearth of qualitative studies in investigating the nature of the psychological contract (Conway and Briner, 2006; Coyle-Shapiro and Parzefall, 2008). In their review of the literature on psychological contract, Conway and Briner (2006) note that the vast majority of studies employ quantitative approaches. This orientation is surprising as the psychological contract implies a subjective nature (Rousseau and Tijoriwala, 1998), indicating a different world within every mind (Sparrow, 1996). The contract refers purely to a perception of reality that exists ‘in the eye of the beholder’ (Rousseau, 1989, p. 123). It seems, as argued earlier in this thesis, that the paradigm shift in psychological contract, instigated by Rousseau’s (1989) seminal reconceptualization, has turned researchers’ attention towards examining the boundaries of the contract, along with its conceptual elements, rather than continuing to explore its dynamic nature. Taylor and Tekleab (2004, p. 279) nicely describe such a situation in their review of psychological contract research: ‘our literature review [...] has caused us to note, with more than little exasperation, that much psychological contract research seems to have fallen into a methodological rut.’ Conway and Briner (2005) argue that in order to capture
the complex nature of the psychological contract, more qualitative research is required to fill such a gap. The present research testing measures do not adequately capture the reality of individuals’ psychological contract experiences (Millward and Brewerton, 2000; Meckler, Drake and Leevinson, 2003; Seeck and Parzefall, 2008). Rousseau (2010, p. 212) relies on this kind of gap by noting that ‘More descriptive qualitative assessment of individual psychological contracts is needed to better understand the potentially distinct perspectives that employee diversity and emerging changes bring to employment.’ Indeed, an interpretivist position is particularly well suited to explore the nature of academics’ psychological contracts, in particular the meaning and motives behind their interpretation of daily events encountered in the course of the employment relationship.

In addition to the above, reflexivity is a significant element of this qualitative research in that it enhances quality throughout the research process. It refers to the need to remain conscious of the influence of the researcher on the choice of research questions, research methods and data interpretation. Generally speaking, it enables researchers to extend their understanding of how their interests and position affect all stages of the research process (Danielewicz, 2001; Holloway and Wheeler, 2002; Bryman, 2004). This is especially important in this research as, according to Denzin (1986, p. 12), ‘interpretive research begins and ends with the biography and self of the researcher’. For example, from the beginning of the researcher’s PhD journey, reflexivity has been manifested in the choice of research topic (examining the employment relationship in UK higher education in a managerialist era), this being a reflection of his values and beliefs. Moreover, the researcher was first introduced to this topic on his Master’s degree programme, where he developed more interest in it and conducted qualitative research in his dissertation, which aimed to investigate the impact of present managerialist policies on academics’ psychological contracts in a business school context.

Besides, the researcher’s personal values and beliefs are not only reflected in his choice of research topic, but also in the choice of methodology and interpretation of the findings. On the one hand, the researcher’s personal experience acquired through interaction with academics participating in the study for his Master's dissertation and their stories about the impact of managerialist practices developed his belief that academics should be heard and involved in a larger study, investigating their perceptions of managerialist policies and practices in UK NHE. This belief is reflected in the development of the current study’s research questions and in the choice of an in-depth, semi-structured interview technique. It has enabled rich data to be collected in response to the interview questions designed. On the other hand, the researcher
recognises the potential for encountering different interpretations in participants’ experiences of managerialist ideology and the ‘slippage between the meanings of researched, researcher and reader… as part of the complex texture of accounts of social relations’ (Grey, 1998, p. 574). The research therefore employed a number of techniques (e.g. a rapport and the four enhanced critical incident technique credibility checks) that enhance the credibility of the qualitative research and which will be discussed later in the chapter. These ensured that in-depth data would be collected. In addition, as far as was possible, the voices of the interviewees were expressed and presented through substantial quotation in the analysis, thus reducing the researcher’s involvement in the construction of meaning in the study.

Furthermore, the researcher recognises his own position or ‘positionality’ in relation to his role as the researcher. Being a non-native and international academic, this might have had some influence on the data collection; for example, hindering the researcher from thoroughly understanding the literal meanings and body language expressed by the interviewees (Gilgun and Abrams 2002; Labaree, 2002). Moreover, the academics participating in the study might have simplified the language used in their communication with the researcher, or might have omitted sharing certain experiences, due to the researcher’s different cultural background. Compounding the above, the researcher expected his position as a novice researcher and lack of interviewing experience to have reduced the participants’ willingness to speak openly about their experiences. However, the researcher also believes that his reflection on his positionality prior to conducting the interviews gave him the chance to address such issues, with the inclusion of probing and follow-up questions. Indeed, it could be argued by looking at the analysis that most of the academics participating in the study contributed to it and enriched it with negative but authentic stories about their academic lives. The researcher believes that most of them talked openly about their experiences and feelings towards their management. Another reason the participants were motivated to talk so openly and enthusiastically could also have been due to their perception of the researcher as an ‘insider’ with them, as well as being an ‘outsider’ overall, as explained earlier. This is due to the fact that the researcher is also an academic, who shares a common bond with the participants: that of struggling against the marching invasion of managerialist ideology worldwide.

Besides being mindful of the aforementioned aspects of his position, the researcher was forthright in communicating his positionality with the participants. Transparency of positionality and the researcher’s intentions for the use of the findings were discussed prior to the commencement of each interview, as well as being included in the consent form.
4.3 Research Approach

At this stage of the research, the researcher considers it important to decide upon a rationale, from which to approach the study. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2002) emphasise the importance of this step by explaining it enables the researcher to make more informed decisions over the research design. In addition, it helps the researcher reflect on those approaches and strategies he believes will work and those which will not (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 2002). A choice of reasoning with which to approach a research task will include inductive, deductive and abductive approaches. The first approach to reasoning refers to ‘theory building process, starting with observations of specific instances, and seeking to establish generalisations about the phenomenon under investigation’. On the other hand, deductive approach involves a ‘theory testing process which commences with an established theory or generalisation, and seeks to see if the theory applies to specific instances’ (Hyde, 2000, p. 83). The third approach to reasoning is abductive, where it involves a combination between both inductive and deductive approaches.

The choice of reasoning adopted in this research is an abductive approach, as the researcher moves back and forth between the incorporation of inductive and deductive elements (Suddaby, 2006). On the one hand, the research will consist of deductive elements as it builds upon the literature of psychological contract, managerialism and higher education. Wallace and Van Fleet (2012) explain that a critical review of the literature plays a deductive role as the researcher will be able to identify relevant principles and theories, which may apply to a specific situation.

On the other hand, the research is concerned with the events taking place in the NHE context in relation to academics’ psychological contracts. It adopts the view that there is no absolute truth and that social phenomena cannot be simply investigated and reported in an objective way. As illustrated in the preceding chapters, research into the topic of psychological contract is new and has excited much debate. Incorporating inductive elements in this research will provide an opportunity for exploring the nature of the current contract in academia (Creswell, 1994; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2008). However, rather than testing the study with pre-existing theory, the existing literature has been used to inform it.

Besides, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2008, p. 127) note that incorporating inductive elements can contribute to the researcher ‘gaining an understanding of the meanings humans
attach to events’. This is important as the psychological contract fundamentally revolves around perceptions of reality.

Therefore, abductive approach is considered appropriate for this research, as the researcher is ‘collecting data to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and explain patterns, to generate a new or modify an existing theory which [the researcher will] subsequently test through additional data collection’ (Saunders et al, 2015, p. 22).

4.4 Sampling Strategy and Rationale
Deciding upon an appropriate sampling strategy is a key element in ensuring that the questions proposed are addressed in a way which meets the objectives set for this research. It will help to assess the objectivity of the questions and their congruence with the overall research and purpose of the subject. The research applied a non-probabilistic sampling method, as the interest here is in understanding and exploring a relationship and social process rather than forming a statistical representation (Pope and Mays, 1995). This is because ‘the probability of each case being selected from the total population is not known and it is impossible to answer research questions or to address objectives that require [the researcher] to make statistical inferences about the characteristics of the population’ (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2008, p. 213). However, according to the above authors, generalisation from such a sample of the population is possible, albeit not on statistical grounds. Nevertheless, from an interpretivist perspective, such generalisation is not the purpose of this research.

The most common techniques used in conducting non-probabilistic research are quota, purposive, snowball, self-selection and convenience sampling. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2008), the selection of the most appropriate technique for conducting research should largely be based on its capacity to enable a researcher to answer the research question(s) and meet its (their) objectives. Therefore, data in this study was collected using a purposive homogeneous sampling technique, which enables the researcher to study the group in great depth (Marshall, 1996). According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003, p.79), this technique is ‘chosen to give a detailed picture of a particular phenomenon - for example, individuals who belong to the same subculture or have the same characteristics. This allows for detailed investigation of social processes in a specified context.’

According to Patton (1990), there are fifteen purposeful sampling techniques for selecting information rich cases. These are extreme or deviant case sampling, Intensity sampling,
maximum variation sampling, homogeneous samples, typical case sampling, stratified sampling, critical case sampling, snowball or chain sampling, criterion sampling and theory-based or operational construct sampling.

In the researcher’s view and following an examination of the aforementioned purposeful sampling strategies, an extreme and critical case was found to be the most appropriate sampling approach for this research. The following discussion provides a description of both sampling strategies, along with a rationale for their application.

This research aims at analysing the relationship between managerialist ideology and academics’ psychological contracts in UK business schools, whereby the focus is exclusively on business academics. This choice of population segment was motivated by the highly ambiguous relationship between UK business schools and new managerialism. Academics in business schools are probably more complex than any other group of academics in new managerialism. Locke and Spender (2011) and Glover (2013) point out that this academic group are more directly complicit than any other group in the reproduction of management debates and practices that support neoliberalism and NHE (Locke and Spender, 2011; Glover, 2013). Furthermore, the literature suggests that academics working in business schools have suffered the most as a result of managerialist practices. Starkey, Hatchuel and Tempest (2004, p.1526) point out that ‘The business school has been most exposed to consumer voice, embodied in the proliferation of league tables which now ‘measure’ and compare on a global basis.’ They continue by explaining that ‘In Europe, and in the UK in particular, the business school is the cash cow in a university system increasingly squeezed of cash from the public purse’ (p. 1521). Cornuel (2005) supports such an angle by arguing that in addition to the role business schools have to play in educating people how to go about the functions of managing and leading, they also have to deliver such services in a way that makes institutions more profitable. Not only do business schools have to strengthen their links with industry by striving to publish new and more interactive research, they are also increasingly required to act as a bridge in the dissemination of management knowledge (Starkey and Madan, 2001). In addition, the academic focus of business academics implies a heightened awareness of the concept of new managerialism and its practices in this tribe. Therefore, this research is an extreme case, because of the unusual awareness and exposure of business academics to such an ideology (Patton, 2002). The results of this extreme case, however, would arguably not be limited to business academics, but could perhaps help us gain some level of understanding of what goes on in other academic tribes and disciplines.
In addition, business academics are seen as both agents and subjects of new managerialism, in that they are implicated in the production of managerial discourse. On the one hand, therefore, business academics are direct agents of new managerialism, as they train students how to be managers, but on the other, they are also the subjects of new managerialism and part of such discourse. This is more evident in their field than it is in other disciplines, as they actually write about management. Thus, this research is also a critical case that tests the boundaries of new managerialism through the perceptions of business academics as both agents and subjects of new managerialism (Patton, 2002).

As for the sampling population, Ticehurst and Veal (1999) note that in qualitative research, it is the data which determines the sample size. In addition, King (1998) argues that the process of conducting interviews should continue until saturation point is reached. The sampling frame for this study consists of a list of academics who were currently employed at the time of the interviews, in business schools across the four university types (for details of the sample see Table 5.1 in chapter five). These lists were accessed via institutional websites. The total sample size for both the pilot and main studies consists of 32 academics drawn from across the four university types here in England, whereby only this number of participants, out of the 122 academics approached from 38 business schools, agreed to participate. The sample includes academics from ancient (n=5), red brick (n=10), plate glass (n=10) and post-1992 universities (n=7), with data being gathered during September, October and November 2013. The size of the sample varied from one university type to another, as some interviewees provided more homogenous results. Where saturation point was reached, fewer interviews were required. However, more complex content was provided by participants from certain university types, thus implying more interviews for data analysis.

However, two aspects of the research sample should be noted. Firstly, there was a gender imbalance in the sample size, with 24 males versus only 8 females. Secondly, the sample included two early career academics, who found it difficult to talk about some of the differences between previous and current conditions in UK HE. Their limited experience would arguably mean they could not take into account the reduction of privileges academics once enjoyed. These two early career academics might not share the view that some of the values and practices associated with the present tightly integrated regime of managerial discipline and control - which differs from bureau-professionalism - is a threat to, or affects their psychological contracts.
4.5 Research Method

As explained earlier, the choice of approach in this researcher is a qualitative method as it seeks ‘to understand the subjective reality of the [academics] in order to be able to make sense of and understand their motives, actions and intentions in a way that is meaningful’ Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2008, p. 111). Bryman (2004) identifies five main approaches associated with qualitative research, namely ethnography and participant observation, qualitative interviewing, discourse and conversation analysis, focus groups and the analysis of texts and documents. Qualitative Interviews represent a powerful technique to aid in understanding ‘how individuals construct the reality of their situation, formed from the complex personal framework of beliefs and values which they have developed over their lives in order to help explain and predict events in their world’ (Jones, 1985, p. 45). It helps in exploring the subjective realities constructed by academics in relation to managerialist ideology. Such an approach would contribute to the understanding of how academics perceive the current prevailing managerialist ideology within the NHE context. Kvale (1983, p. 174) support such a choice by defining the qualitative interview as ‘an interview, whose purpose is to obtain descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena.’ Conway and Briner (2005) support this view by suggesting the use of interviews in data collection as they can help determine what people think, feel and believe. Conway and Briner continue by explaining that such a technique promotes an understanding of how an individual interprets and describes key aspects of his/her psychological contract and this, in their own words.

In a qualitative study, interviews can be either fully structured, unstructured, or semi-structured. A researcher in a fully structured interview uses a very detailed interview guideline, similar to a questionnaire in quantitative research. This type of interview has a predetermined set of questions offering a fixed study design, which denies researchers the chance to follow up on emerging issues (Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler, 2008). Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, can leave out key aspects of the subject under study as they lack any pre-designed guidelines (Conway and Briner, 2005). A balance between the two types of interview (structured and unstructured) was found here through a semi-structured design. The interview design thus comprised pre-determined questions that offer a chance for follow-up questions based on issues that emerge as participants respond to the questions (Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler, 2008).
The adopted method for this study was a semi-structured interview technique. This is because it offers ‘a flexible framework’, through loose, open-ended questions (Dearnley 2005, p 22), but actually consists of a list of questions around one, specific topic (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 2002). Not only is this important for an exploratory study, but it is also a design that provides an opportunity to capture key emerging issues related to the study. It also encourages deeper responses and allows interviewees’ own perspectives of the subject to be explored (Bryman, 2004). That is, it offers an exploration of academics’ perceptions of reality and the beliefs that constitute the psychological contract. Besides, Bryman and Bell (2003) explain that an interviewer in semi-structured interviews can add questions, depending on the participants’ answers. These will then provide opportunities to investigate perceptions of events encountered in academics’ own employment experience by using more probing questions.

4.5.1 Interview Schedule

The interview questions were designed to examine the relationship between managerialism and the psychological contract of academics (see Appendix 1). They aimed to investigate how academics perceive the current prevailing managerialist ideology within the context of NHE, in relation to their perceptions of the growing expectations of the exchange relationship with management. The questions were selected in the light of those themes suggested by the literature review as pivotal in the fulfilment of the psychological contract, along with its dynamic nature. For example, some of the questions were aimed at investigating academics’ views of incidents which led to the perception of an ideological breach of their psychological contracts. In addition, other questions were aimed at exploring the expectations academics believed the university had of them and vice versa.

Probing and follow-up questions were also used in the interview protocol. This is because both question types are considered useful in encouraging participants to elaborate further on a given question or part of an answer. Patton (1990, p. 324) explains that they are used to ‘deepen the response to a question, to increase the richness of the data being obtained, and to give cues to the interviewee about the level of response that is desired.’

In addition, the ‘critical incident technique’ (CIT) was used for parts of the interviews. For example, participants were asked to recall incidents in their experience of current management, in relation to the expectations and entitlements of both sides, and the way in which they subsequently evaluate perceived management actions. (Flanagan, 1954, p. 327) defines this technique as ‘a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behaviour in such
a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles.’ This is considered important as such a technique will offer the possibility of tapping into events which may play a critical role in shaping the psychological contract. Furthermore, it can identify factors that might have an influence on the sense-making process of perceived events. Morrison and Robinson (1997), for example, note the usefulness of a critical incident technique as it can be helpful in improving researchers’ understanding of the dynamics of a breach of psychological contract.

4.6 Data Collection

4.6.1 The boundaries for the research

As explained earlier, the boundaries for the research include the four main university types that constitute higher education in England (i.e. ancient, red brick, plate glass and post-1992). Within the context of the UK, these four university types have been classified according to their age and ethos (Furlong and Cartmel, 2009). The ancient universities were founded more than 900 years ago, and are held as establishments of scholarly excellence, seen as providing significant to research and knowledge (Duke, 1992). Subsequently established in the nineteenth to mid-twentieth century and possessing a civic ethos, red brick universities earned their name from the clay bricks used to build them (Truscott, 1943). They were originally founded as civic universities in major British industrial cities, with an emphasis on religious equality and practical (often engineering) knowledge for the needs of industry. Red brick universities are members of the prestigious Russell Group of universities that attracts two-thirds of UK grant funding and are considered second in status to the ancient institutions. Thereafter and during the Robbins Report of the 1960s, ‘plate glass’ universities were founded as part of a significant expansion of UK HE and were referred to as such due to their prevailing architectural style (Beldoff, 1970). This expansion resulting from the Robbins Report (1963) emphasised the need for equality in student intake and balanced partnerships and collaboration in research and teaching. The last and fourth type of UK university Post-1992 consists of the former polytechnic institutions, granted university status in 1992 or later (Deem, 2006). Post-1992 universities were established through the Further and Higher Education Act, 1992 (FHEA, 1992) and arguably, many of them still maintain a historically strong teaching focus.

Not only were the universities under each type established during a different historical era and for different purposes, according to a distinct ethos, but they also implement strategic imperatives and working practices driven by various political agenda. Historically, this has attracted a variety of people in terms of staff and students. As a result, there are indications that
suggest academics’ experiences and perceptions of managerialism vary across these four university types. Therefore and because this research aims at gaining a rich understanding of the NHE context in England today along with capturing the nature of the psychological contract of business academics in universities of each type, an extreme and critical case is considered to be an appropriate design for addressing the objectives of the research.

Within the four university types, the sample of academics from each type was grouped; first being analysed separately, and then with the results from each type being compared with the whole. An extreme and critical case was used to analyse the relationship between managerialist ideology and academics’ psychological contracts, especially the values and practices affecting the latter’s ideological currency. The research consists of both a pilot and main studies involving a total of 32 academics across 18 business schools in England (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1  The different types of universities

![Diagram of university types](image)

* n  number of academics  * s  number of business schools

### 4.6.2 Interview Arrangements

Each potential interviewee invited to participate in the study received a participant Information Sheet via email, which explained the purpose of the research, matters of confidentiality and the duration planned for each interview. It was also explained in the Information Sheet that participants could withdraw at any time, without needing to give a reason and without any adverse consequences. For those agreeing to participate in the study, an email was sent out three days prior to the interview, requesting the participants to consider different types of
incident (between five and six) that they believed they might have experienced during their employment relationship with management in the past (see Appendix 2). There were a number of interviews that needed to be rescheduled and two participants who decided to withdraw from the study.

4.6.3 Pilot Study Data Collection

Prior to conducting the main study, a preliminary analysis via a pilot study was used, consisting of an individual, semi-structured interview, conducted with three academics during September 2013. The individuals selected for this were based at three universities (two from two red brick universities and one from a plate glass university).

The pilot study was used to assess the questions, ensuring they were easily understood and that they flowed in a logical manner. Besides, they would inform the main study through the discourse taking place; academics would probably talk about how they thought their lives had changed as part of managerialism in NHE, and how this might have affected their psychological contracts. The importance of such a procedure was therefore emphasised, in that it, ‘refine[s] the questionnaire so that respondents will have no problems in answering the questions and there will be no problems in recording the data’ (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2008). The above authors continue by explaining that pilot tests ‘enable [the researcher] to obtain some assessment of the questions’ validity and the likely reliability of the data that will be collected’ (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2008, p. 394). Bell (2010, p. 65) supports such an argument, explaining that ‘The purpose of a pilot exercise is to get the bugs out of the instrument so that respondents in [the] main study will experience no difficulties in completing it. It also enables [the researcher] to carry out a preliminary analysis to see whether the wording and format of questions will present any difficulties when the main data are analysed.’

In addition, pretesting is an important technique, as it will not only inform the researcher of the time required for participants to answer all the questions, but will also indicate the level of difficulty and participants’ willingness to answer sensitive questions (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010).

The interview template was designed into questions that matched the three research questions. This is included as Appendix One. Individual interviews were set up in a semi-structured format, where they lasted between forty-two minutes and one hour and fifty minutes. In total, 1845 hours of recorded interview data were gathered.
4.6.4 Main Study Data Collection

The main qualitative method used in the pilot study was re-applied in the main study using the same interview style, but aimed at a larger sample of academics from each university type. In the main study, 29 academic participants were currently employed in different business schools from the four university types. The data were collected from 17 English universities (two ancient, five red brick, six plate glass and four post-1992 business schools), where two of the business schools (one at a red brick and one at a plate glass university) included in the pilot study also feature in the main study, although with different participants. This was during September, October and November 2013.

By conducting the pilot study, the wording and format of the questions were assessed for any difficulties in understanding the key words in the study. It was found that key words, such as ‘implicit promises’, ‘explicit promises’ and ‘administrative mechanisms’ could be regarded as vague terms by the interviewees; thus, the flow of the interview questions was improved. This was achieved by providing a definition of the respective term from those mentioned above, immediately before the question introducing the term. Apart from that, the questions appeared to be easy to understand and flowed in a logical manner, with the participants being engaged and talking about how they thought their lives had changed as part of managerialism in NHE, together with its consequent effect on their psychological contracts. Therefore, the questions successfully elicited the kind of information required by the study to address the research objectives.

4.7 Data Analysis

Adopting an interpretivist position requires data to be derived through direct interaction with the phenomenon being studied. In a qualitative study, it is important to search for meaning through direct interpretation of what is reported and observed by participants in the study. Bogdan and Biklen (2007, p. 159) describe qualitative data analysis as ‘working with the data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesizing them, and searching for patterns.’ The researcher aims to identify patterns, concepts, themes and meanings.

Therefore, the qualitative analytical method used to analyse the data collected from the interviews in this research is a thematic analysis method for ‘identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes [the] data set in
(rich) detail. However, frequently [it] goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.79). The thematic analysis method differs from other types of analytical methods, in that it looks for patterns across the collected qualitative data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis of text was conducted through the use of templates. King (2004, p. 256) explains that the essence of such a method is,

‘That the researcher produces a list of codes (template) representing themes identified in their textual data. Some of these will usually be defined a priori, but they will be modified and added to as the researcher reads and interprets the text.’

Thematic analysis is an inductive approach as categories that comprise themes are not determined prior to coding the data, but are generated from raw data. However, Ezzy (2002) points out that a priori codes can be generated, representing general issues of interest to the study, but such codes will later be modified and added to the list in the light of a full overview of the data.

Due to the nature of this research, it is preferable to use this kind of analysis as the research aims to report academics’ experiences and their perceptions of reality (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Besides, it fits with the constructionist view of this research (Braun and Clarke, 2006), which investigates ways in which encountered events, experiences and realities are shaped by ‘the effects of a range of discourses operating within society’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Therefore, thematic analysis is regarded as an appropriate method that ‘works both to reflect reality and to unpick or unravel the surface of ‘reality’’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 81).

From a social constructionist position, it is assumed that there are multiple interpretations to be drawn from any phenomenon which depends on the context of the study and the position of the investigator. Therefore, coding reliability is irrelevant (King, 2004). What is important, however, is the richness of the description produced from the raw data.

The analysis of the qualitative interviews conducted in this study involved the production of verbatim transcripts from tape recordings. Relevant codes for the research objectives were identified by selecting sections of the interview transcripts. The process of analysis involved reading and re-reading the transcripts, through which themes were developed and evolving
themes emerged. This process of familiarisation with the data provided the researcher with a deeper understanding of the participants’ views and experiences. Subsequently, the data for each theme was left untouched for a period of time, in order to refresh one’s perspective and thus confirm the accuracy of the interpretations and decisions made in relation to participants’ perceptions of their experiences at work.

Afterwards, the computing software package, MAXQDA was used to analyse the data. This software is a text analysis programme that provides solutions for performing analytical tasks, such as retrieving and coding qualitative data. It offers sophisticated, yet easy to use functions for qualitative analysts using textual data in secure and logically structured data storage. Schönfelder (2011) notes that the software offers a simple and efficient function for reviewing coded passages, which can be stored, or immediately exported. The software features of powerful analytical functions appeared to offer ‘ease of use for researchers and accessibility to sponsors who wished to contribute to the analysis’ (Lewins and Silver, 2007, p. 106).

A powerful function provided by MAXQDA is its network-building feature that can visually connect selected texts, notes, and memos, thus enabling researchers to manage and organise large amounts of qualitative data. This is also a useful function for researchers as it enables them to extract themes and categories in order to derive meaning from the collected qualitative data. Maietta (2008, p. 197) recommends the use of MAXQDA as it is ‘easy to use and understand and features a carefully designed interface with user-controlled use of color to demarcate and locate key content in [a researcher] project.’

