PERCEPTIONS OF THE PSYHOLOGICAL CONTRACT IN WORKING LIFE AND AN APPLICATION IN THE SERVICE SECTOR

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-Abstract-

Unlike employment agreement, psychological contract comprises not only both sides of the covenant in an employment relation but also involves the promises and obligations being dependent on all types of perceived spoken messages, attitudes, and behaviours between the parties. As the individuals in various ways can form this perception, the results during the process and the reflections to the working life may display differences. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impacts of the psychological contract on the relationship between employee and employers. It is also within the scope of this study to evaluate the effects of the demographic characteristics such as gender, age, marital status, academic background, job tenure on psychological contract. In this study, firstly, the term "psychological contract" is examined, then employees' ideas related to psychological contract are tried to be identified in health facilities and retailing

sector in which flexible working is intensely implemented. The analyses of data collected from the questionnaires have revealed the employees' opinions about the issues within the context of psychological contract. When the results of this study are assessed, it is concluded that demographic characteristics stated by the participants did not show any significant variation in the perception of both organizational and employees' commitments.

Key Words: Pschological Contract, Service Sector, Contract Commitment.

JEL Classification: L84, M55, O14

1. INTRODUCTION

The relationships and obligations between employers and employees should be stated with contracts. A contract can be defined as a tool that holds employers and employees together and regulates their behaviors (Top, 2012: 203). Contracts which arise from a relationship between parties enable the parties relations to be regulated and carried out according to the certain rules play an important role in achieving goals and adjusting reciprocal expectations (Beytur, 2008: 29-30). Besides the indentures which can be signed in both written and normative forms, the parties have reciprocal expectations, as well (Godkin, Valentine and St. Pierre, 2002: 59; Mimaroğlu, 2008: 32). Thus, in organizations, there are also contracts determining reciprocal duties and requests. These contracts originated with indentures and result from the reciprocal expectations of the parties (İpek, 2010: 87). Because not all details of the employment relationships are stated on formal and written indentures, psychological contracts which arise due to the gaps in labor contracts fill these gaps (Cyril van de Ven: 2, bt.)

2. DEFINITION OF PSCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT

Psychological contracts were included in social science departments after the1960s and appeared in management literature after the 1980s (Özgen, 201: 747). The interest in this term started to increase in 1990s (Turnley and Feldman, 1999: 895; Türker, 2010: 15).

After Argyris, many scientists began to investigator different viewpoints on the psychological contract. Schein and Kotter's studies emphasized that a psychological contract is a set of mutual expectations about the relations between employers and employees. Another viewpoint about the psychological contract is that of Rousseau (1989, 1990), and Robinson et. al. (1994, 1996) who defined a psychological contract as the common opinions about the statements and conditions which belong to reciprocal barter contracts between the employees and employers.

The most accepted viewpoint about psychological contracts among scientists has been stated by Herriot and Pemberton (1995, 1997) and Guest and Conway (2002). These writers have argued that ignoring the viewpoint of the employer means a misrepresentation of the essence of the psychological contract which is a mutual obligation between the two parties (Zhu and Wang: 2-3).

It is difficult to find a common definition for a psychological contract about the because there is no universally accepted opinion related to the term. Argyris (1960) used the term of psychological contract in order to illustrate the nuncupative contract conducted between the employer and the employee (Chang and Hsu, 2009: 722). Schein (1965) defined psychological contracts as a set of nuncupative mutual expectations of the wage employee organization (Grant, 1999: 328). Kotter (1973) stated that the psychological contract is an implicit contract in which the employer and the organization state what they give to one another and what they expect to get from each other. Rousseau (1989) defined the psychological contract as the perceptions and expectations of the employee related to the mutual obligations in employment shift relation (Raja, Johns and Ntalianis, 2011: 350). Finally Herriot defined psychological contracts as the employer and employee's perceptions of their mutual obligations (Sparrow and Cooper, 2002:

30). The Psychological contract has also been defined stated as a belief which belongs to mutual obligations (Rousseau and Tijorowala, 1998: 679).

