

# The Psychological Contract Theory on Individual and Work-Related Outcomes: A Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

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## Abstract

The aim of this article was to present evaluation-based themes related to the psychological contract theory, specifying the influence this theory has on individual and work-related outcomes as reported in articles published between January 2009 and December 2020 through a systematic literature review. The individual and work-related outcomes in this study lack a systematic literature review (SLR) despite enormous number of published articles with these outcomes. A systematic literature review method was used to gather data, which was analysed using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA). Following the PRISMA guidelines, 45 eligible studies were included from various industries and countries, and findings were reported using descriptive synthesis and tabulation. Scoping evaluation was used to capture the state of current, relevant literature, to acknowledge gaps, and make recommendations for upcoming studies. The findings of the systematic literature review showed that perceived psychological contract is embedded in the fulfilment of the employer obligations, which influences the employees' perception of the state of the psychological contract, and both the employee and employer obligations need to be precise. This study aimed at aggregating and collecting fragmented academic knowledge on the individual and work-related outcomes related to the psychological contract. This systematic literature review emphasises the importance of the psychological contract in organisations in managing the employment relationship. The review made suggestions for practical implications for organisations, limitations and recommendations for future studies.

**Keywords:** Trust/State, Psychological Contract, Violation, Job Insecurity, Performance, Employability.

## Introduction

The psychological contract theory (PCT) is entrenched in the growth and the preservation of relations that develop at work (Kutaula et al., 2020), which Bal and Hornung (2019) had previously found that the understanding of the psychological contract (PC) is a prevalent area of importance and research interest because of its impact on employment relations. Rousseau et al (2018) acknowledged that the PCT has been dominated by content and evaluation theory and has been studied significantly, but there is still a lack of validity when applied to the PC. In earlier research Rosseau et al (2013) explained that PCT is regarded as the content and dynamics that are found in the employment relationships and that PCT is the reflection of the perceived and reciprocated obligations between employers and their employees and how these tend to influence attitudes and behaviours towards each other. This systematic literature review embarked on a research to find how valid the PCT is when applied in different industries of different cultures.

Kutaula et al (2020) found that the PC's transitional and balanced form has limited research output. This finding provided motivation for this study in which it is emphasised that transitional PC is where trust and uncertainty are addressed, so this SLR seeks to outline how trust and uncertainty are important aspects of the PCT that still need attention in research. The relational dimension in PCT where stability is important is another area that has been included in this study in which the importance of the job security factor in the PC has been addressed to show how uncertainty is embedded in the PCT and its importance when studying the PC. Jepsen and Rodwell (2012) outlined categories of PCT where the balanced PC includes external employability where the focus is on the employers and organisations developing employees' employability within and outside of the organisation which will be a focus in this study.

In the theory of the PC, as provided in the evaluation-based construct, the exchange relationship and the perceptions that employees might have regarding the reciprocal obligations of their employers is investigated (Tekleab et al., 2020). Perceptions of contracts among individuals involved in a social exchange relationship are commonly referred to as psychological contracts (Gilst et al., 2020). Therefore, the PC can be referred to as the perception of the reciprocity of the shared commitments of individuals involved in an exchange relationship. Odhiambo (2015) elaborated that the PC consists of the perceived obligations of both employers and employees. Odhiambo (2015) further cited Rao and Narayan (1998) in their definition of perception as the most important cognition factor that helps people make sense of their environment and as a determinant of human behaviour. Estreder et al (2018) highlighted that individual and shared perceptions should not be ignored when studying PCT because they both influence the effects on work-related outcomes.

Previous systematic reviews and literature reviews have focused more on the overall psychological contract concept than on the perception of the psychological contract. The extent of fulfilment of the employers' obligations influences the employees' perceptions of the state of the PC, and it is necessary for both the employees' and employers' obligations to be clear and understood (Odhiambo, 2015).

However, whilst the PC consists of both employers and employees perceived obligations, as mentioned above, it also refers to the perception held of the terms of the employment relationship, and failure to fulfil obligations and promises has been found to lead to unfavourable work and individual outcomes. The perceived terms of the exchange relationship that are largely unspoken are referred to as the PC. These might include, but are not limited to, opportunity for growth in respect, procedural fairness, or salary (Schalk & Soeters, 2008). Shen et al (2019) were of the opinion that the features of formalised contracts do not convey as much weight in the employment exchange relationship as the perceptions of the psychological contract (the context and norms relating to evaluation of the contract). De Jong et al (2009) distinguished the different levels that might help in understanding employees' perceptions of psychological contract levels. In what they termed the "quasi-spot obligation psychological contract". De Jong et al (2009) found that employees believe that a minimum expense of effort might uphold an employment arrangement and are reciprocated likewise by the employer. Perceptions of employees regarding the PC, breach and/ violation are regarded as themes in the evaluation-based PC (De Jong et al., 2009). The degree to which employees' perceptions and beliefs on how fairly they are being treated can be used to measure the psychological contract fulfilment (Conway & Briner, 2009) and also that they can trust their employers (Larmertz & Bhave, 2017).

### **Research Purpose and Objectives**

- The objective of this study was, firstly, to determine the validity of the PC by focusing on the perceptions of the employees in the evaluation-based construct and the focus of article was on a systematic literature review of existing literature between the period January 2009 and December 2020.
- The purpose of this systematic literature review (SLR) was to provide a point of departure from which to explore in detail and deliver conceptual clarity on individual perceptions of the PC and work-related outcomes. The prior to the period from January 2009, the PC had been focused on the hiring of employees and retaining them for a long time providing job security, however from 2009 the shift in the PC studies started to be noticed because of the global competition affecting organisations in their ability to offer long-term commitment to their employees.
- Secondly, the objective of this study was to investigate and aggregate studies on the relationship between perceived psychological contracts (employer obligations, employee obligations, violation), trust (state of the psychological contract), perceived employability and employee performance, and, lastly, to investigate trust (state of the psychological contract) in the employment relationship and how it is affected by job insecurity and individual job performance.

The study has also been able to answer the research questions that were formulated for this study:

- How does trust (state of the psychological contract) of employees in an organisation influence perceived job insecurity?
- Does job insecurity influence the relationship between state of the psychological contract (trust) and work-related outcomes (perceived psychological contract violation) and individual outcomes (individual performance and employability)?

- What is the relationship between the influence of job insecurity on work-related outcomes (perceived psychological contract violation) and individual outcomes (individual performance and perceived employability)?
- How does the psychological contract violate individual outcomes (performance and employability) and work-related outcomes (perceived psychological contract)?

## **Literature Review**

### *Perceived Psychological Contract and Trust (State of the Psychological Contract)*

A psychological contract is known as an informal or unwritten contract that an employee holds towards the interpretations they have of the promises that they hold or are tacitly given by the employer, as well as the perceptions that they might hold with regards to their employment relationship (Abdullah, 2017). Yu (2016) regards the concept of psychological contract as when employees and employers tacitly can differentiate and analyse amongst themselves and predict the expectations that they hold for each other without having to say anything to one another. Robinson et al (1994) and recently, Nizamani et al (2017) noted that in psychological contracts employees have beliefs that organisations will be able to pay them a reasonable wage, offer them job security and also growth within the organisation, as organisations will be rewarding their performance towards their job. Trust and uncertainty are part of PCT in the transitional dimension and they are an important part of the state of the PC, as elaborated above (Kutaula et al., 2020).

Hornung and Rousseau (2017) found that it was necessary to consider perceived fairness and trust in the state of the PC jointly as they can predict individual, related outcomes such as PC violation. Clinton and Guest (2014) provided evidence that PC breach was linked to organisational fairness. As part of the state of the psychological contract, trust is an integral part of the concept as it influences the parties involved in keeping their promises and obligations. Braganza et al (2020) found a substantial positive relationship between the PC and trust. Braganza et al (2020) found that violations of the PC reduce the level of trust between employers and employees. In an earlier study, Gracia et al (2007) found that trust and fairness are dimensions of the state of the PC that influence prediction of fulfilment of the PC. The non-existence or the lack of fairness and trust might result in the mismatch of what was anticipated and what has been delivered and might give rise to feelings of anger (Estreder et al., 2018). Heyns and Rothmann (2015) found that if there is perceived trust followers were likely to respond and participate in trusting behaviours.

