



the Autonomous Management School of
Ghent University and Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

Vlerick Leuven Gent Working Paper Series 2006/39

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAREER-RELATED ANTECEDENTS AND
GRADUATES' ANTICIPATORY PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACTS**

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the results of a study about the antecedents of the anticipatory psychological contract of graduate students entering the labor market. The anticipatory psychological contract (ACP) is conceptualized as an incomplete mental model about the conditions of the future employment relationship (the employee and employer contributions being part of this deal). Departing from earlier research on the importance of the anticipatory psychological contract as a determinant of employee evaluations regarding their employment relationship, we examine to which extent these pre-employment perceptions are affected by individual career-related antecedents (optimism, career strategy, individual career management and work importance). The results of an empirical study among 1409 graduate students largely confirm the proposed hypotheses. Mainly those dimensions of the ACP that are related to career perspective and job content are significantly affected by the antecedents included in our model. Graduates with a high score on careerism, who engage in a high level of individual career management and with management ambitions, have stronger expectations regarding these inducements. With regard to their own commitment toward their future employer, mainly the dimensions flexibility and employability are affected by these antecedents.

INTRODUCTION

A growing body of literature shows that the psychological contract is an important antecedent of employee outcomes like satisfaction, commitment, performance and intentions to stay (e.g. Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; Turnley, Bolino, Lester & Bloodgood, 2003; Turnley & Feldman, 1999). Researchers tend to agree that the psychological contract represents a dynamic process that unfolds gradually, from the pre-employment stage onwards and throughout the different stages of employment and that it is affected by both individual and organizational factors and events (Anderson & Thomas, 1996; Shore & Tetrick, 1994). In this regard, it is not only important to obtain insight in the psychological contract of current employees and newcomers in the organization, but also in the psychological contract beliefs that pre-date the employment relationship, i.e. the anticipatory psychological contract (ACP) (Anderson & Thomas, 1996; Blacero & Kreiner, 2000; Rousseau, 2001). Earlier research has shown that the ACP mediates the relationship between organizational and job characteristics and decisions about job choice. Moreover the expectations of new recruits about their new employment relationship operate as a frame of reference towards which they will evaluate their later experiences in the organization (Mabey, Clark & Daniels, 1996). When these expectations do not match reality, employees are more likely to believe their psychological contract has been breached, which in turn contributes to a reduced commitment to the organization (Arnold & Mackenzie Davey, 1999; Sturges & Guest, 2001). Prior research has also shown that newcomers in the organization will adapt their own promises as a function of the extent to which they believe their employer realizes his promises (De Vos, Buyens & Schalk, 2003).

A better understanding of the expectations and intentions of employees towards their future employment relationship can therefore provide important information for the development and implementation of effective human resources (HR)-practices towards new employees. In view of the high costs associated with an early departure of new employees, it is important for organizations to take their expectations and intentions into account already during the recruitment stage, or to adjust them when needed.

Researchers agree that the psychological contract is affected by individual features (Rousseau, 1995; 2001). However, as to date only a limited number of studies explicitly address the impact of individual characteristics on beliefs and evaluations of the psychological contract (e.g. Ho, 2000; Raja et al., 2004; Robinson & Morrison, 2000). This paper wants to contribute to the psychological contract literature by examining the relationship between individual career-related factors and the ACP. We hereby focus on the target group of newcomers on the labor market who have started their search for a first job but do not have any formal work experience. This allows us to examine in a more “unbiased” way the pre-entry beliefs of individuals about the terms of their future employment relationship and how these beliefs are affected by individual career-related antecedents.