Psychological contracts depend on mutual expectations including the commitment of the organization and employees (Restubog et al., 2012: 22). According to the psychological contract, just as the organization has some expectations for the employees, the employees also have some expectations for the organization (Tükeltürk, Perçin ve Güzel, 2012:94). Psychological contracts state mutually anticipated expectations and obligations of both the employees and the employees related to job quality which are not written or discussed (Bottorff, 2011:3). In psychological contracts in which the obligations of the employees to the organization are clearly stated, the reciprocal duties of the employer are also determined (Sharpe, 2007: 3).

Psychological contracts which help both parties to balance their mutual expectations and do not include normal labor contracts play an important role in reinforcing the interactions between the employees and the organization (Çakmak, Ofluoğlu and Büyükyılmaz, 2012: 57).

3. OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTIES IN PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACTS

Employees generally have expectations regarding promotions, wages, education, job security, career development and getting support for their personal problems from their employers. In return, the employer anticipates that the employee should be willing to be hardworking and loyal, participate willingly in that is which are not explicitly his/her job, inform the employer before quitting the job, be willing to transfer his/her job, avoid supporting any action in favor of rivals and hide the data of the company (Knights and Kennedy, 2005:58). While some of these expectations are mentioned in the contract, others are made up of unwritten expectations. In this sense, the employers and employees have some expectations and wishes in addition to their written contracts (Katrinli et al., 2009).

Because the psychological contract includes thousands of items, it is almost impossible to classify the obligations of the parties. When scanning the existing literature, it is possible to group the obligations of the employers into six categories including determining the content of the work, offering opportunities for career development, improving the social life of the employee and supporting, awarding and respecting private life. Nonetheless, empirical studies have found that the psychological contract depends on the obligations of the employee to his/ her employer. Although psychological contract is signed as a contract in which there are mutual obligations. When scanning literature for the obligations of the employees obligations can be grouped into different categories including work performance, flexibility, additional duty behaviors, loyalty, employability, and ethics (Vos, Buyens and Schalk, 2001: 3-6). The obligations which set the promises that are believed to be signed and accepted by both parties can be summarized like in the following statements. Employees generally have expectations regarding promotions, wages, education, job safety, career development and receiving support for personal problems from the organization. In return, the employer anticipates that the employee should be willing to be hardworking and loyal, participate willingly in work which is not explicitly his/her job, inform the employer before quitting the job, be willing to transfer his/her job, avoid supporting any action in favor of rivals and hide the data of the company (Knights and Kennedy, 2005:58, Seckin, 2011:7-8).

Here the efficiency of the psychological contract depends on the mutual expectations of the parties and balancing these expectations (Mimaroğlu, 2008: 52; Tunçer, 2012: 90).

4. TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACTS

Psychological contracts can also be defined as a set of beliefs and perceptions occurring in the minds of individuals regarding the mutual obligations between the employee and employer (Knights and Kennedy, 2005:57). This includes all the terms such as like perception, expectation, belief, commitment and obligation (Guest, 1998: 651). Psychological contract may depend on the beliefs of the

employee about the mutual obligations between the organization and the employees. Psychological contracts which are different from formal and implied contracts are perceptual (Demiral 2008: 42-43). It is possible that even if people belong to the same organization, they might have different perceptions about the psychological contract. Psychological contracts differ according to the time, person, characteristics of work, and skill level (Smithson and Lewis, 2000: 682). In psychological contracts which have a dynamic characteristics the parties are dependent on each other (Cihangiroğlu and Şahin, 2010:8).

Psychological contracts which differ from formal labor contracts in terms of context and expected effect also have some similarities to standard formal contracts. Psychological contracts are less defined contracts because they are less formal in terms of structure and their articles are not stated in written form or discussed obviously (Mimaroğlu, 2008: 47-48).

Hiltrop (1995) emphasizes that unlike labor contracts, psychological contracts are entered on a voluntary basis and they are subjective, dynamic and informal. For this reason, it is not possible to identify all the details during the formation stage of the contract (Mimaroğlu, 2008:53). On the other hand, Levinson has stated that a psychological contract includes many more things than a classically written formal contract between an employer and the employee (Allen, 2009: 20-21). In the psychological contracts which are mostly unwritten and nonverbal, a deal is made by bargaining on some awards and benefits like wages, working hours and working days. Psychological factors like job satisfaction, paying full wages on time, providing organizational justice and job safety, doing justice, opportunity to use of using creativity are usually bargained nonverbally at the organizations (İpek, 2010: 87). Thus, all possible aspects of the employment relationship are not done in written and formal form. Psychological contracts arise to fill the gaps in labor contracts and direct the behaviors of participants (Cyril van de Ven: 2). As the psychological contract is a kind of contract which includes commitment, it is made up of three factors: promising, paying and accepting (Shore and Tetrick, 1994: 92).

