




Exploring the psychological contract of supervisors: The conflicting roles of being an employee and representing management

PN Mqina

 **orcid.org/0000-0001-5052-8880**

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Supervisor: Prof BJ Linde

Graduation: June 2023

Student number: 34832548

DECLARATION

I, Princess Nompumelelo Mqina, hereby confirm and declare that this dissertation titled: ***Exploring the psychological contract of supervisors: The conflicting roles of being an employee and employer representative*** has not been submitted for any other qualification at any other tertiary institution. I declare that it is my own work and that the views and opinions expressed in this research are those of the author and the relevant literature references are shown in the bibliography.

I further declare that this research has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the North-West University (NWU-00940-21-A4), and that it complies with all the ethical standards issued by the institution.

PN Mqina

November 2022

To whom it may concern

Cecile van Zyl
Language editing and translation
Cell: 072 389 3450
Email: Cecile.vanZyl@nwu.ac.za

2 December 2022

Dear Mr / Ms

Re: Language editing of dissertation (Exploring the psychological contract of supervisors: The conflicting roles of being an employee and employer representative)

I hereby declare that I language edited the above-mentioned mini-dissertation by PN MQINA (student number: 34832548).

Please feel free to contact me should you have any enquiries.

Kind regards



Cecile van Zyl
Language practitioner
BA (PU for CHE); BA honours (NWU); MA (NWU)
SATI number: 1002391

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving mother, Ntombi Mqina for her encouragement, endless love and support. Thank you for being the pillar of my strength, my inspiration and my backbone throughout this journey. Thank you for always being optimistic, for believing in my potential, and for nurturing me throughout this journey.

I love you Nomantungwa!

In memory of my late father, Vusumuzi Ezra Mqina.

PREFACE

This study is presented in an article format as per the North-West University guidelines. Ms PN Mqina conducted the study, under supervision of Prof Bennie Linde. Relevant and available literature was reviewed to address this study topic, using the APA referencing style.

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ABSTRACT

Exploring the psychological contract of supervisors: The conflicting roles of being an employee and employer representative

Despite the all-embracing literature on psychological contracts, little has been documented on the conflicting roles of supervisors as employees and as employer representatives within the context of psychological contracts. The purpose of this study was to explore the dual role of supervisors as employees and employer representatives within the psychological contracts therein experienced in each role and/or the exchange relationships.

Specifically, a qualitative research approach was employed in this study to explore the unwritten contracts of each role experienced and/or occupied by supervisors, i.e. exploring and describing how supervisors distinguish their obligations and expectations as employees as well as employer representatives. In addition, the way in which supervisors distinguish between the two roles was explored. Using a non-probability sampling technique, 17 semi-structured interviews were conducted with employees with managerial responsibilities from different sectors. The findings, based on the captured and analysed data, suggested that supervisors do differentiate between the two roles they occupy, being an employee and as well as an employer representative. Furthermore, the findings indicated that supervisors differentiate their psychological contracts in either role, with expectations in either role being similar to a large extent, while the obligations were largely different. Further research on the impact of psychological contracts on the dual role and collaborate the psychological contracts experienced in each role is recommended.

Key terms

Psychological contracts, supervisors, role differentiation, breach and violation of psychological contract, fulfilled psychological contracts, employer representatives

OPSOMMING

Verkenning van die psigologiese kontrak van toesighouers: Die botsende rolle om 'n werknemer en werkgewervertewoordiger te wees

Ten spyte van die allesomvattende literatuur oor psigologiese kontrak, is min gedokumenteer oor die botsende rolle van toesighouers as werknemers en as werkgewervertewoordigers binne die konteks van psigologiese kontrak. Die doel van hierdie studie was om die dubbele rol van toesighouers as werknemers en werkgewervertewoordigers binne die psigologiese kontrakte daarin, wat in elke rol en/of die uitruilverhoudings ervaar word, te ondersoek.

'n Kwalitatiewe navorsingsbenadering is in hierdie studie gebruik om die ongeskrewe kontrakte van elke rol wat deur toesighouers ervaar en of beklee word, te ondersoek, asook om toesighouers se ervaring van hul verpligtinge en verwagtinge as werknemers sowel as werkgewervertewoordigers te verken en te beskryf. Daarbenewens is die onderskeiding van hierdie twee rolle deur toesighouers ondersoek. Met behulp van 'n nie-waarskynlikheidsteekproef is 17 onderhoude deur middel van semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude gevoer met werknemers met bestuursverantwoordelikhede uit verskillende sektore. Met die data wat vasgelê en ontleed is, dui bevindinge daarop dat toesighouers wel onderskei tussen die twee rolle wat hulle beklee, naamlik om 'n werknemer en 'n werkgewervertewoordiger te wees. Die bevindinge het ook aangedui dat toesighouers hul psigologiese kontrakte in beide rolle onderskei, met verwagtinge in enige rol wat in 'n groot mate soortgelyk was, terwyl die verpligtinge grootliks anders was. Verdere navorsing oor die impak van die psigologiese kontrakte op die dubbele rol en om die psigologiese kontrakte wat in elke rol ervaar word, word aanbeveel.

Belangrike terme

Psigologiese kontrakte, toesighouers, roldifferensiasie, oortreding en skending van psigologiese kontrak, vervulde psigologiese kontrakte, werkgewervertewoordigers

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CHAPTER 1 ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1. Introduction

Researchers have explored the definitions of psychological contracts since the 1960s, and Kotter (1973) defined psychological contracts as mutual expectations of the reciprocal employment relationship between employees and their employers. Guest (2016) quantified that psychological contracts are implicit reciprocal contracts that are set on expectations and obligations and can be viewed as non-rigid, due to it being altered based on the relationship type, time and needs with no formalities (Smithson & Lewis, 2004). Obligations change over time, based on the behavioural changes of parties in the relationship and the gradual development of such a relationship. The psychological contract “is the experience of employee and employer obligations through perceived promises made in the reciprocal employee-organisation relationship” (Linde, 2015, p.11). Psychological contracts reflect a process (Eichler, Lemos, & Neves, 2019), as it changes based on the occurrences of substantial proceedings, which will lead to a change of one’s psychological contracts and changes in the organisation’s psychological contract.

Psychological contracts are based on trust between two parties in a reciprocal agreement enacted from unwritten contracts, expected contributions, and managed obligations from either party (Karagonlar, Eisenberger, & Aselage, 2016). These contracts are also considered as based on expectations from either party in the employment relationship regarding mutual obligations fixed in the relationship (John, 2013). In addition to many explored definitions, Suazo, Martínez, and Sandoval (2009) mentioned that psychological contracts are based on a social exchange theory that is rooted in mutual reciprocity. Accordingly, psychological contracts are mainly studied as agreements between employees and their employers, centred around expectations, promises and obligations (Martinez-Leon, 2012), and such organisational obligations are distinct based on the perceptions of the employee and those of the employer (Aggarwal & Bharava 2009). In an employment setting development, career progress, opportunities and a conducive work environment are some of the organisational obligations as perceived by the employees. Employers perceived organisational obligations to include job security, monetary benefits, and upholding an impartial work environment (Aggarwal & Bharava 2009).

Psychological contracts are set to provide a steady understanding of what to expect from each other, and guiding the actions by either party (Rousseau, 2001). In addition, Guest (1998) mentions that a psychological contract influences human behaviour, since it is a ‘perceived’ exchange agreement between parties (Argyris, 1962; Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl, & Solley,

1962), which is subject to each individual's interpretation and based on their beliefs with regard to the terms of the relationship (Macneil, 1985).

According to Eichler (2017), a psychological contract should be viewed as a process as it changes, based on the occurrences of substantial proceedings, which will lead to a change of one's psychological contracts and changes in the organisation's psychological contract. Furthermore, Hutchison (2019) defines *good faith* as the honest intent of parties in a relationship based on ethical, as well as contractual values and standards, which is the basis of each party formulating psychological contracts.

2. Problem statement

Most studies have explored the definition of psychological contracts linked to specific expectations and obligations in an employment relationship (Guest, 2016; John, 2013); however, with these expectations and obligations exclusively linked to a specific role, being either as an employee, or as an employer (Martinez-Leon, 2012). This research will explore role differentiation and psychological contracts that come with each role fulfilled by an individual (supervisor) as both being in the role of an employee and an employer representative. Accordingly, supervisors represent the employer in the workplace, which is a role with unique expectations and obligations, and they are also employees with different job requirements, expectations and obligations. This research will also seek to explore whether the expectations and obligations embedded in these two roles are the same, or different. Consequently, the research will explore whether there are two different psychological contracts for each role fulfilled by the supervisors or whether there is truly one psychological contract that embodies both roles fulfilled by the supervisor. In exploring this dual role and the belonging psychological contracts, the research will create clarity on the differences or similarities of the expectations and obligations in each role, and the influences that the psychological contracts would have on each of the roles fulfilled. Furthermore, the research will also explore psychological contract breach or fulfilment (Bal, De Cooman, & Mol, 2013), in the dual role, while exploring whether there exists different or specific psychological contract types in each role.

3. Research aims and objectives

The research aimed to contribute to a better understanding of the supervisory roles (senior managerial roles) within the context of psychological contracts. The primary objective of the research was to explore the different psychological contracts embedded in the roles of supervisors, as employees and as employer representatives. To reach this objective, the following secondary objectives, grouped in the articles where they were investigated, were identified.

Research objectives

Article 1: Exploring the psychological contracts of supervisors in the role of employee

Secondary objectives

- To explore how supervisors experience their psychological contracts in their roles as an employees.
- To explore the supervisor's obligations and expectations as an employee.

Article 2: Exploring the psychological contracts of supervisors in the role of employer representatives

Secondary objectives

- To explore how supervisors experience their psychological contracts in their roles as employer representatives.
- To explore the supervisor's obligations and expectations as an employer representative.

4. Contributions of the study

This research envisages to contribute to the existing literature on psychological contracts and further investigate the experience of the different roles of supervisors by exploring the different psychological contracts embedded in these different roles as employees and as employer representatives. This research will possibly contribute to a better understanding of the dual role fulfilled by supervisors and the different psychological contracts through the research findings.

5. Research design

5.1 Research strategy

The researcher followed the qualitative descriptive research strategy for the purpose of this research, considering that the data was collected from the people directly experiencing the phenomenon. In this case, the subjects were defined as supervisors in an employment position with the phenomenon being their experience of dual psychological contracts and role differentiation. Qualitative descriptive research strategies employed for the purpose of this research aimed to explore, determine and comprehend a specific phenomenon and/or perspectives of the participants (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2003). The qualitative descriptive strategy was deemed essential for this research because it has been proven to provide rich information on participants' experiences (Bova, Harper, & Sullivan-Bolyai, 2005), providing a comprehensive summarisation of the events and/or experiences elaborated by the participants. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with various supervisors to understand their opinions on psychological contracts embedded in their different roles, as employees and as employer representatives.

5.2 Research method

The qualitative research method followed by the researcher allowed for a better understanding of the phenomenon and explored a more detailed insight into the psychological contracts of supervisors (Barrett, 2018). According to Percy, Kostere, and Kostere (2015), a qualitative research method allows exploring the participants' subjective opinions and experiences, and therefore the qualitative research approach was applicable in both articles.

5.3 Research design

5.3.1 Research setting

This research was conducted in a social world, in South Africa, with supervisors from various industries. The researcher looked at the supervisors as the target population, because supervisors are in senior managerial roles, as defined by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, number 75 of 1997. The Act (75/1997) defines a senior managerial employee as an employee who has the authority to hire, discipline and dismiss employees and represent the employer internally and externally. The researcher approached the research from the naturalistic

engagement method (Ravitch & Carl, 2016), where data was collected through digital semi-structured interviews, and then the researcher engaged with the participants in their natural settings. Digital interviews have progressively been accepted as a data collection method (Silverman, 2016), which also improved access to participants who could not participate in face-to-face interviews (Jowett, Peel, & Shaw, 2011). Furthermore, considering the Covid-19 outbreak, the interviews were conducted via an online platform, namely Zoom Video Communications Inc. (2016). For this reason, participants were required to have access to a computer or laptop and/or any other electronic device they could connect from for the interview and a stable internet connection. The interviews were conducted over a period of two months from May to July 2022.

5.3.2 Entrée and establishing researcher roles

Before the researcher commenced collecting data, permission was obtained from the targeted group by extending the request for participation through email, depicting the purpose of the research. In the invite, the researcher clearly explained the purpose of the research, including the research process that was to be followed, including how the interviews will be conducted, and the ethical considerations were also elaborated on in the invite.

According to Creswell (2007), the role of a researcher in qualitative research is crucial as it involves collecting and analysing data. For this research, the researcher fulfilled the below-mentioned roles throughout the research:

- Identified and informed the participants about the intent of the research and obtained their consent to participate in the research and therefore take part in the interviews
- Obtained informed consent from the participants; for some participants it was verbal consent recorded on the online platform (Zoom, 2016), and other participants completed, signed and submitted informed consent forms via email (Annexure D). The consent forms also elaborated on the voluntary participation aspect, the interview procedure and the confidentiality aspect
- The researcher collected data through recorded interviews via the online platform (Zoom, 2016). The interviews were conducted on dates and times that were suitable for the participants.
- The collected data was transcribed to draw up a report that depicted the codes and themes established. During the transcription of data, the researcher assigned pseudonyms to each participant to ensure the identity of the participants was kept confidential and private. In addition, the organisations that the participants were associated with remained anonymous.

- Ensured that the collected data was kept securely on the researcher's computer, password protected. The data will be stored for five years for record management purposes, as stated in the NWU record management policy.
- Throughout the research, the researcher expressed the abilities of honesty, fairness and knowledge of the research.

5.3.3 Sampling

During sampling, the researcher intended on recruiting participants who have expertise regarding the subject that was researched. For this research, a non-probability purposive sampling technique was considered, thereby looking at the population that was relevant to the research and obtaining a sample that consisted of prime focus participants who met the criteria for the research and obtaining information to achieve the research objectives (Etikan & Bala, 2017). The methods in this research intended to confirm the particular job role the participants fulfilled. The participants were individuals who were supervisors, therefore holding senior managerial roles as elaborated on in the Act (75/97). The participants were identified based on being rich information cases by virtue of their status, which is being a supervisor, their knowledge and experience as supervisors.

According to Friedman, Hastie, and Tibshirani (2010), defining the study population is important for any research, because it allows for the characteristics of the study population to be elaborated on, as per the criterion sampling technique. Therefore, this section elaborates on the criteria and requirements to be met by participants so as to be included in the research. The criteria and characteristics that constituted participants eligible to be part of the research (Gerrish & Lacey 2010) were:

- Participants need to be supervisors, fulfil senior managerial roles as defined by the Act (75/97);
- Participants need to differentiate between the expectations and obligations associated with their roles as employees and employer representatives; and
- Participants must have adequate, professional English-speaking abilities.