THEORY

The ACP is formed during the anticipatory socialization stage, i.e. the period which precedes organizational entry during which future employees develop expectations about what their new role will be like (Feldman, 1976; Louis, 1980). The ACP is an imperfect schema about the future employment deal that enumerates the promises employees want to make to their future employer and the inducements they expect in return (Anderson & Thomas, 1996). It develops independent from the specific context of an employment relationship. The ACP is the lens through which employees view their future employment relationship and sets the stage for further refinement of the psychological contract during the early employment period (Shore & Tetrick, 1994). As a subjective set of beliefs, the ACP is affected by individual differences like personality, knowledge, interpersonal skills and career motivations (Anderson & Thomas, 1996; Shore & Tetrick, 1994). Raja et al. (2004) distinguish between three processes through which personality can affect the psychological contract: choice, construction and enactment. The first process, choice, refers to the pre-employment stage during which personality is proposed to influence the type of psychological contract individuals want to engage in with their future employer, i.e. their ACP. We suppose that in this stage, not only the personality of job seekers, but also other individual characteristics will influence this ACP.

In this research we focus on career-related antecedents since factors such as career goals and career-related behaviors are assumed to play a role in individual's expectations, attitudes and evaluations regarding their employment relationship (e.g. Rousseau, 2000; Shore & Tetrick, 1994; Sparrow, 1996). We assume that, depending on their personal career attitudes and behaviors, graduates hold different beliefs about their future employment relationship. More specifically, we address the impact of (1) optimism, (2) career strategy, (3) individual career management and (4) work importance.

We formulate hypotheses about the impact of each of these four individual characteristics on the content of graduates' anticipatory psychological contracts. In line with earlier research (e.g. De Vos et al., 2003; Robinson, Kraatz & Rousseau, 1994; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994), we address five dimensions of employer inducements (career opportunities, job content, social atmosphere, work-life balance, and financial rewards) and five dimensions of employee contributions (performance, flexibility, ethical behavior, loyalty, and employability).

Optimism

Optimism refers to individuals' attitudes about their chances for employment. In this sense, optimism is closely related to more basic personality characteristics such as locus of control. Research shows that employees who believe to control the results of their actions and who have a positive self-image show a stronger commitment towards their employer as well as higher performance levels. (Goldsmith et al., 2000; Skinner, 1996). More optimistic individuals have a stronger belief in their own opportunities (Rousseau, 2001). We therefore expect that those graduates with a higher level of optimism will be more willing to make promises to their future employer because they will be more optimistic about the extent to which they will be able to realize these promises.

Hypothesis 1a: Optimism will be positively associated with the willingness to make promises about employee contributions.

Research also indicates that individuals with an internal locus of control perceive a stronger link between their performance level and the rewards they obtain (Goldsmith et al., 2000; Skinner, 1996). This implies that individuals with an internal locus of control perceive their own contributions as more instrumental for having their expectations realized by their employer. We propose that optimistic graduates will report a higher level of expectations regarding the promises their future employer should make to them because they will be more optimistic about the likelihood that they will be able to obtain these inducements, compared with less optimistic graduates.

Hypothesis 1b: Optimism will be positively associated with expectations about promises about employer inducements.

Career strategy.

Employees can differ in the strategies they pursue in their career. While some prefer to develop their career within one or a limited number of organizations (the so-called “local career strategy”), others have a preference for changing employers frequently (the so-called “cosmopolitan career strategy”, also called “careerism”) (Driver, 1994; Gouldner, 1957; Rousseau, 1990). These differences in career strategy reflect different preferences concerning the time span and scope of the employment relationship employees want to engage in (Driver, 1994; Sparrow, 1996). For example, empirical evidence shows that employees with a more local career strategy have a stronger commitment towards their organization and are less inclined to leave the organization (Herriot et al., 1996; Sparrow, 1996). Within the psychological contract literature, earlier research has shown that at organizational entry employees with a local career strategy differ in their psychological contract beliefs from those with a more cosmopolitan career strategy. For instance, Rousseau (1990) observed a positive correlation between the level of careerism and transactional beliefs, and a negative correlation between careerism and relational beliefs. Based on this evidence we expect that career strategy will affect graduates’ ACP beliefs. Graduates who view their first employer as a first step towards further opportunities elsewhere will be less willing to make promises about their own contributions.