Cullinane and Dundon (2006) regarded trust to be part of all psychological contracts on both a cognitive and affective basis, with cognitive trust being rooted in an exchange association and material gains, while affective trust is regarded as the respect given to the relational bonds of the employment relationship. Organisations must be aware of the foundation of trust that employees hold, enabling them to manage the employment relationship. A recent study by Lamertz and Bhawe (2017) found the state of the PC can be affected when employees do not have high levels of trust in their organisations or employers to honour their promises and be fair. Feelings of betrayal, anger, or resentment might develop among employees when they perceive that an organisation or employer has failed to meet one or more of the PC's obligations that they expected to be met. Welander et al (2017) agreed that such feelings might then result in negative attitudes and behaviours towards the organisation.

*Perceived Psychological Contract, Trust (State of the Psychological Contract) on Job Insecurity*

Armstrong and Taylor (2014) suggested that a psychological contract promises job security to employees. Ma et al (2019) defined job insecurity as a psychological state in which employees have different expectations regarding their employment continuity within organisations. Some scholars (Griep et al., 2016; Sverke et al., 2019; Niesen et al., 2018) have defined job insecurity in quantitative terms (continuation of the job) and qualitative terms (essential characteristics of the job). Considering that violation of the PC has been found to have a negative impact on the employees' performance towards the organisation (Nizamani et al., 2017), then it is necessary to consider the impact that the violation of the PC might have on job security. Staufenbiel and Konig (2010) tested a model on job insecurity and its effects on several work attitudes and found that job insecurity leads to reduced work attitudes and behaviours.

Although the above has been accepted, the findings of an empirical study carried out by Tian (2009) supported the idea that job insecurity does, in some instances, effect positive behaviours and attitudes in employees. Employees might be motivated to become valuable to the organisation by working harder to obtain approval and acknowledgement from management and feel more secure about the future of their employment (Debus et al., 2019). Yang and Chao (2016) agreed with the study by Tian (2009) as they also found that employees who regard their PC to be fulfilled by their organisation perceive that they have more job security than employees who perceive their psychological contracts to have been violated or are not being honoured. Ma et al (2019) argued that job insecurity among employees leads to perceptions of violation of the PC and might result in counter-productive work behaviours. However, employers and organisations might not be able to fulfil the psychological contract because of limitations in the economy (Salladarre et al., 2011).

*Perceived Psychological Contract and Trust (State of the Psychological Contract) on Employability*

Sanders and De Grip (2004) regarded the concept of employability to be embedded in the psychological and social constructs. Sanders and De Grip (2004) expressed that individuals' capability to adapt to suitable employment within shifting work environments contributes to being successful and satisfied with their careers. Recently, Yeves et al (2019) generalised employability as the capability of an individual to obtain employment and retain employment both at the organisational level and in the external labour market. Sok et al (2013) had earlier observed that employability is seen as the outcome of the interactions between employers and employees. Sok et al (2013) explained further that employability is enhanced when employers meet their obligations in providing opportunities for continuous training and development of their employees. In this environment, Sok et al (2013) have argued that employability can influence employees' behaviours and attitudes in learning and improving their employability in the organisation or outside the organisation. Vanhercke et al (2014) acknowledged that when employers meet their obligations in terms of the PC, it influences employees' perceptions towards their employability. Recently, Moreira et al (2020) has acknowledged that when defining employability the perception part of employability should not be left out as it has been found to positively be associated with the performance of the individual. The authors go on to say that when defining employability the perception ends with the individual on the way that they view their abilities to be able to maintain employment throughout their careers.

### *Perceived Psychological Contract and Trust (State of the Psychological Contract) on Employee Performance*

Li et al (2016) acknowledged that the PC might be affected negatively when employees' performance management at work is not done effectively. It is necessary to address the PC of employees to see if any violation has occurred because this affects individuals' performance. When the PC is managed effectively, employers might gather the required information to plan ways to increase their employees' performance (Shen et al., 2019). Violation of the perceived PC has negative consequences and a decrease in psychological attachment and identification with the organisation might be presented by employees who feel the organisation's performance management is not fair (Yan et al., 2018).

Liu et al (2020) found that both transactional and relational PC fulfilment had a direct effect on temporary workers' task performance and how they identified with the organisation. Liu et al (2020) found also that relational PC fulfilment had a stronger effect on long-serving employees than those that had been with a company for less than a year. Ruokolainen et al (2016) identified that different patterns of the PC related differently to the in-role performance over time.

The aim of this article was synthesising research regarding the relationship between the PC and job insecurity and how these influence individual outcomes (individual performance and perceived employability) and work-related outcomes (PC and perceived psychological contract violation) as they emerge in the employment exchange relationship.

### **Research Method**

To ensure that literature relevant to psychological contracts, job insecurity, trust, perception of the psychological contract, individual performance, and perceived employability were identified, a systematic literature review (SLR) was applied.

A systematic approach was used to select, identify, and critically evaluate available research to clarify the aims of synthesising to address a clearly defined research question (Booth et al., 2016). The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analysis (Page et al., 2021) was applied during this research to select the studies that were included in this literature review. A PRISMA is a statement based on evidence consisting of a set of items used in systematic reviews and meta-analyses (Page et al., 2021). The PRISMA flowchart was applied in this study to map the number of sources identified, included, and excluded and the reasons for both inclusion and exclusion. By applying the PRISMA in the systematic literature review, bias is minimised because there are formulated research questions and the PRISMA method is comprehensive in involving thorough criteria and instruments that screen out unrelated articles as well as being effective in abating biases.

### **Inclusion Criteria**

Articles that were published in English, in peer-reviewed journals and available in full-text were included. Electronic searches were performed on databases that contain published studies about the perception of the psychological contract and trust (state of the PC), work outcomes (perception of the psychological contract and job insecurity) and individual outcomes (individual performance and perceived employability).

### **Exclusion Criteria**

Unpublished theses and dissertations for the period under review in this study were not included in the articles for the analyses in the PRISMA. Also, articles that were published before 2009 were not included in the analyses and articles published after December 2020. The variables that were excluded included all that are not mentioned in the search process below, excluding other variables not mentioned below narrowed the search to articles that needed to be included in this study. Papers with participants that did not involve employees were excluded from this study. Other reasons for exclusion are mentioned in the adapted PRISMA flow diagram in Figure 1.

### **Search Process**

The Electronic Data Search (EDS) of the Northwest University (NWU) Library was used, which consists of databases such as Google Scholar, Academia, EBSCOHOST, JSTOR, Emerald Insight Journals and Scopus among many others that the University subscribes to. The following search terms were used: “perceived psychological contract” OR “psychological contract” AND “trust” OR “state of the psychological contract” AND “perceived employment uncertainty” OR “job insecurity” AND “employability” AND “employee performance”, for articles published from 2009 to 2020. Studies were analysed and coded by two authors and relevant information was included and tabulated in Table 1 according to the themes of the variables they were investigating. The search of the above databases was conducted using the keywords and their combinations related to the PC and different individual and work-related outcomes in various industries, as highlighted in Figure 1 below.