4.8 Ethical Considerations
A code of ethics was implemented to guide the progress of this research. Before conducting the interviews, the research was reviewed and received a favourable opinion from the University of Surrey Ethics Committee. This was attained by submitting the following documents: summary of the research, detailed protocol for the research, copy of the Information Sheet for participants, copy of the Consent Form and copy of the Interview Schedule (see Appendix 1).

Each interviewee was briefed beforehand via email that all information obtained from the interview would remain strictly confidential and anonymous and could be withdrawn at any time. Participants’ names and the identities of institutions were not revealed, but instead, the participants were assigned a code to be used when quoting their transcripts in the report on the findings. In addition, several participants mentioned the names of their universities in their
responses. These were then removed and replaced with the generic indication: [university name]. Specific quotations and incidents reported by some participants were also removed, as these would have otherwise led to the disclosure of their identity. According to Tolich (2004), such measures are crucial, as people with whom the participants are linked might be able to identify them.

In terms of his ethical position, the researcher is a business academic researching his own context while still in training. The researcher recognises his own views and biases and the way he tries to deal with these is to express the voices of his interviewees, as far as he possibly can. There are therefore many quotations presented in the analysis. In other words, the interviewees’ own words are expressed, as opposed to the author speaking for them. In addition, even though the researcher works in the same sector, he has not researched his immediate institution.

A consent form was provided at the commencement of the interview and this had to be signed, which emphasised the confidentiality of information and the anonymity of the participants and data providers. Permission to record the interviews was given by all participants.

With regard to the data transcribed from the interviews, these were securely stored on a password-protected home computer. Access was exclusively available to the researcher, whereas the thesis supervisors only had access to the fully anonymised version. An external transcriber was employed to transcribe the interviews, and contractually obliged to maintain data security and the anonymity of the interview contents. However, prior to importing the data into the MAXQDA software, all the transcribed information was rechecked for accuracy by the researcher, before starting the process of coding and analysis. This involved checking typographical mistakes and the verifying the consistency of the imported transcripts with the transcripts from the audio-recordings. In addition, all transcripts were rechecked after being imported into the MAXQDA software. The process involved careful detection of any coding errors, such as whether the participants’ words had been accurately transcribed and correctly attributed. Only one error was detected and corrected and this involved a transcript being attributed to the wrong participant.

4.9 The soundness of the research

This research focuses on the individual, diverse and subjective experience of academics, with the aim of understanding their views and experiences in relation to managerialist ideology, rather than endeavouring to develop a ‘conclusive knowledge’ (Mello, 2002, p. 232) of the
potential key factors in the psychological contract of academics. The research takes into account the fact that findings may not be generalised, and as Anderson (1989) notes, it is not always possible to draw firm conclusions from such instances. Webster and Mertova (2007, p. 4) support this argument by explaining that the aim is not to ‘... produce conclusions of certainty but aims for its findings to be ‘well grounded’ and ‘supportable’’. However, qualitative research has to demonstrate its accountability through striving to achieve trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). According to Guba and Lincoln (1981), qualitative paradigm requires credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability criteria in order to demonstrate its ‘trustworthiness’. Bryman, Becker, and Sempik (2008) support such a view by explaining that reliability, validity and generalisability are less likely to be considered as criteria for testing the soundness of qualitative research, whereas credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are regarded as appropriate criteria for such testing (Bryman, Becker and Sempik, 2008). This study adopts Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) criteria to test the trustworthiness of its qualitative research method.

4.9.1 Credibility of the research
In order for qualitative research to demonstrate its credibility in terms of the adopted method(s) and findings, a researcher must ensure that the research tests or measures what is actually intended. Lincoln and Guba (1985) regard this as one of the most important factors in establishing the trustworthiness of research data. They continue by explaining that it can be enhanced through the use of various strategies, for example, the use of purposeful sampling, persistent observation, member checking and peer debriefing. In addition, Shenton (2004) suggests that the implementation of a well-established research method will inspire confidence in the qualitative research. She continues by explaining that the adoption of a successful research method from previous comparable projects, such as successful procedures in data gathering and analysis, will boost the credibility of the research.

This research used purposive homogeneous sampling as its strategy, as discussed earlier in the chapter. The use of such a strategy has enabled the researcher to gain ‘information-rich cases for study in depth’ (Patton 1990, p. 169). Furthermore, and echoing Shenton's (2004) aforementioned argument, the research utilised the critical incident technique (CIT) (Flanagan, 1954) as one of its research methods. CIT is a well-established exploratory and investigative tool that has demonstrated its reliability and validity (Chell, 1998; Butterfield et al., 2009). Furthermore, this research employed four enhanced critical incident technique credibility checks established by Butterfield et al. (2005) to enhance the credibility of CIT. These
enhanced credibility checks, according to the above authors, involve interview fidelity; the independent extraction of critical incidents; exhaustiveness; participation rates; the categorising of incidents by an independent judge; cross-checking by participants; expert opinions, and theoretical agreement.

Another technique proposed for enhancing the credibility of qualitative research, according to Shenton (2004), is through the employment of tactics to ensure participants’ honesty, in terms of the data provided. Shenton argues that one such tactic for ensuring honest responses in such research is to give potential participants an opportunity to either accept or refuse to take part in it when approached. The data collection sessions will therefore only include those who are genuinely willing to participate and freely offer data (Shenton, 2004). Another tactic the researcher employed involved making it clear to the participants that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any point, without the need to provide any explanation (Shenton, 2004). In addition, a rapport was established with the respondents during the data collection sessions, with the researcher stressing there are no ‘right answers’ to the questions being asked. According to Shenton (2004), such a tactic not only helps ensure participants’ honesty during interviews, but also encourages them to talk freely about their experiences, without the fear of

Table 4.1 Enhanced CIT credibility checks

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<td>Descriptive validity (Maxwell, 1992)</td>
<td>To ensure the themes and interpretations elicited accurately reflect the reality of participants’ academic experience, the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhaustiveness (Flanagan, 1954; Woolsey, 1986)</td>
<td>This was reached after the sixth interview, when new categories stopped emerging from the data and proved that the study domain had been adequately covered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation rates (Borgen and Amundson, 1984)</td>
<td>The participation rate in each category in this study was over 25%, thus proving the validation of the categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical validity (Maxwell, 1992; McCormick, 1995)</td>
<td>This was achieved by comparing the established categories from the study to the existing literature, where support was found for all categories.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Butterfield et al. (2005)
losing credibility in the eyes of their management or organisation and so without diminishing the credibility of the research.

4.9.2 Transferability of the research

As for transferability, Baxter and Eyles (1997) explain that generalisable results are very rare when it comes to qualitative research. In spite of the fact that meanings which apply to a small group of individuals may be transferable to and meaningful for a larger proportion, qualitative researchers do not often make claims of transferability. What is important, however, is that the researcher produces findings that allow for transferability rather than purely trying to demonstrate it (Baxter and Eyles, 1997). It is not the researcher’s ‘responsibility to provide an index of transferability; it is his or her responsibility to provide the data base that makes transferability judgments possible on the part of potential appliers’ (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 316).

However, the extent of the transferability of this qualitative research can be enhanced through the inclusion of a high level of detail (quotes), drawn directly from participants in the study. By doing so, it will provide the study with ‘abundant evidence from the raw data’ (Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p. 206). Not only does the inclusion of participant quotes in a study directly enhance transferability, but it will also provide an opportunity for subsequent researchers to research different subjects, considering quotes from the framework or research and more effectively verifying its transferability.

4.9.3 Confirmability of the research

The third criterion in Lincoln and Guba's (1985) framework which aims to address the trustworthiness of a piece of qualitative research is confirmability. According to the above authors, this will depend on the narrative or account representing the study’s participants and the environment of the inquiry, rather than on the researcher's perspectives and biases. Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 278) explain that it ‘is the degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of the inquiry and not the biases of the researcher’. Drawing on the work of Halpern (1983), Lincoln and Guba (1985) discuss an audit trail that allows readers to judge the context of the research. There are six categories in an audit trail, through which a researcher will have a means of organising and documenting the research in progress (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). These six categories, according to the above authors, consist of preliminary development information; raw data; data reduction and analysis notes; data reconstruction and synthesis products; process notes, and materials related to intentions and dispositions. In this research,
the researcher implemented these six suggested audit trail elements. Firstly, preliminary research and interview schedules were produced for the preliminary development information. Secondly, raw data was gathered from interview tapes. In addition, data reduction and analysis products included transcripts of the interviews, with MAXQDA to analyse the data. Moreover, data reconstruction involved the initial structuring of categories and data themes. Fourthly, the process notes presented the steps followed in the research process and then material was collected to inform the audit process of this research, related to intentions and dispositions: the research proposal, research design and personal notes on the researcher’s expectations and motivations. However, Cutcliffe and McKenna (2004) argue that an audit trail is not always necessary, but is rather advisable for a novice researcher.

4.9.4 Dependability of the research
The fourth and final criterion proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) for testing the merit of qualitative research is dependability. It refers to the likelihood that similar contexts and subjects will produce similar outcomes (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982) but is mainly concerned with the documentation of the research context (Baxter and Eyles, 1997). However, Fidel (1993) and Marshall and Rossman (2006) argue against such criterion by explaining that qualitative research cannot be replicated due to the changing nature of the phenomenon, along with its dynamic nature. Nevertheless, the following discussion will represent a number of approaches suggested in the literature that maximise the dependability of qualitative research.

According to Shenton (2004), the dependability of qualitative analysis is largely subject to the extent to which proper practice has been observed. Shenton explains that readers will thus have a chance to assess the grounds for dependability, and will develop an understanding of the methods conducted as well as their effectiveness. This can be attained by devoting three sections of any research to a discussion of the following aspects: ‘the research design and its implementation, describing what was planned and executed on a strategic level, the operational detail of data gathering, addressing the minutiae of what was done in the field and reflective appraisal of the project, evaluating the effectiveness of the process of inquiry undertaken’ (Shenton, 2004, pp. 71-72).

One of the techniques for enhancing the dependability of qualitative research is the use of audiotape recording in all interviews (Perakyla, 1997). This will provide the researcher with an opportunity to access participants’ actual words and so ensure the accuracy of the ideas. It will
offer assurance that the analysis will reflect participants’ accounts rather than being based purely on the researcher’s own perspective.

Last but not least, there are close ties between dependability and credibility, thereby demonstrating that one will contribute to the other (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). According to Lincoln and Guba, a thorough audit trail can be traced to determine the confirmability and dependability of the research. This will inspire confidence in the appropriateness of the inquiry decision and enable researchers to identify, explain and support the method shifts he/she has made (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

4.10 Conclusion
This chapter has addressed the methodological aspects of the present research. It has provided an account of the methodological approach and the method for conducting the research. The principles underpinning the study design were outlined and justifications for adopting a critical and extreme case sampling were discussed. In addition, an explanation of the data collection process for the study was presented. This included the sampling frame, interview arrangements and justification for the selection of a thematic method as a means of analysis. The outcomes of the interviews and the analysis of findings are presented in the following chapter.
Chapter Five
Findings and Discussion

5.1 Introduction
This chapter analyses and discusses the data gathered from the interviews. It presents findings in relation to how academics perceive new managerialism within the context of NHE in UK universities (more specifically, in England), especially their perceptions of growing managerialist expectations from management in the exchange relationship. The first section presents the profiles of academics who participated in this study. Next, the chapter presents an analysis of those areas affected by new managerialism and its practices in UK universities, which show an imbalance in the expectations driven by the managerialist practices being imposed on academics in UK universities. The third section presents academics’ perceptions of the constraints and obligations driven by managerialist ideology, which affect the ideological currency of their psychological contracts. The fourth section subsequently presents and discusses the state of academics’ psychological contracts, which provides an account of academics’ sense of fairness and trust and their belief that their universities have delivered on the deal between them. In addition and throughout the chapter, the author aims to provide insights by showing how practice differs across the university types being compared. The four main university types being investigated demonstrate the similarities and differences of the impact of managerialism on the academic environment in England.

5.2 Sample Profile
As detailed in the previous chapter, the boundaries of the research include the four main university types constituting HE in England (i.e. ancient, red brick, plate glass and post-1992). The sample size for the study consists of 32 academics across the four university types in England. The sample includes academics from ancient (n=5), red brick (n=10), plate glass (n=10) and post-1992 universities (n=7) (Table 5.1). As explained in chapter Four, the size of the samples varies from one university type to another, as some interviewees provided more homogenous results - therefore, saturation point was reached and fewer interviews were required. On the other hand, the sample from some university types offered more complex context, requiring more interviews for data analysis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Code</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Additional Responsibilities</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Years of Experience in HE</th>
<th>University Type</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Associate Professor</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>P20</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Plate Glass</td>
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5.3 New Managerialism and the Changing Psychological Contract of Academics in UK Universities: the Growing Imbalance of Expectations

The analysis produced three broad themes, the first two also comprising a number of sub-themes. The first theme explores the increasing shift towards adopting a managerialist approach in the management of academics in UK universities; the second theme focuses on the constraints affecting academic freedom as a result of managerialist practices and values, and the third and final theme looks at the perceptions of academics in relation to work-life balance, where levels of conflict between work and non-work demands were reported in the findings.

5.3.1 Theme 1: Evidence of a Managerialist Style in Managing Academics

This theme focuses on the way managerialist practices are embedded into the present management style in UK universities. Three sub-themes emerge in relation to the management style embraced across UK university types, namely decision-making, power and the corporatisation of HE. An analysis of these sub-themes reveals evidence of a top-down
approach and market orientation in the management of resources in UK universities. Many academic participants seemed to perceive the present management style in UK universities as producing an imbalance in their psychological contracts. This results from the management’s failure to reciprocate an academic who has fulfilled his or her side of the deal, in relation to obligations or implicit and explicit expectations. This perception of management failing to keep its promises, according to the participants, has followed from the growing frequency of poor communication, and poor management and leadership in the respective universities. This is because one of the expectations of management representing the deal for academics is in fact good management and leadership (Newton, 2000; O’Neill, Krivokapic-Skoko and Dowell, 2010).

According to many participants, managerialist values and practice are more evident, to varying degrees, at three of the university types (plate glass, red brick and post-1992), where a strained relationship between academics and their management as a result of such an impact was reported by the participants. This is particularly the case at plate glass universities, where this movement away from a culture of collegiality towards a more bureaucratic, non-participative management style appears to be most evident. In this university type, managerialist practices are perceived as being deeply embedded in the management style. This finding is inconsistent with those of Kok et al. (2010), where the authors report that academics in post-1992 universities, in comparison with the other three types (i.e. ancient, red brick and plate glass), experience the greatest pressure as a result of a top-down approach and commercially-focused orientation. This, according to Shattock (2006), is perhaps because the structure of post-1992 universities was once under the more corporate style of governance through local government and Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA). However, the findings show a different picture, demonstrating how plate glass universities have the strongest market-oriented values and managerialist practices. This could perhaps be due to the fact that the language and practices embraced and implemented by new managerialism are more robust in those environments. In contrast, at ancient universities, there did not appear to be this perception of a top-down approach or market orientation amongst the participants. According to academics in those environments and in comparison with other universities in the UK, there were no discrepancies between their expectations and the management style. The participants felt they had a relaxing and positive relationship with their managers, fostered by a participative and democratic management style. The outcomes of the delivery of the deal in such environments had positively reflected on their feelings of content and satisfaction in terms of management style.
5.3.1.1 Decision-making

One form of top-down managerialist style perceived by the participants is top-down decision-making, where managers are believed to make decisions in isolation without the consultation that once common. As a result, decisions are perceived to have been made at the top, with academics being left to implement them, even if they do not agree with them. In one poignant comment made by a participant and depicting the current situation in their university:

‘...I think we’re much more managerial than the managerialism we denounce in corporations...I sometimes call it democracy North Korean-style, where announcements are made and then... you're there to applaud decisions that have been made.’

(P21: Professor/Plate Glass)

Another participant who had moved from a university of a plate glass type to a red brick university within the last two years described their previous employer’s management style and how such practice had affected his perception of the delivery of the psychological contract deal:

‘...I found this to be an impossible place to work because the Dean was autocratic, simply uninterested in listening to anybody else’s opinion... if you did disagree with him then you would end up in the outer darkness... I found that intolerable...’

(P14: Professor/Red Brick)

The literature has paid a great deal of attention to exploring how the management in HE institutions nowadays endeavours to emulate corporate businesses strategies and mechanisms. However, the above two comments raise serious concerns about present conditions, suggesting that the situation is becoming worse than it is in the private sector. The comments imply that managers in UK universities, empowered by the new managerialism, are taking advantage of their unfair privileges to dominate academics, without allowing any room for participation.

In addition, several participants voiced concerns over this managerialist move away from traditional modes of collegial decision-making and the way academics were isolated from this process in universities. According to Tight (2002) and Macfarlane (2005), academics, especially professors, need to be involved in the decision-making process. One participant
supports this argument as he believes that as part of their psychological contract deal, academics are entitled to participate in decision-making at their university, in return for their contribution.

‘I feel entitled to be heard and I really have no interest in the level of seniority of anybody within the institution; as a professor, I am part of the leadership of this institution, that’s what professors are and I expect to be heard, that’s an entitlement.’
(P19: Professor/Plate Glass)

In fact, several academics have stated that they felt alienated, as their voices were neither heard nor considered. The following two comments not only show this, but also imply that the participants believe they are victims, as they feel the management does not listen to them and nothing can change that.

‘...universities have just become great big self-serving bureaucracies in many ways and this is something that can be quite alienating to those of us who have, perhaps, more idealistic views of what education is or should be.’ (P30: Senior Lecturer/Post-1992)

‘...the management at this university is actually just stupid. I genuinely just think they're not very clever about it... [Management has] alienated every single body within the university - the support staff, the admin staff and the academics... [They have] created a kind of a layer of management...that stops communication... [they] control academics, rather than getting the academics together and saying, “How can we manage this process together?”.’ (P22: Reader/Plate Glass)

For many of the participants studied, this top-down managerialist style was a big issue and they perceived it as creating a stressful relationship between themselves and their management. This is because academics believe that their involvement in the decision-making process is a key component of their psychological contract deal. Several participants expressed their dissatisfaction and alienation as a result of this increasing control on the part of the management, which is placing pressure on the exchange relationship between themselves and it. This autocratic, top-down management, according to many participants, is strongly present at plate glass and post-1992 universities. However, it was the participants from the former who appeared to perceive this management style most keenly.
5.3.1.2 Power

As detailed in chapter Two, the new arrangement of NHE in UK universities, embraced by new managerialism, has resulted in the reduction of power academics have to make decisions over their own courses and control their practice (Clark, Gewirtz and McLaughlin, 2000; Flynn, 2002; Deem, 2004). The findings confirm such an argument as academics in UK universities are losing ground at what Goodrich (1975) calls the ‘frontier of control’. Participants view the relative balance of power between managers and academics as shifting towards a greater managerial authority over them and their activities. For example, two participants commented on such an impact on the nature of the deal, represented in management intervention in decisions relating to the courses they run:

‘…in my role as course tutor, decisions have been made to do various things strategically with the programme that are taken above my head, and then I’m told those decisions have been made… and it’s then subsequently up to me to do what needs to be done to operationalise those decisions…’ (P20: Professor/ Plate Glass)

‘…we [are] more and more become[ing] the executives of centrally-prescribed curricula.’ (P30: Senior Lecturer/Post-1992)

The above two comments describe the increasing control and management of academic work, driven by growing managerial authority. The participants allude to their negative feelings about their relationship with management, defining themselves as employees, where they are even losing control of decision-making about their courses. Such a management style that undermines academics’ authority and adds to existing layers of bureaucracy in UK universities appears to be affecting participants’ perceptions of the delivery of the deal.

Furthermore, this concern over the negative impact of new managerialism, represented in a managerialist move away from traditional modes of collegial decision-making had become troubling for one participant, as he perceived it as placing pressure on the nature of the psychological contract deal:

‘I became disillusioned with the way the business school was being directed and managed. I thought administrators were having far too much influence and that academics
should basically shoulder responsibility for the way in which major strategic decisions were made. And so that led to me becoming unsettled.’ (P4: Professor/Ancient)

The implications of this shift towards a greater managerial authority over academics and their activities, promulgated by new managerialism, is perceived by the participant as creating an imbalance in his psychological contract. In his view, the management’s authoritarian style at his previous university, especially the failure to deliver implicit expectations had led him to leave:

‘I stopped coming in. I used to go in every day. It was only a 20-minute bike ride in… and it was a lot more convenient in many senses for me to work. Because we’ve got a young child and it was just easier, really, if I went to work. But the minute that I got wind of his views and other things that he’d started saying, I just thought, “I just want to avoid this person. I’ll work at home”’, [I] start[ed] applying for other jobs. ’ (P20: Professor/Plate Glass)

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that not everyone is relegated to the ‘outer darkness’, as participant P14 put it; participants at the ancient universities appear to perceive far less exposure to the current managerialist climate. Here, the management style and culture have not been visibly affected by managerialist values and practices and in the interviews, the respective participants expressed feelings of satisfaction, driven by the nature of the deal, particularly their ability to exercise freedom and independence. Pressure upon management practices as a result of managerialism was not noted. As one participant explained:

‘Nobody tells me what to teach…it’s up to me to determine what the objectives of the course, what the curriculum [will be], what reading materials will be used, how the material is taught. I have tremendous discretion.’ (P2: Professor/Ancient)

The degree of power academics appeared to have and exercise at this type of university is a distinctive feature, perhaps - as explained in chapter Four - driven by the relevant historical background, deeply rooted values and cultural heritage of the ancient universities (Deslandes, 1998; Wæraas and Solbakk, 2009). (Deslandes, 1998; Wæraas and Solbakk, 2009). This observation echoes Duke’s (1992, p. 53) argument that history ‘affects the kinds of resources institutions enjoy, or lack; the kinds of structures by which they organize themselves and other work; and the reigning assumptions about the nature of a university and of a university
education from which they must continue to build…’. Therefore, it is not surprising that the ancient universities still maintain a collegial structure and are governed in a quite different fashion.

5.3.1.3 ‘Corporatisation’ of UK Higher Education

Further evidence of managerialist values and practices in UK universities is the adoption of private sector ideas and language in the management of university resources. The findings support arguments from critics that changes in HE values and norms which are driven by new managerialism, as well as increased competition for funding, have moved autonomous institutions towards more business-like and private sector ideals (Molesworth, Nixon and Scullion, 2009; Furedi, 2011). Several of the academics interviewed in this study noted the impact of such market orientation in their management style and perceived a degradation of working conditions. In the words of one of the participants:

‘I don't think the culture is very different from working in a big corporation. Probably slightly worse...’ (P21: Professor/Plate Glass)

The above comment on the participants’ beliefs about their university culture is not surprising. In fact, it would be more surprising if a significant number of academics working in plate glass and post-1992 institutions did not feel the same way, as the overall findings in this research reveal the prevalence of authoritarian and dictatorial regimes in these types of institution.

In addition, it was revealed by the participants that the dramatic increase in tuition fees in English universities, driven by the marketisation of the HE sector, is placing great pressure on academics. Several participants expressed concerns about this step, not only because of their perception of management’s failure to deliver on the deal they expected, but also because of the changes made to the deal by adding new entitlements from the students’ side. As one participant noted:

‘Certainly this year, I've had one or two students, personal tutees that have basically tried to treat me as their personal administrator.’ (P6: Professor/Red Brick)

For several participants, a failure to deliver on the deal that academics expected was the result of pressures from the changing orientation in the management of universities and their assets as
a business. An example is the appointment of new directors from the private sector in universities. As one participant explained:

‘...It was also the first time we’ve ever had a non-academic director...this guy doesn’t know anything about universities. He really just doesn’t actually understand how they work... his background is in IT and he had some involvement with [food supermarket chain]. So he thinks like supermarkets and fast-moving consumer products, not education.’ (P22: Reader/Plate Glass)

Another participant from the same university, who shares the same concerns and resentment of the current management approach in his university, commented:

‘The management style at the moment...is basically like running a supermarket...[The new director] who has no experience of higher education...clearly sees it as a turnaround project.’ (P21: Professor/Plate Glass)

This perceived intervention into academic space is in line with Burnes, Wend and By’s (2014) finding, where in the English university system, ‘vice-chancellors have become more similar to powerful chief executives, collegial forms of control have been significantly reduced and academic staff increasingly work in an environment in which they are told what to teach, how to teach...’ (Burnes, Wend and By, 2014, p. 905). Such practice is moving away from traditional modes of collegial decision-making and it has had a distancing effect on the relationship between senior managers and academics in universities (Tapper and Palfreyman, 2002; Deem, 2008), resulting in a decline in ‘academic citizenship’ (Macfarlane, 2005). Besides, this aggressive step of bringing in a manager with no academic background is a clear example of how one university seeks to run its business and manage its academic staff. This step not only challenges academics working in such an environment, but could also lead to the suppression of academic ideals in favour of those of the private sector. Academics in UK universities are witnessing a growing trend to corporatise HE, which can be seen in the way that corporate designations are substituting traditional academic titles, e.g. Vice President and Registrar, President and Vice-Chancellor, Registrar and Chief Operating Officer, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Internationalisation, Provost and Pro Vice-Chancellor (International). In addition, UK universities, empowered by new managerialism, are promulgating business-like and private sector ideals in a bid to secure more funds, even though this might render teaching ‘subordinate to an agenda’ (Furedi, 2011, p. 5). This behaviour is evident in some UK
universities, where management is perceived as lowering the standards of student recruitment in order to increase student intake. This, according to the following comment, is impacting the teacher-student relationship, and consequently having a negative effect on the nature of academics’ psychological contract deal:

‘I have students in my office I can’t communicate with because their English is so poor… I’ve sat on plagiarism panels where people have to come in with translators because they can’t understand the proceedings. So how can you expect them to do any serious work? And that’s just a direct consequence of this push for numbers, get the profits up, get more students, more revenue streams...it’s got a terrible impact on your relationship with the students.’ (P21: Professor/Plate Glass)

Another participant who had moved from a university of a plate glass type to a red brick university within the last two years show resentful feelings towards the adoption of such corporate values in managing academic staff in his previous university and commented about the negative impacts of these values upon the various components of the expectations that he perceives to constitute the deal,

‘What saddens me is when, as with the cases of [university name] which appear to be trying to copy what they think private business is like where you have, in theory, managers who issue instructions to subordinates who if they disagree will just have to leave... It’s not just about being free to write what you want in a particular academic paper it’s being free to influence the direction of the institution, our relationships with students and the way we think about grants, funders ... awkward bastards like me who don’t like being told what to do because if I wasn’t like that I wouldn’t be a very good academic.’ (P14: Professor/Red Brick)

While many participants in plate glass and post-1992 universities clearly cited evidence of a growing market orientation, with this being most profoundly expressed in the former university type, the impact of marketisation appeared to have made a relatively mild impression. On the other hand and once again, the new managerialism did not appear to have had an impact on academics at ancient universities. The participants seemed (for the present at least) to be untouched by corporate values.
Interestingly, the above critical remark on the implications of such behaviour contradicts Naidoo and Jamieson’s (2005) argument for the benefits of the marketisation of HE, along with competition between universities, where the above authors claim it encourages universities to continue offering a high quality product at a competitive price. Many participants in the study perceived the marketisation of HE culture as negatively affecting the staff-student relationship, where it had led to disengagement and a decline in students’ academic ability. Pop-Vasileva, Baird and Blair (2011) support this argument by explaining that such conditions are significantly affecting the work of academics by transferring knowledge and diminishing their sense of achievement, resulting in their sense of dissatisfaction and stress.