Hypothesis 2a: There will be a negative association between careerism and the willingness to make promises about employee contributions.

Individuals with a high level of careerism consider their organization as a stepping stone towards a better function elsewhere. In the literature evidence shows that these are often those employees who are strongly focused on their own career development rather than on their organization (Larwood et al., 1998). We therefore expect graduates with a high level of careerism to expect more employer promises relating to career opportunities, since these will allow them to realize their career goals, and to financial rewards, since these are an extrinsic indicator of their career status.

Hypothesis 2b: Careerism will be positively associated with expectations about employer promises about career opportunities and financial rewards.

Individual career management.

In the career management literature, a growing emphasis has been placed on the initiatives that individuals take to steer their careers in the desired direction (Sturges et al., 2005). Empirical evidence indicates that employees differ in the extent to which they actively take initiatives to manage their own career in the desired direction and that this affects a wide range of outcomes, including career success and employee behaviors (e.g. King, 2004, Sturges et al., 2002). Employees with a high level of individual career management generally show a higher level of commitment towards their organization (Sturges et al., 2005). Inherent to the notion of individual career management is a proactive stance of the individual towards his or her career (Kossek et al., 1998). We expect that this proactive attitude will affect the extent to which graduates are willing to make promises to their future employer.

Hypothesis 3a: Individual career management will be positively associated with the willingness to make promises about employee contributions.

Prior research has shown a positive association between the level of individual career management and the career support employees expect to receive from their employer (Kossek et al., 1998; Sturges et al., 2000; 2005). Individual career management includes, among others, self-analysis of talents, capacities and career ambitions (Noe, 1996; Sturges et al., 2000; 2002). Individuals who engage in these types of initiatives might develop a better idea of what they want to attain in their career and how they want to attain this and they might be more concerned about the realization of their career goals. This, in turn, might affect them to expect more promises from their employer about inducements related to their job content and career perspective.

Hypothesis 3b: Individual career management will be positively associated with expectations about employer inducements relating to job content and career development.

Work importance

Work importance refers to the general importance graduates attach to working compared to other life domains (MOW, 1987; van der Velde, Feij & van Emmerik, 1998) and to making progress in their career. Studies show that the centrality of work has a positive impact on job satisfaction and commitment (van der Velde et al., 1998). We assume that the importance of working will affect graduates' ACP. Individuals for whom working is central in their life and who are more career-driven generally attach more importance to values such as development, attaining a high level in an organization, making advancement and obtaining power (London, 1983; Schein, 1993). In exchange for this, they are generally willing to work hard, learn new competencies, take on additional responsibilities and give priority to their job rather than their private life (London, 1983; Schein, 1993). We therefore expect the importance of working will be positively related to graduates' willingness to make promises about their contributions. We expect a positive relationship between work importance and expected employer promises that refer to work-related factors such as job content and career development, rewards and the social atmosphere at work. Inversely, we believe that these graduates will expect less promises relating to their work-life balance.

Hypothesis 4a: There is a positive association between work importance and the willingness to make promises about employee contributions

Hypothesis 4b: There is a positive association between work importance and expectations about employer promises relating to job content, career development, financial rewards and social atmosphere and a negative association between work importance and expected promises about work-life balance.

METHOD

Sample and procedure

We conducted a survey among 1409 students graduating from 12 universities in Belgium. The sample mainly included students in economics (53.5%) and engineering (25.4%) and to a lesser extent psychology (13%) and management (8.6%). At the time of the survey, students were completing their master degree. The sample consisted of an equal amount of male (51%) and female respondents (49%). To test our hypotheses, only those respondents who indicated that they were searching for a first job but who had not yet signed an employment contract at the time of the survey were retained for the analyses. Respondents who indicated that they wanted to continue studying or to postpone their job search were excluded from the analyses. The final sample therefore consisted of 722 respondents.

Measures

All responses were given using five-point response scales. After reliability analyses, scales were constructed by calculating the mean scores for each.