Operational obligations are on economic based barter and they are generally limited, static, narrow-scoped and easily observable. Moreover, relational obligations include both economic and socioemotional barter and they are generally long range, dynamic, subjective, relation-oriented, and rely on trust (Gakovic and Tetrick, 2003: 650). Operational contracts are the contracts which are short range, have completely economic and materialist aims, and require the attendance of both parties. On the other hand, relational contracts are long range and comprehensive and are not limited with to economic changes but include the rules and conditions for the loyalty of the safety and growth of the organization (Raja, Johns and Ntalianis, 201: 350).

5. PRACTICE

5.1 The Aim of the Research

Researchers examined the effects of psychological contracts on the relationships between the employer and employee. In addition, researchers tried to the effects of measure the employees' demographic characteristics on the psychological contract.

5.2 Constraints of the Research

This research on the affects of the psychological contract on the employee and employer was applied in the health and retailing sector because of time constraint.

5.3 Hypothesis of the Research

The following theses are put forward to determine the relationship between the demographic variables and psychological contract in the research.

Hypothesis 1a: There is no positive and significant difference between the genders of the employees and the commitments of the organization.

Hypothesis 1b: There is no positive and significant difference between the commitments and genders of the employees.

Hypothesis 2a: There is no positive and significant difference between the ages of the employees and the commitments of the organization.

Hypothesis 2b: There is no positive and significant difference between the commitments and the ages of the employees.

Hypothesis 3a: There is no positive and significant difference between the civil status of the employees and the commitments of the organization.

Hypothesis 3b: There is no positive and significant difference between the commitments and the civil status of the employees.

Hypothesis 4a: There is no positive and significant difference between the educational status of the employees and the commitments of the organization.

Hypothesis 4b: There is no positive and significant difference between the commitments and the educational status of the employees.

Hypothesis 5a: There is no positive and significant difference between the working hours of the employees and the commitments of the organization.

Hypothesis 5b: There is no positive and significant difference between the commitments and the working hours of the employees.

5.4 Methods of Measurement Used in the Research

The research was conducted on the employees working in the health sector and the retail industry. A survey was used to collect the data.

In the research, the psychological contract scale developed by Denies M. Rousseau for the commitment of the employees and the organization and seen frequently in existing literature was used. The likert scale which was improved by Denies M. Rousseau in relation to the psychological contract is in the form of 1 = never, 2 = very few, 3 = quite, 4 = mainly, 5 = to a great extent.

This scale was used after receiving permission for the PhD thesis about "Breaches of the Psychological Contract in Organizational Change and a Sample Practice". The original form of the scale used in different studies is in English and the translated form of the scale obtained from the PhD thesis has been applied. In this study, only the parts about the employees of the respective scale have been handled and the survey has been applied to employees.

The reliability and validity analysis of the survey was conducted by entering the data obtained into the SPSS 17.0 program. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated ,920 for the commitments of the organization and cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated ,917 for the commitments of the employees, and therefore found quite reliable. Because cases in which the Alpha coefficient is 0,70 and more are deemed acceptable, it is possible to state that the survey is reliable (Büyüköztürk, 2010:171).

5.4 Analysis of the Data Used in the Research

In the tables below, the values of variables like gender, age, civil status, educational status and working hours of employees attending the survey are given.