PRISMA flow chart

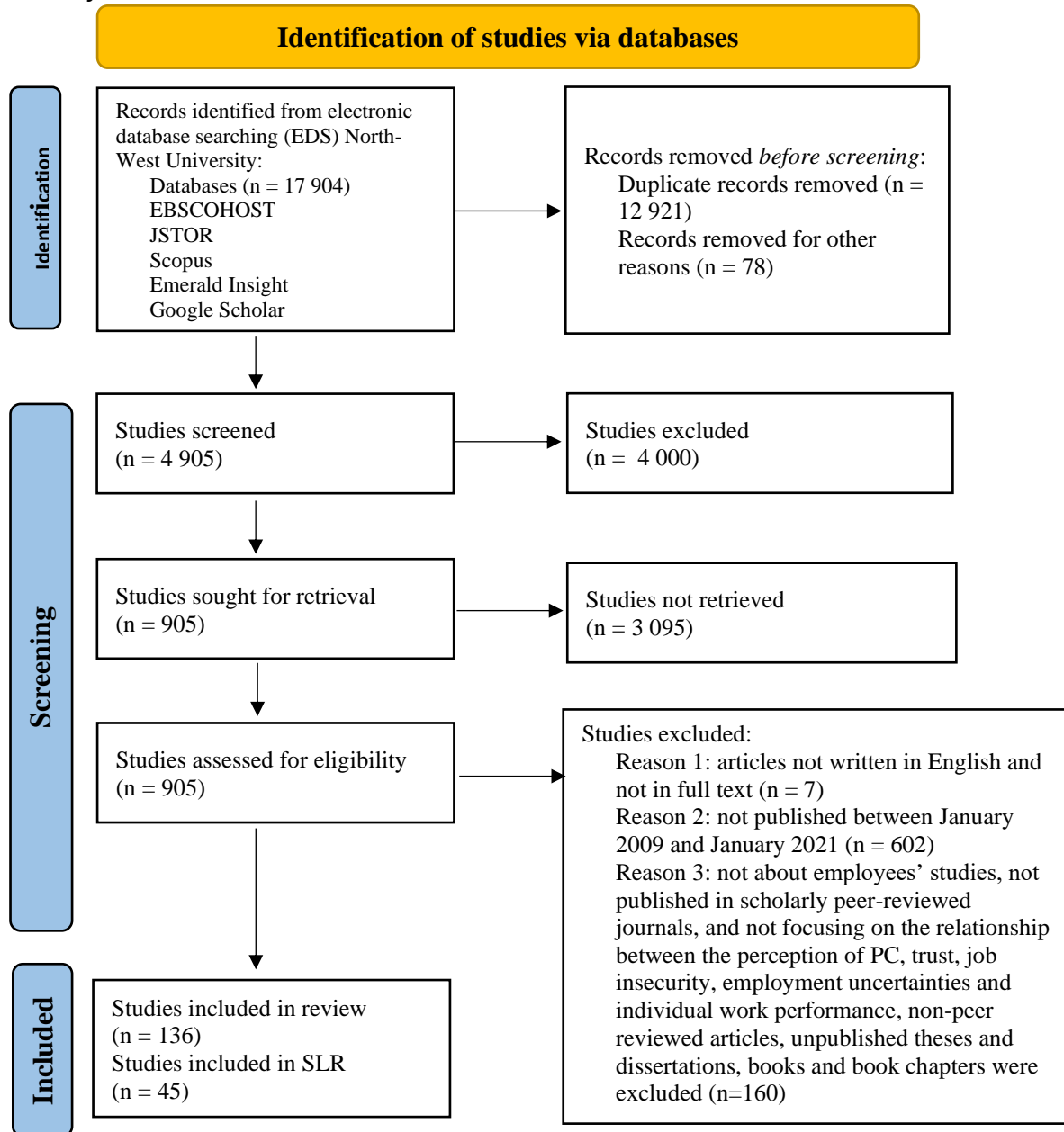


Figure 1: The PRISMA flow chart adapted from Page et al (2021)

**Results**

The sources of the present study were reviewed based on a consensus decision to include 45 sources in the systematic literature review. The sources were read several times to capture an overview of the content. The sources were tabulated according to author and year, the aim of the study, type of paper, sample, method and the primary outcomes of the studies. The search of the databases produced a total of 17 904 sources. After removing 12 921 duplicates, 905 sources remained, of which 769 sources were excluded for reasons 1, 2 and 3 because their focal points were irrelevant to this study. After this process had been completed, 136 sources remained, of which 45 were included in the systematic literature review. 91 of the remaining studies among other sources were included in the discussion of the SLR.



The 45 selected sources included 38 empirical studies, and 7 literature reviews. All the studies selected were carried out with managers, employees, and supervisors. Participants in the studies were from different countries, including the USA, UK, China, India, South Africa, Nigeria and India. Table 1 on the next page shows a summary of the selected sources. Overall, the results highlight the importance of the PC in understanding the employment relationship. Future research directions are suggested and also the limitations of the study are discussed.

Table 1

*Psychological contract studies and main outcomes*

<b>Concepts: Psychological Contract and Perceived Psychological Contract</b>						
<b>ID</b>	<b>Author, year and title</b>	<b>Aim of paper</b>	<b>Type of paper</b>	<b>Sample and method</b>	<b>Main outcomes and gaps</b>	
1	Botha & Moalusi (2010) Values underlying perceptions of the psychological contract.	The aim of the paper was to identify the breaches of the PC that are the most important and what is underlined in the values of the employees' perceptions of breach of the PC.	Empirical paper	477 South African government employees	Lack of promotion and bad treatment by seniors were the main issues among the government employees. They perceived that their PC had been breached. They were also the dominant values underlined in the perception of the government's violation of the employees' PC.	
2	Sok et al (2013) The use of the psychological contract to explain self-perceived employability.	The purpose of the paper was to consider the relationship between the PC and perceived employability, including intra-organisational mobility intentions, development of the employees and perceived labour market opportunities.	Empirical study	247 alumni of the hotel school in The Hague in the Netherlands completed the survey.	It was concluded from the study that the PC does explain some variance among the employees' self-perceived employability and the main aspects of the relationship between the PC and employability are influenced by the intra-organisational mobility opportunities. The study highlighted that autonomy, development and perceived market opportunities were important factors of employability as	

3	<p>Gilst et al (2020) The role of remediation in mitigating the negative consequences of psychological contract breach: A qualitative study in the banking sector.</p>	<p>The researchers investigated whether remediation (provision of an alternative to compensate for an undelivered obligation in the PC) would be perceived as a better way to deal with PCB in organisational change.</p>	<p>Empirical study</p>	<p>8 individual and 14 focus groups interviews were conducted consisting of 30 non-managerial employees and 48 supervisors/professionals.</p>	<p>well as age and gender. The results highlight the possibility of giving compensating incentives to remedy psychological contract breach to light and highlighting the role that other factors as communication and job alternatives. The psychological contract is taken into account to improve employee relations in organisational change.</p>
4	<p>Ghani et al (2020) Tit for tat: Abusive supervision and knowledge hiding – the role of the psychological contract breach and psychological ownership.</p>	<p>PCB was investigated using a proposed model in examining the effects that abusive supervision on knowledge hiding had.</p>	<p>Empirical study</p>	<p>344 full-time employees who were taking part in an executive development programme at a university in China were recruited for this study.</p>	<p>The study showed that PCB had an influence on the supervisors' knowledge hiding and that psychological ownership had a moderate association between abusive supervision and knowledge hiding. The effects of abusive supervision on knowledge hiding were also moderated when employees had high psychological ownership. Causality could not be established</p>

					because the study was not longitudinal.
5	Salin & Netelaers (2017) The effect of exposure to bullying on turnover intentions: The role of perceived psychological contract violation and benevolent behaviour.	An analysis of the relationship between exposure to workplace bullying and intentions of turnover were investigated. The authors hypothesised the relationship to be mediated by the perceptions of the PC, and the benevolence of the employees acted as the moderator.	Empirical study	1148 business professionals were used in the survey.	The results of the study confirmed that perceived PCV explained the relationship between turnover intentions and exposure to bullying partially. It was also shown that employees who had high benevolence were more affected by bullying behaviour and the effects were detrimental to all employees exposed to workplace bullying. The authors noted that their study could have been exposed to mono-method bias as only self-reported questions were applied in the study.
6	Flower et al (2015) Perceptions of fairness in the psychological contracts of allied health professionals.	The relationship between the components of the PC, negative affectivity and organisational justice and employee outcomes (organisational commitment, job satisfaction,	Empirical study	134 Australian allied health workers took part in the study, representing 46 % of the targeted study population.	Breach of the PC was associated with depression, and informational justice was found to be associated with organisational commitment. Job satisfaction was found to be associated with distributive justice. The study noted that

		depression and psychological distress) were investigated.			cross-sectional and self-reported questions also could have contributed to the nature of the results.
7	Kutaula et al (2020) An analysis of employment relationships in Asia using psychological contract theory: A review and research agenda.	PC research that has been conducted in Asia from 1998-2019 was reviewed.	Systematic literature review	96 articles were considered for this study. It was found that the most dominant themes in the studies about PC in Asia are relational and transactional aspects of the PC.	The study found that PC studies in Asia are not broad but that are focused on a single theory to explain employer-employee relationships. It was found that the PC's transitional and balanced forms have been ignored in the studies or have limited output in the research.
8	Tekleab et al (2020) Contextualising psychological contracts research: A multi-sample study of shared individual psychological contract fulfilment.	A study of how shared PC fulfilment is able to shape the relationship between individual PC fulfilment between individual PC fulfilment and outcomes.	Empirical study	A survey among 995 employees in 170 teams participated in the study.	The results showed that fulfilling the PC had moderating effects on the relationship that exists between PC fulfilment and work outcomes at an individual level. The study also found that were employees base and develop their PC perceptions and how these affect work-related attitudes and behaviours, although causation was not established.
	Bordia et al (2010) Breach begets breach: Trickle-down effects of	Study 1 was aimed at testing supervisor	Empirical study	150 supervisor-subordinate dyads took part in the research.	The study found a negative affiliation between

	psychological contract breach on customer service.	PCB-O connection with customer service of their subordinates. Study 2 examined the mediating effect of the perceptions of subordinates of breach in their associations between supervisor PCB-O and subordinate OCB towards customers.			supervisor citizenship behaviour towards a subordinate, and supervisor perceptions of organisational breach and subordinate breach was negatively related to subordinate behaviours towards customer satisfaction.
10	Jiang et al (2015) Organisational context and employee reactions to psychological contract breach: A multilevel test of competing theories.	The study investigated how perceived psychological contract breach is affected by the employees' reactions in the organisational context.	Empirical paper	647 employees at American university completed the survey questionnaires.	Decreased job security and job satisfaction, burnout and increased work-life imbalance were found to have been affected when the PC was breached.
11	Jiang et al (2020). Research trend of psychological contract in construction management.	The study addressed the gap in the unavailability of the application of the PC in construction management and map the way for future studies of the PC in construction management.	Review of literature	of 9 research papers were included in the study.	It was found that, in the 1990s, there were no papers that had been researched on the PC in the construction industry. It was explained that this might have been because the PC concept was just emerging. The authors noted that the trend in PC research in construction management