Optimism.

Optimism was measured using four items that were developed for this study (e.g. “I am optimistic about my chances to find get a good job”). A higher score means a higher level of optimism ($\alpha=.82$).

Career strategy.

We used the careerism scale developed by Rousseau (1990) to assess respondents' intentions to change employers frequently during their careers. A higher score means a higher level of careerism. Two items were reverse scored before calculating the scale ($\alpha=.75$).

Individual career management.

We departed from the individual career management scale developed by Sturges et al. (2000). The original scale consists of 16 items that address four dimensions of individual career management. For our study, the items were adapted to make them relevant for graduates without any prior work experience. Six items were excluded because they were too much related to behavior in a work context and thus were not applicable to our target group. For each of the 10 retained items respondents had to indicate their agreement with each of the activities described (e.g. "I make contacts with people who work in the professional areas in which I would like to work"). To this scale we added 3 items that more specifically assess the extent to which the respondents had actively reflected on the type of career they want to have (e.g. "I have been thinking about the type of job that best fits me"). These items are adopted from Backman, Maley & Johnston (1978).

Work importance.

We used a scale developed by Coetsier & Claes (1990) and which is part of the Flemish "Meaning of Working" study (MOW, 1987). The respondents had to divide 100 points over four life areas (work, leisure time, family and contributions to society) based on the relative importance they attached to each of these areas. In view of our hypotheses only the percentage attributed to "work" was included in our analyses. In addition we included one item that assesses the respondents attach to making progress in their career a second indicator of the importance of working.

Anticipatory psychological contract.

The content of the ACP was measured using two scales: (1) the willingness to make promises about employee contributions and (2) expectations about promises that employers can make about inducements provided to employees. Our items were adopted from a scale used by De Vos et al. (2003) to assess psychological contract development among organizational newcomers. The instructions were changed in order to capture the ACP beliefs of the respondents. The willingness to make employee promises was measured using 20 items that refer to five types of employee contributions (performance, flexibility, loyalty, employability and ethical behavior). Respondents had to indicate the extent to which they were willing to make promises to their future employer about each of the contributions listed. The reliability of the subscales was low for ethical behavior ($\alpha = .59$) but good for the other for subscales ($\alpha = .82$ for performance, $\alpha = .69$ for flexibility, $\alpha = .71$ for loyalty, and $\alpha = .76$ for employability).

Expectations about employer promises were assessed using 25 items that refer to five types of employer inducements (career development, job content, social atmosphere, financial rewards, and work-life balance). Respondents indicated the extent to which they expected their employer to make promises about each of the inducements listed. Each of the five subscales showed good reliability ($\alpha = .80$ for career development, $\alpha = .76$ for job content, $\alpha = .87$ for social atmosphere, $\alpha = .83$ for financial rewards, and $\alpha = .75$ for work-life balance).

Control variables.

In our regression analyses we statistically controlled for sex (1 = male, 2 = female) and study type (1 = commercial sciences, 2 = applied economics, 3 = psychology, 4 = engineering, 5 = management).

Data analyses

For each of the dependent variables (five dimensions of employee promises and five dimensions of employer promises) separate regression analyses were conducted. We controlled for sex and education type in Step 1. In Step 2 the independent variables were added. Changes in R^2 indicate the contribution of each of the independent variables in explaining the variance in our dependent variables. We examined standardized beta-weights to assess the direct impact of each variable on each of the dependent variables.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations and zero-order correlations between all variables in the study. The results of the regression analyses are presented in Table 2 (willingness to make employee promises) and Table 3 (expected employer promises).

Insert Table 1,2 and 3 About Here

As shown in Table 2, the level of optimism is not significantly related to the willingness to make employee promises. Thus, Hypothesis 1A is not confirmed. With regard to expected employer promises there is only a significant association between optimism and expected promises about job content ($\beta = .07, p < .05$) (see Table 3). Hypothesis 1B hence receives only limited support.