	Ν	
Gender	Male	43
	Female	107
	18-25	40
Age	26-30	42
	31-35	58
	36-45	10
	Married	74
Civil Status	Single	76
	High School	58
Educational Status	Bachelor's Degree	68
	Master Degree	15

Table 1. Distribution of Respondent According to Demographic Features

PhD	9	
1-5 years	58	
6-10 years	38	
11-15 years	40	
16-20 years	9	
	1-5 years 6-10 years 11-15 years	1-5 years 58 6-10 years 38 11-15 years 40

In Table 1, when the demographic features of the sample are examined, it is found that 43 employees are males and 107 employees are females out of 150 employees, and female employees are more than male ones. Of the 150 people taking part in the research, 40 of them are between the age of 18-25, 42 of them are between the age of 26-30, 58 of them are between the age of 31-35 and 10 of them are between the age of 36-45. When the age distribution is examined, it is seen that the lowest percentage consist of employees between the ages of 36-45. When the civil status is investigated, the number of those who are married and single are close to each other. When the educational status of those who take part in the research is investigated, it is observed that 58 of them have the education of high school, 68 of them university, 15 of them master's degree and 9 of them have a PhD. When the distribution of their working period is examined, it is observed that 58 of them have worked for 1-5 years, 38 of them for 6-10 years, 40 of them for 11-15 years, 9 of them 16-20 years, and 5 of them 21+ and the highest percentage belongs to those who has worked for 1-5 years.

Gender	N	x	SS	Sd	Т	Р
Male	43	2,61	0,62			
Female	107	2,61	0,47	148	-0,033	0,97

 Table 2: Comparing the Commitments of the Organization According to Gender (t test)

p<0,05

As seen in Table 2, when the relationship between the commitments of the organization and the gender of the employees is examined, the average point value for the commitments of the organization is $2,61\pm0,62$ in male participants and $2,61\pm0,47$ in female participants. There is no significant difference between the point averages (t= -0,033; p>0,05). In other words, there is no significant relationship between the genders of the employees and the commitments of the organization.

When the commitments' scale of the organization is compared to the gender of employees, the average point of " 34^{th} fair and equal treatment" statement in female participants is $2,36\pm 1,17$ and in male participants $2,79\pm1,04$ and it is observed that the difference between the average points is statistically significant (t= 2,84; p<0,05). The perception of "fair and equal treatment" is higher in male participants. In other questions, no significant difference is seen between the male and female participants.

Hypothesis 1 a: There is no significant and positive difference between the commitments of the organization and the gender of the employees.

H1a: Accepted

Gender	N	x	SS	Sd	Т	Р
Male	43	2,99	0,77			
Female	107	3,09	0,69			
				148	-0,702	0,48

 Table 3: Comparing the Commitments of the Employees According to Gender (t test)

p<0,05

As seen in Table 3, when the relationship between the commitments of the employees and their gender is examined, the point average of the employees is $2,99\pm0,77$ in male participants and $3,09\pm0,69$ in female participants. There is no significant difference between the point averages (t= -0702; p>0,05). And therefore no significant relation between the genders of the employees and the commitments of the organization.

When the commitments' scale of the employees is compared according to the gender on a question basis, the average point of " 64^{th} Accepting to transfer to another geographical area if required" statement in female participants is $2,42\pm1,20$ and in male participants $2,87\pm1,23$ the difference between the average points is statistically significant (t= -2,04; p<0,05). The perception of "fair and equal treatment" is higher in male participants. In other questions, no significant difference is seen between the male and female participants. The approval of "accepting to transfer to another geographical area if required" is higher in female participants. In other questions, no significant difference is seen between the male and female participants. In other approval of "accepting to transfer to another geographical area if required" is higher in female participants. In other questions, no significant difference is seen between the male and female participants.

Hypothesis 1b: There is no significant and positive difference between the commitments of the employees and their genders.

H1b: Accepted

		-		
Age Groups	Ν	χ	SS	
18-25	40	2,52	0,44	
26-30	42	2,59	0,46	
31-35	58	2,68	0,59	
36-45	10	2,71	0,57	

 Table 4: Comparing the Commitments of the Organization According to Age Groups (t test)

As seen in Table 4, when the relationship between the commitments of the organization and the ages of the employees is examined, it is seen that the point average which belongs to the commitments of the organization is $2,52\pm0,44$ in the

participants ages 18-25; $2,59\pm0,46$ in the participants ages 26-30; $2,68\pm0,59$ in the participants aged between 31-35; and $2,71\pm0,57$ in the participants ages 36-45.

The source of the variance	Sum of squares	Sd	Average of Squares	F	Р	Significant Difference
Within-group variance	0,676	3	0,225			
Between-group variance	39,089	146	0,268			
Total	39,765	149		0,841	0,473	

p<0,05

The results of a one way analysis of variance show that there is no significant difference between the commitments of the organization and age variance (F3,146= 0,841; p>0,05). In other words, there is no significant relation between the ages of the employees and the commitments of the organization.