12	<p>Dhurup et al (2015) The psychological contract, violation of the psychological contract, work-related anxiety and intentions to quit of sport coaches in South Africa</p>	<p>The aim of the study was to examine whether the psychological contract violation and work-related anxiety had any prediction on the intention of sport coaches to quit their jobs.</p>	<p>Empirical paper</p>	<p>151 sport coaches in the Gauteng Province, South Africa responded to survey questionnaires.</p>	<p>has since increased in terms of the number of researchers since the year 2000. The authors noted that their main limitation was the lack of papers investigating the PC in construction management. The PC in an employee/employer relationship does influence the coaches' intention to quit their jobs. The authors identified the study sample as small, and the geographic area covered was also recognised as a limitation. Also, the study carried out was cross-sectional, so the issue of time being a factor was not taken into consideration in the study. The authors recommended longitudinal studies.</p>
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**Concept: Psychological Contract, Perceived Psychological Contract and Trust (State of the Psychological Contract)**

13	<p>Welander et al (2017) Corrosion of trust: Violation of psychological contracts as a reason for</p>	<p>The study was aimed at investigating and giving a description of social workers' processes that</p>	<p>Empirical Paper</p>	<p>31 participants in interviews with former statutory social workers.</p>	<p>Based on the study, it was found that the social workers' organisational responses were influenced by related</p>
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turnover amongst social workers. lead to making decisions to quit after they perceive that there has been a violation of their PC.

dissatisfaction and seemed to enhance PCB convictions, which resulted in turnover. It was also concluded that the public sector should consider the personnel strategies they used to facilitate rebuilding trust and creating a positive work climate.

Limitations identified in this study might be the limited size of the sample as well as the fact that it was only conducted in a Swedish population.

Therefore, the generalisation of the results to other countries might not reflect the true implications of the PC without conducting empirical studies in other countries.

14	Abu-Doleh & Hammou (2015) The impact of psychological contract breach on organisational outcomes: The moderating role of personal beliefs.	To develop a model that examines the effects of psychological contract breach on organisational outcomes.	Empirical paper	179	Chinese employees responded to a survey questionnaire.	PC breach is negatively related to organisational outcomes. Personal beliefs moderate the PC breach relationship with organisational outcomes, and it was concluded that personal beliefs might aggravate or alleviate the negative effects
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15	<p>Ahmed et al (2016). Psychological contract breach: Consequences of unkept promises of permanent employment.</p>	<p>The study examined attitudes and behavioural reactions of temporary employees experiencing broken promises to get permanent employment by their employers.</p>	<p>Empirical paper</p>	<p>140 Bangladesh bank employees responded to self-report and co-worker rating surveys.</p>	<p>of a PC breach on employees. The article was focused on cross-sectional data and self-reported questions. Therefore, both employers' and employees' perceptions were needed to give a full picture of the study.</p> <p>Presentation of new evidence on the attitudes and behaviour outcomes which arise as a result of employers failing to honour their promises to permanent employees and long-term temporary employees. The study might be limited in aspects so that it cannot be generalised to all types of temporary employees because there are different types of temporary employees and the data that were used in the study were only from the banking sector. Therefore, generalising the study to other sectors and other countries should be done with caution.</p>
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16	<p>Akkermans et al (2019) Me and my team: The role of social context in psychological contract breach and fulfilment.</p>	<p>The study was aimed at bringing together the available theoretical and empirical literature on the that social context plays in the psychological contract and distinguishing individual-level, direct consensus, and referent shift.</p>	<p>Review of literature</p>	<p>of Academic Search Engines of published articles.</p>	<p>The findings of the review showed that most studies of the PC had adopted an individual-level approach and only studied twenty-three idiosyncratic, psychological contracts. A new way to study the PC in a social context was suggested that included the study of the PC among individuals and teams as well. The study did not include an empirical study in the review. Therefore, crucial information might have been lacking and the industries on which the study was focused were limited. Therefore, the study might lack the cultural perspective to make generalisation relevant to all countries.</p>
17	<p>Yan et al (2018). Do the employee's work attitude and work behaviour have the same stability? – An empirical study based on psychological contract breach.</p>	<p>The study was an investigation of organisation commitment and support and their mediating influence on the relationship between PCB and work-</p>	<p>Empirical paper</p>	<p>326 employees answered the survey questions.</p>	<p>It was concluded that, if employees perceive PCB, their attitudes and behaviours will be different. The mechanisms of the effects of their attitudes and behaviours will also be different.</p>

		related attitudes and behaviours of workers.			Limitations identified in this study have been representative of the sample. The study is limited in the sense that the sample can be expanded to include not only colleges and universities but also other institutions and enterprises.
18	Biswas (2016). Behavioral and attitudinal outcomes of psychological contract violation	The study explored the effects of PC violation and exchange of leaders on workplace attitudes and behaviours.	Empirical paper	237 managerial level employees and 156 of their supervisors in seven organisations in India responded to a survey questionnaire.	The author found that leadership member exchange can minimise the impact of PC violation on work-related outcomes and socio-psychological outcomes.
19	Braganza et al (2020). Productive employment and decent work: The impact of AI adoption on psychological contracts, job engagement and employee trust.	The researchers examined the tension that exists between the aims of the SDG 8 of UN that promotes productive employment, decent work and using AI.	Empirical paper	232 survey questionnaires were analysed.	Based on the study, it was found that there is a significant positive effect that exists between the PC and job engagement as well as trust. It was found also that adoption of AI weakens the relational contracts between the organisation and employees.
20	Li et al (2018). Work-related attitudes and behaviors: Empirical evidence from a casino destination	The study looked at the effects of psychological contract breach on work-related attitudes and behaviours associated	Empirical paper	500 dealers were selected randomly from 10 casinos and 464 survey questionnaires were completed and usable for the research.	The findings of the study showed that a breach in the PC occurred when dealers had perceived that the casino had failed to deliver on a promise

with dealers  
in a casino.

and they tended  
not to share the  
responsibility  
for reaching the  
goals of the  
casino and to  
show their  
humane  
behaviours and  
commitment. It  
was noted also  
that dealers  
who had a high  
level of  
perceived  
psychological  
breach had  
negative job  
attitudes that  
led to high  
turnover  
intentions.

**Concept: Psychological Contract and Perceived Psychological Contract and Perceived Employment Uncertainty or Job Insecurity**

1	2	Costa & Neves (2017). Job insecurity and work outcomes: The role of psychological contract breach and positive psychological capital.	This study was focused on the relationship between job insecurity and individual outcomes.	Empirical paper	362	Based on the study, it was found that psychological capital moderated the negative, indirect relationship of job insecurity on outcomes following psychological contract breach.
2	2	Dadi (2012). Promises, expectations, and obligations – Which terms best constitute the psychological contract?	A discussion of the PC's conceptual boundaries and what it is not, and what is best constituted in the PC concept.	Review of literature	Academic Search Engines of published articles.	The PC is subjective; employees' obligations and expectations are only known to the employee. It is necessary to view the PC as being influenced also by

				expectations and obligations formed outside of the organisation. Past experiences of the employee need to be acknowledged as a factor in the PC.		
3	2	Griep et al. (2016). The effects of unemployment and perceived job insecurity: A comparison of their association with psychological and somatic complaints, self-rated health and life satisfaction.	The study investigated the comparison of the association between short- and long-term unemployment, and perceived job insecurity and impact that job insecurity might have on employees' commitment and job satisfaction in Qom municipalities	Empirical paper	Secure permanent employees (N = 2257), insecure permanent employees (N=713), short-term unemployed (N=662) and long-term (N=345) in Finland.	Based on the study, it was found that insecure employment relates to more psychological complaints than short-term unemployment and secure permanent employment.
24		Kwabiah et al (2016). Job security, job satisfaction and organizational commitment as correlates of job performance among workers in Takoradi, Ghana	The study investigated the predictability of job security and satisfaction on organisational commitment and performance of the workers.	Empirical Paper	Employees answered a structured survey in the para-military, civic service and the private sector and a total of 294 employees participated in the study.	The investigation found that job security did not show any significant correlation with performance and that there was also no correlation between job security and organisational commitment. The study recommended that employees' satisfaction with their job and job