Adler and Adler (2012) define a sample size of 30 (n=30) ranging from 12 and 60 interviews as sufficient to support convincing conclusions of the research and to develop a theoretical model. For this research, a sample size of 17 senior managerial employees was considered (n=17). Purposive sampling, in this instance, was meant to spearhead the sampling criteria. Accordingly, a sample size can be determined by the *information power* held by the sampled participants (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). The researcher's theoretical background also guided the

size of the sample, the objectives of the research, the analysis strategy, and the standard of the interview questions. Therefore, had the researcher not collected enough information from this sample size, the researcher will have conducted more interviews to reach data saturation and collect enough data to address the research objectives.

5.3.4 Data collection methods

Data was collected through digital interviews via the online platform, Zoom Video Communications Inc. (2016). The interviews were semi-structured to enable the researcher reciprocity with the sampled participants (Galletta, 2013), and allowed for follow-up questions that also allowed the researcher to explicitly explore the core elements of the research objectives (Wheeler & Holloway, 2010). The interviews optimistically did not exceed 30 minutes to be considerate of the participants' other commitments (Jacob & Ferguson 2012). The researcher made use of semi-structured interviews to allow participants an open platform to elaborate on other circumstances that enabled the researcher to observe a more detailed picture (Thabane et al., 2010), thereby achieving a comprehensive description on perspectives and beliefs of the participants pertaining to the study. The questions asked in the interview were brief, applicable to all participants, and not offensive to the participants.

The researcher used pre-set questions as depicted in Annexure C. In constructing the interview questionnaire, the questions were structured in order to answer the research objectives and/or achieve the aim of the research (Castillo-Montoya, 2016).

5.3.5 Recording of data

The semi-structured interviews conducted were recorded on the online platform, Zoom (2016), which has a recording option. The researcher also made use of field notes during the interviews to capture further information. The digital recordings from all the interviews were transcribed onto a Word document and uploaded onto Atlas.ti (Version 3.15.0-2022-03-09), which unpacked the data into themes. The data collected was securely and confidentially saved on the researcher's computer, and only the researcher and the supervisor had access to it.

5.3.6 Data analysis

Thematic analysis was used to draw conclusions from the data collected to identify comprehensive patterns and themes that were evident. Identifying themes was also important to

justify the importance of those themes concerning the research objectives, as proposed by Bazeley (2013). Therefore, for this research, when searching for themes, the below were explored:

- Similarities and differences in the participants' responses to questions;
- Correlations and metaphors used by the participants to express their thoughts when they answered questions;
- Repetition of subject matter that resurfaced continuously during the interview; and
- Missing data that might have been omitted from the participants' responses to questions (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

According to Clark and Braun (2006), a theme concluded from research is an arrangement derived from the data that relates to the research questions. Themes were constructed from codes identified from the interview questionnaire responses that, in return, provided a basis for a theoretical understanding of the research objectives and/or questions. Thematic analysis aimed to combine two concepts with reoccurrences and significances (Buetow, 2010).

Clarke and Braun (2013) and Nowell, Norris, White, and Moules (2017) highlight the thematic phase process, which was also referred to as the six phases of thematic data analysis.

Thematic phase process

Phase 1: Familiarise yourself with your data

The researcher continuously familiarised herself with the collected data, thereby allowing for a prolonged and repetitive engagement with the data, by listening to the recorded interviews and transcribing the data onto a Word document. The researcher read through the data to ensure accuracy and to grasp an overall idea of the data. The information transcribed onto the Word document was uploaded into the Atlas.ti software program to further identify patterns that occurred.

Phase 2: Generate initial codes

In the code-generation phase, the researcher was involved in noticing similarities and patterns evident in the data, then simplified detailed data features into categorised codes derived from the interviews. The researcher used the Atlas.ti (2022) software program to further scrutinise, monitor and understand the data that was collected.

Phase 3: Search for themes

The researcher further developed themes from the developed codes, thereby collapsing, grouping and merging codes into meaningful themes. The aforementioned technique was used to analyse themes and organise them into similar sub-themes with the assistance of the *quotations* and *networks* features in the Atlas.ti (2022) software program.

Phase 4: Review themes

The reviewing themes phase was considered a quality control phase, and therefore the researcher ascertained that the themes developed were aligned with the research questions or objectives and were a true reflection of the data collected, while also finding irrelevant themes. The researcher reviewed the themes, and therefore separated different themes and combined similar themes. This allowed the researcher to confirm that the established themes were a true reflection of the codes initially developed.

Phase 5: Define and name themes

Defining and naming themes, this phase allowed the researcher to outline the interpretive inclination of themes derived from the data, and therefore proceeded to provide summaries of each theme and the data characteristics each theme resonated with, thereby naming each theme.

Phase 6: Writing a report

The researcher then produced a report that provided in-depth knowledge of the analysis; theoretical and methodological reasoning was encompassed in this research in a way that made it is easy for the readers to understand the codes, themes and sub-themes derived for Article 1, which addressed the supervisors' psychological contracts as an employee, including the supervisors' psychological contract as an employer representative addressed in Article 2.

Coding process

"Coding is the process of analysing qualitative text data by taking them apart to see what they yield before putting the data back together in a meaningful way" (Creswell, 2015, p. 156). According to Saldaña (2016), "a code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 3). Coding is about aligning themes to the data, and the themes developed should be aligned with global themes (Saldaña, 2016). For this research, the live coding process was applied (Parameswaran & Basu, 2020), in which recorded videos were used. Supplementary to it, manual coding was included in the analysis of the videos and transcripts.

5.3.7 Strategies to employ to ensure quality data

According to Loh (2013), the researcher needs to ensure that trustworthiness exists in the research through qualitative data collection and analysis. Therefore, trustworthiness consists of four constituents, i.e. transferability, conformability, credibility and dependability.

- **Transferability:** Korstjens and Moser (2018) define transferability as the applicability of the findings to other research contexts or with other participants. Therefore, the researcher provided a detailed description of the research. To allow for further researchers to replicate this study, the researcher ensured that the objectives were clearly defined.
- **Confirmability** ensures that the findings derived from the research can be confirmed by other researchers (Korstjens & Moser 2018). The researcher ensured that the participants freely expressed themselves, and manipulation of data was limited through the systematic analyses of the data (Atlas.ti software program).
- **Credibility:** Korstjens and Moser (2018) further define credibility as the validity of the findings. Therefore, the researcher ensured the truthfulness of the data collected by reporting the data collected from participants accurately without being biased. The researcher confirmed that the research findings are a true reflection of the participants' perceptions of the research phenomenon and consequently it has been interpreted accurately.
- **Dependability:** Korstjens and Moser (2018) define it as "the stability of findings over time" to ensure the reliability of the data collected and that the findings are repeatable and consistent over time. Therefore, the researcher ensured adherence to this criterion by providing a detailed description of the research leading to the final findings.

5.3.8 Reporting

The collected data was reported on by providing rich and intense records of the participants' responses. As depicted in Table 11, the researcher provided an analysis of those extracts, relating them to the research objectives, and reasonably reporting on the themes derived from the data collected.

5.3.9 Ethical considerations

Prior to conducting the research, ethics clearance was obtained from the North-West University Research Ethics Committee. This research was approved as a minimal risk study: NWU-00940-

21-A4 (Annexure E). The researcher adhered to ethical considerations to ensure ethical conduct of the data collection process (Zegwaard, Campbell, & Pretti, 2017). The purpose of the research was also explained to the identified participants in writing via email. The researcher provided the participants with informed consent forms to complete prior to the semi-structured interviews. Participants were also informed that their participation in this research is voluntary and should they at any given time feel uncomfortable, they may withdraw from the research. Throughout the research, the researcher saved the collected data on her password-protected computer. The data will be kept for a minimum of five years.

6. Chapter division

Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 discuss the discoveries of the research study in the form of research articles. Chapter 4 details the conclusions, limitations and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Research article 1: Exploring psychological contracts of supervisors in the role of employee

Chapter 3: Research article 2: Exploring psychological contracts of supervisors in the role of employer representatives

Chapter 4: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

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CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH ARTICLE 1

2.1 Exploring the psychological contracts of supervisors in the role of employee

Motivation for the research: The research aimed to contribute to a better understanding of the supervisory (senior managerial) roles within the context of psychological contracts. The primary objective of the research was to explore the psychological contracts embedded in the roles of supervisors, as employees.

Research strategy, design and method: A qualitative research design was followed, with a sample (n=17) of supervisors in senior managerial roles, as defined by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, number 75 of 1997. To collect data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the thematic analysis process utilised to process the data.

Main findings: The main findings point to supervisors being aware of their psychological contract in their role as an employee, and in identifying the obligations and expectations within this role, the following themes were frequently narrated, *performance, comply with organisational protocol, conducive environment and remuneration.*

Introduction

This chapter explores the psychological contract, obligations and expectations and the types of psychological contracts associated with psychological contracts from an employee perspective.

Firstly, the employees' psychological contract will be reviewed and how individuals perceive psychological contracts. Typically, psychological contracts are shaped by the operations of HR, namely recruitment, wherein the potential employee has expectations based on the recruitment processes and/or interview; secondly, psychological contracts are formed through the employee's interactions and/or relationships they build with the employer representative (supervisor), and the employee's realisation of their capabilities and level of expertise also suggests the formation of psychological contracts (Grobler & Nicolaidis 2016; Obuya & Rugimbana 2014).

Literature review

McInnis (2012) defined psychological contracts as the unspoken and obvious promises made by parties in an employment relationship, including but not limited to elements such as remuneration and/or working hours. Rousseau (1989) mentions that psychological contracts are subjective promises not only based on unspoken expectations, but also reciprocated obligations pertaining to a fair employment relationship. Psychological contracts were further explained as the implied relationship between employees and the organisation (Ng, Feldman, & Butts, 2014). Argyris (1960) explained psychological contracts as the unspoken agreement between employees and employers, i.e. employee and employer perceptions regarding implicit reciprocal expectations and obligations (Herriot & Pemberton, 1997).

According to Nikolaou, Tomprou, and Vakola (2011), employee psychological contracts are made up of perceptible aspects of the employment relationship considered to be imperative to employees. Additionally, psychological contracts are derived from interactions with their co-workers and line managers, through employee-manager relations, team relations and organisational relations (Shore & Tetrick, 1994). According to Armstrong (2012), psychological contracts are defined as opinion structures that elaborate on employees' reciprocal actions and what employers believe is expected in return from either party. Furthermore, John (2013) expands on psychological contracts as expectations from either party in the employment relationship regarding the mutual obligations fixed in the relationship. Psychological contracts are also well-defined as cognitive representations of how employees observe and envisage the employment relationship (Bal & Kooij, 2011; Rousseau, 1995), consequently allowing one to comprehend work-related behaviours, perspectives, and overall employee well-being in the workplace (Gracia, Silla, Peiró, & Fortes-Ferreira, 2007). Guest (2004) mentions that psychological contracts refer to the expectations and obligations of employees and employers and whether these expectations and obligations have been fulfilled and/or are considered to be fair. This comprise both the employer and employee expectations being included and/or considered in the employment relationship. Consequently, the relationship is seen as a reciprocal relationship (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler 2002; Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski, & Bravo, 2007). Blau (1964) mentioned that the psychological contract is an implied understanding of social expectations between employees and employers.

McFarlane, Shore, and Tetrick, (1994) make mention that the psychological contract shapes employees' behaviour in such a way that an employee will measure his/her obligations counter to the organisation's obligations, and that the psychological contract is set to address elements

not part of the written employment contract, thereby bridging the gap between obligations and expectations and limiting insecurities.

It is evident that it is difficult to determine when the expectations and promises were negotiated (Guest, 2004; Rousseau, 1995). Accordingly, an employee's psychological contract comprises abundant expectations of what organisations should make available to employees (Anderson & Schalk, 1998). Kickul and Liao-Troth (2003) mentioned that the way in which employees observe employers' conduct and interactions creates a foundation of expectations and obligations, creating the basis of the employee's psychological contract. Research has suggested that the foundation of employee psychological contracts is "the belief that a promise has been made and a consideration offered in exchange for it, binding the parties to some set of reciprocal obligations" (Rousseau, 1995, p. 9). This also proposes that psychological contracts are reciprocated expectations regarding the terms and conditions of the employment relationship between employees and employers, which are depicted as an exchange relationship, characterised by perceived expectations and obligations by employees to reciprocate prime relationships with their employers (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Seeck and Parzefall (2008) defined psychological contracts as observed obligations the employer has on the employees, and the employees have on the employer. The scope of the psychological contract obligations and expectations is subjective, based on the employee's previous and current employment experiences, the presumption of the employment relationship, and the organisational influences (Mazumdar, Warren, & Brown, 2021).

Schalk and Freese (1993) also highlighted that an organisation cannot be defined as having a rigid set of expectations for the employees, because the term employer can have different levels to it, as an individual (manager) or the organisation (company). The definition by Rousseau (1990), which redirected the perception to that of individuality, focused the psychological contract as an individual's subjective views about mutual obligations in an employment relation between the employee and the employer – a unilateral relationship.

When looking at unmet expectations and obligations, clearly communicated expectations and obligations during the recruitment phase set the tone for employees of what is expected from them by the employer (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004; Rousseau, 1995; Wanous, Poland, Premack, & Davis, 1992). Consequently, identifying the type of psychological contract experienced by the supervisor is imperative to understanding one's experiences within an employment relationship (Alcover, 2017). Accordingly, Rousseau (1990, 1995) was among the first researchers to distinguish between two types of psychological contracts, namely the transactional and relational contracts. In other research studies, by Shore and Barksdale (1998), two more types of

psychological contracts were presented, namely the balanced and the transitional contract. In the various definitions of the transactional contract, characterised by clearly specified mutual obligations (Janssens, Sels, & Van Den Brande, 2003), Sewpersad, Ruggunan, and Krishna (2019) mention that such contracts are related to monetary expectations and obligations between employees and employers.