Hypothesis 2a: There is no significant and positive difference between the ages of the commitments of the organization and ages of the employees.

H2a: Accepted

Age	N	_X	SS	
18-25	40	3,14	0,71	
26-30	42	3,03	0,68	
31-35	58	3,02	0,76	
36-45	10	3,08	0,59	

 Table 5: Comparing the Commitments of the Employees According to Age Groups (t test)

As seen in Table 5 when the relationship between the commitments of the employees and the ages of the employees is examined, the point average belonging to the commitments of the employees is $3,14\pm0,71$ in the participants ages 18-25; $3,03\pm0,68$ in the participants ages 26-30; $3,02\pm0,76$ in the participants ages 31-35 and $3,08\pm0,59$ in the participants ages 36-45.

The Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Sd	Averages of Squares	F	Р	Significant Difference
Within-group variance	0,353	3	0,118			
Between-group variance	74,690	146	0,512			
Total	75,043	149		0,230	0,875	

p<0,05

The results of a one way analysis of variance show that there is no significant difference between the commitments of the employee and age variance (F3,146=0,230; p>0,05). In other words, there is no significant relationship between the ages of the employees and their commitment.

Hypothesis 2b: There is no significant and positive difference between the ages of the employees and commitments of them.

H2a: Accepted

 Table 6: Comparing the Commitments of the Organization According to Their Civil Status (t test)

Civil Status	N	_X	SS	Sd	Т	Р
Married	74	2,63	0,51			

Single	76	2,59	0,53	147	0,456	0,649

p<0,05

As seen in Table 6 when the relationship between the commitments of the organization civil status of the employees is examined, the point average which belonging to the commitments of the organization is $2,63\pm0,51$ in the married participants and $2,59\pm053$ in single participants there is no significant difference between the groups' point averages (t=0,456; p>0,05). In other words, there is no significant relation between the civil status of the employees and the commitments of the organization.

When the commitments' scale of the organization is compared according to the civil status on question basis, the average point of "8th Learning Opportunities" statement in married participants is $3,05\pm1,12$ and in single participants $2,67\pm1,03$ and it is observed that the difference between the average points is statistically significant (t= 2,20; p<0,05). The average point of "25th Skills and progress" statement in married participants 2,81+1,15 and in single participants 2,43+0,98 and it is observed that the difference between the average points is statistically significant (t= 2,20; p<0,05). "Learning Opportunities" and "Skills and progress" perception is higher in married participants. In other questions there is no significant difference between the single and married participants.

Hypothesis 3a: There is no significant and positive difference between the civil status of the employees and commitments of the organization.

H3a: Accepted

 Table 7: Comparing the Commitments of the Employees According to Their Civil Status (t test)

Civil Status	Ν	x	SS	Sd	Т	Р
Married	74	3,05	0,76			

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Single	76	3,05	0,67				
				147	-0,008	0,994	
						·	

p<0,05

As seen in Table 7 when, the relationship between the commitments of the employees civil status is examined, the point average of the commitments of the employees is $3,05\pm0,76$ in married participants and $3,05\pm0,67$ in single participants. There is no significant difference between the point averages (t=0,456; p>0,05). In other words, there is no significant relationship between the civil status of the employees and their commitments.

When the commitments' scale of the employees is compared according to the civil status on question basis, no significant difference between the single and married participants is observed on question basis.

Hypothesis 3b: There is no significant and positive difference between the civil status of the employees and commitments of them.

H3b: Accepted

PhD

Educational Status		_	
	Ν	Χ	SS
High School Graduate	58	2,51	0,49
Bachelor's Degree	68	2,70	0,54
Master's Degree	15	2,75	0,36

 Table 8: Comparing the Commitments of the Organization According to Their Educational

 Status (One-Way Variance Analysis)

2,38

0,61

9

As seen in Table 8, when the relationship between the commitments of the organization and employees' educational status is examined, the point average of the commitments of the organization is $2,51\pm0,49$ in the high school graduates, $2,70\pm0,54$ in bachelor's degree participants, $2,75\pm0,36$ in master's degree participants, and $2,38\pm0,61$ in PhD participants.