The relationship between careerism and willingness to make employee promises is significant for two of the five dimensions: ethical behavior ($\beta = -.07, p < .05$) and loyalty ($\beta = -.41, p < .01$). The relationship with the other dimensions is also negative but not significant. Our results thus provide partial support for Hypothesis 2A. Concerning expected employer promises, as can be seen from Table 3 careerism is significantly and positively related to promises about job content ($\beta = .09, p < .05$), career development ($\beta = .08, p < .05$) and financial rewards ($\beta = .12, p < .01$). This finding supports Hypothesis 2B.

There is a positive association between individual career management and the willingness to make promises about employee contributions. Self-analysis and networking are significantly and positively related to promises about flexibility ($\beta=.10$, $p<.05$ for self-analysis and $\beta=.08$, $p<.05$ for networking). Practical preparation is significantly and positively related to each of the dive dimensions of employee promises ($\beta= .18$, $p<.01$ for performance, $\beta=.10$, $p<.01$ for flexibility, $\beta=.15$, $p<.01$ for ethical behavior, $\beta=.07$, $p<.05$ for loyalty and $\beta=.39$, $p<.01$ for employability). These results support Hypothesis 3A. We also observe a number of significant and positive associations between the level of individual career management and expected employer promises. For self-analysis, there is a significant association with expected promises about job content ($\beta=.12$, $p<.01$). Networking is not significantly related to expected employer promises. Practical preparation is significantly related to expected promises about job content ($\beta=.19$, $p<.01$), career development ($\beta=.20$, $p<.01$), social atmosphere ($\beta=.13$, $p<.01$) and work-life balance ($\beta=.08$, $p<.05$). These results provide support for Hypothesis 3B.

Respondents who consider working to be more central in their life are more willing to make promises about their flexibility ($\beta=.20$, $p<.01$) and loyalty ($\beta=.12$, $p<.01$), while their ambition to make progress is significantly related to promises about flexibility ($\beta=.19$, $p<.01$) and employability ($\beta=.07$, $p<.05$). Hypothesis 4A is hence partially supported. In addition, there is a significant and negative relationship between the centrality of working and expected employer promises about work-life balance ($\beta=-.19$, $p<.01$). Importance of making progress is positively associated with expected promises about career development ($\beta=.26$, $p<.01$), job content ($\beta=.13$, $p<.01$) and financial rewards ($\beta=.22$, $p<.01$), and negatively associated with expected promises about social atmosphere ($\beta=-.10$, $p<.05$) and work-life balance ($\beta=-.10$, $p<.05$). These results support Hypothesis 4B.

DISCUSSION

This study wanted to contribute to the literature by addressing the pre-employment stage of psychological contract formation. Despite the fact that the psychological contract has become a widely-studied concept in the scientific literature, the number of studies that address the ways in which it is formed are scarce. This study wants to contribute to the literature by addressing the initial stage of psychological contract formation, which takes place in the anticipatory socialization stage. More specifically, we examined the extent to which anticipatory psychological contract perceptions of young graduates who are starting with their search for their first job but who have not yet signed an employment contract, are affected by a number of career-related individual antecedents (optimism, career strategy, individual career management and work importance). In order to test the proposed hypotheses, a survey was conducted among graduates of universities in Belgium.

Our results provide support for our assumption that career-related antecedents contribute to explaining differences in the ACP. Graduates with a high level of careerism consider their first employer as a temporary step and as a consequence they are less willing to express a lot of “a priori” commitments towards their future employer. At the same time however, in view of their strong focus on personal career advancement, they do expect their employer to offer them not only an interesting job and attractive financial compensations, but also a career perspective. This confirms the idea that individuals’ career strategy affects their attitude and beliefs regarding their employment relationship (Driver, 1994; Sparrow, 1996) and extends earlier research on the relationship between careerism and the psychological contract (Rousseau, 1990) to the pre-employment stage. Graduates who report a high level of practical preparation not only show a higher level of engagement towards their future employer, but also hold higher expectations about the level of engagement by their future employer. These findings are in line with earlier research in which proactive behavior has been found to affect employees’ expectations towards their employment relationship (Kossek et al., 1998; Sturges et al., 2005) and it supports the idea that the proactive behavior of employees has consequences for employers, who have to respond to the higher levels of commitment of these employees by providing them relevant inducements in return.