5.3.2 Theme 2: Academic Freedom and Autonomy

The second theme focuses on the way academics across the four university types perceive constraints as a result of managerialist practices and values that consequently affect their academic freedom. The new roles and growing obligations imposed upon academia in UK HE (Deem and Brehony, 2005; Kok et al., 2010) are promoting a strong managerialist culture, which endeavours to embrace a business-like style and private sector ideals (Deem, 2004); a culture that is attempting to change the way in which academic knowledge work is led and managed (Deem, Hillyard and Reed, 2007). These increased expectations of academics on the part of universities, with the aim of attaining a competitive position in the race for a better reputation and increased funding at national level, are impacting the nature of the deal in academics’ psychological contracts, particularly with reference to how they perform daily duties and perceive decisions. This theme has three sub-themes: coercion, standardisation and intensification of the work. An analysis of the theme supports the argument that market-oriented values and managerialist practices embraced by the management in UK universities are constraining academics’ freedom and autonomy (Barnett, 2011).

New managerialism in universities in England is placing more pressure upon academics, resulting in further constraints on their freedom and autonomy. This is especially clear in three out of the four university types: red brick, plate glass and post-1992, where participants reported their perception of managerialist expectations as infringing academics freedom. Such expectations from academics were most strongly perceived by participants from plate glass universities, resulting in a clear lack of freedom.
5.3.2.1 Coercion

Many participants expressed significant concern over the coercive effect of journal rankings and perversions of these in constraining scholarly creativity and innovation, with research topics being geared towards fulfilling the demands of a particular set of top-rated journals. As two participants explained:

‘...[The REF] channels scholarly activity down a very instrumental and perfunctory route which, rather than seeking to reduce scholarship, which has value in human understanding or indeed, even a practical value... it actually leads to a standardisation rather than a broadening out or diversity, or any sense of imagination and academic thinking.’ (P30: Senior Lecturer/Post-1992)

‘... [Journal rankings] dribbles you certain types of research rather than others. And the quality of the journal doesn’t mean anything in terms of the quality of the paper. I’ve seen terrible stuff published in good journals, and great stuff published in journals that are ranked down in ones or noughts. So it’s a structural unfairness, it penalises certain types of research.’ (P22: Reader/Plate Glass)

The above participants condemned the use of journal rankings, particularly the current policy of disadvantaging certain types of research and the way in which academics are directed through management pressure to publish in high-ranking journal publications. In addition, the commentaries suggest that the use of such coercive mechanisms is threatening the survival of other, lower-ranked journals and risking the ongoing healthy competition between all journals which would enrich the quality of scholarly literature.

This culture of ‘journal fetishism’ (Willmott, 2011, p. 438), driven by the ‘seductive power of journal rankings’ (Nkomo, 2009, p. 106) is even evident in ancient universities. Academics at those institutions are not immune from such challenges that to some extent place constraints on their freedom. As one participant noted:

‘I think it has a narrowing influence and I would say that it has a coercive influence...to encourage low-risk forms of scholarship, forms of research and scholarship that have a low risk of failure... more innovative, risky kinds of scholarship are less likely to be undertaken.’ (P4: Professor/Ancient)
Concern over the negative effect of this coercive trend reported by most participants across all four university types is consistent with Adler and Harzing (2009, p. 72) and Walsh (2011, p. 229), where the authors argue it is undermining the very essence of good scholarship, which would normally address ‘the questions that matter most to society’. It is distracting academics from their real work of scholarship, as they ‘have knowledge to discern, students to teach, and organizations to improve.’ (Walsh, 2011, p. 229)

According to the participants, not only is the interference of the use of journal ranking considered to be a potential source of threat to academic freedom, but these changing rules of the game, along with the implications of imposing certain criteria for excellence upon academics’ reactions, could act as a disincentive, as in the case of one collaboration between two researchers employed within the same university:

‘…my colleague is better off writing a paper, not with me, but with somebody from another university because then if the paper gets published, he can put it on as his own score. So in that sense, the system then discourages collegial writing.’
(P11: Professor/Red Brick)

‘…one of the most negative side-effects. I think it’s really counter-productive to not have people from the same university to discourage them from publishing with each other. It’s ridiculous…’ (P23: Associate Professor/Plate Glass)

Another [managerialist] expectation reported by the participants, which they claimed constrained their freedom and autonomy, is the established association between academic excellence and high-ranking journal publications, where other publication output is undesirable. According to Mingers and Willmott (2013, p. 1052), ‘the use of journal lists to assess the quality of research sends out a strong “market signal”: it privileges the agenda pursued in those journals; and, conversely, it devalues research published elsewhere, irrespective of its content and contribution.’ At ancient and red brick universities, two participants raise the same concern.

‘…there is a decline in the value attached to writing a book and writing a research monograph which I regret… it is antithetical to scholarship to imply that the only form of scholarly work is that which is published in a 30 page article…’ (P2: Professor/Ancient)
‘...I don’t like it either when managers say, as many do now in business schools, [that] what you would think is valuable in terms of output is academic journal articles, “Books, we don’t think much of those and chapters in books, edited collections, we don’t like those either’. ’ (P6: Professor/Red Brick)

The above two comments raise concerns about the impact of directing research activity towards what is now regarded as quality research, purely on the basis of assessments of journal lists, while devaluing and disadvantaging other publication outlets. The participants expressed resentment of such a mechanism as a means of evaluating their research quality, as it induces a narrowing of scholarship and limits their freedom. This resentment is arguably exacerbated by the implied criticism in the above two comments of the homogenised criteria and measures comprising the current journal list assessment. The real concern noted from the participants’ comments is not that the use of journal lists devalues other publication outlets, but rather that, in their view, such a list threatens to smother the diversity of research and here, diversity represents the freedom to practice as an individual. However, this coercive trend towards privileging journal publications is empowered by managers in UK universities, as Willimot (2011, p. 430) notes: ‘Academics are terrorised by university managers… who apply pressure upon [them] to confine [their] work to topics, methods and approaches that are suitable for publication in a small number of so-called elite journals.’ This ‘game of excellence’ (Butler and Spoelstra, 2012, p. 891) has resulted in more power being granted to managers, who attempt to influence the behaviour of academics towards fulfilling desired institutional goals (Nkomo, 2009). New managerialism has resulted in the emergence of a greatly intensified ‘publish or perish’ culture in the UK (Vivienne and Grant, 2013, p. 123). As a result, not only does such a corrosive obligation challenge the autonomy and identity of academics, but also negatively affects their psychological contracts, given that career stability and progression has become closely related to research productivity (Sparkes, 2007). As Tipples and Krivokapic-Skoko’s (1997) study on academics’ psychological contracts demonstrates, career development and advancement is an important expectation that universities should fulfil for their academic staff. Thus, the failure to fulfil such an expectation can result in a violation of academics’ psychological contracts, leading to a loss of loyalty, neglectful behaviour and exit from the university (Tipples, Krivokapic-Skoko and O’Neill, 2007).

Interestingly, however, few participants in the study pointed out that the metrciation of journal ranking has positively enhanced their perception of the deal. In their view, such a performance
mechanism has added clarity and fairness in terms of promotions. As two participants explained:

‘I actually think [for] somebody, an ethic minority and who is a women these changes are very positive… [they] will look at your publications and say how many publication do you have in the ABS list…and how much money have you brought in… for every problem this metrication has created I actually think [there] are more benefits that have actually come out of the system from a quality and fairness point of view.’ (P19: Professor/Plate Glass)

‘In the past, you could get that and you would still have somebody saying to you, “Oh, it’s not enough to get promoted,” or, “It’s not enough you should be publishing in even better journals”… So that side of things has changed a bit… I guess the REF has just given it some clarity.’ (P20: Professor/Plate Glass)

The previous two comments show how expectations differ from one academic to another, whereby these two participants place more emphasis on aspects of clarity and fairness in terms of promotion. The participants claim that the upside of the metrication of journal ranking, in comparison with other negative aspects of such performance mechanisms, reflects positively on their perceptions of the delivery of the deal.

5.3.2.2 Standardisation of Academic Work

In UK universities, there is growing evidence of dependence on bureaucratic systems of managerial control in the form of bureaucratic and procedural instruments (e.g. rules and procedures), which increasingly seek to control academic work. Such standardisation, which seeks to replace academics’ judgments and to constrain and direct their action, is what Parker and Jary (1995) refer to as the ‘academic assembly line’ or ‘academic production line’. This ‘assembly’ or ‘production line’ is the classic ‘long-linked technology’ identified by Thompson (1976), indicating how organisations should behave. It can be seen in the codified rules and regulations and the fixed sequence of repetitive steps required by academics to complete administrative and academic work in their universities. This corporate orientation ostensibly leads to efficiency in terms of productivity and cost and reduces the waste of university resources. Such behaviour is clear in the following comment:
‘…at the moment, we are in a massive consistency kick so we want everybody to be doing everything across the university in exactly the same way…’

(P18: Senior Lecturer/Plate Glass)

Another participant who had moved from a university of a plate glass type to a red brick university within the last two years described their previous employers:

‘[The] Business School was very managerialist; [it] even had a league table for individual staff about how REF-able” they were, and their teaching...they suddenly wanted a common, one size fits all, workload allocation model across the whole of [the] university...Classic managerialist approach. Very blunt instrument.’

(P10: Senior Lecturer/Red Brick)

The previous two comments describe how plate glass universities function in terms of managing their resources. The participants alluded to the lack of trust on the part of the management as regards academics’ techniques and skills for completing daily duties, where the management instead seeks to implement its own strategy: one size fits all.

A different form of interference in academic life where managerialism is implemented consists of the growing trend towards controlling and standardising of teaching and teaching evaluation. This might be considered as a set of power relations over academic work. It influences the way in which academics teach in the classroom (Blackmore, 2009). For example, it ‘strip[s] the teacher of freedom in favour of generic structures that provide a lowest common denominator’ (Lupton, 2013, p. 162). In fact, Blackmore (2009, p. 868) argues that the standardisation of teaching evaluation in the classroom is pushing academics toward focusing upon the narrow range of outcomes that can be measured, at the expense of other important elements; in other words, there is a focus on ‘style rather than substance, to minimise discomfort by reducing contentious readings and watering down substance to produce ‘thin’ pedagogies’. A tendency to lower performance expectations in the classroom, in order to obtain more favourable student evaluations (Heckert, Latier, Ringwald and Silvey, 2006; Gump, 2007; Pritchard and Potter, 2011) is increasingly evident because of the growing emphasis on such evaluations and their role in determining retention, promotion and tenure (Titus, 2008; Lippmann, Bulanda and Wagenaar, 2009). In two of the participants’ words:
‘...there are a lot more bureaucratic procedures which affect the way you behave in the classroom, the way you’re teaching...you’re more constrained in terms of module descriptors...’ (P15: Professor/Red Brick)

‘...now we have managers who have certain ideas about what is good for students, they want to standardise the curriculum...’ (P25: Professor/Plate Glass)

Not only did many of the participating academics talk about managers interfering in and controlling classroom teaching practice, they also appeared to view such managerialist practices as changing the nature of the psychological contract deal. They spoke of the disturbing effect of shrinking their academic role in the classroom and perceived such managerialist practices as resulting in unmet expectations and as negatively impacting their academic lives. The workplace in UK universities is growing more focused on controlling and restraining academics. Again, this seems to be increasingly linked to a lack of trust in academics, with the implication that their practice needs to be inspected. This is consistent with Morley (2003) and Rowland’s (2008) arguments, where the authors explain that the standardisation of teaching and teaching evaluation is placing greater stress upon academics and destroying collegiality in universities. It is a practice that is increasingly devaluing and undermining academics’ own authority and role in developing their teaching practice and creating means of investigation in their own teaching (Titus, 2008). The following comment conveys support for the above observations:

‘...what the college is saying more and more is “we want you to accept more of the students that you’ve previously turned away”; in effect, they are saying “lower the entrance standards...”...the quality of our teaching experience, the quality of our working life is being degraded...’ (P6: Professor/Red Brick)

The above comment is a good example of how an academic will strongly associate their overall academic success with what has been achieved in the classroom, especially in terms of their students. It appears that for quite a number of academics, the nature of the psychological contract deal revolves to a great extent around their freedom in the classroom. Their satisfaction and enjoyment in their profession are derived from their freedom within what they regard as their own world (the classroom), rather than meeting measured outcomes set by managers.
Many participants in the study regarded the growing trend towards the standardisation of academic work as a big issue and such perceptions were obvious in three out of the four university types, namely red brick, plate glass and post-1992. Such bureaucratic and procedural instruments are increasingly undermining academics’ own authority and constraining their role in the development of their teaching practice. In the words of one of the participants, who was developing a feeling of apathy toward the status of academia, as a result of such instruments impinging on the deal:

‘One of the ways that they're implemented is by an increasing managerialism in the university to bring those external factors in and ensure that we’re all delivering what we need to deliver to survive in that new institutional environment. But that creates a toxic environment within the university and changes the nature of the work. It’s certainly not the job I intended to go for. If I’d have wanted to be a crappy, middle-level manager I’d have gone and worked for twice the money in a commercial organisation.’ (P22: Reader/Plate Glass)

Therefore, such conditions are perceived as creating discrepancies between perceived promises and what is delivered, consequently affecting the exchange relationship between academics and management. This is in line with Schapper and Mayson’s (2004, p. 196) observation of such a process and the way it is ‘used to convey the sense of de-skilling and depersonalisation of academics in today’s factories of learning.’

By contrast, new managerialism does not appear to have had same degree of impact on academics at ancient universities in terms of standardisation. In fact, these participants claimed to experience a high degree of academic freedom. They reported a number of positive aspects in relation to their job, such as the capacity to negotiate:

‘…my sense of a sort of security, independent power base and freedom is substantially greater than it is almost anywhere else…The embeddedness of academic freedom, which I believe when I hear stories from people that I know, is being more eroded in other institutions where people are being told that they need to work on a particular project...Absolutely no question at all of anybody interfering with academic freedom whatsoever, and it is very, very clearly stated as an absolute primary principal of the university.’ (P1: Associate Professor/Ancient)
‘…it’s up to me to determine what [the] objectives of the course, what the curriculum will be, what reading materials will be used, how the material is taught. I have tremendous discretion.’ (P2: Professor/Ancient)

Perhaps one of the reasons behind such perceptions of academic freedom in ancient universities, reported in this sub-theme and earlier points made, is the degree of power that academics appear to be able to exercise at their universities. Decisions with regard to their academic responsibilities cannot be imposed upon them and they have a say in decision-making. In two of the respondents’ words:

‘...Deans can sometimes be foolish if they don’t listen to the Faculty... Of the four Deans of the Business School, two of them have been gotten rid of, so you’ve got to tread carefully as a Dean about what you do and how you bring academics along with you.’ (P1: Associate Professor/Ancient)

‘...I’ve also reacted and had to act on behalf of the institution to remove those leaders, and have been part of that and not been afraid to do it, and I thought it was the right thing to do.’ (P3: Professor/Ancient)

5.3.2.3 Intensification of Work

In addition to earlier findings that there is increasing evidence of managerialist practice attempting to standardise academic work, many of the academics participating in this study expressed a great deal of concern over the significant increase in administrative tasks and their consequent impact upon academic freedom. In two of the participants’ words:

‘…there are more and more structures being put in place and some of these are actually to make life easier from an administrative point of view; that really does not help the academics whatsoever.’ (P19: Professor/Plate Glass)

‘…I feel, [academic freedom] is getting squeezed out by this formalised administrative structure…we’ve got 19 KPIs here that we have to perform on. Only about four of them are research, maybe five. Others are student satisfaction, teaching, PTS, NSS, these kinds of things, and financial ones about revenues coming in and out of the department, staffing costs and stuff.’ (P22: Reader/Plate Glass)
Another participant who had moved from a university of a plate glass type to a red brick university within the last two years described the intensification of administration in relation to quality aspects of teaching as limiting his freedom:

‘[T]here was an intensification of the teaching effort... by the time I left in 2011, I would say that I felt that although on paper I had a research allowance, in reality I felt there was no time for research... It became a vicious circle; that all the time you were doing less and less you would get less and less time, which meant that you didn’t have the chance. So it was quite a ‘bottoming’. ’ (P10: Senior Lecturer/Red Brick)

The above data allude to academics’ dissatisfaction with the nature of the deal in plate glass universities. According to the participants, there is a lack of understanding of academic work by managers there. This is not surprising as several institutions at this type of university display a strong orientation towards managing their resources similar to corporate businesses. A clear example that was revealed earlier by the data is the appointment of managers from the private sector.

In a post-1992 university, a junior academic reported a feeling of being disappointed by his job quality and referred to it ‘as a stepping stone’. This is because he encountered an inconsistency between the messages delivered by his management in his first two years, where they expected him to start publishing articles, while at the same time allocating ‘a huge timetable of teaching’.

‘[This] made me feel [that] the university’s not really paying much attention to my own career aspirations. Because, if they were, maybe...they wouldn’t allow me to have these huge units in my first few years, which is when you’re defined as an earlier career researcher... The first year wasn’t fair on me. I think here they’re not very fair on new people…’ (P27: Senior Lecturer/Post-1992)

The participant had been frustrated, not only because of the intensification of the workload, but also because of the lack of understanding and appreciation from the management with regard to him still being in his early career years, when in fact, the university should have been supporting him in building his career.
Most participants perceive that the on-going intensification of the work loaded upon them is exerting further control over their activities. They feel that this growing focus on administrative duties as a means of achieving managerialist objectives is impeding their psychological contract deal, by contributing to the erosion of their autonomy and academic freedom. This confirms Tight (2010) and Hornibrook’s (2012) observations about the great constraints and pressure being placed upon academics in UK universities as a result of the growing administrative burden – something which is particularly evident at plate glass and post-1992 universities, where management is seen as increasingly emphasising the importance of administrative tasks and bureaucratic requirements.

5.3.3 Theme 3: Academic Work-life Balance

The findings discussed earlier on in this chapter present a strong argument regarding the influence of new managerialism on the working lives of academics in UK universities. By imposing accountability and various technologies of measurement, new managerialism is placing greater pressure upon the academics’ psychological contract deal through various discrepancies between perceived promises and what is actually delivered. As a result of such conditions, academics’ work-life balance is being challenged. Greenblatt (2002, p. 179) defines ‘work-life balance’ as ‘the absence of unacceptable levels of conflict between work and non-work demands’. However, many participants in the study referred to unacceptable levels of conflict between work and non-work demands. This is clear in the growing imbalance of expectations elevated by the increasing workload of managerialist duties and roles, which is perceived by many of the participants. As one participant reported, there is a lack of balance between work and non-work domains as a result of managerialist expectations:

‘Can I preface that by saying that I would not want to be starting now. I feel quite sorry for young academics coming in. I think it’s almost impossible, in many ways, without risking your health and your happiness because I think it is very difficult to continually work six days a week, 60 hours a week, and to have work-life balance...’ (P10: Senior Lecturer/Red Brick)

Not only do the findings suggest that the new arrangement of NHE in UK universities, embraced by new managerialism and increasingly intruding into all areas of the lives of academics - with the subsequent cry from participants in this study for a better balance between personal and working life - but there is also the perception of a serious work-life conflict
between the increasing workload due to managerialist expectations and personal duties. In one of the participant’s words:

‘I developed high blood pressure when I was pregnant in the second semester [and spent a] weekend in hospital… I was trying to cope with an awful lot of things and the doctor signed me off for three-four weeks… the Dean damn well sent work home to me, and again it was stuff I didn't need to do; it wasn't like [a matter of] life or death [or that] it had to be me; anyone in the department could have done that. If I signed in as dead he would send me work...’ (P8: Professor/Red Brick)

It seems that the boundaries between work and non-work domains in UK universities have become increasingly blurred and academics are now expected to prioritise their working time and energy above personal life roles. The above comment demonstrates poor work-life balance as a result of constant work demands. According to Frone (2003), these blurred boundaries between work and home life can have a deleterious impact on individual wellbeing and family life. In addition, the findings of this study are consistent with Kinman, Jones and Fiona (2006) and Buckholdt and Miller’s (2013) arguments, which show a work-life conflict in UK universities. Both sets of authors examined work demands and work-life balance and reported high levels of psychological distress and dissatisfaction across academics in UK universities.

Taking into account that some of the expectations forming academics’ psychological contracts revolve around workload and working hours and the promises to be kept in return for their contribution (Sturges and Guest, 2004), most of the participants appeared to believe that their managers had failed to honour the deal. Besides an expansion in student numbers, along with the heavier workloads and longer working hours associated with this, new managerialism policies undermine the privileges academics once enjoyed and continue to challenge university academics. According to Tipples and Krivokapic-Skoko’s (1997) study on academics’ psychological contracts, maintaining good work-life balance includes providing support with personal problems as one of the expectations that universities should fulfil for their academic staff. The findings suggest that good work-life balance is relatively rare and most of the participants at (in diminishing order) plate glass, post-1992 and red brick universities reported poor work-life balance as a result of the pressure of managerialist expectations.

On the other hand, it appeared that academics at ancient universities enjoy a pleasant balance between their work and non-work demands. This is not surprising, in view of all the privileges
academics in the respective university type enjoy. Besides, the comparison with other academics from other university types would boost their morale and this would compensate for any relative imbalance between work and non-work demands.

5.4 Ideological Currency in the Psychological Contract of Academics in UK Universities

As discussed earlier, the involvement of interrelated, organisational, managerial and cultural changes established by the prevailing new managerialism has initiated a new departure in UK HE, leading to a tightly integrated regime of managerial discipline and control, which is different from bureau-professionalism (Clarke and Newman, 1997). It supports the argument that academic work in UK universities has started to revolve around practices that ‘violate traditional academic values’ (Harley, 2002, p. 187). Therefore, it is not only vital to consider this dimension of ideological currency in order to understand how academics evaluate and perceive their universities’ actions in terms of expectations - due to the dominance of managerialist ideology in UK universities, which has resulted in a reduction in the privileges academics once enjoyed - but it must also be borne in mind that the intrinsic elements which may have initially attracted academics to a deeper commitment to their discipline and which motivate them in their educational path are greatly compromised in order to comply with market-oriented values and managerialist practices (Deem 2004). According to Thompson and Bunderson (2003), ideological currency plays an important role in the formation and reformation of individual expectations and obligations as it recognises the importance of an academic’s credible commitment to pursue a principle, or a valued cause which may not be limited to self-interest. O'Donohue et al. (2007, p. 75) explain that such commitment ‘reflect an individual’s belief that the organization will provide a mechanism and supportive environment through which the individual can contribute to a highly valued cause (e.g. occupational ideals such as professional autonomy and discretion)’. Not only does the following comment illustrate the current conditions of UK NHE, but it also confirms the above argument and shows the significance of the ideological currency dimension in shaping academics’ psychological contracts, as academics participants regard it as part of the deal.

‘…I’d say both in teaching and research I find them disappointing... I went into [Academia] because I felt there were certain principles, like a certain sense of free thinking, open-mindedness, challenge, those sorts of things, which seemed to me to be disappearing...the more targets, structures, goals, management spreadsheets come in, [the more] those things are slowly being eroded.’ (P24: Professor/Plate Glass)
According to the proposed heuristic model presented in chapter Three and reproduced below (Figure 5.1), academics will experience an ideological breach as a result of four conditions encountered, namely intentional reneging, incongruence and the perception of goal displacement or value interpenetration.