- security should be investigated by management to improve organisational commitment and workers' performance.
- 25 Jiang & Lavaysse (2018). Cognitive and affective job insecurity: A meta-analysis and a primary study. An application of the distinction between cognitive and affective job insecurity in conceptualisation and theory development. To examine a moderator that explains why individuals with the same level of cognitive job insecurity might display different affective job insecurity levels. Review of Academic Search Engines of published articles. The results demonstrated that job security can be treated separately when identified as cognitive job insecurity or affective job insecurity. The outcomes of the review showed also that affective job insecurity is more closely linked to employee outcomes than cognitive job insecurity.
- 26 Jandaghi et al (2011). The impact of job security on employees' commitment and job satisfaction in Qom municipalities. The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of job security on the commitment of employees and job satisfaction. Empirical paper 158 employees in Qom municipalities responded to survey questionnaires. The extent of organisational commitment and job satisfaction is greater in permanent employees than in contractual employees. The study did not give much new evidence towards what is already known. However, it was confirming studies done by other authors in a different sample.
- 27 Ma et al (2019) The aim of the paper was to Empirical paper The data were collected from The findings of the study

	<p>The relationships between job insecurity, psychological contract breach and counter-productive workplace behaviour. Does employment status matter?</p>	<p>examine the mediating effect that PCB has on the relationship between job insecurity and counter-productive workplace behaviour (CWB) and how the status of employment moderates this relationship.</p>		<p>survey questionnaires completed by 212 supervisor-subordinate dyads from a state-owned Chinese air transportation group.</p>	<p>revealed that PCB partially mediates the effects of job insecurity on counter-productive workplace behaviour (CWB) at both the organisational and interpersonal CWB level. The study also showed that the relationship between job insecurity, PCB and CWB differ significantly between permanent workers and contract workers.</p>
28	<p>Niesen et al (2018) Job insecurity and innovative work behaviour: A psychological contract perspective.</p>	<p>The researchers examined the relationship between job insecurity and innovative work behaviour (IWB) and the role of the PCB in explaining this relationship.</p>	<p>Empirical paper</p>	<p>190 employees from an industrial company that had undergone restructuring and downsizing responded to survey questionnaires.</p>	<p>The study found there was no direct association between job insecurity and idea generation and implementation, though indirect relationships were found to exist between job insecurity and the two types of IWB through PCB which was found to be positively related to idea generation and implementation</p>
29	<p>Staufenbiel &amp; Koning (2010). A model for the effects of job insecurity on performance,</p>	<p>The study was an investigation of effects that job insecurity has on in-role</p>	<p>Empirical Paper</p>	<p>A survey was administered to 183 non-managerial participants with 152 responses accepted as usable data, with</p>	<p>The findings of the study revealed more complex effects on performance,</p>

	turnover intention, and absenteeism.	behaviour, organisational citizenship behaviour, turnover intention and absenteeism.		responses from 24 participants in managerial positions being accepted.	turnover intention, and absenteeism than previously assumed in earlier studies. The investigation showed that the effect of job insecurity on performance is neither purely negative nor positive but, instead, is both a hindrance and a challenge stressor. The authors suggested that the generalisability of their study results should be tested in other countries and cultures to replicate and extend their results.
30	Koen et al (2019). Job preservation efforts: When does job insecurity prompt performance?	The purpose of the paper was to examine when job insecurity might prompt task and contextual performance.	Empirical Paper	103 permanent employees of a company were surveyed	The findings of the study showed job insecurity to be positively linked only to supervisor-rated overall performance. The research revealed gaps in that it was not clear in specific situations where job preservation might occur. Mechanisms that might cause either positive or negative responses to job insecurity were beyond the scope of the study.



**Concept: Psychological Contract and Perceived Psychological Contract and Employability**

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|----|---|--|----------------------|--|--|
| 31 | Bargsted (2017).<br>Impact of personal competencies and market value of type of occupation over objective employability and perceived career opportunities. | The paper predicated the weight of market value of the type of occupation, gender, and career competencies over objective employability and perceived opportunities in future careers and satisfaction of young professionals. | Empirical Paper      | 294 graduates from 27 undergraduate degree programmes took part in the study and explained their labour situations and satisfaction with career opportunities and the level they had attained in their studied competencies. | It was identified in the paper that the market value of the graduates' occupations had significant effect on objective employability which facilitates the development of specific intervention strategies for the promotion of equality in labour opportunities and placement.  |
| 32 | Sok et al (2013).<br>The use of the psychological contract to explain self-perceived employability.   | The relationship between the PC and self-perceived employability included: intra-organisational mobility intentions, employee development and perceived labour market opportunities.   | Empirical paper      | 247 alumni of a hotel management school in The Hague in the Netherlands completed the survey.  | The results of the study showed that the PC can be used to explain a fair amount of variance found in the hospitality workers' self-perceived employability. External factors were not taken into consider in the study, for example, organisational size and macro-economic factors, including the unemployment rates affecting the sample. |
| 33 | Vanhercke et al (2014).<br>Defining perceived employability: A psychological approach.  | The main objective of the paper was to define employability in the context of the psychological literature with a main focus   | Review of literature | Academic Search Engines of published articles.   | Awareness was raised in the paper that there are differences in the psychological notions of employability and that they are not equal. It   |

		on perceived employability.				was highlighted in the paper also that perceived employability is glued to competences and dispositions which are related although the notions are different. The researchers found that the perceived employability approach to the study provided an overall view which integrated every possibility of personal and structural factors and how they interact with each other in Perceived Employability Theory.
34	Forrier et al (2015). Integrating different notions of employability in a dynamic chain: The relationship between job transitions, movement capital and perceived employability.	The aim of the study was to investigate employability to arrive at an integration of what is disjointed and ambiguous.	Empirical paper	643	Belgian and Dutch-speaking employees participated.	Based on the study, it was found that both the internal and external labour markets are important foci in research about employability and both were found to relate differently to the notions of employability and how employees perceived their employability both at the internal and external level.

**Concept: Psychological Contract and Perceived Psychological Contract and Employee Performance**

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|----|---|--|-----------------|--|--|
| 35 | Bal et al (2010).<br>Psychological contract breach and work performance: Is social exchange a buffer or an intensifier?                                 | An investigation of how social exchanges modify the relationship between psychological contract breach and work performance.   | Empirical paper | 266 employees in a service-sector company in the United States of America (USA) responded to a survey questionnaire.   | Based on the study, a negative relationship was found between PC breach and work performance and that the relationship was moderated by social exchanges. This revealed that the relationship was stronger for employees with high social exchange relationships, perceived organisational support, and trust. |
| 36 | Che et al (2018).<br>Job performance and job satisfaction: Roles of organisational commitment and psychological contract.                               | An investigation of the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance of employees through the mediating effect of psychological contract and organisational commitment. | Empirical paper | 144 employees and managers responded to a survey questionnaire.  | Job satisfaction generates a positive effect that carries over onto job performance, and it was found that the PC and organisational commitment are important mediators between job performance and job satisfaction.  |
| 37 | Kwabiah et al (2016).<br>Job security, job satisfaction and organizational commitment as correlates of job performance among workers in Takoradi, Ghana | Industries in Lagos State in Nigeria were examined to establish the predictability of job security, satisfaction on organisational commitment  | Empirical Paper | A structured survey was answered by employees in the para-military, civic service and the private sector and a total of 294 employees participated in the study. | The investigation showed that job security did not have any significant correlation with performance and also that there was no correlation between job  |

		and workers' performance.			security and organisational commitment. Based on the study, it was recommended that employees' satisfaction with their jobs and job security should be investigated by management so that organisational commitment and workers' performance can be improved.
38	Li et al (2015). The effect of labor contracts on the psychological contract dynamics among Chinese migrant construction workers.	The article was an examination of the effect that the fulfilment of the psychological contract has on migrant workers' job involvement and job performance.	Empirical research	305	supervisor-subordinate dyads were used as the sample. The investigation showed that the labour contract did moderate the relationship that exists between PC fulfilment and job involvement and the relationship was much stronger for the migrant workers who had not signed a labour contract than for those who had signed. The researchers also examined how the interaction between psychological contracts and labour contracts might influence migrant workers' job involvement and performance. The study was limited in that only the labour contract was

- 39 Li et al (2016). Effects of psychological contract breach on attitudes and performance: the moderating role of competitive climate. The purpose was to advance a multi-level model that could be used to draw connections among competitive climate, organisational identification, job performance, affective commitment and psychological contract breach. Empirical paper 272 surveys from the 350 that were handed out at 30 hotels in Macau, China were valid. The results of the study showed that PC breach is negatively related to organisational identification (OID) and affective commitment (AC) and that they both have a significant, positive relationship with job performance. Competitive climate at the organisational level was found to provide moderation to the effects of OID and AC on the hotel workers' in-role performance. The results of the study offered valuable implications for managers in producing more efficient, hotel human resource management techniques.
- 40 Liu et al (2020). Effect of gig workers' psychological contract fulfilment on their task performance in a sharing economy – A perspective from the mediation of organisational The aim of the study was to propose a framework that would explore the effects of PC fulfilment on task performance. Empirical paper 223 drivers in China participated in the study. The investigation showed that both transactional and relational PC fulfilment had a direct effect on contract workers' task

identification and among  
the moderation of employees.  
length of service.

performance as well as how they identified with the organisation. It was found also that relational PC fulfilment had a stronger effect on long-serving employees than those that had been with a company for less than one year.