The significant relationships between work importance and the ACP confirm the idea that career motives impact employees' beliefs about their employment relationship. Previous research has shown that newcomers who attach more value to their career advancement are more likely to seek for information about what they can expect of their employer in terms of their job content and career development opportunities (De Vos, Buyens & Schalk, 2005). Our findings suggest that this relationship might be mediated by the pre-employment beliefs of future employees. Our findings suggest that ACP beliefs are more affected by what individuals want to attain during their career and how they want to attain this, than by a more general attitude towards their chances for employment. One explanation is that optimism is more affected by respondents' beliefs in the value of their diploma than by the belief in their personal capacities to find a job and that this as such is not affecting their expectations towards their future employment relationship. Future research should further clarify the distinct relationships between different types of individual characteristics and the psychological contract.

Our results suggest that the impact of career-related antecedents differs depending on the content dimension of the ACP. Some dimensions are more strongly affected by the antecedents included in our model than others. When we look at the results for the impact on the willingness to make employee promises, our antecedents mainly have a significant impact on promises regarding flexibility, employability and loyalty, while promises about the concrete behavior in the job (performance and ethical behaviors) are less affected by these antecedents. One possible explanation for this difference is that the extent to which expectations are made explicit during recruitment campaigns and selection procedures impacts the room for interpretation that is left for the individual job seeker. Requirements towards the applicant with regard to their performance level and also certain aspects of ethical behavior are in many advertisements and job interviews those aspects of the deal that are most explicitly discussed. The majority of our respondents had already participated in several selection procedures at the time of the study. It is possible that the intentions they have regarding their commitment in terms of performance and ethical behavior are mainly affected by the exchange of information during these procedures, which implies that these beliefs are to a lesser extent affected by subjective factors.

Also when we look at expected employer promises, not every dimension of employer promises is explained to the same extent by the antecedents included in our model. The proportion of explained variance is highest for promises about work-intrinsic factors, i.e. job content and career development, and is substantially lower for promises about social atmosphere and work-life balance. The fact that mainly work-intrinsic factors are affected by our antecedents can probably be explained by the fact that we only included career-related attitudes and behaviors. It is possible that expectations about the work context (such as work-life balance and social atmosphere) are more affected by more general individual characteristics such as values or personality. Further research is needed to examine which content dimensions of the psychological contract are most affected by subjective factors and what might be the impact of information exchange with the organization during different stages of the recruitment process.

Implications

This study addresses the pre-employment expectations and intentions of graduates regarding their psychological contract with their future employer. Even though the large majority of this group of young graduates does not yet have a frame of reference based on earlier professional experiences that will affect their ACP, they do already have a mental model about their future employment relationship that will play a role, not only in their job choice but also in the evaluation they will make of the extent to which their expectations match reality after organizational entry. In view of earlier empirical evidence about the relationship between this perceived congruence of expectations with reality on affective commitment and other employee attitudes, it is important for organizations to take the ACP into account already during the recruitment stage, by addressing graduates' expectations and by trying to impact them when needed. Organizations should thereby realize that, depending on their career goals and other career-related factors, young graduates approach their future employment relationship with different expectations and intentions. For organizations, insight into prior expectations and intentions can also be relevant for the design of recruitment campaigns and employer branding initiatives.

This might increase their attractiveness as an employer, but at the same time the challenge will be to meet these expectations after entry. Only when the latter is realized organizations can succeed in realizing the desired level of commitment and retention among their newcomers and to stimulate these newcomers to realize their own promises.

Limitations and suggestions for future research.