However, following the data analysis in this study, the heuristic model proposed above was revised to articulate the conditions under which an ideological breach of academics’ psychological contract in UK HE is likely to occur (Figure 5.2). On the one hand, the revised heuristic model argues that it is not incongruence which will lead an academic to experience an ideological breach in their relationship with their university. The participants in this study did not perceive the occurrence of ideological incongruence to be an issue for academics and so it is excluded from the model. Perhaps incongruence was not perceived by the participants for the following reasons. Firstly, since UK universities have been transformed from academic communities of scholars into workplaces (Deem, Hillyard and Reed, 2007), which uphold quasi-market standards and techniques as being more valuable than those that promote independent and critical thought (Evans, 2004), it would be surprising for an academic to actually develop an ideological expectation based on either implicit or explicit promises during the formation of a psychological contract. Secondly, the findings of this thesis suggest that the impact of new managerialism varies from one university to another, which indicates that the

Figure 5.1 A model of ideological breach in an academic environment

Adapted from Thompson and Bunderson (2003)
implementation of managerialist policies and practices is not something that is beyond university control. This runs contrary to Morrison and Robinson’s (1997, p. 244) argument concerning incongruence, namely that it will only result ‘from factors beyond the organization's control’. In fact, the literature reviewed in chapter Two suggests that ideological breach resulting from managerialist values and practices in UK universities is intentional conduct which seeks to discipline academic life. Lastly, the occurrence of an academic’s perception of ideological incongruence is unconvincing, as such perceptions of the misconstruction of a university’s commitment to an ideology would only arise, according to Thompson and Bunderson (2003, p. 579), from the gap between ‘aspiration’ and ‘reality’, driven by ‘public statements of an organization's ideological agenda’. It is more relevant to organisations which state their mission or objectives publicly, such as volunteer organisations.

In addition, the expectation on the academic side of ‘appropriate remuneration’ was excluded from the revised heuristic model. This is because the participants in this study did not report any incidents which involved this expectation affecting the ideological currency of their psychological contracts.

![Figure 5.2](image_url)

It seems that many of the research participants found that the change towards new managerialism also fundamentally changed their perception of the deal. This is especially the case in the way these changes had affected how participants identified with their universities,
as well as undermining the traditional nature and mission of universities in general. This supports the existing scholarly research that indicates managerialist practices and expectations have produced a ‘poignant tension in academia’ (Vivienne and Grant, 2013, p. 132) that ‘tends to suffocate creativity and spontaneity; it limits academic identity; it corrals academic life into an undue uniformity; it allows no escape’ (Barnett, 2011, p. 56). Such managerialist practices and expectations that can lead to an ideological breach of academics’ psychological contracts are particularly evident at plate glass and post-1992 universities, where management is seen as increasingly emphasising administrative tasks and bureaucratic requirements. Participants perceive such tasks as changing the nature of academic work, namely placing an emphasis on bureaucratic requirements which serve only to secure the survival of the university in the competitive NHE environment. In their view, there is a big disconnect between their expectations and what has been delivered in terms of the ideological currency of their psychological contracts.

5.4.1 Perceived Goal Displacement in UK Universities

It appeared that for many of the participants, the excessive workload and time spent on bureaucratic tasks had the potential to lead to perceptions of inconsistency between the intrinsic elements which had first attracted them to the discipline and which motivated them to continue, and the increasing bureaucratic requirements. Such administrative tasks in UK NHE are associated with perceived goal displacement amongst academics, resulting in an ideological breach of their psychological contract (Thompson and Bunderson, 2003). Krivokapic-Skoko and O’Neill (2008) support the above argument, as they note that academics perceive such bureaucratic requirements as a breach of their psychological contracts. The above authors continue by explaining that this is because of academics’ perceptions of the encroachment onto their world, since administrative rules and regulations demand rationality, compliance, conformity and efficiency in their practice (Krivokapic-Skoko and O’Neill, 2008). In one of the participants’ words:

‘…there are more and more structures being put in place and some of these are to make life easier from an administrative point of view, which really does not help academics whatsoever.’ (P19: Professor/Plate Glass)

The policies and practices of UK NHE, imposed by new managerialism, are perceived by participants to have resulted in a more centralised control mechanism, where universities are increasingly adopting complex and time-consuming measures. The participants reported that
their workload was changing, with more administrative responsibilities impinging on the time available for their academic duties. This is consistent with Tight’s (2010) study that presents evidence of the increasing academic workload in UK universities:

‘...I certainly spend most of my time now doing admin – form-filling, report writing, analysing, student satisfaction surveys or performance data.’ (P22: Reader/Plate Glass)

‘...There’s an awful lot of time dedicated to things like the National Students’ Survey, so pretty much every meeting we have here we’ll be talking about how we can get more students to fill in the National Students’ Survey; how we can get our student perception statistics up.’ (P31: Professor/Post-1992)

The on-going work intensification and preoccupation with measurable results experienced by participants is showing a shift in emphasis onto administrative efficacy for academia’s intrinsic values. Such administrative expectations existing in UK universities arguably impinge on the ideological obligations of academic work (Hornibrook, 2012; Craig, Amernic and Tourish, 2014). This is clear in the following comment:

‘...the managerialist agenda has been very pernicious in compromising the good things that we should be doing.’ (P30: Senior Lecturer/Post-1992)

Another participant who had moved from a university of a plate glass type to a red brick university within the last two years described the emphasis on administrative and bureaucratic requirements in his previous university, which had constrained his time and resulted in a perception of management failure to deliver ideological expectations of the deal:

‘[There] was an increase in the intensification of work you were doing, because there was much greater emphasis on quality aspects of teaching, so therefore you had a much higher degree of administration, audit trails...I could not see any way possible to undertake, for example, a new area of research. I just couldn’t see how I could ever find the time without getting a grant.’ (P10: Senior Lecturer/Red Brick)

According to many of the participants, their management’s failure to deliver the deal in relation to ideological obligations has caused an ideological breach of academics’ psychological contracts. This perception of goal displacement was particularly evident at plate glass and post-
Participants in the respective university types perceived that their management failed to deliver a key component of their psychological contract deal. In their opinion, this is because their management is demonstrating a shift in emphasis towards administrative efficacy, away from academia’s intrinsic values, and therefore failing to honour the deal.

5.4.2 Perceived Value Interpenetration in UK Universities

Besides the growing administrative workload that leaves less time for research (Lyons and Ingersoll, 2010; Tight, 2010), there is a growing trend in UK NHE to view academics on the basis of economic criteria. Rather than being acknowledged and rewarded as producers of knowledge, academics are now recognised and valued as producers of commodities in the form of publications (Willmott, 2003). The level of State funding allocated to universities has become largely determined by such tangible and measurable commodities. This is clear in the following two comments, where, according to the participants, any publication output other than via high-ranking journals is deemed undesirable.

‘…there has been a decline in the value attached to writing a book and writing a research monograph, which I regret... it is antithetical to scholarship to imply that the only form of scholarly work is that which is published in a 30 page article...’ (P2: Professor/Ancient)

‘...I don’t like it either when managers say, as many do now in business schools, that what they think is valuable in terms of output is academic journal articles: “Books, we don’t think much of those and chapters in books, edited collections, we don’t like those either.”’ (P6: Professor/Red Brick)

In addition, the established association between academic excellence and high-ranking journal publications has influenced the culture and characteristics of academics and the way in which they prioritise their practice in fulfilling the requirements of these journals (Judge et al., 2007). In one of the participant’s words:

‘...I’ve certainly had that in reviews of my own work. “You don't cite enough articles in this journal...” [This] also means you can't bring in something new from outside the fields into that... the stuff that I see being published in the best journals is quite often the most boring and predictable. It’s using well-established methodologies; it’s not challenging anything.’ (P22: Reader/Plate Glass)
Several participants also identified certain strategic behaviours that arguably contradict academic’ values and therefore impinge on the ideological obligations of the deal of academic work. As one participant commented:

‘...people will only do what they call ‘gap-spotting’ research where you sort of find a little gap in the literature and then you fill it. But you don't want to say too much because, obviously, the reviewers could otherwise find fault with something...it stifles interesting ideas.’ (P21: Professor/Plate Glass)

Another activity that arguably leads to a perception of value interpenetration across academics in UK HE is the growing expectation of industrial collaboration. Universities in the UK are adopting an entrepreneurial orientation to attract new cash resources from industry, due to diminishing funds from the government. Academics are increasingly expected to engage with industry and exploit commercial opportunities, in order to boost university income in the competitive NHE environment (Lam, 2010). Such collaboration expected to be attained by academics might affect their identification with the university, which may consequently lead to perceptions of value interpenetration. For example, one participant described it as undermining the traditional nature and mission of the university, which, according to his perceptions, negatively affected the delivery of the deal:

‘...when we have very big departmental meetings and the message is very much about targets, business, the student as a consumer...’‘We need to be doing more of what business tells us. We need to be giving students more two-ones”... They’re to do with getting the University up and down in league tables and so on... I can find that quite alienating and it can make me feel more distant from the University as a whole.’ (P31: Lecturer/Post-1992)

The above quote confirms Kok, Douglas and McClelland’s (2008, p. 232) study conducted across staff members in UK universities, which shows that ‘the assimilation of more business-like styles and goals of profitability and sustainability into university management is diametrically opposite to the principal ethos of educating and disseminating knowledge.’ Academics are increasingly expected to engage in practices and activities that support market-oriented targets, in order to boost university income in the competitive NHE environment (Mingers and Willmott, 2013). Such market orientation empowered by new managerialism is
consequently negatively affecting the nature of the deal, as participants perceive that several key promises and obligations they expected from their university have not been delivered.

All of the aforementioned implications of such conditions, promoted and driven by new managerialism in UK universities, suggest that many participants are experiencing value interpenetration, ending in an ideological breach of their psychological contract. It seems that the mechanisms embraced to assess academics’ publications value a different set of criteria, not necessarily relevant to a quality education. The growing expectations of such demands upon academics in UK universities, which arguably run against academic values, are creating feelings of despondency among certain participants, which validates the view expressed in the theoretical piece by Harley (2002) and Hornibrook (2012). Although these growing expectations are evident, to varying degrees, at the four university types, participants at post-1992 universities have strongly noted such expectations.

5.4.3 The Perception of Having Experienced Intentional Reneging in UK Universities

UK universities have been transformed from academic communities of scholars into workplaces that hold quasi-market standards and techniques as being more valuable than those promoting independent and critical thought (Evans, 2004; Deem, Hillyard and Reed, 2007). Academics operating under such conditions seem to have little choice and are expected to ‘subjugate their academic personae with the corporate persona’ (Barnett, 2011, p. 51). The findings show three management practices identified by the participants which could engender a perception of intentional reneging, namely where decision-makers in the university have, for whatever reason, consciously and deliberately deviated from ideological commitment. The first practice involves the influence of journal lists in decisions over promotion, rewards, or the selection of academics for submission to evaluation exercises. As one respondent explained:

‘...the general environment encourages you to publish in certain journals...if you’re sensible...you go along with the environment...it’s not only REF; it’s also the reward systems to go along  [with]...the reward system is skewed towards certain behaviour.’

(P15:Professor/Red Brick)

The above finding is in line with Mingers and Willmott’s (2013) remark that academics in UK universities are placed under great pressure, where journal lists have become an influential factor for career progression. A growing number of managers in UK universities are succumbing to managerialist and financial pressure and taking deliberate action to avoid
following through on their obligations towards their academic staff. Such behaviour leading to unfair promotion undermines academics’ psychological contracts. This view is based on Shen’s (2010) study that establishes fair promotion as a significant expectation of an academic’s psychological contract.

A different form of interference in academic life reported by the participants is management practice aimed at controlling classroom teaching, which involves the standardisation of teaching and teaching evaluation. In the words of two of the participants:

‘...there’s a very prescriptive model of teaching…we need to get more [university name] graduates employed…because that affects our targets, our league table position and therefore, in the class, we have to be bringing in all these employability tasks.’ (P31: Professor/Post-1992)

‘…they want us to drop our ‘A’ Level grades. They already want us to lower our IELTS grades for taking people…’ (P21: Professor/Plate Glass)

Such behaviour is arguably affecting the ideological currency of academics’ psychological contracts as, according to Blackmore (2009, p. 868), it pushes academics towards focusing upon that narrow range of outcomes which can be measured, at the expense of other important elements; in other words, there is a focus on ‘style rather than substance, to minimise discomfort by reducing contentious readings and watering down substance to produce ‘thin’ pedagogies’.

The third and final expectation reported, where academics might perceive intentional reneging, is grade inflation. Academics are expected to be generous markers in the classroom. This is because of the increasing focus on student satisfaction and the National Students’ Survey (NSS) rating system. Universities in this competitive funding allocation, especially those who do not do well in the publications game, are arguably under pressure to do well in the NSS to attract higher student numbers for funding. The above is clear in the words of three of the participants, where concerns were raised over academic standards:

‘...we can't give any marks between, whatever, 67 and 73 now; so basically, a 67 becomes a 73, and so on....there is inevitably an issue of grade inflation there…it’s driven by the NSS course.’ (P21: Professor/Plate Glass)
‘...there’s a demand from senior management that a certain percentage of students get a certain mark… I think that this is quite damaging in some ways to the actual process of teaching.’ (P31: Professor/Post-1992)

‘...using student satisfaction measures...creates incentives to mark up. I was teaching on the MBA programme and one of the administrators suddenly, after I’d marked the units I was teaching, sent the marks from all the other units that had been assessed the year before mine, “So, I just thought you might like to see the median and the distribution scores on the other units, as you’ll see yours is a little lower...”’.
(P24: Professor/Plate Glass)

The above quotations are consistent with those of Furedi (2011, p. 5), who found that ‘the culture of positive marking and grade inflation has become a fact of campus life.’ The findings show that there is a growing emphasis on student evaluation and satisfaction, where several participants reported that management are demanding performance expectations be lowered in the classroom, with students’ grades being marked up, in order to achieve more favourable student evaluations. This target-driven grade inflation explicitly demanded by managers is most notable at plate glass and post-1992 universities. This lends further support to earlier findings by Gump (2007) and Pritchard and Potter (2011), which indicate such concerns and show a growing interest in student satisfaction measures.

In their empirical study of academics’ psychological contracts, Krivokapic-Skoko, O'Neill, and Dowell (2010) reported that academics show a strong personal commitment to quality teaching and enhancing student development, where they perceive both as an obligation to their university. Therefore, it would seem that the practices adopted in the classroom for fulfilling a set of ideological managerialist objectives are currently impinging on the deal and represent a potentially serious cause of perceived breach of academics’ psychological contracts.

In addition, feelings of stress and disillusionment as a result of the university’s failure to deliver on its ideological promises and obligations were expressed by one participant. Such feelings were derived from experiencing intentional reneging and substantiate the fact that these managerialist practices are affecting academics’ relationship with management:
‘Because we’ve got an implicit curve everybody needs to comply with...some people get very stressed about it... There are several [who have] been off with stress now [sic]...another colleague of mine said the other day, “They're probably waiting for somebody to die before something happens.” ...there’s a real disjunction between...what actually goes on in reality and the measures that supposedly reflect what goes on in reality... An exam or an assignment is to test students’ ability and you grade that, but this becomes more and more meaningless and so it’s a cause of great stress for people.’ (P21: Professor/Plate Glass)

Although the participant refers to the demand from management to meet certain targets as an ‘implicit curve’, it suggests there is a perceived pattern from management that associates rewards with obeying the rules (in this case, even if the rules being implemented resemble an intentional renege from a promise), or else ‘you end up in the outer darkness’.

For many of the participants, management decisions were perceived as deviating from ideological commitments, particularly in three out of the four university types: red brick, plate glass and post-1992. However, such perceptions of management failure to fulfil its ideological obligations were most evident across participants at plate glass and post-1992 universities.

5.5 The State of Academics’ Psychological Contracts

As explained in chapter Three, Guest’s (2004) model argues that there are four contributory factors which shape the state of the psychological contract, namely individual, contract-related, organisational and in relation to the wider context. These factors directly influence the state of the psychological contract and indirectly influence attitudinal and behavioural psychological contract outcomes. By utilising Guest’s model, reproduced below (Figure 5.3), the following discussion provides an account of what these factors represent, purely in the context of my research.
Individual factors in this research involve those that are likely to shape academics’ expectations, particularly academics’ career-related needs. According to scholarly work in the psychological contract of academics, detailed in chapter Three, these academic-specific items represent the type of expectations and obligations that academics may perceive as important in the relationship with their university; for example, recognition and workload.

Organisational factors shaping academics’ psychological contract and related to this research are the four different university types that constitute HE in England (i.e. ancient, red brick, plate glass and post-1992). As detailed in chapter Four, these four university types have a history and heritage factors attached to them. These interrelated factors play an influential role in the construction and reconstruction of an academic’s psychological contract throughout the employment relationship.

Contract-related factors are the expectations of management in UK universities. These factors, within the present NHE context, include managerialist expectations that academics are required
to meet, such as doing more administrative and bureaucratic tasks and publishing in high-ranking journals.

The final factor to be discussed which shapes the state of the psychological contract, according to Guest’s (2004) model, is represented by wider contextual factors. These represent demands from the macro-political arena in the UK forming the new arrangement of NHE, including globalisation, UK government policies, new managerialism and the corporatisation of HE. Chapter Two presents a detailed analysis of the events leading to the establishment of the present NHE context and the way in which they have shifted conventional HE towards NHE (e.g. funding and students as customers).

In an earlier work, Guest and Conway (1997) present a model, discussed in chapter Three and reproduced below (Figure 5.4), which looks specifically at the state of the psychological contract. The model gives a representation of what takes place in the workplace, based on whether and to what extent academics believe their universities have met their promises and obligations, been fair and engendered trust.

Figure 5.4 A model of the psychological contract

According to the above Model, the values and practices associated with new managerialism, presented in earlier chapters, are identified as causes which could impinge on aspects of content: fairness, trust and the delivery of the deal. However, it is expected that the nature and impact of managerialist values and practices will vary from one university type to another,
which lends further support to Guest’s (2004) argument about the importance of ‘organisational factors’ in shaping the state of the psychological contract. For example, the language and practices embraced and implemented by new managerialism are more robust in plate glass and post-1992 universities, whereas academics in ancient universities appear to perceive far less pressure in the current managerialist climate. Therefore, it is expected that academics’ psychological contracts are in better shape in ancient universities than they are in plate glass universities. The following discussion aims to portray the state of academics’ psychological contracts in UK universities and how this differs from one type to another.

5.5.1 Academics’ Perceptions of Management Fairness in UK Universities

Within the UK NHE context, managerialist values and practices implemented in UK universities have created a perception of unfairness amongst many of the academics working within them. The participants described many processes and procedures as unjust, whereby they believed they had been subjected to unfair decisions or treatment. One clear example of this sense of unfairness is reported by one participant who condemned his university’s reward allocation:

‘...it’s unfair in that the same tariff of expectations is applied to different subject groups...you’ve got somebody like me, who’s basically an ethnographer. I’m never going to generate large grants but I have to generate the same revenue. So there, it’s structurally unfair in the sense that the negative side of it, without regard to persons, [is that] they don’t actually take into account the context you’re operating in. They just apply [it] to the whole school.’ (P22: Reader/Plate Glass)

The above comment is from an academic at a plate glass university who, not surprisingly, echoes the words of another participant at a different plate glass university: ‘one size fits all, workload allocation model across the whole of [the] university... Classic managerialist approach’.

This perception of injustice in terms of the procedures and policies adopted in coming to decisions that concern outcome distribution seems more evident across participants at plate glass universities. This poses many problems in relation to the state of academics’ psychological contracts, as the perception of procedural fairness might not only impact academics’ job satisfaction, motivation and commitment, leading to their intention to quit (Fatt, Khin and Heng, 2010), but might also play a key role in alleviating the impact of a perceived
breach being experienced as a contract violation (Morrison and Robinson, 1997). If the latter factor is considered important, in accordance with the findings presented earlier in the chapter, academics in UK universities are currently encountering several potential causes and signs that could lead to perceptions of an ideological breach of their psychological contracts. Morrison and Robinson (1997) suggest that procedural and interactional fairness will mitigate against a breach being experienced as a contract violation.

In addition, the perception of unfairness in management decision-making, in terms of policies and procedures, might impact on academic organisational citizenship behaviour. This reflects the case of one participant who was offered teaching work in another university, in addition to his work in his current university, but his manager tried to prevent him from accepting the additional job. The participant commented:

‘…I have been a good citizen, done a lot for the college that I needed to do; the college should have made a different decision. So, on that issue, she has not been fair… this decision is still not finalised yet… but if it goes against me I will withdraw from a number of committees which I am serving; for example, I sit on the governance course, which is purely optional and I don’t have to do it; I will withdraw from that, I will resign, and I will make it clear why I am resigning and say this is like a symbolic protest; you treated me unfairly…’ (P6: Professor/Red Brick)

Clearly, the above comment encapsulates the essence of the psychological contract, whereby the participant had assumed future returns were promised, based on his efforts and had consequently expected his management to supply future benefits. The participant’s perception of unfairness in procedures and policies resulted in him quitting extra-role jobs for the university, which is in line with Moorman (1991), Bulent (2000), and Masterson et al.’s (2000) findings concerning the direct impact of procedural justice on organisational citizenship behaviour.

Indeed, fairness plays a vital role in the psychological contract, as it may mediate existing perceptions of unfairness in other aspects of the workplace. This is clear in red brick universities, where the impact of new managerialism is perceived as being lower than in post-1992 and plate glass universities. According to the findings, a large proportion of participants in red brick universities acknowledged the presence of new managerialism there, but perceived it as being driven by external governmental bodies. In contrast with plate glass and post-1992
institutions and shaped by the influence of ‘organisational factors’ (Guest, 2004), the management in red brick universities was perceived as fair, democratic and relatively collegial. As two of the interviewees noted:

‘In my experience of institutions, [university name] is quite laissez faire compared to other institutions. It’s more relaxed. It’s less of the directive driven culture.’
(P10: Senior Lecturer/Red Brick)

‘…is not run by edicts, or run by [any] kind of high command and order, so there’s a lot more collegiality here than I observe in many other universities.’
(P15: Professor/Red Brick)

The above argument shows that the participants from red brick universities are of the opinion their management act in a way they consider to be as fair and collegial as possible. This perceived high level of justice, driven by individuals at management level in a collegial and respective manner, corresponds to the literature on interactional justice and consequently, to their perceptions of reality (Greenberg, 1990; Folger and Skarlicki, 1999). It also supports Masterson et al.’s (2000, p. 740) argument that ‘Employees perceive acts of fairness to be contributions that enhance the quality and desirability of their on-going relationships’.

As detailed in chapter Three, interactional justice is concerned with social sensitivity; for instance, treating academics with respect and dignity, offering adequate reasons for decisions and showing empathy. Communicating with academics by offering explanations in an honest but sensitive manner demonstrates treatment with dignity and respect, thereby strengthening academics’ perceptions of interactional justice (Greenberg, 1990). Folger and Skarlicki (1999, p. 45) argue that ‘As organizations continue to change, and as psychological contracts are changed, we think that people will judge the changes according to implications for human dignity.’ However, it appears that such management skills are lacking amongst some managers in UK universities. This bureaucratic hierarchy is particularly evident at plate glass universities. Two participants who had moved from a university of a plate glass type to a university of a red brick type within the last two years described their previous employers:

‘Certainly my intention to leave [university name] was because of the psychological contract. I was so pissed off at [university name] at that stage...[university name] offered me a massive pay rise to stay but it was too late; it is not actually about the money, it is
just because I'm so annoyed. If you want me to stay, treat me like a decent human being, stop all this bullying, and behave like the sort of organisation that I actually want to work for.’ (P3: Professor/Red Brick)

‘it rapidly became very clear that the Dean and his increasingly small management team were going to make whatever decision they liked without any attempt to explain the rationality behind that decision and so departures happened very quickly... So that’s what ultimately kind of led me to leave. I didn’t want to feel like that. I want to respect the person I work for and I want them to have respect for my opinions and ideas, I’m not a kid. Treat me like a grown-up...’ (P14: Professor/Red Brick)

Not only do the above two comments show a clear perception of unfair treatment through managerialist practice, but they also confirm the consequent behavioural outcome, as illustrated in Guest and Conway’s (1997) model, that the perception of unfairness might lead to exiting the university. This is also consistent with Zaman, Ali and Ali’s (2010) findings.

5.5.2 Academics’ Perception of Trust in UK Universities

Unsurprisingly, the findings in this section show that academics’ trust in management actions at UK universities has been compromised as a result of managerialist practice. The evidence presented earlier in the chapter shows that the UK NHE context is deeply marked by a growing managerialist style and the expectation of meeting certain goals, especially those that seek to serve economic targets. A lack of trust is therefore alluded to. This is consistent with Hoecht (2006) and Deem’s (2008) arguments that the demand for greater accountability implies a diminishing trust in academics’ actions.

The noticeable tendency towards a bottom-up approach in managing and regulating both the activities of academics and associated resources, pushing out any potential for trust in the academic working environment, is more evident at plate glass universities. The lack of trust reported by participants there depicts such a situation.

‘The one [line manager] we have now would just lie...I know he would lie to your face...he may lie, would smile to your face and probably would happily put a dagger in your back.’ (P21: Professor/Plate Glass)
‘...when there are reports that are going back and forth between senior management that impact on my area and I am not even told about them, that is really difficult... that has significantly eroded that trust.’ (P22: Reader/Plate Glass)

This dysfunctional relationship produced by this growing mistrust of academics’ actions in plate glass universities is very troubling. Not only does it lead to alienation between academics and management (Trow, 1994), but it may also result in attitudinal and behavioural consequences. For example, the above two comments show feelings of disillusionment as a result of management actions and a lack of trust in them, resulting in low job satisfaction, which is consistent with Robison and Morrison (1995) and Bijlsma and Koopman’s (2003) findings. Bryson (2004, p. 45) lends further support to such an argument by explaining that some academics are no longer enjoying ‘any part of the job, apart from the vacations’ due to increased administrative tasks, monitoring and assessments.