- 41 Ruokolainen et a. (2016). Patterns of psychological contract and their relationships to employee well-being and in-role performance at work: Longitudinal evidence from university employees. The purpose was to identify patterns of the PC and how these were related to employee-well-being and in-role performance over time. Empirical paper 224 university employees responded to a survey questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed that employee job satisfaction did not vary between patterns and that the PC pattern that had different obligations on the part of the employee and employer resulted in better employee well-being and in-role performance. The different patterns of the PC and how they were related to in-role performance over time were also identified in the study. The study was limited because of the respondents. Although they might have been representative of their organisation, it might not be possible to

42	Shen et al (2019). Work group climate and behavioural responses to psychological contract breach.	The paper was an examination of whether PCB had any influence on in-role performance and organisation-directed citizenship (OCBO) on work group climate levels, especially procedural justice climate and power distance climate.	Empirical paper	Survey questionnaires were administered to 312 employees and 86 supervisors of a pharmaceutical manufacturing company in China.	<p>generalise the results to private sector businesses. Therefore, the authors suggested that different organisations be used to replicate findings so that a generalised result can be more acceptable.</p> <p>PCB influences in-role performance strongly and OCBO for those that have favourable procedural justice climates. The limitation of this study is its generalisation to other cultures and different organisations. Therefore, it would be advised that the study be replicated in other different organisations in different industries so that a generalised outcome can be applied to different organisations and industries.</p>
43	Yang & Chao (2016). How psychological contract breach influences organizational identification and organizational citizenship behaviour: The mediating role of	The main objective of the paper was to investigate how the PC influences extra-role contribution of employees. The mediating role that	Empirical paper	283 Chinese employees responded to a survey questionnaires.	The results of the study indicated that psychological capital does partially mediate the relationship between PCB and organisational

psychological capital.

psychological capital plays in the extra-role behaviours of employees was also explored.

identification, and also that psychological capital does mediate fully between PCB and organisational citizen behaviour. The study found that the PCB is the damage factor of the employees' extra-role contribution, while psychological capital is the protective factor. The study was limited as a cross-sectional design was used. Therefore, a longitudinal design might be applied so that causal inferences can be investigated about how the PCB affects causal relationships with different outcomes.

44	Philippaers et al (2016). Perceived employability in relation to job performance: A cross-lagged study accounting for a negative path via reduced commitment.	In the study, the idea that perceived employability boots job performance and that perceived employability might indirectly decrease the performance of employees because they have reduced affective organisational	Empirical paper	Data were collected in two phases from 791 Dutch-speaking Belgian employees. An online link was created to administer survey questions and surveys were also conducted in magazines and newspapers	The study results suggested that perceived employability might decrease affective organisational commitment, and also that job performance might be decreased or compromised. However, the authors acknowledged that the study
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commitment  
was  
challenged.

might have been limited because their sample was representative of an exceptional population who were career-oriented and were readers of an HR magazine that published job opportunities and it was assumed that this might be salient to other theoretical assumptions. The authors noted that a different sample might reveal other arguments that might have been minimised by their sample.

45	Alromaihi et al (2017). Job satisfaction and employee performance: A theoretical review of the relationship between the two variables.	The article identified factors influencing job satisfaction, determinants of employee performance and to review the relationship between them accordingly.	Review of Academic Search Engines of published articles.	The review showed the dual direction of the relationship that had cyclical cause and effect. Hence, job satisfaction leads to performance which leads to satisfaction through a number of mediating factors. It was found also that successful organisations apply structures to measure satisfaction and performance periodically. The study was focused only on
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gathering data and did not include an empirical study to substantiate the findings from literature.

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## Discussion

Abu-Doleh and Hammou (2015) noted that perceptions held by employees regarding their PC being breached or violated might aggravate or alleviate the adverse effects on employees' individual and organisational outcomes that were studied. As mentioned earlier, the findings of Tekleab et al (2020) that perceptions that employees are bound to have regarding their PC are influenced by the reciprocal obligations of their employers in the employment relationship. In a study of government employees, Botha and Moalusi (2010) found that different values influence the perceptions of the employees' psychological contracts (PC). Botha and Moalusi (2010) found that lack of promotion and ill-treatment were the main issues that were influencing the perceptions of the PC. The findings concurred with those of Bordia et al (2010), who found that the PC should be regarded as an individual's perception. Similarly, Dadi (2012) noted that have failed to agree on one definition of the PC because of its embeddedness in perceptions and, based on findings that indicated that the PC can be influenced by different aspects including nationality, beliefs and culture of expectations or perceptions, proposed a definition that: "The psychological contract is a set of individual obligations or expectations unknown to the employer in respect of the exchange relations between the parties involved" (p. 98).

Ahmed et al (2016); Pramudita and Sukoco (2018) found that perceptions of the PC are directly linked to the behaviours and attitudes of employees towards their organisations. Gilst (2020) believed that certain remedials could be applied when there are negative perceptions of the PC not being fulfilled, such as intra-organisational mobility to facilitate employability and employee development. Similarly, Gilst et al (2020) proposed that compensating inducements to remedy psychological contract breach could be an alternative way to alleviate negative perceptions of the PC using communication or job alternatives.

Recent developments in research about the PC have strengthened the significance of understanding the concept and its application in understanding attitudes and behaviours of employees in different industries (Akkermans et al., 2019). Ghani et al (2020) found that perceived psychological contract breach (PCB) or violation influenced knowledge hiding by Chinese employees and abusive supervision, which was confirmed by Salin and Netelaers (2017), who found that perceived PCV or PCB explained the relationship between workplace bullying and high turnover rates. PCB was found to be associated with depression in the study by (Flower et al., 2015). Although employee well-being was not discussed in this study, this observation highlights the extent to which negative perceptions of the PC can affect employees' health. Salin and Netelaers (2017) investigated the relationship between exposure to workplace bullying and intentions of turnover and found that the relationship was mediated by the perceptions of the PC, and the benevolence of the employees acted as the moderator. Salin and Netelaers (2017) confirmed that perceived PCV explained the relationship between turnover intentions and exposure to bullying partially and that

employees who had high benevolence were more affected by bullying behaviour and the effects were detrimental to all employees exposed to workplace bullying.

After a systematic literature review, Kutaula et al (2020) highlighted the need to conduct PC studies in other cultures because they found a lack of studies in Asian literature. This finding provided the idea to apply the PC in the construction industry in South Africa. Bal et al (2010) investigated how social interactions altered the association that exists between psychological contract breach (PCB) and work performance and found a negative association between PCB and work performance and that social exchanges moderated this relationship. Employees who had high social exchange associations, alleged organisational support and trust, did not perceive the existence of PCB, and their performance was not affected. Alromaihi et al. (2017) stated that it is important that individual performance of each employee is understood so that informed management decisions can be made, as they are based on individual performance.

Shen et al (2019) found that when employees perceived PCB, their performance was affected negatively. It was found that in-role performance was affected and that perceived procedural injustice also affected the performance of the employees. When the performance of employees is lacking, it has been found that it is expensive for organisations (Li et al., 2018). In their respective studies, Li et al (2018); Shen et al (2019) found that, when employees perceived PCB, they had a tendency not to share the responsibility for reaching the goals of the organisation, thereby affecting the overall performance of the organisation. Employees also reduced being humane and committed towards the organisation which can become expensive for the organisation if employees do not meet their profit-making goals. Liu et al. (2020) found that PC fulfilment contributed to employees' performance and it was relatable to previous studies in organisational behaviour. However, Liu et al (2020) expressed a strong opinion that the relational PC had greater influence on the performance of employees than other forms of the PC.