Accordingly, Ahmad and Ab Habib (2018) define them as being associated with the economic exchange theory – a ‘give-and-take’ reciprocal relationship – with clearly defined roles and responsibilities between the employee and the employer, with a relatively short-term span (Wöcke & Sutherland 2008). Contrarily, relational contracts are not characterised by unambiguously specified mutual obligations (Janssens et al., 2003). Bravo, Won, and Chiu (2019) mentioned that the relational psychological contract is based on one’s identification with the organisation centred around loyalty and trust, growth opportunities, and employment security, and is concerned with the retention of the employment relationship between employees and their organisation. Morrison and Robinson (1997) and Rousseau (2004) mentioned that employees who associate with this type of psychological contract are inclined to the socio-emotional elements of the employment relationship, characterised by commitment and engagement (Antonaki & Trivellas, 2014; Knights & Kennedy, 2005) with a relatively long-term span (Janssens et al., 2003).

The balanced contract is another psychological contract type, identified by Shore and Barksdale (1998), in which the obligations of either parties in the employment relationship are at the same level. Furthermore, Guzzo and Noonan (1994) defined the contract types as consisting of both the relational fundamentals and transactional fundamentals of a psychological contract, and therefore it can be viewed as a balanced contract. Lastly, regarding the transitional psychological contract, and referring to Rousseau (1995), there is no certainty to this type of contract, thereby revealing the lack of a solid contract and/or agreement between parties in the employment relation (Hui, Lee, & Rousseau, 2004). Obligation levels in psychological contracts can be characterised by either mutual high obligations, mutual low obligations, employee over-obligations, and employee under-obligations (Shore & Barksdale, 1998). Therefore, within one type of psychological contract, there is a possibility that there exist elements of another psychological contract type (Janssens et al., 2003).

2.1.1 Breach of psychological contracts: Unmet expectations and obligations

Chen, Tsui, and Zhong (2008) define the notion of “breach of psychological contracts”, as unfulfilled perceived promises, obligations, and/or unmet expectations. A breach is perceived as a cognition, a thought, or an awareness of broken obligations, while the violation experience is an emotional responsive reaction to the breach experience (Morrison & Robinson, 1997).

Rousseau (1995, p.112) defines psychological contract violation as “failure to comply with the terms of a contract”. Given the subjective nature of the psychological contract, how people interpret the circumstances of this failure determines whether they experience a violation (Rousseau, 1995).

2.1.2 Employee perspective on psychological breach

The perception of undelivered psychological contract obligations is equated to the breach of psychological contracts (Bordia, Restubog, Bordia, & Tang, 2017), which is the absence of psychological contract fulfilment (Zhao et al., 2007). Morrison and Robinson (1997) define psychological contract breach as an employee’s perception of the organisation not meeting perceived obligations. According to Ehlers (2017) and Paul-Dachapalli (2016), employees perceive psychological contract breach to include actions of dishonesty, lack of respect and trust, as well as partial and unreliable employment operations. Blau (1964) defined psychological contract breach as the disparity of the social exchange relationship between the employee and the employer. Employees experience psychological contract breach when the perceived expectations have not been met by the employer (Rayton & Yalabik, 2014). Consequently, employees experience feelings of betrayal once the employer fails to meet obligations (Grobler & Nicolaides, 2016). Gakovic and Tetrick (2003) also define psychological contract breach as an employer’s reluctance to fulfil perceived obligations in accordance with mutual promises. The most prominent consequence of psychological contract breach, as perceived by employees, is to leave the organisation (Collins, 2010; Zhao et al., 2007). Seopa, Wöcke, and Leeds (2015) add that the negative outcomes of a psychological contract breach also depend on the type of psychological contract. A transactional psychological contract breach results in employees leaving the organisation, or at least considering such an exit, while a relational psychological contract breach will result in employees showing lack of interest in the organisation and thereby showing neither interest nor effort in their work (Seopa et al., 2015).

Significant psychological contract breach for employees results in a psychological contract violation experience (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Lester, Turnley, Bloodgood, and Bolino (2003) mention that employee retention, job dissatisfaction and declined commitment to the organisation result as some of the ‘penalties’ of the psychological contract breach experience. In addition, consequences of psychological contract breach experiences have a negative impact on the employee’s organisational behaviour, including absenteeism, presenteeism and employees neglecting their job roles and performances (Kraak, Russo, & Jiménez, 2018).

According to Robinson and Rousseau (1994), psychological contract violation, which is used interchangeably with the psychological contract breach, yields negative emotional reactions,

including betrayal, since psychological contracts are mainly based on trust. Therefore, perceived psychological contract breach and/or violation as experienced by employees include job dissatisfaction (Bunderson, 2001; Kickul, Lester, & Finkl, 2002; Lambert, Edwards, & Cable, 2003), lack of trust (Guzzo et al., 1994; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Schalk, Freese, & Bosch, 1995; Robinson & Morrison, 1995), increased turnover (Montes & Irving, 2008; Montes & Zweig, 2009; Raja, Johns, & Ntalianis, 2004) and reduced organisational citizenship behaviour (Gakovic & Tetric, 2003; Sturges, Conway, Guest, & Liefoghe, 2005). In essence, psychological contracts are seen to heavily influence how employees behave (Sporn, 1996).

Research design

Research aims and objectives

The research aimed to contribute to a better understanding of supervisory roles (senior managerial roles) within the context of psychological contracts. The primary objective of the article was to explore the psychological contract embedded in the role of supervisors, as employees.. To reach this objective, the following secondary objectives, grouped in the articles where they were investigated, were identified.

Purpose and research objectives

The purpose of the research was to contribute to a better understanding of the employee role within the context of psychological contracts. The primary objective of the research is to explore the different psychological contract embedded in the role of supervisors, as employees. To reach this objective, the following secondary objectives, grouped in the articles where they would be investigated, were identified.

Article 1: Exploring the psychological contracts of supervisors in the role of employee

Secondary objectives

- To explore how supervisors experience their psychological contract in their role as an employee.
- To explore the supervisor's experiences and expectations as an employee.

Research method

The study employed a qualitative examination to explore psychological contracts experienced by supervisors in their role as employees. A qualitative research method allows for a better

understanding of the phenomenon and explore a more detailed insight into the psychological contracts for supervisors (Barrett, 2018). According to Percy, Kostere, and Kostere (2015), a qualitative research method allows for exploring participants' subjective opinions and experiences.

Research strategy

For the purpose of this research, qualitative descriptive research strategies were considered, with the aim to explore, determine and comprehend a specific phenomenon and/or perspectives of the participants (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2003). A qualitative descriptive strategy was essential in this research because it provided rich information on how participants experience (Bova, Harper, & Sullivan-Bolyai, 2005) psychological contracts in their role as an employee. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with supervisors (senior managers) to understand their opinions on the psychological contract embedded in their role as employees.

Participants

The qualitative research method necessitated the selection of participants who would offer insight into the phenomenon of supervisors with dual roles, consequently selecting purposeful participants (Creswell, 2012). This research required the sample size of participants to meet the criteria below (Gerrish & Lacey 2010), namely:

- Participants need to be supervisors; fulfil senior managerial roles as defined by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997;
- Participants need to differentiate between the expectations and obligations associated with their roles as employees and employer representatives; and
- Participants must have adequate, professional English-speaking abilities.

In ensuring that the research yielded meaningful detailed information, the researcher kept to a sample size of 17 participants (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Data was collected through interviews conducted via Zoom, each interview lasting between 20 and 30 minutes. Interview questions were structured in such a way as to explore the research objectives (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). In addition, central questions were the broad questions specific to the research objectives and the sub-questions specific questions to the research objectives to allow the researcher to explicitly explore the core elements of the research objectives (Wheeler & Holloway, 2010).

Central research questions

- How do you experience your current work environment as an employee? And how do you view your role as a supervisor/manager/employer representative?
- Do you differentiate your role as an employee and as a supervisor/manager/employer representative?
- How do you differentiate your roles as an employee and a supervisor/manager/employer representative?
- Do you perceive yourself as loyal to the employees as a supervisor/manager/employer representative? And to your company as an employee?

Sub-research questions

- Can you identify expectations that you have as an employee in your company?
- What are your obligations as an employee?
- Are your expectations and obligations as a supervisor/manager/employer representative different? Please elaborate?
- Do you think that you fulfill the obligations you made to your company as an employee? And as a supervisor/manager/employer representative?

FIGURE 1: CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SUB-RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Data analysis

Thematic analysis was applied for data analysis, consisting of six phases, consequently combining two concepts with reoccurrences and significances (Buetow, 2010). Accordingly, the thematic analysis process was used to analyse the data collected through semi-structured interviews.

All the recorded interviews were transcribed onto a Word document, therefore constructing a general overview of the data. The information transcribed was uploaded into the Atlas.ti software program (2022) to analyse the psychological contracts of supervisors in their employee role. After familiarisation of the data, the codes were highlighted and determined as *employee obligations* (code 1), and *employee expectations* (code 2), in accordance with the supervisors' psychological contract in their role as an employee. The data was analysed according to the interview questions posed to the participants. After the data was sorted, the researcher captured themes with the assistance of the *quotations* and *networks* features in the Atlas.ti (2022) software program to ensure the themes developed were correctly aligned to the participants' responses. During the review, the themes that were identified were further analysed to summarise them as accurately reflecting the data collected. The themes were defined by further using the characteristics of the data collected, and each signified theme and the relevance of the themes to the aim of the study were incorporated.

Interview content analyses

The findings were reported in table format after data was analysed and documented onto a Word document first, then into the Atlas.ti (2022) software program. The responses from the participants provided the results for the findings, thereby ensuring the results were reported truthfully.

Findings

The findings of the research will be discussed in the below section, reflecting on the codes and themes that emerged from the data analysis. The findings begin with an overview of the research design, thematic analysis and the description of the data collected.

Article 1: Exploring the psychological contracts of supervisors in the role of employee

- To explore how supervisors experience their psychological contract in their role as an employee.

- To explore the supervisor’s obligations and expectations as an employee.

The questions asked to the participants were structured in such a way to address the aforementioned objectives. Participants expressed that their role as employee (Figure 5) is clearly defined, thereby making it easier for one to fulfil his/her employee role with the responsiveness of what is required by the role and the expected outputs. With that said, seemingly, the role allows one to have a better understanding of the organisation, which is always better from an employee’s perspective, as alluded to by the participants.

TABLE 1

Employee role

RESPONSES	CODES	THEMES
“IN THIS ROLE ONE HAS THE LUXURY OF HAVING GOOD & BAD DAYS”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GOOD AND BAD DAYS • FEWER RESPONSIBILITIES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACUTE JOB ROLE • KNOWLEDGEABLE OF THE ROLE REQUIREMENTS
“CONSIDER THE ROLE AS A CAREER PATH FOR GROWTH”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLEAR JOB ROLE/DESCRIPTION • PRIMARY STAKEHOLDER 	
“NOT BEING HEARD AND BEING OVERLOOKED UNLESS IT AFFECTS THE MASSES”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GROUND-LEVEL EXPERIENCE • UNDERSTANDING THE ORGANISATION 	
“UNDERSTANDING THE ORGANISATION FROM AN EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVE”.		
“JOB ROLE OUTLINED IN THE JOB DESCRIPTION”		

Table 1 elaborates on the employee role as part of knowing one’s job, and part of being a primary stakeholder, thereby being a property of one’s career path. Participants expressed how the employee role somehow gives them flexibility to have good days and bad days due to fewer responsibilities associated with the role. Contrary to the aforementioned, it was mentioned that

the role holds many work outputs with little time for all that is required. This role was viewed as a career path to growing into bigger roles within the organisation. The following themes were derived:

Acute job role: This characteristic is embedded in the description of the employee role, which is perceived as critical in an organisation, to enable operational functioning.

Knowledgeable of the role requirements: This characteristic refers to knowing what is required of the role making the role easier to fulfil, and therefore it is very important to be well versed in the employee role as a supervisor.

In the questions asked to the participants, it was alluded to that a clear definition of the employee role was important so as to differentiate one with organisational requirements from an employee role perspective. This elaborates on understanding the organisation better as a primary stakeholder. In addition, the employee was characterised as having fewer responsibilities, since it does not entail on any managerial responsibilities.

TABLE 2

Employee expectations.

<u>RESPONSES</u>	<u>CODES</u>	<u>THEMES</u>
<p>“SOME EXPECTATIONS HAVE BEEN MET, INCLUDING MEDICAL AID FUNDING, STUDY BENEFITS AND EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMMES”.</p> <p>“TO BE OFFERED GROWTH INITIATIVES & OPPORTUNITIES, COUPLED WITH INCENTIVES”.</p> <p>“TO BE HOUSED IN A HEALTHY WORKING ENVIRONMENT & WORKING CONDITION”.</p> <p>“WITH THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT, YOUR EXPECTATIONS TEND TO CHANGE DURING YOUR TENURE AT THE ORGANIZATION”.</p> <p>“TO BE TREATED FAIRLY”.</p> <p>“TO WORK IN A CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT, WHEREIN YOUR CONTRIBUTION IS HEARD & APPRECIATED”.</p> <p>“TO GET PROMOTED”</p> <p>“FOR EMPLOYEES TO BE GIVEN A VOICE”.</p> <p>“TO HAVE ENOUGH RESOURCES TO UPKEEP THE STANDARD OF WHAT THE ORGANISATION EXPECTS OF ME”.</p> <p>“FOR THE EMPLOYER TO REALLY MAKE AN EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS REALLY REQUIRED TO KEEP THE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JOB GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY • REMUNERATION • CONDUCTIVE WORKING CONDITIONS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COMPENSATED AND OFFERED GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

**ORGANISATION PROPER
FUNCTIONING”.**

Table 2 portrays different expectations desirable in the employee role among supervisors. The expectations in the employee role are characterised by job growth and inclined opportunities, also making mention of the importance of conducive working conditions as a feature alluded to by the participants. In addition, the main theme is discussed below.