In addition, this perception of loss of trust across academia could affect academics’ organisational citizenship behaviour (Bijlsma and Koopman, 2003) and lead to an intention to quit (Connell, Ferres and Travaglione, 2003). The following comment from a participant at a plate glass university supports both the above arguments:

‘I tend to stay at home, not get involved...he doesn’t trust me; I don't trust him...if they want to pay me a professorial salary for being completely disengaged...you can't do that in the long-term... the effect of this [is] complete breakdown; I try to do as little as possible and try to find another job.’ (P21: Professor/Plate Glass)

Similarly, the lack of trust expressed by participants from red brick and post-1992 universities was not as marked as in the case of participants from plate glass universities:

‘...if I had a problem, an issue I would think - well before I would have gone to see them automatically and talk about it, now I think much more carefully...I would be a lot more cautious and not quite as open.’ (P6: Professor/Red Brick)

‘...what matters to me at the moment is [whether I have]...seen my timetable. So, the line manager can say what she wants, but I need to see the timetable...’
(P27:Senior Lecturer/Post-1992)
The participants from ancient universities, on the other hand, reported a high degree of trust in their current management. This is not surprising as the management style and culture in ancient universities have not been affected by managerialist values and practices and the respective participants expressed feelings of satisfaction, driven by their ability to exercise freedom and independence.

Indeed, the findings suggest that there are incentives and adequate grounds for academics in such a culture to believe that their expectations, shaped by their ‘individual factors’ (Guest, 2004) in terms of academic freedom, recognition and collegiality elements, would be met. These conditions articulate Robinson’s (1996, p. 576) conception of encapsulated trust, which she defines as: ‘expectations, assumptions, or beliefs about the likelihood that another’s future actions will be beneficial, favorable, or at least not detrimental to one’s interests’.

5.5.3 Academics’ Perceptions of Management Delivering the Deal

The third and final component of psychological contract content in Guest and Conway’s (1997) model is delivery of the deal. It revolves around the extent to which the university has kept its promises. The failure to reciprocate a party that has fulfilled its side of a deal in relation to obligations or expectations will erode the quality of the exchange relationship (Cotterell, Eisenberger and Speicher, 1992; Rousseau, 1995). In one of the participants’ words:

‘In my previous job at [red brick university]... it was a demotivating experience because I’d made a significant move to a very, very good institution but then all the things they said to attract me there, they didn’t deliver on.’ (P13: Professor/Red Brick)

‘... [At a red brick university] my interests were completely out of line with the views that [the Head of Department] was expressing. So, a classic case of being brought into, believing that you’re going into one environment and then the environment actually turns out to be something else... I stopped coming in. I used to go in every day.’

(P20: Professor/ Plate Glass)

The above two comments show examples of perceived reneging, regardless whether this intentional or otherwise, where unmet expectations can erode the quality of the exchange relationship and result in attitudinal and behavioural consequences. Many of the participants talked about their perceptions of unmet expectations from the management side and the way in which these decreased their level of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. This lends
support to Turnley and Feldman (2000) and Searle and Skinner’s (2011) arguments about such consequences.

Academics’ perceptions that their management have failed to keep their promises might create a feeling of being undervalued. The findings reported earlier in this chapter suggest that perceptions were all the more intense for many of the participants at plate glass universities, where the UK NHE context was experienced as increasingly managerialist in terms of its values and obligations. Feelings of despondency among participants as a result of such ‘contract-related factors’ (Guest, 2004) were noted, as was their intention to quit. In one of the participants’ words:

‘...I’m looking to get out, to be honest, so I’m using some research contacts. It seems like Scandinavia seems to be a bit more sane. I’m not happy and I’m not sure I really want to continue in this I think quite a few people are thinking of exiting...people go, like, “This is not my game anymore.” And I do feel that increasingly.’ (P21: Professor/Plate Glass)

In addition, although the influence of ‘the new cultural epoch of managerialism’ (Shore and Wright, 2000, p. 58) is not only limited to UK HE universities, the above comment from a participant raises an interesting point concerning the working lives of academics in UK universities, in comparison with those in other countries. It seems that the language and practices embraced by new managerialism and management in the UK are more robust. This is evident in the growing forms of control over academics’ activities and the way market-oriented principles are valued. The findings of the Changing Academic Profession (CAP) survey, which was conducted across 18 countries and published in 2010, clearly manifest the relatively poor nature of the context in which academics at UK universities work. According to the survey’s results, UK universities have the lowest work satisfaction scores of the 18 countries participating in the study (Figure 5.5) (Locke and Bennion, 2010). This troubling level of dissatisfaction is arguably closely related to excessive workload and time spent on administrative tasks (‘contract-related factors’ (Guest, 2004)), along with the inconsistencies between what academics believe they have been promised and what they have actually been delivered. Fredman and Doughney (2012, p. 56) have commented on this level of dissatisfaction at UK universities across academia: ‘the turn from a social-democratic to a neo-liberal model was particularly wrenching and thoroughgoing… compared to, for example, the United States (where social-democratic practice was less established) or continental Europe (where neo-liberalism has been less thoroughgoing).’ Therefore, it is not surprising that some
participants’ feelings were intensified, with ensuing despondency and the intention to move to other countries, since conditions in UK HE, especially ‘wider contextual factors’ (Guest, 2004), were causing them too much stress.

Figure 5.5 Satisfaction with academic work by country

![Graph showing satisfaction with academic work by country](image)

Source: Locke and Bennion, 2010

However, this is not the case at the ancient universities. It seemed that the psychological contracts of many of the participating academics working at the respective university type were in a positive state. This, according to Gracia et al. (2007) and Van der Vaart, Linde and Cockeran (2013), results in satisfaction with work–life balance, job satisfaction and psychological well-being. In one of the participants’ words:

‘I, quite honestly, can’t imagine being anywhere else in the UK. I’m very much now fully acclimatised, incorporated or something, into the nature of the institution and I like it, so I’m not going and I have all of the freedoms that I wouldn’t have in other institutions in this country. So, no, I have no intention at all to sort of quit.’

(P1: Associate Professor/Ancient)

Another element that could disrupt the reciprocal nature of the employment relationship and affect the delivery of the deal are the new ideological obligations in UK NHE. The findings discussed earlier in this chapter expose the importance of ideological currency in shaping
academics’ psychological contracts. Hence, the deal in academia will additionally revolve around the obligations and expectations shaped by perspectives of academics’ ideological currency. An unmet expectation in this regard would certainly disrupt the reciprocal nature of the employment relationship and lead to unfulfilled obligations in academics’ psychological contracts. Clear evidence of the attitudinal and behavioural consequences of not taking into account the dimension of academics’ ideological currency was reported by a participant from a red brick university:

‘I’ve seen this with a colleague, he was incredibly proud of that programme…and there were just not very many students that came to that programme and management said, “Right that’s it, we’re going to shut it down.”…academically, he was extremely disappointed…he thought, “Well, if you don’t support my particular postgraduate programme, then I am no longer interested in working here…” Here, what you see is academic integrity and academic interest clashing with the commercial side of running a university… this can be extremely dissatisfying to an academic, and I’ve seen it happen in [a plate glass university].’
(P11: Professor/Red Brick)

5.6 Conclusion
A central discussion in this chapter has been around the effect of the changing context and conditions in the sector, as a result of a proliferation of constraints driven by the current and prevailing new managerialism. The chapter adds to the debate against new managerialism by demonstrating that it is increasing and affecting the working lives of academics. It shows that the UK NHE context is deeply marked by a growing managerialist style and the expectation to meet certain goals. The findings support the suggestion that such conditions are currently impacting on academics’ working lives and consequently affecting their psychological contracts.

In addition, not only do the data confirm the significance of the ideological currency dimension in shaping academics’ psychological contracts, but also suggest that academics currently encounter a fair number of factors they could potentially perceive as leading to ideological breaches of their psychological contracts. Indeed, it would not be surprising if there was a growing feeling of stress and sense of disillusionment across academia. It seems that the contemporary policies and practices of new
managerialism in the UK negatively impact upon academics’ perceptions of the extent to which the ideological currency of their psychological contract is fulfilled.

It seems that many participants in this study experience the state of their psychological contracts as poor. This is because of the proliferating culture of accountability, audit and performance that characterises the UK NHE environment. Attitudinal and behavioural consequences as a result of perceived unfairness, a lack of trust and unmet expectations were reported by the academics interviewed.

Throughout the chapter, insights have been provided which show how practices differ across the respective university types. Moreover, the comparison between the four main university types presented through a discussion of the three themes demonstrates the similarities and differences of the impact of managerialism on the academic environment in England. The findings show the strong presence of managerialist values and practices in red brick, plate glass and post-1992 university types. Participants from these contexts identified, to varying degrees, a dysfunctional relationship between academics and their management. This is not only due to the growing managerialist style and the expectation of meeting specific goals, but is also because of the increasing constraints on academic freedom. Indeed, it seems that the language and practices embraced by managerialism and implemented in these three university types are more robust, as the findings indicate growing forms of control over academics’ activities and the way market-oriented principles are valued. However, the data suggest that in plate glass universities, managerialist ideology has grown ever more persuasive and entrenched in university culture.

The next and final chapter presents a summary of the findings and discusses the limitations of the research in terms of the process adopted and the results obtained. The chapter provides recommendations and indications of how further research on this topic could develop.
Chapter Six
Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction
This research is an exploratory study, which examines the relationship between the new managerialism and the psychological contract of academics in universities in the UK, especially in England. As a reminder, chapter One has provided an overview of the thesis and presented the two research objectives, namely: to investigate: academics’ perceptions of new managerialism and its practices in terms of their psychological contracts, and how their perceptions differ across the four types of university to be found in the UK, and the values and practices associated with managerialist ideology and its effect on the ideological currency of academics’ psychological contracts.

Chapter Two has presented the argument that new managerialism has affected the social exchange relationship between academics. The chapter put forward the claim that the proliferating culture of accountability, audit and performance characterising the UK NHE environment is currently impacting on academics’ working lives.

Chapter Three has reviewed and discussed the literature on the psychological contract, along with related theories, such as the social exchange theory. The chapter has placed an emphasis on the central role of perceptions of reality in the psychological contract, represented as being ‘in the eye of the beholder’ (Rousseau 1989, p. 123). A conceptual model, built on the literature, is introduced, which illustrates the formation and development of an individual’s psychological contract in the employment relationship. In addition, the chapter has presented a heuristic model that articulates the conditions under which an ideological breach of academics’ psychological contract is likely to occur.

Chapter Four has outlined the research methodology used to investigate the two research objectives in this instance. The chapter has provided justification for adopting an extreme and critical case and limiting the scope of the sample exclusively to business academics.

Chapter Five then has presented and discussed the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews conducted across academics working at the four types of UK university. The findings show an imbalance in the expectations driven by those managerialist practices being
imposed on academics in that context. The data show the participants’ strong negative views of managerialist values and practices. Such values and practices, according to the participants, are negatively affecting their psychological contracts. The chapter illustrates how the impact of managerialism on the academic environment differs across the four university types.

The closing chapter of this thesis offers a summary and discusses the key theoretical and empirical contributions made by the thesis. The chapter then discusses the implications of the research findings, before identifying and discussing research limitations in terms of the process adopted and the findings generated. This is followed by some recommendations and implications of how further research on this topic could develop. The final section presents concluding statements on the research and its contribution.

**6.2 Contribution**

Guided by the literature, the research has investigated academics’ perceptions of reality in terms of managerialist ideology and practice in universities, especially the growing expectations of the current prevailing ideology within the NHE context. By doing so, this research has made four theoretical and practical contributions to the existing body of knowledge on the relationship between new managerialism and the psychological contracts of academics in general, with particular reference to the impact of managerialist policies and practices in UK NHE. The following two sub-sections present a discussion of the abovementioned contributions and their implications.

**6.2.1 Theoretical contribution**

The theoretical contribution to theory offered by this research relates to the ideological currency of academics’ psychological contracts. There not only appear to be limited studies exploring this topic (Shen, 2010; Tookey, 2013), but there is also an absence of research discussing the significance of the ideological currency dimension in shaping these psychological contracts. This research has addressed that gap in the literature by introducing a heuristic model, reproduced below (Figure 6.1). This is unique to the academic environment and articulates the conditions under which an ideological breach of an academic’s psychological contract is likely to occur.
The proposed heuristic model argues that an academic in a university will experience an ideological breach as a result of several conditions encountered, namely intentional reneging and the perception of goal displacement or value interpenetration. The perception of such conditions is shaped by certain types of expectations and obligations that academics perceive as important in terms of their ideological currency within the relationship they have with their university.

In addition, not only has this heuristic model helped to develop an understanding of the relationship between academics and their management in universities, especially in terms of academics’ psychological contracts, but it has also identified an area where further research would be beneficial.

### 6.2.2 Empirical contribution

The findings of this research present contributions to the understanding of working lives in four types of UK universities. Although there has been considerable research into the impact of new managerialism on academics lives (e.g. Jary and Parker, 1998, Willmott, 2011; Mingers and Willmott 2013; Butler and Spoelstra, 2014), there appears to be an absence of research
investigating the differentiated experience of new managerialism and its effects across the main four English university types. Drawing on an extreme and critical case, this research has addressed the respective shortcomings and attempted to fill the knowledge gap by exploring how managerialist practices differ across the different types of university.

Looking at different university groups allowed the researcher to enter into the richness of the context and uncover all sorts of extremes in academic life. Many participants in red brick, plate glass and post-1992 university types talked about the strong presence of managerialist values and practices in their respective workplaces. Participants from these contexts were found to identify, to varying degrees, a dysfunctional relationship between academics and their management. This is not only due to the growing managerialist style and expectations of meeting specific goals, but is also because of the increasing constraints on academic freedom. However, out of the three types, the impact of managerialism was perceived as lowest in red brick universities. Academics there seem to still possess relative collegiality and democratic decision-making.

On the other hand, participants from plate-glass universities seemed to be particularly affected by managerialist values and practices. The experience of academic work in the respective university type tends to be worse in comparison with red brick and post-1992 universities. This is clear in the darkest accounts of the constraints and pressures, driven by the growing managerialist expectations, reported by participants of the strong presence of top-down approach and commercially-focused orientation, of the poor work-life balance, and the erosion of their autonomy and freedom. This empirical finding is contrary to what has been previously argued by Kok et al. (2010), where the authors report that academics in post-1992 universities have been worst affected by new managerialism.

In contrast, at ancient universities, participants at the ancient universities appeared to perceive far less pressure in the current managerialist climate. Besides the exception of the publication pressures, there was no perception of a top-down approach or market orientation by participants. Academics at the respective type seem to enjoy, for the mean time, a certain degree of power, freedom and independence.

Secondly, the research adds to the debate against new managerialism in relation to the growing negative relationship between academics and their management (Deem 2004; Barnett 2011; Vivienne and Grant, 2013) by demonstrating that the proliferating culture of accountability, audit and performance that characterises the UK NHE environment is negatively affecting the
psychological contracts of academics. The interview data show that the UK NHE context is deeply marked by a stringent management styles, control mechanisms and the expectation to meet certain goals. Participants reported a growing imbalance in the expectations driven by the managerialist practices being imposed on academics in UK universities. The poor state of academics’ psychological contracts in UK universities, suggested by the findings, strengthens and confirms such concerns raised against managerialist values and practices. Attitudinal and behavioural consequences as a result of perceived unfairness, a lack of trust and unmet expectations were reported by the academics interviewed.

Last but not least, the study has also made contributions to investigating the subjective realities of academics in UK universities, by embracing an interpretivist epistemological position. This is through the use of qualitative semi-structured interviewing to explore the nature of academics’ psychological contracts, in particular the meaning and motives behind their interpretation of daily events encountered in the course of the employment relationship. This is important because, according to Conway and Briner (2005), and Coyle-Shapiro and Parzefall (2008), there is a dearth of qualitative studies on the nature of the psychological contract, where the vast majority of studies employ quantitative approaches. The qualitative data from the interviews yielded rich information on some of the areas academics might perceive as affecting their psychological contracts, e.g. the ‘corporatisation’ of UK HE, where some participants reported that management is lowering the standards of student recruitment in order to increase student intake.

6.3 Implications of the Findings
The findings of the research have several implications for management in universities. As UK universities, empowered by new managerialism, are promulgating business-like and private sector ideals, it is hoped that the findings of this research will play a valuable role in shedding light on the relationship between academics and their universities. The findings show the poor state of academics’ psychological contracts in UK universities. This is because of the proliferating culture of accountability, audit and performance which characterises the UK NHE environment. Attitudinal and behavioural consequences as a result of perceived unfairness, a lack of trust and unmet expectations were reported by the academics interviewed. Therefore and because the psychological contract is increasingly viewed as a useful instrument in understanding and managing noticeable changes surrounding employment relationships which are driven by political and economic pressure (Arnold, 1996; Sparrow, 1996; Herriot, Manning and Kidd, 1997), the management at UK universities may find the psychological contract to be
a powerful instrument of organisational leverage when seeking ways of retaining academic staff and trying to ensure high levels of job satisfaction amongst the latter. In fact, the maintenance of the psychological contract can positively impact organisational citizenship behaviour. University managers, especially in plate glass and post-1992 types, should therefore take it seriously and employ appropriate strategies to effectively manage the psychological contracts of academics.

In addition, this research has exposed the significance of ideological currency in shaping academics’ psychological contracts. The findings suggest that ideological expectations play an important role in motivating academics and enhancing their commitment. Academic participants reported a high level of awareness about their academic profession. It is therefore to be recommended that universities pay attention to those ideological obligations which are valued by professional employees and create a work environment where academics have the opportunity to uphold their valued causes and principles. Furthermore, the findings reveal that some managers at UK universities overlook this dimension in their exchange relationship with academics, resulting in perceived ideological breaches and a negative impact on academics’ attitudes and behaviour at their respective universities (e.g. low commitment and extra role behaviour). From a practical viewpoint, this suggests that managers should attempt to understand the nature of ideological currency in academics’ psychological contracts and how such valued causes and beliefs might affect academics’ perceptions of what they contribute to the university and what the university is expected to offer in return.

The third implication of the findings of this research is in relation to the present conditions of plate glass universities, where managerialist ideology has grown ever more pervasive and entrenched in university culture. According to the findings, academics working in the respective type experience the greatest pressure as a result of a top-down approach and commercially-focused orientation. Within the conditions of NHE and its management, it seems that academics in plate glass universities are squashed in the middle. Conditions in those environments are rather less attractive than one might conceive of life in academia. Academics might actually be better off working elsewhere, including post-1992 universities.

Furthermore, the findings of this research raise serious questions about the soundness of the need to implement managerialist values and practices in UK HE, particularly in red brick, plate glass and post-1992 universities. Although the findings show the strong presence of managerialist values and practices in the respective types, theses types of universities are
lagging behind not only in terms of the success in league tables (nationally and internationally), but also in the way in which management is managing their most valuable asset: academics. The findings show that academics there are disappointed and not happy with the present managerialist practices. Ironically on the other hand, ancient universities, who were far less exposed to the current managerialist climate and still maintain a collegial structure, are scoring in league tables and continue to put their mark nationally and internationally.

So, why there is this desire to try to be like another type of university (i.e. ancient); to emulate their success, through the use of mechanisms and techniques that are totally alien to those sorts of universities? It is implausible that this continuous argument to promote managerialist values and practice while it is clear that such approaches are failing to achieve their target claims and at the same time undermining the academic ethos, which ancient universities still poses.

In addition, the findings portray a gloomy picture of the conditions under which academics work in UK universities and the privileges they enjoy. The reported conditions of bureaucratic hierarchy, erosion of freedom and autonomy, lack of trust and feelings of disillusionment and despondency by academics are worrying not only because they might lead to a demotivate academic staff but also might lead to a brain drain from the academic profession.

Last but not least, there is a lesson to be learned from managers at ancient universities and how they handle the managerialist regime. Managers in plate glass and post-1992 universities, especially in the former, might like to consider and emulate some of the ways in which managers at the ancient universities handle this growing movement towards managerial culture and deal with the exchange relationship with their academic staff. Perhaps the key message here is a call for urgent change of policies, particularly at the way in which plate glass and post-1992 universities operate under managerialism.

6.4 Limitations of the Research
This thesis displays a number of limitations. Firstly, it has the potential for bias and there are a number of reasons for this; one being that the sample has many more male than female academics. It could also be argued that the academics who participated in this research were currently experiencing difficulties at work and merely sought to voice their concerns and vent their dissatisfaction with management actions. In addition, a psychological contract is a subjective perception, differing from one party to another (Thomas and Anderson, 1998). As reported here, this position plays a critical role in positive psychological contracts. Hence, a
sample comprising more academics from a broader sample of universities could yield a higher number of optimistic findings. Another reason why the findings could be perceived as biased is that the sample includes two early career academics, constituting a potential weakness.

Another limitation of this thesis is the adopted sampling strategy. This research is an extreme and critical case that focuses on business schools. Although several rationales were presented in chapter Four in support of this decision, it might constrain the applicability of the findings to other disciplines and schools, because of differences in relation to historic, cultural and economic conditions. Brown and Humphreys (2006, p. 252) note that ‘question(s) may be answered quite differently by groups with distinct histories’. In addition, English universities are quite different from universities in other countries.

In addition, the method adopted for this study, i.e. the semi-structured interview, could also represent a limitation, as the participants’ willingness to talk openly about their experiences could be influenced by the researcher’s performance. Moreover, the fact that the views expressed could differ in other contexts means they should not be interpreted as definitive.

Last but not least, it was only possible within the respective timeframe for my PhD to offer a snapshot of academics’ perceptions of reality and the beliefs that constitute their psychological contracts. While the findings reveal interesting arguments concerning managerialist policies and practices in UK NHE, along with their consequent potential impact upon academics’ psychological contracts, what is equally important is the dynamic nature of the psychological contract itself, where individuals may apply on-going evaluation in shaping their perceptions of reality throughout the employment relationship.

6.5 Recommendations for Future Research
Based on the findings and limitations of the research, several future directions could be recommended. While the study has raised arguments against new managerialism and its consequent effect upon the psychological contracts of academics in UK business schools, it is for other studies to establish whether these findings are unique or whether they have significance for other academic departments.

In addition, while the findings of this study are only applicable to UK HE, the reported values and practices might not be centric phenomena there; similar conditions could be evident elsewhere. Given the way that globalisation is taking place within HE, as in any other industry,
it could be implied that these conditions exist elsewhere. Therefore, a comparative study that covers an international dimension is required.

Another future direction concerns ideological currency in academia. The findings indicate that perceptions of academics’ psychological contracts are best understood in reference to the ideological currency dimension. It could therefore be recommended that future studies consider examining the significance of the ideological currency of academics’ psychological contracts across a broader sample of universities. In addition, future research should consider examining how ideological currency interacts with economic and socio-emotional dimensions in shaping academics’ psychological contracts.

The fourth recommendation for future research is to uncover more on the dynamic nature of the psychological contract, especially the factors which continue to shape individual expectations. This research design did not permit an exploration of the evolving nature of psychological contracts; however, a conceptual model was proposed at the end of chapter Three, which illustrates the development and dynamic nature of the psychological contract in the course of the employment relationship. The model highlights the dynamic nature of psychological contracts as they continue to evolve in response to various specific factors. Therefore, a longitudinal study that tests the proposed model is required.

The fifth recommendation concerns the chosen research design and method. Although an exploratory research and qualitative method were considered most appropriate for examining the subjective reality constructed by academics in relation to managerialist ideology (Kvale, 1983; Jones, 1985; Conway and Briner, 2005), future studies should also seek to examine such perceptions using alternative research designs, sampling strategies and sophisticated quantitative data collection and analysis methods.

The sixth recommendation for future research concerns the similarities and differences presented in the impact of new managerialism on the academic environment in England. Although these findings are considered exploratory rather than confirmatory, they provide an argument over the ways in which practice differs across the university types being compared. It is hoped that these findings will guide researchers and provide insights into the nature of new managerialism and its effects across the different types of university in England. For example, researchers could investigate in more depth the culture of plate glass universities and
understand the reasons which have led to their management adopting the strongest market-oriented values and managerialist practices, in comparison to the other types examined.

6.6 Final words

This research seeks to challenge those values and practices associated with new managerialism in UK universities that undermine the academic ethos and question the claims that such a culture is achieving its aims (e.g. improving the working lives of academics and the student experience). The findings reveal that, within the UK NHE context, the polarity between academics and new managerialism appears to be more intense than what is implied in much of the literature. In fact, a gloomy picture is portrayed of the present conditions in UK universities, where a distancing relationship between academics and management is becoming more marked, as a result of continuously growing managerialist values and practices.

The findings confirm the criticisms of new managerialism, where an increasingly top-down and autocratic style of academic management, a corporate mentality amongst managers, a lack of freedom and autonomy, and the management’s distrust of academics are evident in UK universities. As a result of such conditions, the academics participating in this study appeared to hold strong negative views of managerialist ideology and condemned their managers of surrendering to this ideology, which is ‘ill-conceived and unfit for purpose’ (Miliken and Colohan, 2004, p. 389).

The consequences of new managerialism’s grip over academic participants and their work can be seen in the proliferating culture of accountability, audit and performance that characterises the UK NHE environment. Such an invasive climate, embraced by the management in UK universities, is currently affecting the psychological contracts of academics. This is clear in the participants’ feelings of unfairness, a lack of trust and perceptions of growing imbalance in managerialist expectations, to the detriment of academics, in the exchange relationship. Not only do the findings show the poor state of academics’ psychological contracts in UK universities, but they also suggest a growing feeling of stress and sense of disillusionment across academia.

Although this research calls serious attention to the prevalence and impact of managerialist ideology and practice in UK HE, the research argues that experiences of academic work can vary widely from one university type to another. This is drawn from the findings, which reveal a highly interesting differentiated experience of such ideology across the four main university
types. On one hand, the findings show the sharpest contrast between those participants working at ancient and plate glass universities, where the conditions of the former are portrayed as ‘walking on water’ and those of the latter are likened to ‘walking into the outer darkness’. On the other hand, red brick and post-1992 universities appear to lie between the other two, strikingly different university types, in terms of evidence of managerialism, with the former being noticeably milder.