Another important view, emerging from the present systematic literature review was the relationship between the PC and job insecurity. Niesen et al (2018) articulated that the PC promises job security to employees when they are of the belief that they will have their job for as long as they want it. Niesen et al (2018) examined the relationship between job insecurity and innovative work behaviour (IWB) and how PCB explains this relationship. It was found that PCB moderated the relationship between JI and IWB, which further supports the notion that, when employees can generate and implement ideas in their work, they are able to alleviate their perceptions of PCB. Koen et al (2019) believed that job insecurity prompted performance and investigated multi-level analyses on job insecurity. Koen et al (2019) found that job insecurity was positively linked to supervisor-rated performance and that employees devoted extra effort to their job performance when they felt that there was a great potential for job loss. Koen et al (2019) concluded that the motivation brought by job insecurity was more effective when both the employment and the employee were threatened with job loss. Jiang et al (2015) found a decrease in job insecurity when employees perceived that their PC had been violated. Ma et al (2019) found that PCB partially mediates the effects of job insecurity on CWB on both the organisational and interpersonal level and that these differ greatly for permanent and contract workers. This finding was supported by Yan et al (2018), who carried out a study focused on organisational commitment and organisational support

and how these moderated relationships between PCB and work-related attitudes and behaviours of workers. Yan et al (2018) noted that the lack of support and trust in an organisation resulted in employees perceiving PCB which affected their behaviours and attitudes. This idea was supported by a study undertaken by Welander et al. (2017), in which it was found that turnover was high among social workers and who do not hesitate to quit their jobs when they have no support from their organisations and when they have perceived PCV.

Jandaghi et al (2011) found that job security had other mitigating factors that also contributed to how the employees viewed their job security or insecurity. Costa and Neves (2017) investigated JI and how it affected individual outcomes and found that the PC moderated the negative relationship that exists between JI and individual outcomes that were increased by perceived PCB. Jiang and Lavaysse (2018) conducted a meta-analysis study in which they found that, as employees face the unavoidable essential alterations in the world of work, including less secure employment, JI is becoming one of the realities in the workplace. Jiang and Lavaysse (2018) suggested that organisations that are going through changes could help employees to cope with JI by involving their employees in decision-making regarding their jobs and fostering relationships between supervisors and their subordinates that encourage effective communication.

Griep et al (2016) found that the anticipation of harm because of job insecurity also had an influence on the perception of losing the actual employment and the uncertainties that are brought by anticipation of loss of employment. Kwabiah et al (2016) investigated how three different industries (para-military, civic service, and the private sector) were affected by job insecurity. It was found that employees' satisfaction with their job and job security should be investigated by management so that organisational commitment and employee performance can be improved. Kwabiah et al (2016) highlighted the importance of the perception of job insecurity among employees in different industries and how this can affect their performance. It is noted that Kwabiah et al (2016) investigated three different industries and were able to make a conclusion that is applicable to those industries and can be generalised to the construction industry. The components investigated by Kwabiah et al (2016) can be applied to the construction industry, so that management can map policies and procedures that enhance performance in their employees. Staufenbiel et al (2010) investigated job insecurity and how it affects and influences in-role behaviour, organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), turnover intention and absenteeism.

When a PC is considered to have been violated, Biswas (2016) observed that the situation depicts perceptions of employees' evaluation of the abilities of their employers to fulfil exchanges related to work-related efforts. Biswas (2016) highlighted that PCV might occur unintentionally and might be moderated by a strong leadership exchange that might depict that the nature of the business PCV happens unintentionally. Dhurup et al (2015) found that, when PCV occurs, employees' feelings of insecurity within the organisation might occur and mistrust might also develop. In a study that was focused on sports coaches, Dhurup et al (2015) affirmed that, when PCV occurs where the mutual understanding was violated, the coaches wanted to leave their employers. Braganza et al (2020) found that trust in the job by employees has become highly significant in attaining positive organisational outcomes, and that trust prevents employees from breaching their contracts with the organisation. It was

found also that sufficient job engagement enhances employees' trust based on their psychological contracts. Braganza et al (2020) emphasised that employers should be aware of the impact that the adoption of Artificial Intelligence has on PCs so that employees do not experience what they termed "alienational psychological contract".

Jiang et al (2015) asserted that, when psychological contract breach (PCB) occurs, there are negative effects involved, yet, they also found that these negative effects can be moderated by the organisational context. Jiang et al (2015) specified that employees who feel higher PCB are those who experience it at individual level rather than in a group unit in the organisation that was not affected by organisational change, and they showed reduced job security and job satisfaction. Jiang et al (2015) highlighted that employees involved in organisations that were experiencing change experienced a high level of PCB on an individual level, or as a group unit if they were affected negatively by the change.

Li et al (2018) found that the organisational context (environment in this case) influenced how employees reacted to their PC being violated or breached. It was found that perceived PCB significantly influenced working behaviours and how employees perceived their psychological contract. Li et al (2018) found that, if there was perceived mistrust and failure to deliver on promises, it resulted in higher intentions to quit the organisation. Two environments were differentiated to which employees in the study were exposed: the (very important persons) VIP room, and mass tables. The findings of the study confirmed what Jiang et al (2015) highlighted about the organisational context influencing PCB. Li et al (2018) found that, if employees who worked on the VIP tables experienced that the casino was unable to fulfil their promises and obligations or PCV, they were more likely to leave the organisation than those who worked on mass tables.

Welander et al (2017) found that PCV occurred among social workers who were interviewed during a study. It was found that the PCV that the social workers felt they experienced was attributed to the employment relationship exchanges that did not happen according to what they were promised or were obligated to have happened because of the employment relationship. The interviews that were held with the social workers revealed that the mistrust that developed was a clear expression of a violation of the obligations and expectations that existed in the employment relationship. Flower et al (2015) also suggested that the PCV occurred because there were disturbances in the exchange relationship found between employees and organisations. Flower et al (2015) observed that Social Exchange Theory might not be fulfilled by both parties, hence the party that is affected will try to retaliate to bring balance to the employment relationship. Yan et al (2018) concluded that, when violation occurs on a PC, various work-related behaviours are affected as a result of organisational commitment being affected. It was found also that organisational commitment played a moderating role when PCV occurred.

Having considered the impact of the PCV, it could be concluded that investigating the link between the PC and employability to determine how the PC impacts employability is important in order to establish what happens when there is perception of the PC being violated or breached. Researchers have found that when PCV occurs, employees might develop intentions to leave their organisations which influence their perceptions of employability outside the organisation (Philippaers et al., 2016; Sok et al., 2013; Vanhercke et

al., 2014). Bargsted (2017) found that perceived employability of employees might be influenced and affected by the economy of market that is available to the employee. Bargsted (2017) explained further that the availability of jobs in the market and the need for the skills that the employee has determines their employability in the market economy.

Sok et al (2013) argued that the PC plays an important role in influencing employees' perceptions of employability. Based on their study, Sok et al (2013) found that, if employees valued their PC more positively, they responded with positive behaviours and perceptions of their employability. Forrier et al (2015) found that all three concepts of employability (job transitions, perceived employability and movement capital) all contribute to how individuals interpret their employability both in the internal and external environments. The findings of the study by Forrier et al (2015) revealed that practices initiated by employers in maintaining their obligations have a bearing on attitudes, intents, and actions of employees, as well as the effect of Social Exchange Theory, in the employment relationship. In an earlier study, Aggarwal and Bhargava (2009) found that training and development are important to facilitate employability in employees. Aggarwal and Bhargava (2009) acknowledge further that training and development have become an important part of employees' PC and, when employees perceive that training and development has not been facilitated by their employers, they might experience a violation of the PC.

Vanhercke et al (2014) found that perceived employability has many facets and having studied the psychological part of employability, they found that perceived employability (psychological notions) is not the same for all individuals. Vanhercke et al (2014) noted that, although perceived employability is treated the same in literature, it is influenced by the capabilities and dispositions of individuals. Bargsted et al (2021) suggested that, although perceptions are individualised, employees who are highly skilled and are motivated by their environments and employers to advance themselves continuously, have positive perceptions about their employability opportunities.