Compensated and offered growth opportunities: In the role of an employee, the expectations are characterised by rewards and recognition, and therefore supervisors as an employee have the expectation of being compensated for the work done and being granted inclined career opportunities. With this displayed theme, it is highlighted as a main theme based on the participants' responses, and therefore the role of the employee is characterised by expectations of *being promoted; being furnished with resources; as well as being heard and treated fairly.*

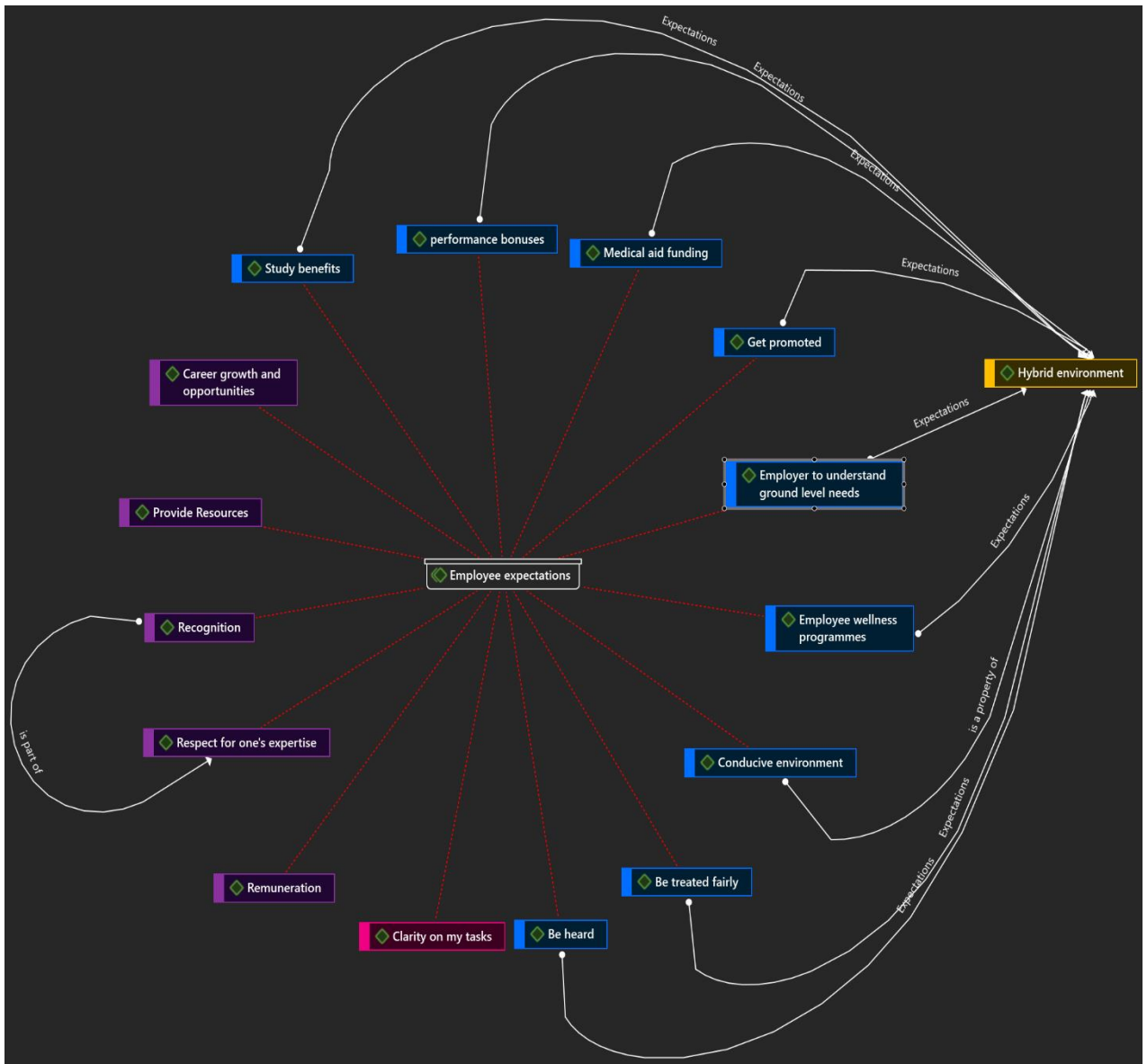


FIGURE 2: THEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF HOW THE PARTICIPANTS VIEWED THEIR EXPECTATIONS AS EMPLOYEES

During interviews, participants alluded to expectations in their employee role, and these were evident as benefits as perceived by organisations. Figure 2 illustrates the characteristics embedded in the expectations as outlined in the employee role, which include performance bonus, remuneration, medical aid funding, funding for furthering studies and employee wellness programmes as some of the expectations listed by participants in their employee role. In addition, participants highlighted working in a conducive environment as one of the expectations they have in the employee role, and therefore a hybrid working environment came up often during the interviews. Furthermore, clarity on one's role is another feature of the expectations in the employee role as alluded to by the participants. In the employee role, the participants alluded to questions posed regarding the characteristics embedded in the employee role to be more tangible in nature, and therefore being inclusive of attaining rewards and recognition for one's efforts and performance. The participants were asked a question regarding their obligations with reference to the employee role. Participants referred to performance as one of the obligations embedded in the role.

TABLE 3

Employee obligations

<u>RESPONSES</u>	<u>CODES</u>	<u>THEMES</u>
<p>“TO FOLLOW COMPANY RULES, PERFORM MY DUTIES AS SET IN MY JOB ROLE”.</p> <p>“PROVIDING THE COMPANY WITH GUIDANCE REGARDING THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND OR ASPECTS”.</p> <p>“OBLIGATIONS WILL ALSO CHANGE BASED ON THE CHANGING ORGANISATION’S DIRECTION AND OR NEW DIRECTIONS INTRODUCED”.</p> <p>“ENSURING THE COMMUNITY FEELS SAFE”.</p> <p>“TO BETTER INFORM THE EMPLOYER OF WHAT IS NEEDED ON THE GROUND LEVEL”</p> <p>“ACHIEVE GOALS SET IN THE OPERATION PLAN REGARDLESS OF THE RESOURCES I HAVE TO MEET THE TARGETS”.</p> <p>“TO COMPLY FIRST WITH THE POLICIES, EMPLOYMENT LAW, ORGANISATIONAL LEGISLATION, PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT”</p> <p>“ADHERING TO THE KPAS AS STIPULATED IN THE PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT”.</p> <p>“EDUCATING THE STAKEHOLDERS”.</p> <p>“BE HONEST TO THE EMPLOYER”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PERFORMANCE DELIVERABLES • ADHERE TO PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT • MAINTAIN A TRUST RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EMPLOYER • CONFORM TO ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE • GUIDE CLIENTS • KNOW AND CONFORM TO ORGANISATIONAL PROTOCOLS • PERFORM ASSIGNED DUTIES • TAKE ACCOUNTABILITY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PERFORMING ACCORDING TO ROLE REQUIREMENTS • TRUST RELATIONSHIP

***“ENSURING I LIVE WITHIN THE
VALUES OF THE COMPANY AND BE
ETHICAL”.***

***“I HAVE TO MAKE SURE THE
CLIENT IS HAPPY WITH THE
SERVICES”***

“OFFER EXCELLENT SERVICES”.

With the questions asked to the participants, the evident features, as depicted in Table 3, were alluded to as part of employee obligations, namely performance deliverables; adhering to the performance agreement; maintaining a trust relationship with the employer; conforming to organisational change; providing guidance to clients; conforming to organisational protocols; performing assigned duties; and taking accountability. The definitions of the themes are discussed below.

Performing according to role requirements: Supervisors made mention that the capability to perform in one’s job is obligatory in the role of an employee. Obligations in the employee role highlight the importance of adhering to the predetermined key performance areas.

Trust relationship: For an employment relationship to remain intact and operational, the trust relationship between the employee and the employer is very important, and therefore the role of the employee is to maintain that trust.

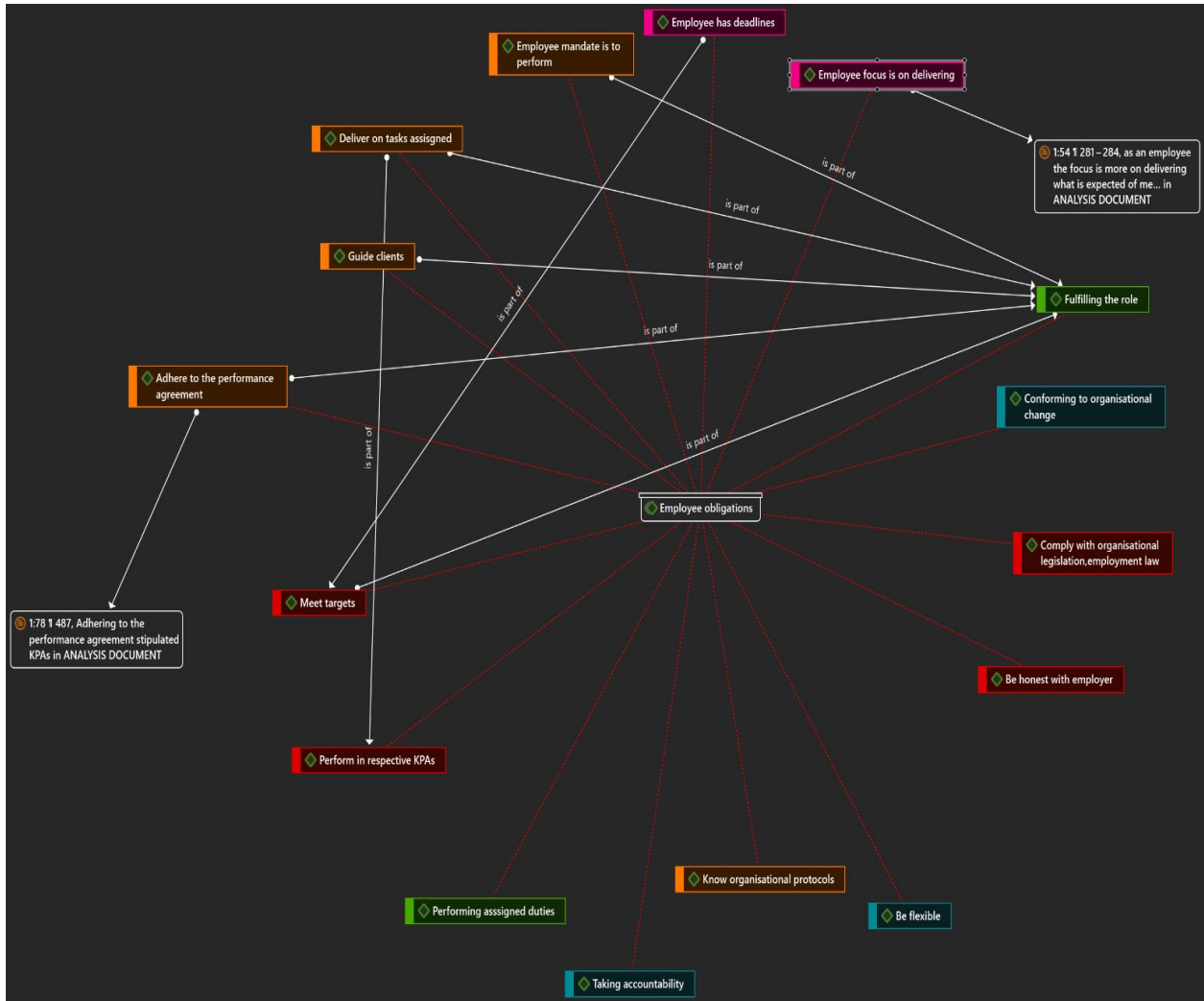


FIGURE 3: THEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF HOW THE PARTICIPANTS VIEWED THEIR OBLIGATIONS AS EMPLOYEES

In relation to the employee role, as illustrated in Figure 3, participants repeatedly mentioned performance being the main obligation that is associated with fulfilling the role. Role fulfilment is part of delivering on the pre-set performance agreement outputs, and includes delivering on assigned tasks, taking accountability, meeting targets, adhering to performance agreements, adhering to organisational protocols, and conforming to organisational change. Other participants made mention of the adherence to organisational protocols and conforming to organisational change as some of the obligations related to the role for the employee.

Conclusion

This research explored the psychological contracts of supervisors in their employee roles. The findings of the research depicted the obligations and expectations of supervisors in their employee roles, thereby allowing the research to contribute to the current literature on psychological contracts, and gaining more insight into how supervisors view their employee role with reference to the psychological contract. The findings of the research will provide perspective to the concept of a dual role for supervisors and distinguish between the role of an employee and employer, based on the obligations and expectations expressed in this role. These research findings will be supportive to organisations in the further understanding of the psychological contract encompassed the employee role.

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CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH ARTICLE 2

3.1 Exploring the psychological contracts of supervisors in the role of employer representatives

Motivation for the research: The research aimed to contribute to a better understanding of the supervisory roles (senior managerial roles) within the context of psychological contracts. The primary objective of the research was to explore the different psychological contracts embedded in the roles of supervisors as employer representatives.

Research strategy, design and method: A qualitative research design was followed, with a sample (n=17) of supervisors in senior managerial roles, as defined by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, number 75 of 1997. To collect data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the thematic analysis process utilised to process the data.

Main findings: The main findings point to supervisors being aware of their psychological contract in their role as an employer representative role, which was reported as having supplementary obligations. In identifying the obligations and expectations within these roles, the following themes were frequently narrated: *manage a team*, *provide resources* and *grow the business*.

Introduction

This chapter provides a methodical context to research on supervisors' psychological contract as employer representatives; it explores how supervisors define their obligations and expectations as employer representatives.

Literature review

3.1.1 Employer representative: Psychological contracts

In the definition of an employment contract, we find the definition of an employer, in which Grogan (2011) defines an employment contract as "a contract between two persons, the master (employer) and the servant (employee), for the letting and hiring of the latter's services for reward, the master being able to supervise and control the servant's work". Accordingly, an employer is said to either be a natural or juristic person, thus having the duty to pay the employee

remuneration, and this was evident in a test applied by the South African courts in the case *Dhlamini v Protea Assurance Co. Ltd* (1974). Secondly, an employer is characterised as having the obligation and right to control the work done by employees (Selwyn, 2006), and an employer is liable to control and supervise an employee (Rycroft & Jordaan, 1992).

For the purpose of this research, supervisors are regarded as employer representatives, as defined by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, number 75 of 1997, where supervisors are regarded as individuals in senior managerial roles. The Act defines a senior managerial employee as an employee who has the authority to hire, discipline and dismiss employees and represent the employer internally and externally (Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997). The psychological contract is defined as the implied and unambiguous promises two parties in an employment relationship make to each other (McInnis, 2012). As an example of such a promise, an employer might promise employees the delivery of job security, and in what is termed the old and the new psychological contracts by Theron (2011), the employer's obligations and expectations are characterised by the employer providing remuneration, career development opportunities and job security. Often, what is perceived as contents of a psychological contract are not obviously guaranteed or commonly made compulsory by the employer, as opposed to that of an employment contract (Sporn, 1996). According to McDermott, Conway, Rousseau, and Flood (2013), employer representatives reach consensus and make commitments with employees with reference to the psychological contract.

Consequently, supervisors are considered to play a vital role in the development and upkeep of psychological contracts in organisations (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; McDermott et al., 2013). In agreement with this statement, Rousseau (1995) also mentions that as an employer representative, the supervisor can make unspoken and implied promises to the employees, and "The employee is more likely to view their supervisor as the chief agent for establishing and maintaining the psychological contract" (Shore & Tetrick, 1994, p.101), and in a study by Rousseau (1995), supervisors are said to be agents of the employer, representatives of the organisation (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Supervisors are tasked with the responsibilities of communicating with employees, offering training, assigning responsibilities to employees (Osland & Turner, 2011), and evaluating fulfilled promises and obligations (Levy & Williams, 2004).