The evidence provided by the data raises great concern over the way in which UK universities operate. The continued imposition of forms of invasive and coercive managerialist practices upon the academic world is an extremely dangerous path that appears to be altering the essence and squashing the positive aspects of an academic career. Managers at UK universities are therefore dealing with the most valuable asset in their institutions with an autocratic and top-down management style. The consequent dysfunctional relationship between academics and managers as a result of such an approach and the growing managerialist expectations, mentioned by most of the participants in this research, may arguably drive away the most skilled and talented academics in the UK. UK universities are actively creating a culture which encourages the departure of their academics. So-called ‘brain drain’ is something which can particularly be expected as a result of this, with all the damaging characteristics new managerialism promulgates to both academics and the student experience. It seems that academics, especially in plate glass and post-1992 universities, do not see their career as enjoyable and fulfilling and with the growing dominance of new managerialism, an academic career might in future become a dull and demotivating prospect. Although this is not yet the case in the ancient universities, aside from the constraining effects of the pressure to publish in highly-ranked journal articles, how long will universities of this type remain immune from the marching invasion of managerialist ideology?

It is evident that managers in UK universities have lost their way, as they are treating the most valuable university asset in this autocratic and top-down manner. UK universities are creating a culture which will eventually alienate their academics, resulting in a dearth of expertise and its ensuing damage to the academic environment and the students hoping to benefit from it. This warning message is especially directed at managers in plate glass universities. The findings suggest a worryingly dark experience for academics working at the respective type of university. Why have so many managers surrendered to the new managerialism? To reiterate the views of one participant, who poignantly described the conditions in such institutions:
‘... I think we’re much more managerial than the managerialism we denounce in corporations ... I sometimes call it democracy North Korean-style, where announcements are made and then...you're there to applaud decisions that have been made.’

(P21: Professor/Plate Glass)

What has gone wrong? Most importantly, can academics survive this onslaught? This is yet to be seen as HE continues to evolve under new managerialism – a development which is unlikely to relent in the context of the new conservative government.
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Appendix One

Ethical approval forms
Participant Information Sheet

Research Title: Examining the employment relationship in UK higher education in a conservative era

Dear Prof. /Dr.

I would like to invite you to take part in a research project. I am a doctoral student at the University of Surrey where I conduct research examining the relationship between management and the psychological contract of academics. I plan to interview a cross section of academics from Business Schools from each type of university in England (i.e. old, red brick, new and modern) to obtain a representative picture of how they view their working experience nowadays.

It is unlikely that you will benefit directly but it is hoped that the research will aid in making sense of the changing realities of contemporary academic work and thus, in helping to inform future HE policy. However, I will send to you a summary of the research findings on the completion of my research, which will approximately be at the end of 2015.

I would like your help in gathering this information: it will entail a 60-75 minute interview during which I will be asking you about your views on working at your university and your perception with regard to a number of aspects of your employment experience. It is intended that the interview be recorded; permission to record will be sought, and only where given will the interview be recorded. In addition, I will be sending you an email three days before the interview, in which I will ask you kindly to think about different types of incident (between five and six) that you believe you might have experienced during your employment relationship with management in the past. This is important as some parts of the interview questions require you to provide examples of such incidents, if applicable. I recognise that confidentiality is vitally important and will ensure that all the personal information you give will be anonymised so that those reading reports from the research will not know who has contributed to it. Likewise there will be no reference to the university affiliations of the participants. Research data will be stored securely and retained for 10 years in accordance with University policy; personal data will be held and processed in the strictest confidence and in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998).

The study is funded by my PhD sponsor: the Saudi Arabia Cultural Bureau and the research has been reviewed and received a favourable opinion from the University of Surrey Ethics Committee. Further information may be obtained from my supervisor: Dr. Alf Crossman on 01483 68 2006; a.crossman@surrey.ac.uk.
You are under no obligation to take part in this research. You can withdraw at any time without giving a reason and there will be no adverse consequences if you do so. I very much hope you choose to participate in this work. If so, please contact me either by email (a.alawaad@surrey.ac.uk), so that we can agree on how we should proceed, or I will be happy to ring you at a convenient time when you can arrange some privacy, either at work or at home, as you prefer. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Information Sheet.

ABDULAZIZ ALAWAAD
Consent Form

Ethics Committee

• I the undersigned voluntarily agree to take part in the study on “Examining the employment relationship in UK higher education in a conservative era.”

• I have read and understood the Information Sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation by the investigator (Abdulaziz Alawaad) of the purpose and likely duration of the interview, and of what I will be expected to do. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of the study and have understood the advice and information given as a result.

• I consent to my personal data, as outlined in the accompanying information sheet, being used for this study and other research. I understand that all personal data relating to volunteers is held and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998).

• I consent to the recording of the interview.

• I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without needing to justify my decision and without prejudice.

• I confirm that I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participating in this study. I have been given adequate time to consider my participation and agree to comply with the instructions and restrictions of the study.

• Name of volunteer (BLOCK CAPITALS)………………………………
  Signed........................................................
  Date...........................................................

Name of researcher (BLOCK CAPITALS)………………………………
Signed..........................................................
Interview schedule

The purpose of this interview is to find out more about how academics regard their psychological contract (the promises they believe have been made by their management) in the context of HE. I would like to ask you several questions in relation to your experience as an academic and how you perceive management practices and expectations. This should last no longer than 1 hour and 15 minutes. Is it OK if I record our conversation for data collection purposes? Any personal details you provide in response to the questions will be treated in a confidential manner and your anonymity will be preserved; at no time will your name, or any other information which could identify you, be attached to any of your responses.

Firstly, I would like to ask you for some personal information (years of experience in HE) and about your role in the university. This information will enable me to make comparisons with other academics participating in my research, who may have similar characteristics.

1. How many years have you worked as an academic in the higher education (HE) sector, and how many years in this university?

2. Could you tell me about your role in the university?

Now, I am going to ask you to think about the relationship that you have with (authority) the senior management in general and your line manager in particular, as well as the expectations that have been shaped as a result of your belief in implicit or explicit promises in the exchange relationship with management.

3. How would you describe the management style and administrative mechanisms adopted in HE institutions nowadays?

4. Do you believe that the role of academics has changed over recent years? Can you tell me how, and describe your feelings about these changes?

5. Would it be fair to say that these changes have impacted your relationship with senior management and your line manager at the university? Tell me how and why, and give me examples.
6. How would you describe the communication channels between line managers and academics in the university?

7. Since you started working as an academic in HE, do you believe senior management and line managers’ expectations from academics have changed (reduced or increased)? Tell me how and why, and give me examples.

8. Since your recruitment to the university, and in comparison with your previous jobs as an academic in HE,
   I) Do you believe that your expectations of, and entitlements from, senior management in general, and your line manager in particular have changed?
   II) Please explain how and why, and give me examples.

9. Have you ever experienced any inconsistencies between what you believe your line manager has said he/she will do, and what he/she has actually done?
   I) Could you describe these incidents and your feelings as a result of them?
   II) Do you believe someone else in the university may have contributed to these incidents? Tell me how, and give me examples.

10. In your job experience, have you had any responses to similar incidents (the failure of your line manager to deliver on expectations); changes in terms of your motivation, engagement in extra roles, attendance and the intention to stay/quit over the years? Give me any examples of how your experience has changed, if applicable?

11. During any of these incidents, and as a means of evaluating your line manager’s actions, did you take into account what happened to your academic colleagues in similar situations? Please give me examples.

12. Think of this situation, if someone with a traditional career-oriented and he/she encountered an incident a perceived broken promise or undelivered obligation

Can you tell me about other factors that you believe might have moderated the extent of a perceived broken promise or undelivered obligation that you believe senior management or your line
manager defaulted on?

13. How important is it for you to trust your line manager? Does this influence your perception of some of the inconsistencies that we talked about?

14. How would you describe the level of trust you first had with your line manager, in comparison to the level of trust you now have?

15. How would you describe the fairness of the processes adopted by your line manager in the university?

Finally, is there anything else you would like to add concerning your current work experience here in the university? Is there anything that I have not covered in this interview and that you believe is relevant? If you think of anything else, feel free to contact me in future. Furthermore, if you like, I will send you a copy of the transcript of our discussion so that you may comment on, or correct anything I have recorded. If there is anything I am unclear on, may I contact you to verify?

This ends the interview. I would like to thank you very much for your participation in my research.
Appendix Two
Sample interview transcript

I: How many years have you worked as an academic in the higher education (HE) sector, and how many years in this university?

R: I’ve worked in two universities; both of them have been mainly teaching universities.

This university has a better research base than my previous university and, actually, was the main reason for me coming here. I came into higher education quite late – as is common in business schools – so I had already had a career and came in at forty or just under forty. I’ve done about twenty years’ service and that will be pretty much split between the two institutions.

When I was at the previous institution, I worked my way up from senior lecturer through to principal lecturer and reader and then came over to this institution as a professor. I have been a professor here… I came into a senior fairly early on. We have a system in this university of a rota, a rotating Associate Dean for Research. Fairly soon after I arrived, I stupidly put my hand up for that job.

So, actually, quite quickly, I was able to be in senior team meetings here. I rotated out as I needed to – and that’s fine – and then, I suppose, carried on being a Professor within a department, supporting other’s work etcetera, etcetera. And, then about a year ago – just over a year ago – With a restructure at our Business School, I volunteered to become a line manager for around about thirty people.

So, I’m now on the other end [laughter] of the psychological contract and so… Or maybe I’m the jam in the sandwich? I’m not sure but I’ve now got a reasonable overview and it’s a very interesting experience in higher education.

I: Could you tell me about your role in the university?

R: I’m in charge of just under thirty people for point six of my time.
And, in that time, I’m responsible for all those I manage, what they do and their appraisals. I deal with all the timetabling stuff. I do not have to identify how much research time they get – we have rubrics for that – it’s about the publications and you get so much time. So, I administer that but I see my role as enabling staff and one of the big things that I think I never got as a young academic – or rather, new to academia, I was never a ‘young’ academic – was nobody was clear with me on how I advanced. And, what I see, my final contribution here is working with a set of people who are actually enormously talented and what I want to do is help work with them so that they can maximise their careers in whatever direction that is. If it’s to do research, marvellous…If they want to progress, through reader and professor, fantastic but if they don’t, that’s also fine.

And, obviously on the teaching side too and the administration so, there’s three main routes. What I’m trying to do is help them collect enough experiences so that when a promotion job comes up, they’ve got that sitting there and if they don’t want promotion, and, actually, when any other interesting opportunity were to come up that would enrich their working lives, I like them to feel as if they have the confidence and the experience to at least have a go. Because I think most people come into academia, interested, they’re certainly not here for the money. And therefore, for me, it’s about what are the other rewards of the job and trying to maximise those for people. That said, I do say to everybody, “Twenty per cent of what you do is shit” and we’ve got to reckon that if I can achieve… Eighty per cent of your work is really thrilling and really, really engaging and gives you joy every day, that’s actually what I’d like to achieve. I’m very, very open with staff on that.

And, as for my sixty per cent…Now, the other problem…The other issue is that, of course, I’m meant to do forty per cent on other things. However, in terms of my role, I also have a pile of doctoral candidates to supervise. I also have to do teaching because I have to role-model. And, I’m meant to do research. In fact, since I have had this job last year, I have had two afternoons of research. So, my research has been… It’s been a disaster. Fortunately, I’m in that stage of my career, where I’m into the next REF. I won’t be here for the next, for the one after, so it doesn’t matter but I feel dreadful for the other managers who are occupying equivalent positions who are not in my fortunate…Mine was very much a calculated move. I wanted to be able to give back to the working community and had already made sure that I was in the REF, so that was alright. So, I’m still a Professor but to be quite honest my publications are…I’m piggy-backing off other people and also it’s what’s left in the pipelines still that is drifting through.
So, it’s very sad though. It’s a very sad experience to leave the Professorial side behind. I mean, obviously, it’s in fact leaving the research behind that is sad. All the Professorial stuff…I have got much more power, now, to be able to help people and find time for them and lie, cheat and steal for them.

I: Now I’m going to ask you about the relationship you have with authority - the senior management or the Line Manager, where applicable. Have the expectations that have been made shaped as a result of explicit or implicit promises changed the relationship with management?

How would you describe the management style and administrative mechanisms adopted in higher education in institutions nowadays?

R: I think what I see in this institution is rather mechanistic HR processes. This institution has moved from providing advancement on merit to being one that provides advancements into a fixed number of roles. And that is just dramatic as a change. Advancement is constant issue here and unfortunately, I have had to pick up a situation where quite often, when people were hired…The person who occupied my position said to just about everybody, “You will be a principal lecturer,” - which for us, in old universities, is a senior lecturer - “within the year.” Six, seven, eight, nine, ten years later, they are still that same grade.

So I certainly pick up the wrong end of promises and I have been astounded at how different people react. My personal reaction is that…I’m quite political animal and if somebody makes me a promise that they don’t keep - now this cannot be kept, this promise – what I do is, quite quickly; work out that that’s not going to happen. I don’t hang around, I don’t waste my life waiting for them and I just move on and I rearrange my brain and my expectations or I would change jobs, or change institutions. Actually, that’s not what people do here: They sit with the hurt and that is the… it’s constantly an issue of how far people can walk away from promises that have been made and not delivered and I am extremely careful…In fact, I only promise what I can deliver and that actually means I promise very little because, actually, I can’t deliver anything much.

I: What do you think about the management style here, in relation to publication?
R: I come back to the word ‘mechanistic’…We have a rubric which is based on the REF and everybody can understand that in a business school because that is what we get paid for. And so, the Rubric is extremely mechanistic. I am constantly trying to change the mechanism but I have to see the rationality of it. So I think it’s very rational, it is over-mechanistic and it actually does not help, particularly, the staff who came into the institution and then picked up research. The people who it helps is the classic economics person who comes to do their masters, stays on and does their doctorate, stays in, they are a ‘career academic’. In my area, which is OB and HR, most people have had real careers, so they come in as teachers. They then pick up the research baton and it’s…That’s when they need the time and, unfortunately, if you have an output-orientated model, they don’t get the time when they need it. So, it then takes them another five years to even start registering on our output model. They could have done it in one-and-a-half or two but we’ve – as far as I’m concerned – lost three years of that time.

So the mechanistic approach, the benefits of it is that it’s definitely fair - everybody can see it’s fair, in terms of the outputs. What it is not taking into account is how people are getting to the outputs and developing people to be able to get to those outputs. So, in terms of publishing it is very fair here and that’s good.

I: Do you believe the role of academics has changed over recent years?

R: I came from an institution that had far more…far higher workload expectations, regarding teaching. I came into this institution so that say, for example, I stopped counting when I was teaching seventeen hours a week because I knew the institution was breaking its contract and I just stopped counting because I didn’t want to know how bad it was. The institution was financially dodgy and really it was all hands on deck. It was actually very meaningful work…It was a great place…I enjoyed working there and it was good, but as far as the contract was concerned; terrible. So, I walked into here and actually for people to teach eight hours a week here is fairly ordinary. So, if you’ve been teaching seventeen hours a week and you see an average of eight, you start to think.

So my previous experience did frame my expectations but I have seen, in this institution, say over the last, probably four years, a real intensification of work, yes. And I think the intensification is particularly around…It comes from…The one side people are being asked to teach more, they are but on the other side, we are being incredibly slow in this place – and I suspect in others – about relieving highly-paid staff relatively of administration jobs. So, this
morning at eight-thirty I was doing my printing [laughter]. I was doing the printing for my students this afternoon. It’s stupid, frankly; it’s stupid that I have to take registers; it’s stupid that I have to prepare all my arks for the exam board. I theoretically, if I was running a course of three hundred and fifty, I would get help but actually I have to be running a course of more than a hundred to get help. And’ if I’m running a course of ninety eight, actually, I get no help.

So, it’s stupid that we’re paying senior – bright, senior people, the senior lecturers; It’s a very, very expensive way. Now I think, if we are asking people to teach, I think that’s…I have no problem with that. If we’re asking people to research at a higher level and publish at a higher level; actually, I have no problem with that. But what we do need to do is take away the blob jobs, and give them to administrators who are probably actually able to do them far quicker, far better because that’s where their skills are.

I: What do you think of the role of an academic in relation to freedom, freedom to publish in journals?

R: We have had a push towards three star and four star journals. In this institution or in our business school, we generally – because we do teaching a lot – we are rarely producing the data that will get into a four star journal. I think if somebody gets into a four-star journal here it’s absolutely fantastic and often, of course, they’re doing it with people in other institutions, who probably do have more resources. That said, I think the… pushing people… I personally don’t have any trouble in getting people into three star journals.

I: Right.

R: I do worry that there is going to be a huge amount of knowledge that is unpublished and I do worry…What we have, certainly, is a very strong push to say to people, “If you try a two/three start journal two times and you can’t get in and you can’t get it in, for heaven’s sake get it published anywhere. You know, just stick in into anything because in the end if you’re looking at people’s CVs, length of publications, how many you’ve got does matter. I think the…Where I find staff who are…I manage; I find they are unrealistic, whatever I say to them. They appear to be unrealistic – I reckon I’ve been in post just over a year – but they are unrealistic as to what it takes to write a good paper and that, actually, writing a good paper probably takes at least nine months.
I:  Yes.

R:  And that’s why one paper a year fine with me and that’s why we’re judged on less than one paper a year.

I:  What do you think of the collegiality among staff at the university?

R:  You have to work at it and it has to be worth it, I think. I certainly work a lot at it. Because I’ve been a professor in this group for a lot of years now, I have continually worked at it. It is something that, often people don’t have enough time to sit with each other. They don’t have enough time to take advantage of all the collegiality. That said, we are in a business school, where people come to work to work and that’s actually our competitive advantage.

If you go to the university up the road, their car park is empty because the staff come in; they teach, they go back in their car and they go home. They have no Christmas parties - well, if the Dean runs a Christmas party, twenty people turn up. Our Dean can’t run a Christmas party because we haven’t got anywhere big enough yet everybody will come. I run a Christmas party and have one hundred per cent attendance and everyone actually likes it.

So, that’s good but I have to make…I have to work very hard to create spaces for people to be collegiate and also have to spend quite a lot of informal time, where some people are too sharp with each other and other people need to step forward some more. I know they’re frustrated but they’ve actually got to step forward and take some risks. So, it encourages some people to step forward and encourages some people – especially bossy people – to step back a bit [laughter]. But I do a lot of that – I do a lot of that but also I do a lot of that too myself; I have a lot of self-reflection because I am a very bossy person. I’m far too noisy and I have to shut up and it’s very difficult for me to do that. But, given that I do it on a daily basis…I’m not very good all the time but I do try.

I:  Do you think that the role of academics has changed in relation to engagement with students?

R:  Yes, I’ve seen very much it will do. The mentality of some academics does not survive, which is good. I see students get a better deal now. I also like very much…I know one of the reasons of moving to a stronger research place is that, really, the spill-over of research into
teaching is not really what the member of staff has done, it’s actually about what standard of scholarship they use. And the students really do benefit from that: That the academics are up to high standards of scholarship and if you’re polishing and you’re researching, I’m not bothered if you have a PhD or not. But a PhD is a bench that says, “I am at that good quality level” and we have a lot of PhDs here. So like, for example, I’m teaching Research Methods to quite a difficult set of students who we need to get to a high level quickly. I can design a seminar which is using quite sophisticated angles of web of knowledge and I just look on the staff list and I know they’re all on that level. I don’t have to make the case that Google score is not enough. It’s wonderful and that’s really good.

I: One of my interviewees mentioned that the engagement of students with regard to one-to-one contact...

R: There’re so many students. Yeah. I have always worked in business schools where there are a lot of students. My only expectations are that I rarely get to know students, with the exception of when I’m supervising their dissertations. But, I’ve never had that expectation. I’ve never been in a school where there are enough students…I have boards and you can see here…I’m bad on names so I have boards that make sure that I’m at least calling the student by their correct name. But, other than that I have very low expectations of having really…What I can have, I think, is very meaningful interactions. What I try to do is have fantastic quality interactions with students – very affirming for them and, I hope, directly useful. But I don’t…I rarely have a relationship with a student.

I: What do you think of the standardisation of teaching along with the teaching evaluation in the classroom?

R: The standardisation issue, I think - I observe - varies a lot from place to place. For me, just to check what we mean by standardisation. For me, it’s about an evenness of delivery. So, say we have a course here that has three hundred and fifty students on it, what we need to make sure is that every seminar experience has a minimum standard. It’s…We’re looking through; that every staff member will personalise it – as they should. And indeed personalise it for the group. Is that what we mean by standardisation?

I: Well, it’s, yeah… controlling the teaching practice in the classroom.
R: Yeah.

I: Yeah, yeah.

R: How people’s workloads happen here is that almost everybody really has some teaching where they are a follower. The unit coordinator is the leader because they will design the materials and give people good briefing. Now, sometimes it is too much by pigeon hole. I worry about that but nevertheless. You’re probably picking up we do have a group that do talk together a lot, and because we’re here a lot, we are bumping into each other a lot, which is why I was only just on time for this meeting. So, every time I walk out there, there are people there, whereas with some universities you’ve got to get them on the phone and that sort of thing.

I think that everybody got a set of teaching...And that’s my job, as well; to blend where they are basically in charge - and, frankly, completely free, as long as we’re the right side of the law. I don’t care what they do and I don’t care that they do it here. They could go off down to the local shopping centre and do a lecture in the middle of the shopping centre for anything I mind. Just get out there and do it, so they have some hours within the week where they’re in charge, some hours where they’re leading a group and some hours where, actually, they’re the follower.

For most of us – actually, for everybody, there’s a blend except for our part-timers. Our part-timers we only ask to be followers.

I: How would you describe the communication channels between line managers and academics in the university?

R: At our place the communication channels vary fantastically, according to the line manager. I am a passionate carer, I also walk the corridors and I was, indeed, in a meeting in my institution this week where it turned out that I was the only person around a table of fifteen managers who walked the corridor. And someone said, “I don’t have time” and my comment was, “It is part of your job. This isn't an extra. This is part of the fundamental of your job”. That’s it; there are some people who I rarely bump into that...definitely the case. And I think communication is often by email.
We also have rafts of policies and guidelines and God-knows-what on computer drives - that nobody can find their way around because there’s so much junk. So, it’s quite scary and I think it’s…We don’t take advantage of the new communications. That’s it; we are really starting to get to grips with it whereas we are not getting to grips at all with the issue of administrators. We’re not getting to that at all. The communication side is absolutely crucial but, for us – very much – we do have a challenge of what - beyond the line manager, further up the hierarchy – we enhance the communication. In general, that’s rather important.

I: Since you started working as an academic in higher education, do you believe senior management and line manager expectations from other academics has changed or increased?

R: Yes, I think they’ve tightened up.

I: Tell me how?

R: I think they've tightened up, particularly driven by students as traction. And I think that it comes back to, “that’ll do” isn’t enough. We have to be making every single session with students good. The other angle, I think, on research has been extremely interesting to observe in this business school. This business school has moved from a situation of rather siloed departments to being a matrix structure so everybody’s on the same routines and allowances. What I’ve seen here is a lot of peer pressure to…What we’ve done, generally, is not really go for the average. We’ve gone to the slightly disadvantage to the staff end. We haven’t gone for the worst. So, say for example, if I have so many publications; in one place, it was about how many publications you submitted to get your research allowance and in another place – in another department – it was about how many publications you had accepted. And, for the how any publications you got submitted, it was pretty easy to keep your Research Allowance.

I: Right.

R: So, now we’ve actually got a…We’ve got a balance now. But at least it’s fair. But that has been a very big change and it was a change that staff wanted. They didn’t…Our staff here all have muddled up offices so there’s somebody from a different department working next to each other. So you don’t have a lump of economists, a lump of accountants, a lump of HR people. Everybody is muddled up in quite a big business school. So, getting rid of the
resentment of someone knowing that you’re next door neighbour has got a much bigger research allowance than you. Of course, you have no resentment if you have a much bigger research allowance than them. You might feel sorry for them when you think about it. [Laughter]. So, that’s all gone now.

I:    Yeah.

R:    Yeah. And I do think that this is the whole process of tightening up. I mean, some people will call it ‘managerialism’ – yeah it is. I think it’s worse than managerialism, I think it’s mechanistic – rubrics – so that people that should be there as useful things but actually we should be also doing quite a lot of interaction on the relational things. But some colleagues are leaving it to the mechanisms.

Can I just say, in this institution, no managers have to do training with the exception of Health and Safety and I think that’s a fundamental flaw.

I:    Yeah.

R:    And I see that in many other higher education places. People volunteer for management training so I think that’s one of the reasons why there is a drift towards this mechanisation. It’s because it then means that you don’t have to train your managers. You’re then taking Professors and people like that – who nobody’s said ‘Boo’ to for ninety years…Taking them aside, “You don’t have to cope with that” and I have seen, here, a huge shift over the last five years – a really dramatic shift – away from thinking ‘You’re a professor; you need to manage other people’. A huge shift so that, in fact, people are looking for ‘people managers’. I still think that’s the institution avoiding doing any management training. [Laughter]. Yeah, how do you teach teachers? I think they’re just avoiding it. Of course you can teach a teacher to do this. I do voice these opinions. Yeah.

I:    Since your appointment at the university – and in comparison with your previous job as an academic in Higher Education – do you believe that your expectation of entitlements from senior management in general and your Line Manager in particular have changed?

R:    No.
I: What about the engagement? You mentioned the engagement of students. You have low expectations? That...

R: I’ve always had good expectations. I’ve always had, personally, very high expectations but what I’d observed, is that, over time, for example, people who didn’t use the technology. I will always use the technology, as much I can to my capability but we have… I have always had lots of colleagues who have…If they could still come up…Say if you’re in an area where it doesn’t change very much – maybe that is economics, I don’t know – but you could potentially go along the slides from last year or the year before or the year before that. I don’t think people are doing that any more.

I: Why do you think your expectation didn’t change? Was it low from the beginning?