The results of this study should be considered in view of a number of limitations. First, we only used self-report scales, and as a consequence common method variance might have affected the results. In view of our research questions, however, we believe that assessing perceptions was the best suited method. Second, this is a cross-sectional study. A next step might be to conduct a longitudinal study to further examine the development of their psychological contracts once these graduates enter an organization. Future research could also address changes in the ACP throughout different recruitment stages. Third, we realize that in this research we only addressed a selected group of antecedents of the ACP. In addition to individual, career-related factors such as those that were included in our research, other factors will probably also play a role, for example the extent to which graduates have already built some preliminary professional experience through internships. Our correlations indicate that the type of education also impacts the anticipatory psychological contract. Future research could examine to which extent students from diverse types and levels of education differ in their anticipatory psychological contract.

CONCLUSION

Research has shown that the evaluation of the psychological contract, i.e. the evaluation of experiences in view of perceived promises, has an important impact on the retention and commitment of organizational newcomers. In this sense the ACP operates as a frame of reference that organizations should not neglect if they want take into account newcomers' expectations and intentions. Our study shows that this ACP of young graduates is affected by individual factors. In this sense the extent to which and the ways in which graduates are preparing themselves for their future careers are an important source of information for organizations in order to estimate their attitude towards their employment relationship.

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TABLE 1**Means, standard deviations and correlations between variables included in the study.**

	M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. Sex																			
2. Type of diploma		-0,19																	
3. Optimism	3,02	-0,19	0,12																
4. Careerism	3,12	-0,03	0,09	0,11															
5. Self-analysis	3,31	-0,04	0,29	0,09	0,04														
6. Networking	3,23	-0,12	0,19	0,22	0,11	0,35													
7. Practical preparation	3,59	0,01	0,15	0,12	0,09	0,36	0,40												
8. Work centrality	46	0,05	0,02	-0,04	0,03	0,12	0,04	0,08											
9. Management ambition	3,36	-0,14	-0,01	0,15	0,20	0,13	0,24	0,11	0,10										
10. OP career development	4,28	0,04	0,04	0,11	0,16	0,15	0,19	0,27	0,07	0,30									
11. OP job content	4,21	0,14	0,05	0,09	0,18	0,24	0,19	0,30	0,11	0,19	0,64								
12. OP social atmosphere	4,52	0,22	0,01	-0,02	-0,03	0,00	-0,02	0,11	-0,06	-0,13	0,37	0,41							
13. OP financial	3,99	-0,09	-0,02	0,10	0,17	0,08	0,14	0,08	0,01	0,29	0,46	0,34	0,19						
14. OP work-life balance	4,14	0,15	-0,12	-0,05	0,00	-0,10	-0,08	0,01	-0,20	-0,13	0,28	0,25	0,50	0,41					
15. EP flexibility	3,34	-0,02	0,17	0,02	0,07	0,24	0,21	0,21	0,24	0,24	0,18	0,22	-0,03	0,11	-0,16				
16. EP performance	4,34	0,21	0,08	-0,01	-0,02	0,13	0,11	0,23	0,02	0,03	0,36	0,44	0,58	0,11	0,26	0,23			
17. EP ethical behavior	4,23	0,10	0,16	0,03	-0,02	0,13	0,06	0,18	0,04	0,05	0,26	0,30	0,30	0,09	0,16	0,22	0,62		
18. EP loyalty	3,05	-0,06	-0,05	-0,04	-0,40	0,03	-0,03	0,03	-0,01	-0,03	-0,04	-0,05	0,04	0,02	0,04	0,14	0,06	0,07	
19. EP employability	3,82	0,08	0,12	0,03	0,08	0,24	0,24	0,45	0,18	0,14	0,26	0,36	0,13	-0,03	-0,08	0,42	0,39	0,33	0,09

Correlations > .07, $p < .05$, correlations > .09, $p < .01$

OP = organizational promises; EP = employee promises

TABLE 2

Hierarchical regressions for the impact of career-related antecedents on the anticipatory psychological contract – willingness to make employee promises.¹