Psychological contracts are therefore said to be subjective based on specific employer-employee characteristics and subjective expectations (Rousseau, 1995; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). Furthermore, the influence that supervisors have on the psychological contract between them and the employees is subjective (McDermott et al., 2013), and it is based on the type of psychological contract they have and how they explicitly interact with employees – therefore, the supervisor's

personality is likely to have an effect on the psychological contract breach or fulfilment and/or contents thereof (Graen, Cashman, Ginsburg, & Schierman, 1977). Consequently, psychological contract breach and fulfilment are a reflection of the supervisor's conduct (Cassar & Buttigieg, 2015), and therefore, according to Rodwell, Ellershaw, and Flower (2015), psychological contract breach yields negative results such as high turnover rates, while fulfilled psychological contracts result in increased organisational commitment by employees. Therefore, supervisors are regarded as the main characters in ensuring the fulfilment of psychological contracts for employees as they are employer representatives (Marks, 2001).

McDermott et al. (2013) put forward that leadership styles have an influence on how supervisors view and/or interpret psychological contracts. Consequently, Costa and McCrae (1992) make mention of the Big Five personality dimensions portrayed by supervisors, namely neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness, extraversion and conscientiousness.

Supervisors with a neuroticism personality trait are characterised as being impromptu (Costa & McCrae, 1992), and more concerned about themselves and less about the well-being of the employees (Hayes & Joseph, 2003), which is contrary to extraverted supervisors, who are prone to pleasing their subordinates, thereby agreeing to employment terms that are more appealing to their employees (Metz, Kulik, Cregan, & Brown, 2017). The agreeableness personality trait refers to the acceptance and respect of others (Soto, 2018). According to Rousseau, Ho, and Greenberg (2006), supervisors with such a personality trait are more inclined to preserve the employment relationship, which may include ensuring the fulfilment of the psychological contract.

Regarding openness to experience, these supervisors are keen on taking up more responsibility (Costa & McCrae 1992). Nikolaou, Tomprou, and Vakola, (2007) mentioned that there is no relationship between this personality trait and the psychological contract. According to Soto (2018), supervisors with a conscientious personality trait are devoted to fulfilling obligations and performing their duties. Supervisors with this personality trait are oriented towards longevity, and therefore they ensure that they organise, strategise and fulfil their duties and obligations (Metz et al., 2017).

In summary, supervisors with high levels of agreeableness, extraversion and conscientiousness are more inclined to adhere to the psychological contract obligations, achieving employer obligations, as well as fulfilling the psychological contract and employment terms (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The breach of psychological contracts also occurs when neither party in an employment relationship meets promises made in an employment relationship (Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski, & Bravo, 2007). Psychological contract breach is the result of imprudent and/or inevitable organisational operational requirements or employee misconduct (Ackroyd &

Thompson, 1999). In expanding on the breach of psychological contracts, Robinson and Morrison (2000) distinguish between two reasons for one's perceptions that the organisation has failed to meet an obligation or obligations, namely:

Firstly, incongruence, which refers to when both parties in an employment relationship have fixed understandings about the existence of an obligation and the nature within which it exists. Therefore, incongruence also occurs when one party perceives the psychological contract obligation(s) to have been met, while the other party perceives them as neither met nor delivered upon (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Reneging, on the other hand, which is the second reason, occurs when an organisation defaults in meeting a factual obligation even with the acknowledgement of the obligation.

When either party experiences a psychological contract breach, perceived to be an intentional break to a promise, feelings of violation emerge (Robinson & Morrison 2000).

These feelings are portrayed through diminished trust, job dissatisfaction, increased turnover and decreased work performance (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). Psychological contract violation leads to heightened turnover as a result of feeling wronged and betrayed (Salin & Notelaers, 2017), and on the other hand, psychological contract breach yields workplace misbehaviour (Astrove, Yang, Kraimer, & Wayne, 2015).

Loyalty to the employer, commitment to the individual and employer growth and goals are some of the employee obligations as perceived by supervisors (Cable, 2010). Therefore, fulfilled psychological contracts yield favourable productivity levels for the organisation (Boselie, Jansen, & Paauwe, 2001) as an outcome of positive employee behaviour and attitude, and increased performance (Turnley, Bolino, Lester, & Bloodgood, 2003). Contrary to the former, Chen, Tsui, and Zhong (2008) mention that psychological contract breach, as perceived by the supervisor, is the inconsistency between the expected contributions from the employee and the contributions actually achieved by the employee. In addition, as a response to the psychological contract breach by the employee, as perceived by the supervisor, often the reaction would be a low performance evaluation score (Tekleab & Taylor, 2003).

According to Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2000), how supervisors perceive psychological contracts is highly influenced by the organisational reinforcements, policies and procedures in place. Consequently, Conway and Briner (2005) mention that supervisors find it hard to fulfil psychological contract obligations due to set organisational policies. To a certain extent, organisational formalisation restricts psychological contract fulfilment (Metz et al., 2017). With supervisors being the crucial key players in the operative management of an employment

reciprocity relationship (McDermott et al., 2013), the recommendation by Rousseau et al. (2006) for organisations is to accommodate managerial discretion with boundaries, so as to enable supervisors to influence the foundation of and fulfil psychological contract obligations. In addition, Freese (2007) and Pate, Martin, and Staines, (2000) emphasise that organisational change may result in psychological contract breach and/or violation as perceived by employees.

Research design

Research aims and objectives

The research aimed to contribute to a better understanding of the supervisory roles (senior managerial roles) within the context of psychological contracts. The primary objective of the research was to explore the different psychological contracts embedded in the roles of supervisors, as employees and as employer representatives. To reach this objective, the following secondary objectives, grouped in the articles where they were investigated, were identified.

Purpose and research objectives

The purpose of the research was to contribute to a better understanding of the employer representative role within the context of psychological contracts. The primary objective of the research is to explore the different psychological contracts embedded in the roles of supervisors as employer representatives. To reach this objective, the following secondary objectives, grouped in the articles where they would be investigated, were identified.

Article 2: Exploring the psychological contracts of supervisors in the role of employer representatives

Secondary objectives

- To explore how supervisors experience their psychological contracts in their role as employer representatives; and
- To explore the supervisors' obligations and expectations as an employer representative.

Research method

The study employed a qualitative examination to explore psychological contracts experienced by supervisors in their role as employer representatives, in both their roles as an employee and as an employer representative. A qualitative research method will allow for a better understanding of the phenomenon and explore a more detailed insight into the psychological contracts for

supervisors as employer representatives (Barrett, 2018). According to Percy, Kostere, and Kostere (2015), a qualitative research method allows exploring the participants' subjective opinions and experiences. A qualitative research approach will be applicable in both articles.

Research strategy

For the purpose of this research, the qualitative descriptive research strategies will be considered, with an aim to explore, determine and comprehend a specific phenomenon and/or perspectives of the participants (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2003). A qualitative descriptive strategy was essential in this research because it provided rich information on how participants experience (Bova, Harper, & Sullivan-Bolyai, 2005) psychological contracts in their roles as employer representatives. The researcher conducted interviews (semi-structured) with the supervisors (senior managers) to understand their opinions on psychological contracts embedded in their roles as employer representatives.

Participants

The qualitative research method necessitated the selection of participants who would offer insight into the phenomenon of supervisors with dual roles, consequently selecting purposeful participants (Creswell, 2012). This research required the sample size of participants to meet the below the criteria (Gerrish & Lacey, 2010) namely,

- Participants need to be supervisors, fulfil senior managerial roles as defined by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997;
- Participants need to differentiate between the expectations and obligations associated with their roles as employees and employer representatives; and
- Participants must have adequate, professional English-speaking abilities.

In ensuring that the research yielded meaningful detailed information, the researcher kept to a sample size of 17 participants (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin 2009). Data was collected through interviews conducted via Zoom; each interview lasting between 20 and 30 minutes. Interview questions were structured in such a way that they explored the research objectives (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). In addition, central questions were the broad questions specific to the research objectives and the sub-questions questions specific to the research objectives to allow the researcher to explicitly explore the core elements of the research objectives (Wheeler & Holloway, 2010).

Central research questions

- How do you experience your current work environment as an employee? And how do you view your role as a supervisor/manager/employer representative?
- Do you differentiate your role as an employee and as a supervisor/manager/employer representative?
- How do you differentiate your roles as an employee and a supervisor/manager/employer representative?
- Do you perceive yourself as loyal to the employees as a supervisor/manager/employer representative? And to your company as an employee?

Sub-research questions

- Can you identify expectations that you have as an employee in your company?
- What are your obligations as an employee?
- Are your expectations and obligations as a supervisor/manager/employer representative different? Please elaborate.
- Do you think that you fulfil the obligations you made to your company as an employee? And as a supervisor/manager/employer representative?

FIGURE 1: CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SUB-RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Data analysis

For the purpose of this research, the researcher utilised the thematic analysis process, consisting of six phases to analyse data, consequently combining two concepts with reoccurrences and significances (Buetow, 2010). Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Accordingly, the thematic analysis phases are discussed below:

Phase 1: Familiarise yourself with the data

In the first stage, the researcher listened to each recorded interview and transcribed the responses onto a Word document. The captured information was uploaded on to the Atlas.ti (2022) software program to further identify patterns containing the psychological contracts of supervisors regarding their employer representative role.

Phase 2: Generating initial coding

In this preliminary data coding stage, the researcher noticed and gathered similarities and patterns evident from the data. With the questions asked during the interviews, the coding determined was: a) Code 1: *employer representative obligations*; b) Code 2: *employer representative expectations*.

Phase 3: Searching for themes

After coding the data, the researcher further developed themes, while grouping them into meaningful categories. The above-mentioned method was used to analyse themes and organise them into similar sub-themes with the assistance of the *quotations* and *networks* features in the Atlas.ti (2022) software program.

Phase 4: Reviewing the themes

This phase was considered a quality control phase in which the researcher ascertained that the themes developed were aligned with the research questions or objectives and were a true reflection of the data collected.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

The researcher defined themes in this phase and further summarised data characteristics for each theme with reference to the responses.

Phase 6: Producing the report

The report analysis produced and identified features that addressed supervisors' psychological contracts as an employee representative in article 2. The data was reported in thematic maps, portraying the supervisors' obligations and expectations as employer representatives.

Strategies employed to ensure quality data

All the participants were asked the same questions during the semi-structured interviews, questions which were deemed relevant to the research (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2012). According to Loh (2013), to ensure trustworthiness, the researcher should observe to the below criteria.

Credibility: The researcher should ensure that the data is believable, and a true reflection of the participants' representations and interpretation of the phenomenon. (Polit & Beck, 2012).

Transferability: Transferability refers to findings being applied to other groups and settings, and therefore the results can be associated to other experiences (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Polit & Beck, 2012). In achieving transferability, the researcher ensured that adequate information regarding the study was provided to participants.

Dependability discusses the reliability of the data over time and over similar conditions (Tobin & Begley, 2004). This is attained through the researcher's thorough description of the research process to the participants (Koch, 2006).

Confirmability relates to the researcher's ability to present the responses of the participants without being biased (Polit & Beck, 2012). In qualitative research reporting, the researcher demonstrates confirmability by describing the interpretations and conclusions as established from the findings directly from the data collected.

Reporting

The gathering of data and deriving themes from the data are alluded to on the qualitative research report. The results were captured and entered onto a Word document first, then onto the Atlas.ti (2022) software program. The exploring of the themes in relations to the research objectives was also implemented.

Findings

The findings of the research will be discussed in the below section, reflecting on the codes and themes that emerged from the data analysis. This section will elaborate on the research purpose and the research objectives, an overview of the research design, thematic analysis and the description of the data collected for article 2.

Purpose and research objectives

The purpose of the research was to contribute to a better understanding of supervisors' employer representative roles (senior managerial roles) within the context of psychological contracts. The primary objective of the research is to explore the psychological contracts embedded in the roles of supervisors as employer representatives. To reach this objective, the following secondary objectives, grouped in the articles where they would be investigated, were identified.

This article was guided by the below-mentioned research objectives:

Article 2: Exploring the psychological contracts of supervisors in the role of employer representatives

- To explore how supervisors experience their psychological contracts in their role as employer representatives.
- To explore supervisors' obligations and expectations as an employer representative.

Furthermore, in the category of the employer representative role (Figure 3), the responses gathered from participants alluded to the vastness of the employer representative role. The role of an employer representative is viewed in two-fold, i.e. how the employer views the role and how the subordinates view the role. Accordingly, participants mentioned that as employer representatives they act on behalf of the employer, which is associated with representing the organisation, providing guidance where necessary for the subordinates and the overall organisation, strategically and consequently being defined as the employer. Consequently, the role of an employer representative was described by participants in Table 1 as that of a mentor, being an enabler and setting targets and deadlines.

TABLE 1

Employer representative role

<u>RESPONSES</u>	<u>CODES</u>	<u>THEMES</u>
<p>“I REPRESENT THE COMPANY, IN AND OUTSIDE THE WORKPLACE”.</p> <p>“I FOCUS A LOT ON ENABLING MY TEAM AS MUCH AS I CAN”.</p> <p>“THE ROLE INCLUDES A LOT MORE CARING AND TAKING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THEIR WELL-BEING”.</p> <p>“AS A MANAGER YOU ARE EXPECTED TO TAKE DECISIONS THAT MIGHT IMPACT THE LIVES OF PEOPLE”.</p> <p>“EXPECTING THE ORGANISATION TO BE ON MY SIDE IN ENSURING SUBORDINATES CARRY OUT LAWFUL INSTRUCTIONS”.</p> <p>“THE ORGANISATION NEEDS TO BELIEVE IN ME “.</p> <p>“THE SUCCESS AND OR FAILURE OF THE TEAM IS IN YOUR HANDS”.</p> <p>“TO BETTER INFORM THE EMPLOYER OF WHAT IS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AMBIGUOUS ROLE • ADDITIONAL MANAGERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES • RESPONSIBLE FOR NEEDS OF SUBORDINATES • ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF SUBORDINATES • ACT ON BEHALF OF THE EMPLOYER • BEING A MENTOR TO SUBORDINATES • BEING AN EMPLOYEE FIRST • BEING DEFINED AS THE EMPLOYER BY SUBORDINATES • BEING PARTIAL • BEING THE VOICE OF THE SUBORDINATES • CHAMPION THE NEEDS OF SUBORDINATES • CHANGING AS THE ORGANISATION CHANGES • COMPROMISE YOUR RIGHTS AND PERSONAL NEEDS • DIFFICULT ROLE • ENABLING SUBORDINATES • ENSURE EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE LEVELS • HAVE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE • JOB ROLE IS NOT CLEAR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REPRESENTING THE EMPLOYER • REPRESENTING THE SUBORDINATES • COMPLEX, UNCLEAR ROLE

NEEDED ON THE GROUND LEVEL”.