R: Yeah.

I: Why?

R: I think I’m a self-starter and, for me, it’s the less that a manager does, the better because then it means that I can create my world and I can create my future. So, I actually get irritated by line managers who pick away at little things. I’m a builder, I like to do big things; I’m ambitious, I want to bring people along with me. One of my ideas to be enhanced and used and taken over by them and I’m not one of these that detail things. I need detailed people behind me but, actually, in an academic institution, you’ve almost always got those. There’s a whole pile of people who will do that; it’s never been a problem. For me: the less that my manager does the better. I think that’s partly because I came in as a mature person. So, I actually knew what I was doing – or thought I knew what I was doing. I’ve probably changed it! I’m certainly a lot nicer. [Laughter].

I: Have you experienced any consistencies between what you believe your line manager has said or senior management has said and actually done?

R: Oh, yes, phenomenally, yes. But that’s also, That’s human and it continues to happen; it happens all the time and I tell them, and I’m quite gentle about it because I’m quite sure I do the same. I do try to be very, very careful with this whole issue of delivering what I say and,
now I’m in a people management position, more and more and more careful. But, if somebody does that then I just get back to them and say, “Well, which one do you want? Do you want what you said then or do you want what you’re doing now? I don’t mind. You just tell me what you want”. I’m also quite a corporate person, you know; if somebody wants something, unless I have a real ethical issue or problem, I will just tend to deliver it. So that’s quite helpful.

I: Yeah.

R: I’m not sitting there, thinking I have some colleagues who are so strongly collegiate, actually, they’re not collegiate. They are so geared to the willingness of every individual and self-determinism over every single individual that, in fact, this place can’t work. They can’t cope with a team. No team will ever form because people, these days, need more energy given to them and more structure given to them. Yes, don’t join the team but you’ve got to actually provided a lot of framework - because everyone’s so busy – to help them just join that team for a bit. And then the team does the work and then they dissolve. I do have some colleagues say, “Well, you know, if any colleagues would like to join me” and actually, you did that. That’s too unstructured a statement. You might get one person and that’s their friend.

I: In your job experience have you had any responses to similar incidents: The failure of your line manager to deliver on expectations? You mentioned a small inconsistency…Has that changed you in terms of motivation, engagement in extra roles, attendance or intention to stay on?

R: No.

I: No? Why do you think that? Is it -

R: I think it’s because again I’m very self-determined on what I want to do. I’m a real pro-active, self-motivated person and I’ve got bundles of energy and it’s about shaping the energy and pushing it forward. I’m just trying to think of where have I had drops in motivation? I’ve had drops in motivation where I have seen somebody not… somebody, say like a Dean or somebody further up the hierarchy, not fighting for my for our organisation…Our part of the organisation. We did have a Dean for a while who was very sweet to everybody and he never fought our battles at Central University and it meant that we lost a huge number of years of work just from us being ineffective. It then means that people who are in leadership roles – like
me – have to spend a huge amount of time telling people they are being valued. So, if you have the, “I need to value you”…Or, “People need to feel valued” on your agenda…If people upstairs aren’t doing it, I have to do it and that’s a lot of work. And that means I’m not doing something else and so, in many ways, that means they’re dumping on me. They don’t see it like that however, I would tell them.

I: You’re focusing on stress and bullying. What attracted you to this -?

R: It was an un-researched area when I picked it up. I actually wanted to get a PhD because, as a woman in a business school – the business school that I was in – that was very, very male dominated and also very tough. It was a very, very nice place to work but it was really tough and we had a…The business school was in a very long, thin building but it was quarter of a mile long. My office was on the top floor at the other end from the lift and I would say the first term I was there, two people actually spoke to me from the staff, other than my boss and I just couldn’t believe it. I’d never worked anywhere where you would work somewhere for three months and only two people speak to you. And, what I worked out is you had to actually get out there and talk to them and, of course, in the first year of academia it is dire. You’re trying to keep ahead, you’re trying to work out what to do, what the standards etcetera, etcetera. That’s all you have time for, really.

But, this was a school…If you were a female…What I worked out was some people were listened to and other people weren’t. Most of the women weren’t but if anybody had a PhD, they were listened to. It took me quite a while to work that one out. So then I thought, “Right: I need a PhD”. And, so I looked at corporate culture…I spent a summer looking at corporate culture and I though the literature was so fragmented and so awful, I couldn’t really do it as a topic. So, I stumbled into the issue of workplace bullying. I’d seen it at work, I’d never experienced it but it struck me it was a great area to research because it stops all the value flowing through.

I: Did it happen to one of your colleagues? Bullying?

R: Surely. On our staff survey we have two hundred and fifty people who were bullied. So it’s happening everywhere. Yeah. How do you mean? Do you mean…? I said, ”Oh sorry…” I said I’d seen it. That was when I was a young manager – a point of regret for me as a young manager, actually. I was working in a sales organisation, which had a variety of offices, and we
had this really lovely young woman come and work with us who had just left university. She came in and she worked for me for about six months. She was then sent off to another office and this woman was so horrible to her and she came back and she was in pieces. I helped the member of staff but I should’ve done more with managers; that was evident. I should’ve gone up and gone across because everybody knew how it was and everybody knew this lady had a reputation for doing this but I had…This girl when she came back to my office, she was just a changed person. It was really…It was haunting. It was dreadful and I never did anything about it then.

So, somebody phoned me up when I got into academia, just after I’d had this summer looking at culture…What am I going to do for my PhD? You know the problem. You have to find the issue and then find your angle on the issue and I was just thinking, ‘This is terrible. Where’s the theory? There’s no theory, there’s no this. What am I going to do?’ I’m a positivist as well so…And then somebody phoned me up and said, “I’ve seen bullying. You now work in a Business School. Tell me what needs to happen”. This person had the opportunity to go to the Chief Executive and talk about the bullying she had seen. So I really thought, ‘Now is the time to amend my sin from so many years before’ and I went down to the library and I found one book which was Andrea Adams’ book on bullying and two dreadful American articles and that was it and I was stunned. I then spent at least ten days searching, searching, searching everywhere – I went to the TUC, CBI, CIPD – everywhere I could think of. ‘Who’s done work on bullying?’ and nobody had done anything so I suddenly…Fate had given me a topic so I just thought, ‘Okay. Thank you. Thank you: I’ll take it’.

I: **How important for you is it to trust your line manager?**

R: Quite important. I have had line managers that I distrust. I would say it holds my work up. It’s not crucial.

I: **Not crucial?**

R: It’s not crucial. I think I’ve worked in some fairly awful work places so I am quite…Yeah, I think it’s because I am, sort of, quite self-determined so…Yeah. If I thought I had somebody acting against me that would be really problematic. At which point I think I would change my job or I would work out how long they could last. And I would then work out whether I needed to change my job or I’d just sit it out.
To my knowledge – but I am a very positive person…To my knowledge, I haven’t had a line manager who’s worked against me ever, in all of my career. I’m probably… Maybe I’m lucky. I don’t know. Maybe I’m insensitive but while I’ve had line managers who I couldn’t trust; they would say they would do things and then they don’t. But most people tend to not do things in a pattern because they don’t dare to do things. They promise to do things, they want to do things for you and, actually, when it gets to it, they don’t have the opportunity or the power or the guts. And, if you know your line manager, you know – probably – where some of their limitations are.

I: Yeah.

R: I have a really good line manager now, in terms of guts; she’s fantastic and I’m really exploring it, It’s been a very interesting development of the relationship. I’m quite gripped by… and, actually, thinking about my current line manager, I think I’ve had rather…I think I’ve said to you I’m not bothered about the line manager, I think I’ve often behaved as if I’m not bothered about the line manager and just carried on. [Laughter].

I now have a line manager who, actually, is really quite engaging. She’s thoughtful…Very different; very different from me but we have some very interesting discussions and I really do listen to what she has to say.

I: This perception, does it influence your perception of the future?

R: In what sense?

I: Have you recounted, for example, an inconsistency between what she’s said and actually done or -?

R: Yeah, I think that where the mismatch is happening is that I really have very low expectations of my line manager and here I have somebody who maybe I could expect something from.

Which is the first time in a…Certainly in this institution, I had some pretty…My first academic line manager was very, very good and I would say that I’ve probably used him as a role model
for myself. Other than that, I’ve had just weak management and I think people disguise it as collegiality and freedom, you know? And I don’t care; I don’t mind. They can call it what they like; as long as I can get on with what I want to do.

I: How would you describe the fairness of the processes adopted by your line manager and the university?

R: I think they’re probably as fair as they can be and all processes have a human element. People are interpreting policies. We have enough policies to make a very large Guy Fawkes bonfire on November 5th, and nobody can find them. People do read them – I understand it since I’ve become a line manager. Line managers do read the policies and they do try and follow the policies.

I: Is your current perception similar to your previous perception?

R: No, that is actually…That’s true and I think we have had many more policies. Certainly when I arrived at this institution I had an extremely sexist boss who was making sure that the people who did get promotion were all chaps. And, that’s quite hard to watch and it’s also quite hard to challenge. So, it’s quite a difficult…That’s a very, very…To challenge it – informally or otherwise…But that’s a very tough thing to accuse somebody of in higher education – sexism. It’s very serious. It’s like saying you’re racist. It really is a serious -

I: Was this a long time ago?

R: No, not particularly. I would say it was ten years ago.

I: Okay.

R: Okay. And it lasted probably for four or five years. I have seen people run a ‘favouritism clubs’.

I: Here?

R: So, yes. But I would say, also, not now. I would say in the last two or three years – last three years – probably favouritism…Not always, It’s uneven; it’s just certain people like to
have a bunch of people around them. But I don’t see that at the moment and I haven’t seen that for three years, probably.

I: How do you perceive the processes of workload responsibilities – like teaching – are they fair in this university?

R: Well, I’m responsible for all the workloads so I am trying to be absolutely as fair as possible. What I try to do is to tell everybody...Within the appraisals system, we look at what you want to do next year and what I try to do is show everybody as open a system and balance as possible. That said, I think...We used to have a system whereby all members within a department could see other members workloads and that has now been taken away. I find that strange because I such that every single decision on the workload side can be challenged and I need to be willing to sit and justify exactly what I’ve done.

I: So would you say that transparency here is much better?

R: It’s got worse. Yes. And that’s such a shame because, actually, the fairness has got better. I don’t understand and I continue to ask that we should all be able to tell every single member of staff in the Business School what every single member of staff’s workload looks like. I think we should just have a transparent work sheet but I imagine, I continue to fight that battle and I would like to think I will win it in the next academic year.

I: Finally, is there anything else you would like to add concerning your current employment experience?

R: I think the training of managers is a real highlight for me and the lack of training of managers. And I think having people with courage to challenge academics is really crucial. People can get intimidated by senior academics too much. You need to have a cadre of people in HR or in training or support, or whatever, who have got enough confidence to stand up and say, “Actually, you do need to do that”. I absolutely will support the training in ‘people management’. In a business school it’s easier because we’ve all... Most people in a business school – I guess apart from the economists – many, many people are not career academics so we have an understanding of what management is. But, if you’re a physicist or stellar people, they look at the stars. They make star maps. How does a ‘star map’ person ever learn how to do management? I don’t know. Or, if you’re a poet or whatever; if you’ve never actually worked
in a commercial public-sector organisation out there, how do people learn how to manage in that position?

I: **So it’s embedded in your personality?**

R: I think not. I think us being very bad at…There’s a deep irony in here about us being unwilling to educate ourselves.

I: **Yeah.**

R: We are very good at telling students what they should do in horribly…Especially doctoral students. But we are extremely…I think we avoid telling academics what to do and there are some areas where that’s fantastic. Here, you can research exactly what you want, as long as it has some relationship to business, as long as it could be submitted into Business and Management. You can research exactly what you want – we have people here researching prostitutes so, you know, fine…It’s on prostitution. Who cares? We’ve got people here researching bullying? You know, we’ve got people here researching engagement and fellowship and all that sort of stuff.

But, there are some areas where you absolutely shouldn’t interfere but I do think, in terms of training managers to manage; that is really crucial and we need to do better.

I: **Is there anything that I have not covered in this interview - ?**

R: The last thing, it’s just on the training side; it’s about helping teachers to teach.

I: **What do you mean?**

R: Helping teachers learn how to teach.

I: **Learn how to teach?**

R: Because in this institution, we have a three point five per cent turnover rate which is tiny, unhealthy. So, I’ve been teaching for twenty years. We have a very, very light touch on
whether I’m doing a good job. It’s a very light touch. I wish we were tougher on… and it should be something we talk about but we don’t do.

I: Why do you think that?

R: I don’t know but I do think it comes back to, “academics like to tell people things.”
Dear Professor\ Dr.,

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in my research.

Before we meet on ( ), I would like you to think about a few different incidents that you believe might have affected your relationship with your university or with your manager. Some of the interview questions will cover this and providing specific examples will be very useful.

Kind regards,
Abdulaziz Alawaad
Appendix Three

MAXMaps: Code-Subcode Segments Model
Appendix Four

Conference Papers
New managerialism and ideological currency in the psychological contract of academics in UK universities

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Introduction
This research investigates the relationship between ‘new managerialism’ and the psychological contract of academics. The paper advances the argument that a growing bundle of constraints and obligations associated with the ‘new higher education’ context (NHE) (Jary and Parker 1998), such as the reduction of privileges, has affected academics and impacted on their psychological contracts. Drawing on a qualitative, multi-case study across the four UK university types, this paper argues the business-like approach and private sector ideals, now common in higher education, increasingly revolves around values and practices that affect the ideological currency of academics’ psychological contracts. The empirical analysis shows that these new ideological obligations in UK NHE are currently causing ideological breaches of academics’ psychological contract, and consequently impacting their emotional reactions.

Given the scant attention awarded to exploring the psychological contract of academics in universities (Shen 2010), the intention of this paper is to draw on psychological contract literature to examine the changing nature of academic work, and this from the much-overlooked ideological currency perspective. By so doing, an argument may be built around the potential causes and signs that might lead to perceived ideological breach amongst academics of their psychological contract in the NHE context. In addition, this paper aims to broaden the literature on academics’ psychological contract by proposing a model that articulates the conditions under which the ideological breach of academics’ psychological contract is likely to occur. The paper is based on a study of academics that was undertaken as part of a study to investigate how academics perceive the current prevailing managerialist ideology within the context of the NHE, concerning their perceptions of growing expectations of the exchange relationship with management.

Conceptual Framework
Academics and the growing expectations of NHE
There are indications that changes in the academic landscape represented by the new roles and growing obligations imposed upon academia (Deem and Brehony 2005) - driven by managerialist ideology - have considerably affected the nature of academic employment, particularly the relationship between academics and their management. The intrinsic elements that attract academics to become involved in their discipline in the first place and which motivate them in their educational journey, such as autonomy, flexibility, peer recognition and teacher–student relationship elements (Lyons and Ingersoll 2010) are greatly compromised in order to comply with market-oriented values and managerialist practices (Deem 2004). The
new obligatory duties and expectations that academics are expected to fulfil may force them to shift their priorities towards increasing productivity in other tasks. As Vivienne and Grant (2013, p. 132) observe, such managerialist practices have produced a “poignant tension in academia” that “tends to suffocate creativity and spontaneity; it limits academic identity; it corrals academic life into an undue uniformity; it allows no escape” (Barnett 2011, p. 56).

The psychological contract
The psychological contract represents the employment relationship with regard to the subjective beliefs of an employee and his/her employer (Rousseau 2011). Thus, a psychological contract implies a subjective quality, indicating a different world within every mind (Rousseau and Tijoriwala 1998); a perception of reality that exists “in the eye of the beholder” (Rousseau 1989, p. 123).

There not only appears to be a dearth of research focusing on the psychological contract of academics in universities (Shen 2010), but studies which examine the content-specific items of academics’ psychological contracts in HE are also limited. These studies consist solely of work at Australasian universities: Krivokapic-Skoko and O’Neill (2008); O’Neill et al. (2010) and Shen (2010). According to the above-mentioned studies, academics’ subjective perceptions of their expectations from university revolve around a number of factors, for example, staff development and support, recognition and workload.

A model of ideological breach in academia
This paper seeks to address the gap in the literature by proposing a model which is unique to the academic environment (Figure 1). It articulates the conditions under which an ideological breach of academics’ psychological contract is likely to occur. The practices and controlling forms within the NHE context, imposed by the new managerialism in UK universities, are examined through this model, so as to build an argument around potential causes and signs that could lead to perceptions of ideological breach of academics’ psychological contract. Taking into account the influence of the ideological currency dimension in shaping academics’ perceptions of encountered breaches to their psychological contract is significant, since, according to Thompson and Bunderson (2003), it plays an important role in the formation and reformation of individual expectations and obligations. The inclusion of such a dimension that recognises the importance of an academic’s credible commitment to pursue a principle, or a valued cause which may not be limited to self-interest (Thompson and Bunderson 2003), has been overlooked in the literature on academics’ psychological contract. According to their
proposed model, the authors argue that an individual will experience an ideological breach as a result of several conditions encountered, namely intentional reneging, incongruence, and the perception of goal displacement or value interpenetration.

In UK universities, academic work has started to revolve around values that “violate traditional academic values” (Harley 2002, p. 187) and it is often said to be “underpinned by an agenda that seeks to discipline academic life through consumer pressures on higher education” (Furedi 2011, p. 3). Therefore, it is not only vital to consider this dimension of ideological currency in order to understand how academics evaluate and perceive their universities’ actions in terms of expectations - due to the dominance of managerialist ideology in UK universities, which has resulted in the reduction in the privileges academics once enjoyed - but it must also be borne in mind that the intrinsic elements which may have initially attracted academics towards a deeper commitment to their discipline and which motivate them in their educational path are greatly compromised in order to comply with market-oriented values and managerialist practices. By examining the ideological obligations of UK NHE, the following sections identify the major causes and signs of an ideological breach of academics’ psychological contract which could result from academics’ perceptions of goal displacement, value interpenetration or intentional reneging.

**Figure 1  A model of ideological breach in an academic environment**

1. Staff development & Support.
2. Fair treatment in promotions.
3. Good workplace relations.
4. Academic life.
5. Fairness & Equity.
6. Appropriate remuneration.
7. Power & Responsibilities.
8. Workload.

![Diagram](image)

1. Teaching.
2. Research.
3. Administrative tasks.
4. Commitment.
5. Above & beyond.

Adapted from Thompson and Bunderson (2003)
Perceived goal displacement:
One of the growing expectations in UK HE over recent years is the significant increase in administrative tasks, which have placed great pressure upon academics (Hornibrook 2012). Such on-going work intensification experienced by academics is arguably showing a shift in emphasis onto administrative efficacy for academia’s intrinsic values. The excessive workload and time spent on bureaucratic tasks could create a perception of inconsistency amongst academics between the intrinsic elements that first attract them to the discipline in the first place and which motivate them to continue, and increasing bureaucratic requirements. This preoccupation with measurable results embraced by managerialism in NHE could also result in the perception of goal displacement amongst academics. A perception would then emerge as a result of the scarification of core ideological values at the expense of administrative requirements (Thompson and Bunderson 2003). Thus, it would appear that the growing number of administrative tasks in UK NHE is associated with perceived goal displacement amongst academics, resulting in an ideological breach of their psychological contract.

RQ1. What are the perceptions of academics regarding the growing number of administrative tasks in UK NHE, particularly with reference to goal displacement that results in their perception of an ideological breach of their psychological contract?

Perceived value interpenetration
Besides the growing burden of administrative workload that leaves less time for research (Tight 2010), there is also an increasing trend in UK NHE to view academics on the basis of economic criteria (Willmott 2003). This is evident in the established association between academic excellence and high-ranking journal publications. The RAE/REF in the UK are arguably challenging certain values which are taken for granted in academia, as well as controlling the professional work of academics, by specifying criteria for excellence and potentially causing an ideological breach of academics’ psychological contracts. The use of such rankings in assessing academics’ publication output for the satisfaction of certain criteria imposed by external funding bodies, is undermining the very essence of good scholarship (Adler and Harzing 2009) and distracting academics from the real work of scholarship (Walsh 2011). It has influenced the culture and characteristics of academics and the way in which they prioritise their practice in fulfilling the requirements of these journals (Judge et al. 2007). Mingers and Willmott (2013, p. 1051) explain that “the use of journal lists to assess the quality of research sends out a strong ‘market signal’: it privileges the agenda pursued in those journals; and, conversely, it devalues research published elsewhere, irrespective of its content and contribution.” In UK NHE, academics are “terrorised by university managers… who apply
pressure upon [them] to confine [their] work to topics, methods and approaches that are suitable for publication in a small number of so-called elite journals” (Willmott 2011, p. 430). Such a mechanism is embraced that values a different set of criteria, not necessarily relevant to quality in education and this is arguably a potential cause of academics’ perception of value interpenetration. According to Thompson and Bunderson (2003), value interpenetration is perceived as a result of the organisation forging relationships with other organisations that do not share the same ideology or values.

Not only is the external interference of journal ranking considered to be a potential cause of value interpenetration across academics, but these changing rules of the game, along with the implications of imposing certain criteria for excellence upon academics’ reactions, show clear examples of strategic behaviour that arguably contradict academics’ values. For example, academics are “turning themselves into gap-spotting sub-specialists eager to pump out as many journal articles as possible rather than into more genuine scholars, wanting to do really novel, challenging and significant research.” (Alvesson and Sandberg 2013)

Another activity that arguably leads to a perception of value interpenetration across academics in UK HE is the growing expectation of industrial collaboration. Universities in the UK are adopting an entrepreneurial orientation to attract new cash resources from industry due to diminishing funds from the government. Academics are increasingly expected to engage with industry and exploit commercial opportunities, in order to boost university income in the competitive NHE environment (Lam 2010). Indeed, such collaboration might cause a perception of value interpenetration, not only because of the emphasis on attracting external research funding, thus causing ‘academic capitalism’ (Barry 2011) and ‘sociological ambivalence’ (Hackett 2005), but also because it could undermine the traditional nature and mission of university research (Bozeman and Boardman 2013). As a consequence, there is a growing expectation of industrial collaboration and publication in high-ranking journals in UK NHE that is associated with perceived value interpenetration amongst academics, thus ending in an ideological breach of their psychological contract.

**RQ2. What are the responses of academics to the pressure to forge relationships with other organisations (industry/REF), particularly those who are not committed to the same ideology or values?**
**Intentional reneging**

UK Universities have been transformed from academic communities of scholars into workplaces (Deem et al. 2007) which uphold quasi-market standards and techniques as being more valuable than those that promote independent and critical thought (Evans 2004). Academics operating under such conditions seem to have no choice and are expected to “subjugate their academic personae with the corporate persona” (Barnett 2011, p. 51). Academics are therefore arguably placed under great pressure and have little choice but to participate in the journal ‘game list’. For career progression, journal lists have become an influential factor in decisions over recruitment, promotion, tenure and the selection of academics for submission to evaluation exercises (Mingers and Willmott 2013).

A different form of interference in academic life where new managerialism is implemented consists of the growing trend towards controlling classroom teaching practice. The standardisation of teaching, along with teaching evaluation, is considered as a set of power relations over academic work in influencing the way in which academics teach in the classroom (Morley, 2003). It pushes academics towards focusing upon a narrow range of outcomes that can be measured, at the expense of other important elements (Blackmore 2009). A tendency to lower performance expectations in the classroom in order to obtain more favourable students evaluations (Pritchard and Potter 2011) is increasingly evident because of the growing emphasis on student evaluations and their role in determining retention, promotion and tenure (Titus 2008). Consequently, there appears to be an increasing influence of journal lists upon decisions over recruitment, promotion and academic tenure, and a growing trend towards controlling classroom teaching practice in UK NHE. Such practice, according to Thompson and Bunderson (2003), results in an academic perception that decision makers in the university have, for whatever reason, consciously and deliberately deviated from ideological commitments, leading to an experience of intentional reneging.

*RQ3. To what extent are academics experiencing intentional reneging as a result of actions executed by their universities that deliberately seek to deviate from ideological commitments?*

**Methodological approach**

This paper adopts a qualitative method as it seeks “to understand the subjective reality of the [academics] in order to be able to make sense of and understand their motives, actions and intentions in a way that is meaningful” (Willmott, 2011). Interviews represent a powerful technique to aid in understanding “how individuals construct the reality of their situation, formed from the complex personal framework of beliefs and values which they have developed.
over their lives in order to help explain and predict events in their world” (Jones, 1985, p. 45). Conway and Briner (2005) support this view by suggesting the use of interviews in data collection as they can help determine what people think, feel and believe. Conway and Briner continue by explaining that such a technique promotes an understanding of how an individual interprets and describes key aspects of his/her psychological contract and this, in their own words.

The interview questions were designed to examine the relationship between managerialism and the psychological contract of academics. They aim to investigate how academics perceive the current prevailing managerialist ideology within the context of NHE, in relation to their perceptions of growing expectations of the exchange relationship with management. The questions have been selected in the light of those themes suggested by the literature review as being pivotal in the fulfilment of the psychological contract and which are particularly related to those managerialist values and practices which currently affect academics’ ideological currency and which could cause an ideological breach of their psychological contracts as a result of perceived goal displacement, value interpenetration or intentional reneging.

In addition, the ‘critical incident technique’ (CIT) (Flanagan 1954) was used for parts of the interviews. For example, participants had been asked to recall incidents in their experience of current management, in relation to the expectations and entitlements of both sides, and the way in which they subsequently evaluate perceived management actions. The aim is thus “to gain an understanding of the incident from the perspective of the individual, taking into account cognitive, affective and behavioural elements” (Chell 1998, p. 56).