The Source of the Variance	Sums of squares	Sd	Averages of the Squares	F	Р	Significant Difference
Within-group Variance	1,944	3	0,648			
Between-group Variance	37,821	146	0,259			
Total	39,765	149		2,501	0,062	

p<0,05

The results of one-way variance analyses show that there is no significant difference between the educational status and the commitments of the organization (F3,146= 2,501; p>0,05). In other words, there is no significant difference between the educational status of the employees and the commitments of the organization.

Hypothesis 4a: There is no significant and positive difference between the educational status of the employees and commitments of the organization.

H4a: Accepted

Educational Status		-	
	Ν	X	SS
High School Graduate	58	2,84	0,68
Bachelor's Degree	68	3,30	0,74
Master's Degree	15	2,78	0,41
PhD	9	3,08	9,47

 Table 9: Comparing the Commitments of the Employees According to Their Educational Status (One-Way Variance Analysis)

As seen in Table 9, when the relationship between the commitments of the employees and educational status is examined, the point average of the commitments of the employees is $2,84\pm0,68$ in high school graduate participants, $3,30\pm0,74$ in bachelor's degree participants, $2,78\pm0,41$ in master's degree participants, and $3,08\pm0,47$ in PhD participants.

The Source of the Variance	Sums of squares	Sd	Averages of the Squares	F	Р	Significant Difference
Within-group Variance	7,959	3	2,653			
Between- groupVariance	67,085	146	0,459			A-B
Total	39,765	149		5,774	0,001	

p<0,05

The results of one-way variance analyses show that there is significant difference between the educational status and the commitments of the employees (F3,146= 5,774; p<0,05). In other words, there is significant difference between the educational status of the employees and the commitments of the employees.

Hypothesis 4b: There is no significant and positive difference between the educational status of the employees and commitments of them.

H4b: Accepted

Working Hour		-	
	Ν	X	SS
1-5 years	58	2,53	0,43
6-10 years	38	2,60	0,60
11-15 years	40	2,65	0,58
16-20 years	9	2,83	0,27
21- + years	5	2,94	0,35

 Table 10: Comparing the Commitments of the Organization According to Working Hours

 (One-Way Variance Analysis)

As seen in Table 10, when the relationship between the commitments of the organization and working hour is examined, the point average of the commitments of the organization is $2,53\pm0,43$ participants who worked for 1-5 years, $2,60\pm0,60$ for participants who worked 6-10 years; $2,65\pm0,58$ for participants who worked 11-15; $2,83\pm0,27$ for participants who worked 16-20 and $2,94\pm0,35$ for participants who worked 21 years or more.

The Source of the Variance	Sums of squares		Averages of the	F	Р	Significant Difference
		Sd	Squares			
Within-group	1,407	4	0,352			

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Variance						
Between-group Variance	38,358	146	0,265			
Total	39,765	149		1,330	0,262	

p<0,05

The results of one-way variance analyses show that there is no significant difference between the working time and the commitments of the organization (F4,145= 2,501; p>0,05). In other words, there is no significant difference between the working time and the commitments of the organization.

Hypothesis 5b: There is no significant and positive difference between the working time and commitments of the employees.

H5b: Accepted

6. RESULT

Psychological contracts consist of the expectations and perceptions related to the mutual unwritten obligations of the parties and rising between the employers and employees at the early phase of a business. As psychological contracts arise in the minds of the employees, they hold true only if the employer and employee mutually carry out their obligations. When the results from this study are examined, demographic characteristics of the individuals create no difference in the perception of obligations promises in the psychological contract. Factors such as sex, age, educational status, civil status and working time do not alter the perception of both the commitment of the organization and the commitment of the employees. The expectations of the employees from their organization and their employers are formed independently apart from these variables. As the psychological contract relies on being mutual, the manners of employees varies similarly depending on how much the commitments are applied. The manners of

the employees sometimes vary depending on the unemployment level and expectation of finding a new job in the country, sector and region. In the economical crisis period, while the employees have milder attitude even if the commitments are not carried out, the employers show stricter attitude because they believe that they will not have any trouble finding a new labor force.

The results of this study applied in the health sector and retail sector can be beneficial for other studies related to the government and private sector as well.

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