“MAKE AN EFFORT TO ENCOURAGE EMPLOYER DECISIONS AND MOTIVE THE NEED”.

“BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF OTHERS”.

“I REPRESENT THE ORGANISATION”.

“THE JOB DESCRIPTION IS NOT CLEARLY DEFINED”.

“ADAPTABILITY IS IMPORTANT”.

“THE ROLE IS TRICKY’.

“I HAVE TO QUICKLY BE ON BOARD WITH THE ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AND GET OVER MY INDIVIDUAL FEELINGS”.

“YOUR MOOD DETERMINES THE MOOD OF THE WHOLE TEAM”.

“IT IS NOT JUST YOU THAT YOU HAVE TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT”.

“CAREFULLY MANAGING YOUR EMOTIONS”.

“YOUR RIGHTS AS AN EMPLOYEE ARE TAKEN

- **PROVIDE GUIDANCE FOR THE ORGANISATION**
- **PROVIDE LEADERSHIP**
- **SUPERVISOR SETS DEADLINES**
- **SUPERVISOR'S MANDATE IS TO ENSURE PERFORMANCE**
- **TAKING ACCOUNTABILITY**
- **THERE IS RESISTANCE AND INCOMPATIBILITY BETWEEN THE TWO ROLES**
- **COMPLICATED ROLE**

**AWAY BY THE FACT THAT
YOU HAVE TO TAKE CERTAIN
DECISIONS”,**

“ACCOMMODATE OTHERS”.

**“CHAMPION THE NEEDS OF
YOUR SUBORDINATES”.**

Representing the employer: The employer representative is defined as the employer, thus ensuring performance of the employees, adherence to the employment legislation and the advocate for the organisation’s vision and mission.

Representing the subordinates: The role is characterised as being the voice of your subordinates, thereby championing their course and being expedient.

Complex, unclear role: The job description on the employer representative role is often ambiguous, thereby making it difficult to fulfil the role adequately.

When the employer representative role was discussed, as per Table 1, during the interviews the participants were asked to elaborate on the expectations associated with the role of an employer representative. As the participants responded, most of them alluded to characteristics that are more inclined with sustenance, with additional managerial responsibilities, and taking accountability for the performance of the subordinates, thereby providing leadership. The features of the employer representative role are defined as being difficult and complicated as the role is ambiguous, thereby making it difficult for one to fulfil the role. Furthermore, participants associated the role with emotional intelligence as one of the eminent features of the employer representative role; being responsible for the performance of subordinates and the overall team performance. Some participants alluded to how the role tends to be complicated and grim due to the role not being clearly defined and it not being constant as it needs to conform to organisational changes. Furthermore, participants mentioned that the employer representative role requires one to have emotional intelligence, have the ability to accommodate the needs of the subordinates, and have the ethic of care for the subordinates. Contrary to the aforementioned, some supervisor participants revealed that the employer representative role to a certain degree requires one to compromise one’s personal needs and truths to accommodate those of others and for the benefit of the organisational goal.

TABLE 2

Employer representative expectations.

<u>RESPONSES</u>	<u>CODES</u>	<u>THEMES</u>
<p>“TO EQUIP ME WITH, BUDGETS AND POLICIES THAT SUPPORT ME IN MY JOB”.</p> <p>“PROVIDE ME WITH TOOLS OF TRADE”.</p> <p>“WE ALL EXPECT TO BE COMPENSATED SUBSTANTIALLY FOR THE WORK YOU DO”.</p> <p>“I EXPECT TO BE LISTENED TO, RESPECTED AND TAKEN SERIOUSLY IN MY AREA OF EXPERTISE”.</p> <p>“TO HAVE A ROLE IN EXECUTIVE DECISIONS”.</p> <p>“TO BE GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE”.</p> <p>“TO BE INFORMED SO ENABLE ONE TO DO THEIR JOB”.</p> <p>“BEING SUPPORTED, HAVING SOMEONE TO CHAMPION YOUR CAUSE, EITHER FROM TOP MANAGEMENT,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GRATUITY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT • REMUNERATION • OPERATIONAL RESOURCES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TO BE SUPPORTED IN ORDER TO SUCCEED IN THE ROLE

**MIDDLE AND
COLLEAGUES”.**

To be supported in order to succeed in the role: Being provided with support equips and enables one to perform in one’s role and succeed in it. With that, succession acknowledgement is projected as part of championing the development of individuals. In addition, participants associated the employer representative expectations with remuneration and operational resources, and therefore the characteristics of employer representative expectations are aligned with being furnished with tools of trade so as to achieve one’s role and being enabled to perform assigned duties. Accordingly, these characteristics are associated with being supported in the role of an employer representative.

TABLE 3

Employer representative obligations

<u>RESPONSES</u>	<u>CODES</u>	<u>THEMES</u>
<p>“ENSURING THAT THE SUBORDINATES UNDERSTAND THE VISION AND THE MISSION OF THE COMPANY AND HOW WE CONTRIBUTE AS THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT TOWARDS ACHIEVING THAT GOAL”.</p> <p>“CAPACITATE THE SUBORDINATES TO MEET THEIR OWN GOALS”.</p> <p>“ENSURING WHAT IS STIPULATED IN THE PERFORMANCE CONTRACT IS ADHERED TO AND OR ACHIEVED, AS WELL AS THE OVERALL ORGANISATIONAL GOALS”.</p> <p>“ADHERE TO THE CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS AND OR OUTPUTS”.</p> <p>“THE PERSPECTIVE OF OBLIGATIONS CHANGE”.</p> <p>“TAKING ETHICAL DECISIONS THAT YOU CAN DEFEND”.</p> <p>“AS A MANAGER YOU ARE EXPECTED TO TAKE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BE ETHICAL • ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF SUBORDINATES • ACHIEVE BRAND AWARENESS • ACHIEVE GOALS IN THE OPERATIONAL PLAN • ADHERE TO CONTRACTUAL REQUIREMENTS WITH STAKEHOLDERS • BE FLEXIBLE • BE HONEST WITH EMPLOYER BUILD A TRUST RELATIONSHIP • COMPLY WITH ORGANISATIONAL LEGISLATION, EMPLOYMENT LAW • DEVELOP STRATEGIES • EDUCATE STAKEHOLDERS • STREAMLINE EXCELLENT SERVICE • ENSURE SUBORDINATES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHAMPIONING SUBORDINATE PERFORMANCE • SUPPORTING THE EMPLOYER MANDATE

<p><i>DECISIONS THAT MIGHT IMPACT THE LIVES OF PEOPLE, SUBORDINATES, NEW EMPLOYEES”.</i></p>	<p>DELIVER ON WORK OUTPUTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GROW THE BUSINESS
<p><i>“HAVING TO COMPROMISE YOUR OWN RIGHTS AND BELIEVES AND ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF OTHERS”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GUIDE AND LEAD A TEAM • LIVE WITHIN THE ORGANISATION’S VALUES
<p><i>“I AM A FIGHTER FOR THE PEOPLE, THE WORKFORCE, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE PEOPLE AT THE LOWER LEVEL TO HAVE A VOICE BECAUSE THEY KEEP THE WHEEL TURNING, CONSULTING THE WORKFORCE BEFORE DECISIONS ARE MADE”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OBLIGATED TO A TEAM • OBSERVE AND MANAGE THE UNWRITTEN RULES AND EXPECTATIONS FROM YOUR EMPLOYER • MEET TARGETS • TAKING DECISIONS IN THE INTEREST OF THE ORGANISATION
<p><i>“STREAMLINE EXCELLENT SERVICE TO STAKEHOLDERS”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TO BETTER INFORM THE EMPLOYER

Table 3 elaborates on the different obligations embedded in the employer representative role, characterised by being ethical, thereby having the ability to accommodate the needs of subordinates. Other features of the employer representative obligations were inclusive of being adhering to the contractual requirements, providing guidance and leadership to subordinates, while ensuring the achievement of strategic operational plans and attainment of such goals. Other participants alluded to the features of living within the values of the organisation, observing and managing unwritten rules that guide one in making decision in the interest of the organisation and consequently in the interest of the subordinates. The themes in relation to the obligations of the employer representative role are discussed below.

Championing subordinate performance: This entails ensuring that the subordinates perform as per their performance agreement, with the aim of achieving organisational goals. There, one's success is depicted by the success of their subordinates.

Supporting the employer mandate: As a characteristic of representation of the employer, one is the voice of the employer, thereby being tasked with filtering and conveying organisational communication and warranting compliance with the mandates as specified by the employer.



FIGURE 2: THEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF HOW THE PARTICIPANTS VIEWED THEIR OBLIGATIONS AS EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVES (SUPERVISORS)

As per the participants' description, in Figure 2, the role of an employer representative's obligations depicts the vastness of the role obligations. These obligations included being obligated to the subordinates, as well as ensuring they adhere and uphold organisational legislation and employment law. Furthermore, the employer representative role is obligated to the

employer, which is associated with managing and observing unwritten rules by the employer, which is also part of growing the business, protecting the employer brand, being the definition of the employer, guiding employer decisions and prominently building and maintaining the trust relationship with the employer. Participants repeatedly alluded to the obligation of the employer representative role being that of achieving organisational goals as outlined in the operational plan. This is achieved by having an influence on employer decisions, compliance with organisational legislation and the role being obligated to the subordinates. Therefore, the role is responsible for the success of the organisation, which is embedded in the role ensuring subordinate performance, translated as subordinates supporting the role of the employer representative, consequently enabling the role to attain the role obligations as highlighted in the featured themes for the role.

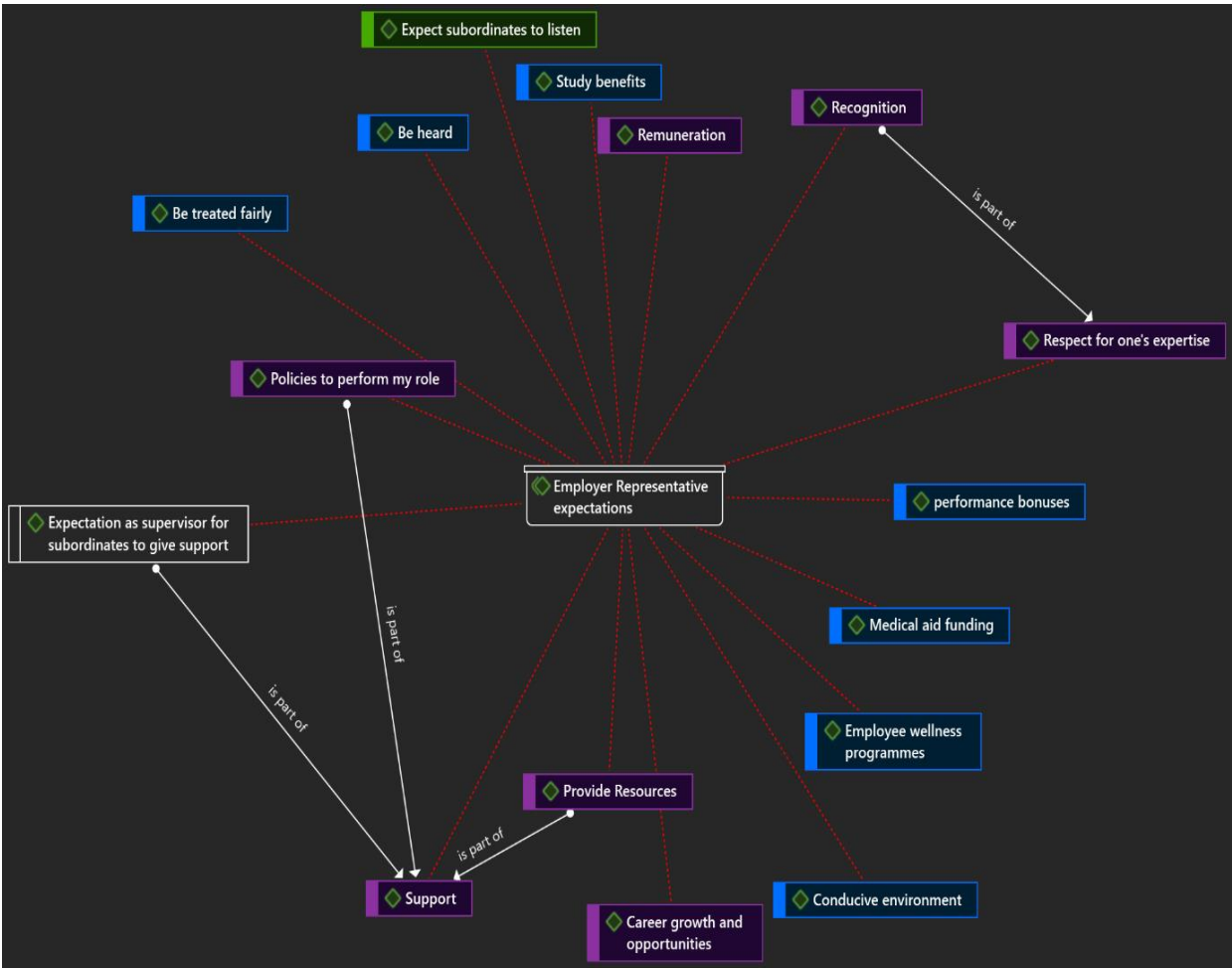


FIGURE 3: THEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF HOW THE PARTICIPANTS VIEWED THEIR EXPECTATIONS AS EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVE

During the interviews, the aspect of expectations from an employer representative role were discussed, and participants expressed expectations as per Figure 3. The employer representative

role, as alluded to by the participants, has an expectation of the employer and that of their subordinates, as discussed below.

From the employer:	From the subordinates:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To be heard• Provided with tools of trade in a form of policies and human resources (enough staff members)• Acknowledgement for their expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To provide the employer representative with support• Compliance from the subordinates

Conclusion

In contributing to this research study, supervisors with dual roles became aware of the obligations and expectations embedded in the role of an employer representative, further clarifying on the perspectives and opinions expressed by participants within the context of the employer representative role and therefore the psychological contract embedded in this role. This study could help organisations to view the psychological contract of supervisors in more depth and understand with reference to the dual role of supervisors, and specifically the employer representative role.