The Sample

The boundaries for the research fall within the four main university types that constitute higher education in England (i.e. ancient, red brick, plate glass and post-1992) (figure 1). Each type has its common interests and because this research aims at gaining a rich understanding of the NHE context in England today along with capturing the nature of the psychological contract of academics in universities of each type, a multiple case study is considered to be an appropriate design for addressing the objectives of the research. Four case studies comprised a sample of academics from each type, which was first analysed separately, and then results from each case study were compared with the whole. A multiple case study was used to analyse the relationship between managerialist ideology and academics’ psychological contracts, especially the values and practices that affect the latter’s ideological currency.
Moreover, the research focuses exclusively on those members who work in the business schools of a university type, whereby schools of each type will be treated as individual case studies, consisting of multiple case studies. By conducting cross-case studies, patterns of similarities and differences in the responses of academics across these four cases will be investigated and so this is a useful strategy to enable us to establish whether or not findings can be generalised (Willmott, 2011).

The research will apply a non-probabilistic sampling method as the interest here is in understanding and exploring a relationship and social process rather than forming a statistical representation (Mays and Pope 1995). The sample size of the study consists of 32 academics across the four university types here in England, where only this number of participants out of 122 academics agreed to participate in the study. The sample size includes academics from ancient (n=5), red brick (n=10), plate glass (n=10) and post-1992 universities (n=7). Individual interviews were set up in semi-structured formats, where they lasted between forty-two minutes and one hour and fifty minutes. All interviews were tape-recorded, fully transcribed and further processed using the computing software package MAXQDA. The software was used to facilitate the analysis of data collected during the interviews, where a thematic method was adopted to process the findings. Thematic analysis method is for “identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes [the] data set in
(rich) detail. However, frequently [it] goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic” (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.79). Thematic analysis is an inductive approach as categories that comprise themes are not determined prior to coding the data, but are generated from raw data.

Data Analysis

As the interest in this research is not limited to an investigation of just one particular institution or university type as a unit of analysis, multiple case study is considered to be an appropriate design for addressing the research objectives. However, according to Stake (2006), there is a healthy tension in such a strategy between generalisation and particularisation. Therefore, the analysis was conducted in two phases: Phase 1 focuses on the individual case and Phase 2, on multiple cases - that is, patterns of similarities and differences in the responses of academics across these four cases. The following is a brief description of these two phases.

Phase 1: Individual case analysis

For each individual case, the data represented academics’ interpretations of how they experience their world and interact within the context of managerialism. Facilitated by the MAXQDA software package, all themes and categories were extracted in order to derive meaning from the qualitative data collected.

Phase II: Multiple case analysis

Once all the individual case studies representing each university type were complete and analysed, the results from each case study were compared with the whole. This was to help analyse the relationship between managerialist ideology and academics’ psychological contracts, along with the values and practices that affect the latter’s ideological currency. Using MAXQDA and through a process that had included ‘three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification’ (Miles and Huberman 1994, p. 10), the multiple case analysis was completed. Patterns of similarities and differences across the collected qualitative data from the set of four university types were noted.

Findings

Perceptions of the impact of managerialism

There were seven main areas identified by participants across the four university types as having been impacted by managerialist ideology and practice. These affected areas represent academics’ perception of the current prevailing managerialist ideology within the NHE context, in relation to their ideological currency. While some of these perceived effects were reported to a degree in all the types, there were differences across university categories in terms
of the strength and nature of the impact. For example, one university type was considered to be a high impact type, as six out of seven areas of impact were reported as being strongly present. In comparison, the other three were classified as medium, low, or minimal in reflection of the degree to which managerialism had influenced the academic environment in these seven areas. This follows the methodology adopted by Elliott (2013), where these ratings and the summarised results are presented in Table 1 and the findings are described below.

Table 1
Impact of Managerialism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1992 impact</th>
<th>Ancient - minimal impact</th>
<th>Red brick - low impact</th>
<th>Plate glass - medium impact</th>
<th>Post-1992 - high</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area impacted by managerialism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Style</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●●</td>
<td>●●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Expectations</td>
<td>⊗</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom and Autonomy</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived goal displacement</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived value interpenetration</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>⊗</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentional reneging</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>⊗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision Rules</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Percentage of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>●●</td>
<td>Area of impact very strongly present</td>
<td>The strong majority of interviewees (&gt;70%)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>●</td>
<td>Strongly present</td>
<td>≥ 40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⊗</td>
<td>Moderately present</td>
<td>&lt; 40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○</td>
<td>Slightly present</td>
<td>≤ 20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The percentages represent the number of participants who mentioned this area of impact. Each participant’s response was only counted once.

Management Style
For two out of the four university types in England (plate glass and post-1992), managerialist practice appears to be perceived as deeply embedded in management style. Participants employed in universities of both types identified the dominance of managerialist ideology in management action. In two of the participants’ words,
…at the moment we are a massive consistency kick so we want everybody to be doing everything across the university in exactly the same way...

...I think we’re much more managerial than the managerialism we denounce in corporations...I sometimes call it democracy North Korean-style, where then the announcements are made and…you're there to applaud decisions that have been made.

Another two participants who had moved from a university in plate glass type to a university in red brick type within the last two years explained,

...I found this to be an impossible place to work because the Dean was autocratic, simply uninterested in listening to anybody else’s opinion...if you did disagree with him then you would end up in the outer darkness...I found that intolerable...

[The] Business School was very managerialist. Even had a league table for individual staff about how ‘REF-able’ they were, and their teaching...they suddenly wanted a common, one size fits all, workload allocation model across the whole of [the] university...Classic managerialist approach. Very blunt instrument.

Managerialism practice also was noted in Red brick universities, but not as strongly as in plate glass and post-1992 types. Only some participants that work in Red brick universities reported that management are promoting managerialist values and practice. As one respondent pointed out,

...I think there’s more central control over the university, so the central management at the university have a lot to say in what goes on. And this hierarchy tends to determine what happens.

A large proportion of participants in red brick universities acknowledged the presence of managerialism in their universities, but perceived it as being driven by external governmental bodies. However, the management in such institutions was perceived as fair, democratic and as collegial as possible. As two of the interviewees noted,

In my experience of institutions, [university name] is quite laissez faire compared to other institutions. It’s more relaxed. It’s less of the directive driven culture.
...is not run by edicts, or is not run by kind of high command and order, so there’s a lot more collegiality here than I observe in many other universities.

In the ancient universities studied, the situation was different. While managerialist practice was mentioned by several participants, they were primarily referring to other universities of other types. As one respondent commented:

...it is certainly compare with almost in other institution you would think of this being extremely collegial.

Participants from the ancient universities declared that they felt the management acted in a fair and collegial way, leaving room for negotiation and involvement in decisions. Pressure as a result of managerialism upon management was marginally noted. As one participant explained,

Well if I look at my experience at [university name] over the last two years, it’s been a style of transparency, transformational leadership locally...

Academics in ancient universities also mentioned the degree of power they were able to exercise at their universities. Decisions with regard to their academic responsibilities could not be imposed upon them and they had a say in decision-making. In two of the respondents’ words,

...Deans can sometimes be foolish if they don’t listen to the Faculty...Of the four Deans of the business school, two of them have been gotten rid of. So you’ve got to tread carefully as a Dean about what you do and how you bring academics along with you.

...I’ve also reacted and had to act on behalf of the institution to remove those leaders. And have been part of that and not been afraid to do it. And I thought it was the right thing to do.

Management expectations
Although expectations driven by managerialism, including the growth of all kinds of administrative processes around teaching, were reported across the 4 types, participants in plate glass and post-1992 universities had the strongest impression of this impact. They clearly
identified the pressure and increasing expectations to fulfil managerialist roles and responsibilities. At post-1992 universities, one academic noted,

...There’s an awful lot of time dedicated to things like the National Students’ Survey. So pretty much every meeting we have here we’ll be talking about how do we get more students to fill in the National Students’ Survey, How do we get our student perception statistics up.

In addition, expectations to achieve certain targets in relation to students’ grades were reported across participants from both types. The use of student satisfaction measures to assess teaching quality appears to be affecting academics. As two participants explained,

...there’s a demand from senior management that a certain per cent of students get a certain mark...

...using student satisfaction measures...creates incentives to mark up, I was teaching on the MBA programme and one of the administrators suddenly after I’d marked the units I was teaching they send the marks from all the other units that have been assessed that year before mine. “So, I just thought you might like to see the median and the distribution scores on the other units, as you’ll see yours is a little lower...”

Although responses from red brick universities indicated a recognition that managerialism has created a certain set of objectives, the respondents did not report feeling that their management was acting aggressively towards attaining these. In general, participants noted an increasing expectation to publish journal articles in 3- and 4-star journals. As one respondent commented,

...the university has a huge incentive to pressure us, the academics, to apply for grant to get grants because it means big money for them.

Once again, responses from ancient universities were different. While the participants acknowledged the growing emphasis on publication and administrative responsibilities, they did not perceive this as impacting their relationship with management. In one respondent’s words,
…It’s not hugely demanding…So I would see it as duty of care really to the institution. It leads to money.

However, one participant pointed out that professors are now expected to play a role in helping other academics meet management expectations. As he explained,

…the increasing requirements for professors to become leaders so they are not solo scholars they are expected to play a leadership role in the academic by being a head of department by creating a research centre by leading their field of study so the notion of leadership as it applies to academia has become much more important.

**Freedom and Autonomy**

A third major effect experienced by a fair number of participants was the perceived constraints that have affected their academic freedom as a result of managerialist practices and values. For three out of the four university types in England (red brick, plate glass and post-1992), an increased focus on market-oriented values and managerialist practices was strongly perceived as constraining academic freedom. In two of the respondents’ words,

…now we have managers who have certain ideas about what is good for students they want to standardise curriculum...

...we’re increasingly faced with a resource-based set of arguments where this costs too much money to run…it’s a market logic which distances the management from control of academic knowledge.

An interesting point was raised by two participants, where academic freedom is now linked to publication. As two participants explained,

...as long as I do well on the publication front, I have a lot of freedom and autonomy...

…my job is a very research-focused one. So in that sense I think I have more freedom and autonomy

Finally, in contrast, managerialism did not appear to have an impact on academics at ancient universities. In fact, participants claimed to experience a high degree of academic freedom.
They reported a number of positive aspects in relation to their job, such as the capacity to negotiate.

…my sense of sort of security, independent power base and freedom is substantially greater than it is almost anywhere else…The embeddedness of academic freedom, which I believe when I hear stories from people that I know, is being more eroded in other institutions where people are being told that they need to work on a particular project…Absolutely no question at all of anybody interfering with academic freedom whatsoever, and it is very very clearly stated as an absolute primary principal of the university.

…it’s up to me to determine what the objectives of the course what the curriculum, what reading materials will be used, how the material is taught. I have tremendous discretion.

And in the [university name] context, professors have a slightly unusual existence in [university name] in my opinion. They more or less walk on water. So the [university name] ethos as I’ve kind of grown to understand it is that the reputation of the university depends on perhaps, 10-20% of the professors. Who may not be Nobel Prize winners but they may be potential Nobel Prize winners. And so to attract and retain them, they’ve got to have a huge amount of freedom. But you don’t know who they are so you have to give everybody the same contract. So everybody has a huge amount of freedom as professors in [university name] it seems to me.

**Perception of ideological breach in academia**

A substantial number of participants across the four university types reported certain managerialist practices and controlling forms that had been encountered in their universities. Such reported conditions that suggest academics had perceived goal displacement, value interpenetration or intentional reneging are, according to the proposed model, regarded as causes and signs of ideological breach of the participants’ psychological contracts. While some of these conditions were reported to some degree by each university type, there were differences across types in terms of the intensity and nature of the impact. These ratings and the summarised results are presented in Table 1 and the findings are presented below.
Perceived goal displacement
As explained earlier, the growing number of administrative tasks driven by managerialist ideology which academics are expected to accomplish may create a perception of goal displacement. The findings in regard to RQ1 showed that this is particularly evident at plate glass and post-1992 universities, where management is seen as increasingly emphasising administrative tasks and bureaucratic requirements. For example, some academics reported that management is demonstrating a shift in emphasis towards administrative efficacy, away from academia’s intrinsic values. In three of the participants’ words,

...the managerialist agenda has been very pernicious in compromising the good things that we should be doing.

...I certainly spend most of my time now doing admin – form-filling, report writing, analysing, student satisfaction surveys or performance data.

…there are more and more sketches are putting in place and some of these are to make life easier from administrative point of view that really does not help the academics whatever.

In contrast, at ancient universities, there was no goal displacement perceived by participants. At red brick universities, there were slight indications of perceived goal displacement in the participants’ responses. As one participant explained,

...I’m an admissions tutor…but I would say only about 5% of what I was being asked to do was driven by the admissions side…And it’s driven by this sort of machine, the administrative managerial machine saying we need to have these figures.

Perceived value interpenetration
For all of the university types in England, managerialism was perceived to have instilled values and practices that have influenced the culture and characteristics of academia. The findings in regard to RQ2 suggested that academics are experiencing value interpenetration. This was evident, to varying degrees, at the four university types. While participants strongly noted such practices at post-1992 universities, these were moderately and minimal at red brick and the other two types (plate glass and ancient) respectively. For example, the established association
between academic excellence and high-ranking journal publications, where other publication output is undesirable. At ancient and red brick universities, two participants explained,

…there is being a decline in the value attached to write a book and writing a research monograph which I regret…it is antithetical to scholarship to imply that the only form of scholarly work is that which is publish in 30 pages article...

…I don’t like it either when managers say as many do now in business schools what would you think is valuable in terms of outputs is academic journal articles. Books we don’t think much of those and chapters in books, edited collections, we don’t like those either.

Similarly, the use of external bodies in specifying criteria for excellence in universities is challenging academics and creating tension. As one participant in a post-1992 university noted,

…we’ve got this Higher Education Academy…It’s meant to be the rubber stamp of my professionalism...who are they to decide whether I’m adequately qualified or skilled to be an academic...They’re probably failed academics themselves that sit in this Higher Education Academy making these decisions.

Not only is the external interference of journal ranking considered to be a potential cause of value interpenetration across participants, but these changing rules of the game, along with the implications of imposing certain criteria for excellence upon academics’ reactions, according to the participants, is promoting certain strategic behaviour that arguably contradict academics’ values. At plate glass and post-1992 universities, three participants commented,

...people will do only what they call gap-spotting research where you sort of find a little gap in the literature and then you fill it. But you don't want to say too much because, obviously, otherwise the reviewers could find fault with something...it stifles interesting ideas.

…I’ve certainly had that in reviews of my own work. You don't cite enough articles in this journal...also means you can't bring in something new from outside the fields into that...the stuff that I see being published in the best journals is quite often the most boring and predictable. It’s using well-established methodologies; it’s not challenging anything.
It focuses activity down this very narrow path of publishing these four papers and four ranked journals, it actually leads to a standardisation rather than a broadening out and diversity and any sense of imagination and academic thinking.

In addition, the values and practices associated with managerialism have also encouraged academics to engage with industry to boost their universities income. Such collaboration expected to be attained by academics might affect their identification with the university, which consequently may cause perceptions of value interpenetration. For example, one participant in a post-1992 university described it as undermining the traditional nature and mission of university.

...when we have very big departmental meetings and the message is very much about targets, business, the student as a consumer. “We need to be doing more of what business tells us. We need to be giving students more two ones,”...They’re to do with getting the University up and down in league tables and so-on...I can find that quite alienating and it can make me feel more distant from the university as a whole.

**Intentional reneging**

The findings in regard to RQ3 showed that the highest perception of intentional reneging across participants was at red brick universities. Participants there felt that a number of management decisions had deviated from ideological commitments. For plate glass and post-1992 universities, the perception of practices that might lead to intentional reneging was less significant. Management practices relating to such cause of ideological breach were reported as moderately and slightly evident at post-1992 and plate glass universities, respectively. Once again, the responses from ancient universities differed from the above in that they did not refer to any management practices that might lead to the perception of intentional reneging. There were in fact three management practices identified by participants across red brick, plate glass and post-1992 universities that could engender a perception of intentional reneging. The first practice involves the influence of journal lists in decisions over promotion, rewards, or the selection of academics for submission to evaluation exercises. As one respondent explained,

...the general environment encourages you to publish in certain journals...if you’re sensible... you go along with the environment...it’s not only REF. It’s also the rewards systems to go along...the reward system is skewed towards certain behaviour.
A different form of interference in academic life reported by participants is the management practice aimed at controlling classroom teaching, which involves the standardisation of teaching and teaching evaluation. In three of the participants’ words,

...there’s a very prescriptive model of teaching...“we need to get more [university name] graduates employed” because that effects our targets, our league table position and therefore, in the class, we have to be bringing in all these employability tasks.

...what the college is more and more saying is we want you to accept more of the students that you’ve previously turned away, in affect they are saying lower the interest standards...the quality of our teaching experience, the quality of our working life is being degraded...

...they want us to drop our ‘A’ Level grades. They already want us to lower our IELTS grades for taking people…

The third and final expectation reported where academics might perceive intentional reneging is grade inflation. Academics are expected to be generous markers in the classroom. This is because of the increasing focus on student satisfaction and the National Student Survey (NSS) rating system. Universities in this competitive funding allocation, especially those who do not do well in the publications game, are arguably under pressure to do well in the NSS to attract higher student numbers for funding. As two respondents noted,

...if I were giving the same marks as I was ten years ago for the same quality of work, I would probably be branded as a very, very bad lecturer, therefore, there is inevitably an issue of grade inflation there...it’s driven by the NSS course.

...we can't give any marks between, whatever, 67 and 73 now. So basically, a 67 becomes a 73, and so on....there is inevitably an issue of grade inflation there. But that is driven, again, by these key performance indicators; it’s driven by the NSS course.

...there’s a demand from senior management that a certain per cent of students get a certain mark…I think that is quite damaging in some ways to the actual process of teaching.
Emotional Reaction

This preliminary analysis adds evidence to the expanding literature on managerialism and the negative effects of practices and controlling forms upon academics. The results show that the context of UK NHE is increasingly shifting towards embracing a bundle of constraints and obligations which affect the ideological currency of academics’ psychological contracts. The findings support the suggestion that such bundles of constraints are currently causing ideological breaches of academics’ psychological contract, and consequently impacting their emotional reactions. The following shows the feelings of stress and disillusionment across participants.

...I think it’s almost impossible, in many ways, without risking your health and your happiness because I think it’s very difficult to continually work six days a week, 60 hours a week, and to have work-life balance, because I think in order to be the best possible researcher, to realise your potential as a researcher and teacher you need space.

…I’d say both in teaching and research I find them disappointing... I went into it because I felt there were certain principles like a certain sense of free thinking, open-mindedness, challenge, those sorts of things, which seemed to me to be disappearing the more targets, structures, goals, management spreadsheet comes in those things are slowly being eroded.

...I think it’s more intense and I think the demands, both the external demands and the internalised demands of wanting to be successful and to be an excellent academic are combined to make it quite unhealthy.

In addition, the study exposes feelings of despondence across certain participants, where they appear to perceive the UK NHE context as becoming increasingly managerialist in terms of its values and obligations. In two of the participants’ words,

...I’m looking to get out, to be honest. So I’m using some research contacts. It seems like Scandinavia seems to be a bit more sane. I’m not happy and I’m not sure I really want to continue in this.
...just the fact that I’m obviously applying abroad indicates my concerns with UK higher education...I think quite a few people are thinking of exiting...people go, like, “This is not my game anymore.” And I do feel that increasingly.

Discussion
This study strengthens the existing scholarly research that suggests managerialism has considerably affected the nature of academic employment, particularly the relationship between academics and their management. It was found that the UK NHE context is deeply marked by the growing managerialist style and the expectation of meeting certain goals. This is in line with earlier findings which show the new roles and growing obligations imposed upon academia in UK HE (Deem and Brehony 2005; Benmore 2002 and Kok et al. 2010). It is therefore characterised by a strong managerial culture that endeavours to embrace a business-like style and private sector ideals, which has been argued by Deem (2004).

In addition, the findings from this study generate novel insights into the impact of managerialism upon the ideological currency of academics’ psychological contracts. The findings validate the view expressed in the theoretical piece by Harley (2002) and Hornibrook (2012); academic work in UK universities has started to revolve around values and duties that violate and conflict with these traditionally associated with academic life. It confirms that the UK NHE context is filled with constraints and obligations that are affecting the ideological currency of academics’ psychological contracts. According to the proposed model (Figure 1), participants are experiencing ideological breaches of their psychological contract as a result of perceived goal displacement, value interpenetration and intentional reneging.

According to the findings, this emphasis on the ideological currency in academia is increasing because managerialism is growing and more pressure is being placed upon academics. This is evident in the increased expectations of academics on the part of universities, with the aim of attaining a competitive position in the competition for higher reputation and funding at national level. One clear example is the external interference of journal rankings, where academics are expected to become involved in the race for publications. Academics are placed under great pressure and have little choice but to participate in the journal ‘game list’ as it is this which will guarantee them a career for the next three-six years. Such behaviour, promoted and driven by managerialism is affecting the ideological currency of academics’ psychological contracts, which supports the concerns expressed by Alvesson and Sandberg (2013) and Tourish (2011) that the publications outlet is increasingly prioritised over substantive content and contribution. This finding, also lends further support to Willmott’s (2011) argument about the present
monoculture in UK business schools and its negative effect upon the diversity and richness of research topics.

Not only does the new arrangement of NHE have a profound effect on the way in which academics perform their tasks, together with their expected roles, but it also impacts knowledge production and justification practices. According to the findings, there is a growing emphasis on student evaluations and satisfaction, where several participants have reported that management are demanding that performance expectations be lowered in the classroom, with students’ grades being marked up, in order to achieve more favourable student evaluations. This is in line with earlier findings by Gump (2007) and Pritchard and Potter (2011) which indicate such concerns and show a growing interest in student satisfaction measures.

In addition, the research extends the debate on the impact of managerialism upon academia and generates some preliminary suggestions on the nature of its impact across the different types of universities in England today. The comparison between four main university types (Table 1) illustrates the rankings for the impact of managerialism on the academic environment in England. While all types of impact were reported to some degree at all four university types (ancient, red brick, plate glass and post-1992), there were differences across the four types in terms of the force and nature of the impact. On the one hand, the findings show the strong presence of managerialist values and practices in red brick, plate glass and post-1992 university types. Participants at the three university types identified, to varying degrees, a dysfunctional relationship between academics and their management. This is not only due to the growing managerialist style and expectations of meeting certain goals, but also because of the increasing constraints on academic freedom. Indeed, it seems that the languages and practices embraced by managerialism and implemented in these three university types are more robust, as the findings indicate growing forms of control over academics’ activities and the way market-oriented principles are valued. However, the impact of managerialism in red brick universities is perceived as the lowest amongst the three types. This is because participants feel that their management are acting in way that they consider to be fair, democratic and as collegial as possible. This perceived high level of justice, driven by individuals at management level in a collegial and respective manner, is in line with the literature on interactional justice and its influence on perceptions of reality, and consequently on their psychological contracts (Greenberg 1990; Folger and Skarlicki 1999). It also supports Masterson et al.’s (2000, p. 740) argument that “Employees perceive acts of
fairness to be contributions that enhance the quality and desirability of their on-going relationships”.

On the other hand, it seems that the ancient universities are operating under far less pressure in the current managerialist climate. Here, the management style and culture have not been affected by managerialist values and practices and the respective participants express feelings of satisfaction, driven by their ability to exercise their freedom and independence.

The above preliminary suggestions on the nature and impact of managerialism across the different types of universities are consistent with those of Kok et al.’s (2010) findings. According to them, academics in post-1992 universities and in comparison with the other three types (i.e. ancient, red brick and plate glass) are experiencing the greatest pressure to attract more students along with increasing perception that their universities are adopting more commercially focused orientation. This perhaps, according to Henkel (2000) and Shattock (2006), is because that the structure of post-1992 universities used to be under more corporatelike control of local government.

The final issue that this study addresses is that of the emotional reactions of the participants as a result of the obligatory managerialist duties and expectations that academics are expected to fulfil. The findings suggest that the conditions of UK NHE are not conducive to encouraging a healthy environment for academics and management. Feelings of frustration, disappointment and anger were noted as a result of the increasing load of expectations driven by the changing practices and ideals of academic work. These feelings emanate from the perception of ideological breaches of academics’ psychological contract, strengthening the existing scholarly research that suggests that managerialist practices have produced a “poignant tension in academia” (Vivienne and Grant 2013, p. 132) that “tends to suffocate creativity and spontaneity; it limits academic identity; it corrals academic life into an undue uniformity; it allows no escape” (Barnett 2011, p. 56).

It seems that not only has managerialist practice shifted the worth and purpose of education from its intrinsic and immeasurable value, leading to the perception of ideological breaches in academia, but it also devalues individuals, as measurements are determined according to economic, rather than intrinsic values. The latter is increasingly evident in UK NHE, where the environment is characterised by a proliferating culture of accountability, audit and performativity. As a result of such conditions, the findings reveal that some participants’
feelings are intensified, with their perceptions of ideological breaches of their psychological contract resulting in perceived violations. The participants expressed their despondency and intentions to move to other countries, as conditions in UK HE are causing stress. This perception is in line with the literature, which has discussed the negative consequences of perceived violation of an individual’s psychological contract (Maertz and Griffeth, 2004; Zhao et al 2007).

**Conclusion**

This study is constructed around the argument that, within the NHE context, academics working in UK universities are affected by the dominance of managerialist ideology and its espoused policies and practices. It aims to broaden the literature on academics’ psychological contract by investigating the relationship between the new managerialism and the psychological contract of academics. In addition, this author has referred to psychological contract literature and proposes a model which is unique to the academic environment, where the focus is on the causes of ideological breach of academics’ psychological contracts, supported by data to suggest that the NHE context in the UK is occupied with a number of values and practices that affect this ideological currency, since the ideological obligations are growing in this context. In addition, this preliminary analysis presents a new picture of the differences between managerialist approaches at various types of university in England, in relation to academics’ psychological contracts.
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