Philippaers et al (2016) were of the view that perceived employability decreases affective commitment, which they found also had a negative impact on job performance. Dries et al. (2014) found that employees who have lower perceived employability invest in their existing employment relationships and maintain long-term commitment more than those who have higher perceived employability, as the employment relationship for the parties involved is embedded in Social Exchange Theory. Philippaers et al (2016) agree with these findings as they found that employees who have higher perceived employability are focused on maintaining their employability outside the organisation rather than maintaining loyalty to the organisation. Philippaers et al (2016) elaborate further that employees who are highly employable are likely to become frustrated when their expectations are not fulfilled by their employers. Unfulfilled promises might become detrimental to employees' performance as they focus on aligning their employability with other organisations that will hire them and offer career progression that matches their potential (De Cuyper et al., 2011).

As discussed above, when employees perceive that their expectations of continuous training and development to enhance their employability are not being met, their individual performance might be affected. Therefore, it is important to consider individual performance and how it is affected by PC. Based on services sector research, Bal et al (2010) found that



there was a undesirable relationship between PCV and individual performance, but they found also that social exchanges in the employment relationship moderated the effects. Bal et al. (2010) found that trust impacted on the PCV and explained that, based on their study, they concluded that individual performance was lower in employees who had lower social exchanges in the organisation. This was not affected by the level of the PCB. Bal et al (2010) explained further that employees who had higher social exchanges in the organisation produced higher individual performance, which decreased when their perceived PCB was higher.

Che et al (2018) supported this idea and observed further that individual performance suffered or decreased when employees perceived that their PC had been violated or breached. Che et al (2018) also found the PC to be an important mediator in the employment relationship and individual performance. Kwabiah et al (2016) noted further that effectively managed psychological contracts resulted in increased individual performance. Researchers have shown that, when the PC is violated, employees will have decreased individual performance and high levels of turnover (Bal et al., 2010; Che et al., 2018; Kwabiah et al., 2016; Li et al., 2016).

In a study of migrant Chinese construction workers, Li et al (2015) found that the fulfilment of the PC had an influence on job involvement and job performance and that there was a relationship between the PC and labour contracts. Li et al (2015) acknowledged that there were previous studies that had shown that there is a positive association between PC fulfilment and job performance, but they found that there was a link between the migrants' perception of PC fulfilment and job performance, moderated by job involvement. Li et al (2015) found also that, in the absence of a labour contract, the employment relationship was enabled by high-quality social exchange between the employers and the migrant workers, which confirmed the positive influence of the PC on job performance.

Li et al. (2016) were of the opinion that fulfilment of the PC re-assures trust and offers mutual benefits in the employment relationship. However, when employees perceive that they have not been receiving the benefits of the employment relationship, they might retaliate negatively. In existing literature, a breach of the PC has been linked with behavioural reactions, including PCV (Biswas, 2016; Dhurup et al., 2015), job insecurity (Ma et al., 2019; Niesen et al., 2018; Staufenbiel et al., 2010), and employability (Sok et al., 2013); Vanhercke et al., 2014; Philippaers et al., 2016). The constructs mentioned above have also been linked with having an impact on individual performance (Bal et al., 2010; Che et al., 2018; Kwabiah et al., 2016; Li et al., 2016).

Ruokolainen et al. (2016) reported that employees with perceptions of balanced obligations between them and their employers showed higher individual performance on their tasks, while employees who perceived that their PC has been violated showed lower individual performance. Furthermore, Shen et al (2019) found that, when a PC has been violated or breached, this strongly influences in-role performance which ultimately has an impact on the performance of the organisation.

Lee et al (2014) argued that, when employees perceive that they are not receiving adequate organisational support to complete their tasks, their performance is affected, which was also found to be damaging to the organisation's overall performance. Yang and Chao (2016) suggested that employers should have employment practices that promote positive employee perceptions of organisational support. Philippaers et al. (2016) investigated further how performance is affected by perceived employability and found that employees who had lower perceived employability had reduced affective commitment over time, and affective commitment is an essential factor for individual performance.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the PRISMA methodology to analyse and critically evaluate existing literature, the findings of this study contribute significantly to the present body of knowledge about the PC, with a special focus on how the PC and job insecurity (JI) influence individual outcomes (performance and perceived employability) and work-related outcomes (PCV).

By applying the PRISMA, as prescribed and endorsed by Page et al (2021), to existing literature, it was found that the PC has strong relations with several different outcomes. In this systematic literature review, studies about the PC and job insecurity, trust, PCV, employability and individual performance have been aggregated. It has been highlighted in the study that employers and organisations should not be caught up in making unrealistic promises they might be unable to fulfil. Promises made and not fulfilled might cause employees to perceive violation of their PC and the parties involved in the employment relationship might suffer.

In this article, it has been shown clearly that a PC that is perceived to have been violated might cause different outcomes and might have negative consequences for those involved in the mutual relationship. Therefore, it is necessary for both employers and employees to see and understand why some of the promises might be met for reasons beyond each other's control. It was also noted in this study that organisations and employers should identify and recognise variances in behaviours of their employees and use mechanisms, such as surveys, to determine the root causes of those variances.

The present study has offered a research avenue that can enable researchers to further understand the outcomes of the PC both at the individual and work-related outcomes. With the variables discussed in this study, it has been evident that individual outcomes (individual performance and perceived employability) can have two dimensions in being positive or negative depending on the perception of the individual employee involved. Of the work-related outcomes (psychological contract violation) that the study focused on may lead to counter-work productive behaviours.

### **Theoretical and Practical Implications**

The study has aggregated studies that show that the effective management and the understanding of the PC can prevent destructive behaviours by employees, managers and employers should be attentive to employees' perceptions of the psychological contract. The article has also created awareness that understanding employees' perceptions of their PC fulfilment or violation has a major influence on the quality of their employment relationship, highlighting the importance of the Social Exchange Theory in the effective management of



the employment relationship. It is recommended that everyone who is involved in an employment relationship should identify and recognise mutual obligations so that, if there is any breach (actual or perceived), it can be addressed by both parties.

The study has revealed the broad theoretical and experimental evidence that supports the importance of understanding the PC in employment relationships, as shown in Table 1 above. Jiang et al (2020) in their analysis of the PC in construction management found that there are limited studies that apply the PC in construction management. Nine papers that were published about the PC in construction management were identified, which highlights that PC studies in the construction industry are lagging behind. The above finding points the need for research of the PC in the construction industry.

The study has shown that it is important that employers are able to identify and understand behaviours that are associated with how employees respond to, and cope with, the threat to their perceptions of their psychological contracts. The study sought to establish the relationship that the PC has on different work and individual outcomes, and it has highlighted that perceived psychological contracts have a huge impact on employees' behaviour both at an individual and organisational level. By providing specific individual and work-related outcomes in which employees perceive their own promises and their individual evaluation of the obligations and promises of their employers the findings of this study have contributed to the literature about the PCT.

A wide array of studies about the psychological contract (PC) has provided information for both employees and employers as they engage at work. However, a better understanding of the contributions and appropriate assessment was needed. From a practical viewpoint, the findings of this systematic literature review have shown the importance of organisations and employers implementing surveys in their organisations periodically. Implementing mechanisms such as surveys will also help organisations in the construction industry to gather the thoughts of employees regarding their employment relationships and direct the appropriate people address a situation that could be arising if any is identified.

The process above might lead organisations to implement counselling programmes to mitigate the consequences of detrimental behaviours to the organisation. Surveys can also be used to help organisations to assess the needs of their employees and then plan ways and interventions to manage situations that might arise. By being able to assess the needs of their employees, organisations might be able to alleviate situations in which negative work outcomes are inevitable.

Mutual trust should exist in the employment relationship to facilitate fulfilment of the PC, which encourages job performance. The importance of psychological contracts for organisations and their effects on employees' behaviours has been shown in this systematic review. It has been shown in this study that it is beneficial for employers and organisations to manage their employees' PC effectively to eliminate counter-productive behaviours.

### **Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

The systematic literature review was focused on articles about PC and different outcomes. The SLR was focused on the PC, trust, and job insecurity and how these influence individual

outcomes (individual performance and perceived employability) and work-related outcomes (PC and perceived psychological contract violation). The constructs studied can be said to be not exhaustive of all the outcomes that can be influenced by the PC. However, this made the amount of data collected manageable. The study also did not focus on the statistical significance of all the articles included in the SLR as this was not the focus of the study but the outcomes of the studies and how the PC has been applied.

Future researchers are encouraged to investigate the definitions of the PC throughout the decade. Researchers in future might carry out a comparable study of the influence of PC using quantitative methods in self-reported questionnaires and also in qualitative studies using focus, groups for example. Future researchers might also investigate the different dimensions of the PC and their influence on individual perceptions of the PC. Future studies might also look into the PC before the Covid-19 pandemic and post the pandemic and how the perceptions of the PC have shifted because of the pandemic.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no existence of any competing interests.

*The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.*

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