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CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Limitations

As with any study, the researcher acknowledges limitations that occurred in this research. A point of limitation identified when conducting the research during the semi-structured interviews, was that some supervisors who suitably met the participant criteria had limited knowledge of the description of psychological contracts. The limited available articles with reference to the psychological contracts from an employer perspective was another limitation point discovered during this research. The sample size of $n = 17$ supervisors could have been larger with the inclusion of more participants from other provinces.

4.2 Recommendations for future research

It would be of additional benefit to the academic research society to further investigate the two psychological contracts evident in the role of supervisors and what impact they can have on the attainment of organisational goals and how supervisors further perceive these two psychological contracts in their supervisory roles and how each influences their performance. Another significant and interesting research topic for the future would be to look at the significant psychological contracts for supervisors as employer representatives and as employee representatives between female and male supervisors – whether there exists a distinct variation.

4.3 Conclusion

Data analysis

Thematic analysis

- **Article 1: Exploring the psychological contracts of supervisors in the role of employee**
- **Article 2: Exploring the psychological contracts of supervisors in the role of employer representatives**

The data collected from all the participants was transcribed by the researcher, and the transcribed data was read repeatedly as noted by Braun and Clarke (2006). Following this initial stage, codes

were derived from the data, which the researcher considered relevant to the research objectives. Furthermore, the researcher searched for themes deduced from the codes relevant to the research objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The analysis for this research followed the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) method to draw conclusions from the data collected, and to identify comprehensive patterns and themes that are evident (Guest, 2012) in exploring qualitative data (Caulfield, 2019). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the use of thematic analysis is very popular in psychological research, which is why it was deemed relevant for this particular research. The thematic analysis process, according to Braun and Clarke (2013) and Nowell, Norris, White, and Moules (2017), includes six phases of thematic data analysis, namely:

Table 4

Thematic analysis process

- **Phase 1: Familiarise yourself with your data**
- **The researcher continuously familiarised herself with the collected data through transcripts and recordings**
- **Phase 2: Generate initial codes**
- **The researcher will be involved, noticing similarities and patterns in how participants viewed their psychological contract in the dual role, thereby generating codes with relevant codes.**
- **Phase 3: Search for themes**
- **The researcher developed themes from the codes, with the narrative of how participants experienced their work environments, the participants' narratives on obligations and expectations in their roles as employees and as employer representatives.**
- **Phase 4: Review themes**
- **In reviewing the themes, the researcher established the link between the themes developed with the research objectives.**
-

- **Phase 5: *Define and name themes***

- **The researcher outlined the interpretive inclination of themes derived from the data, summarising each theme and the characteristics each theme resonates with, with reference to the research objectives.**

- **Phase 6: *Write a report***

- **The researcher then produced a report that provided in-depth knowledge of the analysis, reflecting on the objective of the research, which is exploring the different psychological contracts embedded in the roles of supervisors, as employees and as employer representatives, with reasoning encompassed in the expectations and obligations of the dual role as experienced by supervisors.**

The analysis process that was applied to the interview transcripts produced concepts that were evident in the data. Themes derived from the data collected from the participants' narratives included "similar work environment experiences", "different roles (employee role and employer representative role)", "different obligations", "similar expectations". The themes are further viewed as an interpretation of the participants' general understandings of their psychological contracts in the dual roles.

In the table below, the themes derived are associated with the research objectives, characterised by the six factors, namely the employee role, employee expectations, employee obligations, employer representative role, employer representative expectations and employer representative obligations, with the following themes responses presented in Table 5 below: *acute job role; knowledgeable of the role requirements* being associated with the definition of the employee role. *Being compensated and offered growth opportunities* are characteristics of employee expectations. *Performing according to the role requirements and trust relationship* form part of the characteristics of employee obligations. *Representing the employer, representing the subordinates, and complex, unclear roles* are some of the characteristics of the employer representative role. *To be supported in order to succeed in their role* is the main theme associated with employer representative expectations and *championing subordinate performance supporting the employer mandate* is associated with employer representative obligations.

Table 5

Summary of participants' responses, codes and themes derived

RESPONSES	CODES	THEMES
WORKING IN A HYBRID ENVIRONMENT THE ENVIRONMENT IS FINE AS IT REQUIRES YOU TO WORK AS AN INDIVIDUAL.	DEMOCRATIC ENVIRONMENT TOXIC ENVIRONMENT WORKING IN A HYBRID ENVIRONMENT ORGANISATION ACCOMMODATES ITS EMPLOYEES	WORK ENVIRONMENT SIMILARITIES CONDUCIVE TO PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION REINFORCED INACTION
YOU HAVE THE LUXURY OF HAVING GOOD & BAD DAYS I AM AN EMPLOYEE FIRST CONSIDER IT A CAREER PATH FOR GROWTH JOB ROLE OUTLINED IN THE JOB DESCRIPTION	GOOD AND BAD DAYS FEWER RESPONSIBILITIES CLEAR JOB ROLE/DESCRIPTION PRIMARY STAKEHOLDER GROUND LEVEL EXPERIENCE UNDERSTANDING THE ORGANISATION	ACUTE JOB ROLE KNOWLEDGEABLE OF THE ROLE REQUIREMENTS
I REPRESENT THE COMPANY, IN AND OUTSIDE THE WORKPLACE ADAPTABILITY IS IMPORTANT THE ROLE IS TRICKY YOUR RIGHTS AS AN EMPLOYEE ARE TAKEN AWAY BY THE FACT THAT YOU HAVE TO TAKE DECISION	AMBIGUOUS ROLE ADDITIONAL MANAGERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES BEING AN EMPLOYEE FIRST CHANGING AS THE ORGANISATION CHANGES JOB ROLE IS NOT CLEAR	REPRESENTING THE EMPLOYER REPRESENTING THE SUBORDINATES COMPLEX, UNCLEAR ROLE
OBLIGATIONS WILL ALSO CHANGE BASED ON THE ORGANISATION'S CHANGING DIRECTION ACHIEVE GOALS SET IN THE OPERATION PLAN	MAINTAINING A TRUST RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EMPLOYER CONFORMING TO ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE TAKING ACCOUNTABILITY	PERFORMING ACCORDING TO THE ROLE REQUIREMENTS TRUST RELATIONSHIP

ENSURING THAT THE SUBORDINATES UNDERSTAND THE VISION AND THE MISSION OF THE COMPANY	BE ETHICAL ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF SUBORDINATES	CHAMPIONING THE SUBORDINATE PERFORMANCE
CAPACITATE THE SUBORDINATES TO MEET THEIR OWN GOALS	BE HONEST WITH EMPLOYER BUILD A TRUST RELATIONSHIP	SUPPORTING THE EMPLOYER MANDATE
STREAMLINE EXCELLENT SERVICE TO STUDENTS/STAKEHOLDERS AND STUDENTS	OBSERVE AND MANAGE THE UNWRITTEN RULES AND EXPECTATIONS FROM YOUR EMPLOYER	
	MEET TARGETS	

SOME EXPECTATIONS HAVE BEEN MET

PROVIDE ME WITH TOOLS OF TRADE

TO BE HOUSED IN A HEALTHY WORKING ENVIRONMENT & WORKING CONDITIONS

WE ALL EXPECT TO BE COMPENSATED SUBSTANTIALLY FOR THE WORK YOU DO

JOB GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY

GRATUITY & OPPORTUNITIES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REMUNERATED

OPERATIONAL RESOURCES

COMPENSATED AND GROWTH

Table 6

*Summary of psychological contract obligations and promises by employees and employers:
Global themes*

EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS	EMPLOYEE PROMISES	EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS	EMPLOYER PROMISES
JOB PERFORMANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GOOD SERVICE • PROFESSIONALISM • SATISFYING PERFORMANCE 	JOB CONTENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RESPONSIBILITY • FLEXIBILITY • VARIED WORK
LOYALTY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOT PUTTING THE COMPANY NAME IN DISREPUTE • DISCRETION 	REWARDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JOB SECURITY • RECOGNITION • FAIR SALARY
ETHICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HONESTY • COST EFFECTIVE 	MANAGEMENT POLICY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAIR DISCIPLINE • PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS
EXTRA-ROLE BEHAVIOUR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOCIAL PARTICIPATION • RESPECT COMPANY TIME 	SOCIAL ASPECTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GOOD WORKING ENVIRONMENT • SOCIAL NETWORK
FLEXIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WORK OVERTIME • CONFORMITY • GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY 	CAREER DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SKILLS DEVELOPMENT • REACHING TRUE POTENTIAL • PROMOTION ABILITIES
		ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RESPECT FOR PRIVATE LIFE • TRUST IN MANAGEMENT

-
- **GOOD HUMAN
RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT**
-

Source: Adapted from Linde (2015)

Table 6 summarises the global themes that were evident in the research as alluded to in Table 5.

The researcher further made use of the thematic maps to generate themes that accurately replicated what was apparent in the data collected. The next stage was to define and name the themes derived to indicate the importance of the theme to the overall research objectives. The final stage involved the production of the report to illustrate elements of the themes in relation to the research objectives.

Thematic maps

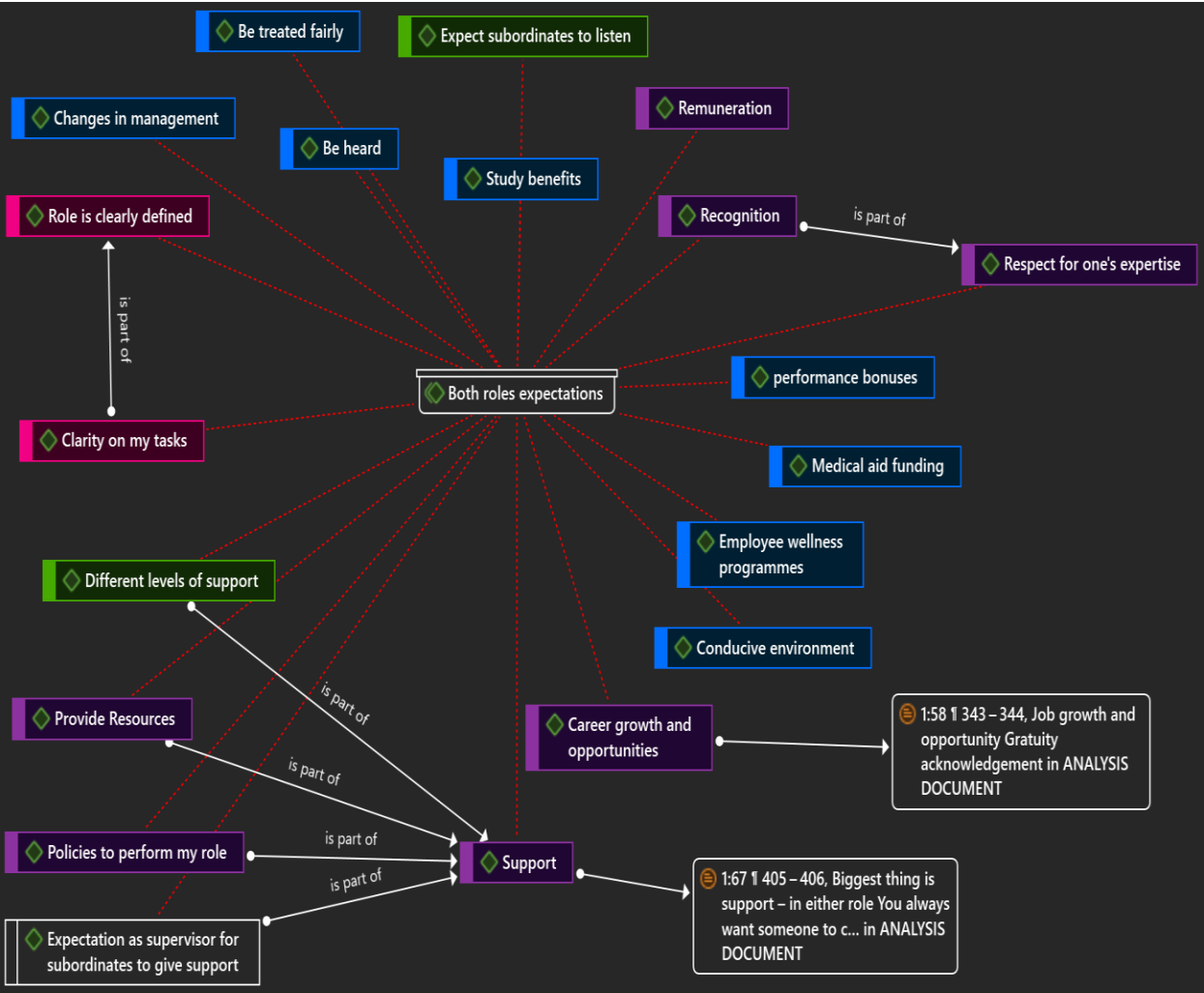


FIGURE 1: THEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF HOW THE PARTICIPANTS VIEWED THEIR EXPECTATIONS BOTH AS EMPLOYEES AND AS EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVES

During the data transcription, it was evident that expectations of the participants in the role of an employee and that of a supervisor were similar. Consequently, the codes generated from the two specific questions posed to participants, namely

1. What would you say are your expectations in your role as an employee?
2. What would you say are your expectations in your role as an employer representative?

were similar as per the thematic map. The similar expectations were being remunerated and treated fairly, being exposed to a conducive environment, and the most prominent expectation was that of being supported. According to the narrative by participants, supports was associated with tools of trade, policies that support and guide an individual in their role as an employee and as an employer representative.