Dependent variable:	Performance		Flexibility		Loyalty		Ethical behavior		Employability	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Predictors:										
Step 1:										
Sex ²	,216**	,222**	,008	,020	-,061	-,073	,126**	,130**	,052	,054
Study economy ³	-,031	-,046	,074	,063	,024	-,006	,037	,032	,062	,042
Study engineering ⁴	,109*	,078	,064	,075	-,008	-,025	,093*	,075	,152**	,100
Study psychology ⁵	,076	,046	,076	,083*	,004	-,056	,121*	,102*	,011	-,027
Study management ⁶	,091*	,061	,233**	,147**	-,082	-,021	,188**	,171**	,186**	,102*
Step 2:										
Optimism		-,015		-,040		-,014		,024		-,017
Careerism		-,050		-,014		-,413**		-,069*		-,004
Self-analysis		,030		,102*		,047		,040		,037
Networking		,036		,076*		-,029		-,042		,061
Practical preparation		,187**		,102**		,071*		,153**		,390**
Work centrality		-,016		,196**		-,006		,014		,120**
Management ambition		,047		,189**		,032		,056		,073*
<i>F</i>	9,58**	7,41**	6,29**	12,94**	1,48	12,07**	6,27**	4,73**	6,80**	20,88**
Change in <i>F</i>		5,55**		16,97**		19,44**		3,51**		29,57**
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	.604	,11	,04	,18	,01	,17	,04	,08	,05	,23
<i>R</i> ² Change		,05		,14		,16		,03		,22

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

¹ Standardized β -coefficients are reported

² Dummy variable: 1 = female, 0 = male

³ Dummy variable: 1 = study applied economics, 0 = other

⁴ Dummy variable: 1 = study engineering, 0 = other

⁵ Dummy variable: 1 = study psychology, 0 = other

⁶ Dummy variable: 1 = study management, 0 = other

TABLE 3

Hierarchical regressions for the impact of career-related antecedents on the anticipatory psychological contract – expected employer promises.¹

Dependent variable:	Career development		Job contenta		Social Atmosphere		Financial rewards		Work-life balance	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Predictoren:										
Step 1:										
Sex ²	,040	,079*	,101*	,130**	,213**	,204**	-,068	-,030	,095*	,094*
Study economy ³	-,012	,012	-,017	-,018	,001	-,008	-,045	-,023	,037	,039
Study engineering ⁴	,021	,048	,120**	,099*	,086*	,046	-,139**	-,102*	,042	,012
Study psychologiy ⁵	-,012	,013	-,097*	-,116**	,070	,036	-,056	-,019	-,087*	-,107*
Study management ⁶	,080	,003	,163**	,061	,027	,039	,008	-,059	-,078	-,040
Step 2:										
Optimism		,057		,073*		,022		,036		,013
Careerism		,084*		,087*		-,019		,126**		,018
Self-analysis		,016		,119**		-,027		,046		-,070
Networking		,035		,039		-,014		,038		-,031
Practical preparation		,198**		,193**		,125**		,023		,077*
Work centrality		,032		,057		-,058		-,013		-,189**
Management ambition		,264**		,128**		-,104*		,223**		-,096*
F										
Change in F	9,58*	25,37**	20,82**	31,36**	11,87**	7,59**	5,17**	12,90**	7,61**	8,24**
Adjusted R ² .		41,01**		35,96**		4,38**		18,06**		8,45**
R ² Change	,01	,19	,07	,23	,04	,06	,02	,10	,03	,07
		,19		,16		,02		,09		,04

* p < .05

** p < .01

¹ Standardized β -coefficients are reported

² Dummy variable: 1 = female, 0 = male

³ Dummy variable: 1 = study applied economics, 0 = other

⁴ Dummy variable: 1 = study engineering, 0 = other

⁵ Dummy variable: 1 = study psychology, 0 = other

⁶ Dummy variable: 1 = study management, 0 = other