Final thematic map – findings

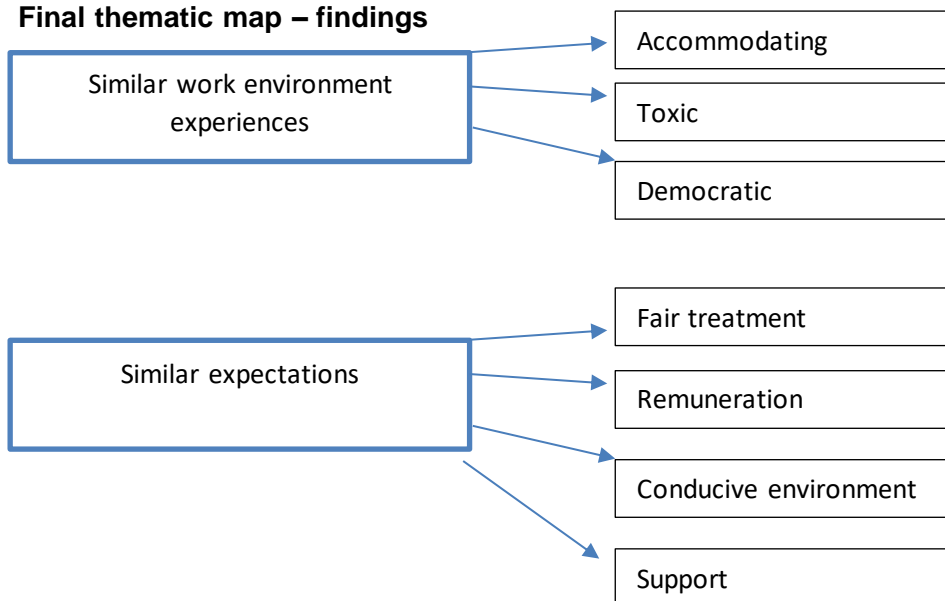


FIGURE 2: SIMILARITIES IN THE EMPLOYEE ROLE AND EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVE ROLE EXPECTATIONS AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

The participants' narratives regarding their work environment experiences were similar in either their role as an employee or as an employer representative. Accordingly, participants consented to their work environment being convenient and democratic with regard to organisational culture. Yet, they still considered the environment not on par as compared to other competitor environments. With that said, the narratives were also twofold; firstly, the environment was viewed as being positive, which was associated with the advantages of working in a hybrid environment, which is an accommodating environment. Secondly the environment was described as toxic, thereby contradicting the environment being accommodating and convenient, and highlighting the disadvantages of a hybrid environment, wherein employees are not acquainted with each other considering that they are working from home.

Consequently, during the data transcription, it was evident that expectations of the participants in their role as an employee and that of an employer representative were evident repetitions in what was deemed as expectations in either role, namely to be remunerated, to be offered adequate tools of trade to carry out the functions of the role, to be housed in a conducive environment and the most prominent expectation was that of being supported. Consequently, in the codes generated from the two specific questions posed to participants, namely

What would you say are your expectations in your role as an employee?

What would you say are your expectations in your role as an employer representative?

there were correlations as per Figure 1: Thematic map (Braun & Clark 2006).

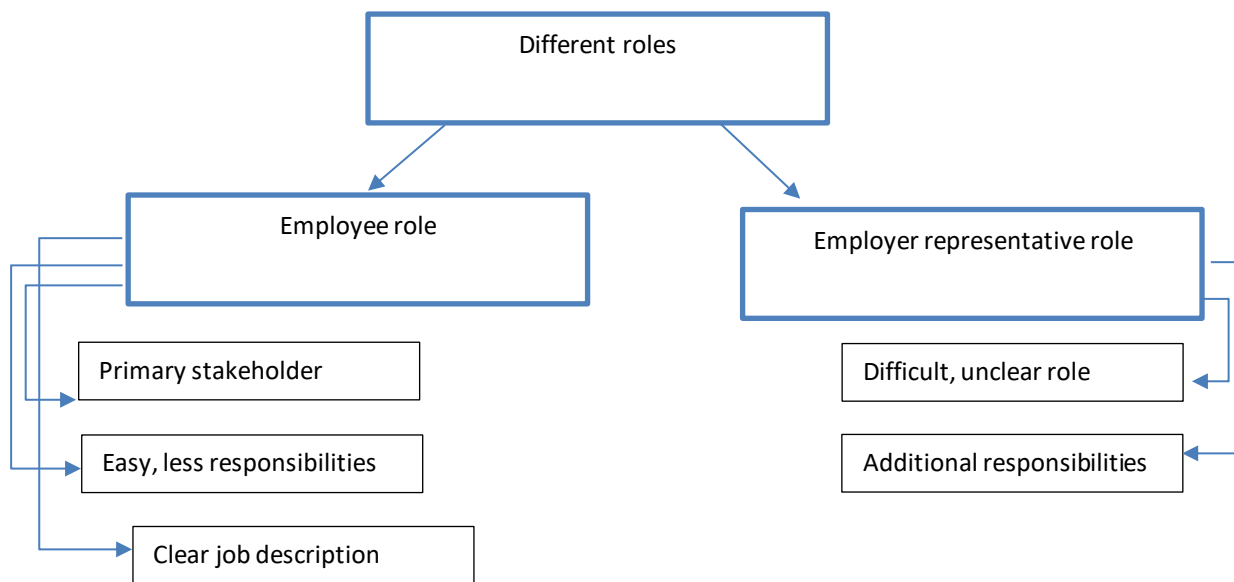


FIGURE 3: THE EMPLOYEE ROLE AND EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVE ROLE

Participants portrayed a common perception regarding the role of an employee (Figure 5) with reference to the objective of the research, which is that of a dual role. The role of an employee is guided by a performance agreement that highlights some of the employee’s obligations in relation to the role. The role is clearly outlined and defined in their job description. The role of the employee being depicted as having fewer responsibilities by some participants contradicted how other participants viewed the role as having too many deliverables and little time to complete them. Some participants stated that having clarity regarding your role makes the role easy to fulfil and consequently they viewed the employee as a career path for personal development. A common narrative from the participants was that they defined the role of an employee as being an internal primary stakeholder of the organisation.

In relation to the employee role, participants repeatedly alluded to performance as being the main obligation that is associated with fulfilling the role. Role fulfilment is part of delivering on the pre-set performance agreement outputs. Other participants made mention of the adherence to organisational protocols and conforming to organisational change as some of the obligations related to the role for the employee.

One prominent narrative with regard to the employer representative role in Figure 6, is that participants were in accordance that they considered themselves employees first before the role of a supervisor. Accordingly, the depiction of the role of a supervisor included being the definition

of the organisation, which is associated with representing the organisation and acting on behalf of the employer. Consequently, the term “employer representative” is prominent to the research. Participants furthermore summarised the role to comprise additional managerial responsibilities with an obligation to the subordinates, including being the voice of the subordinates, as well as championing their growth and needs; ensuring they conform to the organisational norms and keep up the standard of their key performance areas. With records of the transcriptions, the codes derived also alluded to the fact that participants not only considered the role of a supervisor as that of just a manager and a leader, but also that of being a mentor, a teacher, an enabler and a change agent. A predominant number of participants felt that the role requires one to be flexible and impartial and the effect being that one has to change one’s perspective in accordance with organisational change. Furthermore, the supervisor role for some participants was precisely marked as tricky and difficult because certain organisational changes require one to overlook one’s personal emotions and civil freedoms as employees, but to be part of the new changes, filtering down the mandate.

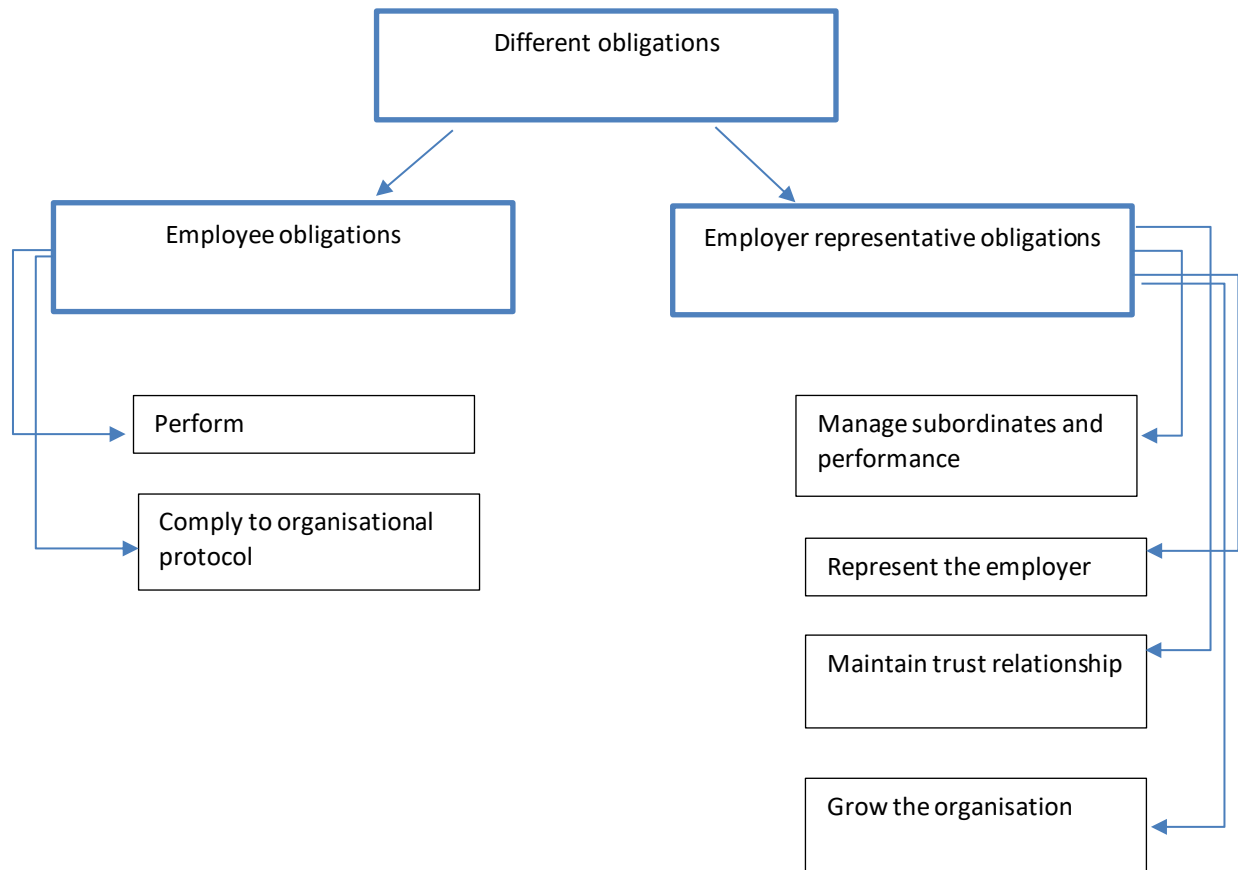


FIGURE 4: OBLIGATIONS IN THE EMPLOYEE ROLE AND EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVE ROLE

In relation to the employee role (Figure 2: Thematic representation of how the participants viewed their obligations as employees), participants repeatedly alluded to performance being the main obligation that is associated with fulfilling the role. Role fulfilment is part of delivering on the pre-set performance agreement outputs. Other participants made mention of the adherence to organisational protocols and conforming to organisational change as some of the obligations related to the role for the employee. As per the participants' description of the role of an employer representative, obligations are vast, as depicted in Figure 3: Thematic representation of how the participants viewed their obligations as employer representatives (supervisors). These obligations included being obligated to the subordinates, as well as ensuring they adhere and uphold organisational legislation and employment law. Furthermore, the employer representative role is obligated to the employer, which is associated with managing and observing unwritten rules by the employer, which is also part of growing the business, protecting the employer brand, being the definition of the employer, guiding employer decisions and prominently building and maintaining the trust relationship with the employer. Participants repeatedly alluded to the main obligation for the employer representative role as that of achieving organisational goals as outlined in the operational plan.

Discussion

The aim of the research was to contribute to a better understanding of the supervisory roles (senior managerial roles) within the context of psychological contracts. The primary objective was to explore the different psychological contracts embedded in the roles of supervisors, as employees and as employer representatives. The secondary objectives were to:

- Explore supervisors' obligations and expectations as employees, thereby exploring how supervisors define their psychological contract in their role as an employee.
- Explore supervisors' obligations and expectations as employer representatives, thereby exploring how supervisors define their psychological contract in their role as an employee.

The research found that how supervisors defined their roles as employees and as employer representatives (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970) played a major role in how they observed and related to the expectations and obligations in their roles as employees and as employer representatives.

Themes

Similar expectations in the dual role

This theme explored a fragment of the psychological contract definition. Accordingly, John (2013) described psychological contracts as expectations from either party in the employment relationship. From the data collected, it was evident that supervisors had similar expectations from the employer in their role as an employee as well as in their role as employer representation (Nandal & Krishnan, 2000). The main expectations that were evident in how supervisors experienced their dual roles, included being offered support in the form of tools of trade, enabling policies, being housed in a conducive environment and fair compensation for the work done. With reference to the objectives of the study, this theme illustrated that supervisors are aware of their psychological contract based on the notion that they view expectations from one role, the role of an employee. This is consequent to the definition of psychological contracts, as agreements between employees and their employers (Martinez-Leon 2012). Therefore, in the role of being employer representatives in relation to the research, supervisors dominantly leaned towards the role of being employees based on what they expect from the employer (Nandal & Krishnan, 2000). As a result, in either role, the expectations of supervisors are the same. Furthermore, with reference to expectations, supervisors do not necessarily differentiate between the role of being an employee and that of being an employer representative.

Different obligations in the dual role

As defined by Karagonlar, Eisenberger, and Aselage (2016), psychological contracts are unwritten contracts regarding managed obligations. They are implicit reciprocal contracts set on obligations and expectations (Guest, 2016). Accordingly, supervisors had different obligations in their role as an employee and as an employer representative (Braverman, 1974). From narrative, supervisors experience different psychological contracts based on the different obligations of either role.

Primary objective: To explore the different psychological contracts embedded in the roles of supervisors, as employees and as employer representatives

The primary objective of articles 1 and 2 of the research was to explore different psychological contracts embedded in the roles of supervisors, as employees (Chapter 2) and as employer representatives (Chapter 3). Through this study, the understanding of the supervisors' dual roles and psychological contracts from different industries, entailed different and some similar perspectives, beliefs and/or behaviours, with an unspoken understanding of what is to be exchanged in an employment relationship as a central element of the psychological contract (Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl, & Solley, 1962; Menninger, 1958).

Article 1: Exploring the psychological contracts of supervisors in the role of employee Secondary objective 1: To explore how supervisors experience their psychological contract in their role as an employee

Psychological contracts are defined as what employees considered is owed to them by the employer in return for what they deem they owe to the employer (Dulac, Coyle-Shapiro, Henderson, & Wayne, 2008; Suazo, Turnley, & Mai-Dalton, 2008). How supervisors in their role as employees defined psychological contracts formed part of the objective, largely based on the employee's beliefs regarding the terms and conditions of the exchange employment relationship between the employer and employee (Rousseau, 1989). As shown in the research, employees' psychological contracts focus on what employees expect from the employer based on the employee and employer expectations and perceived mutual obligations. The employee commits to fulfilling what is expected of them in return for the employer to also fulfil their obligations as perceived by the employee (Shore & Tetrick, 1994). In the view of the psychological contract in this article, supervisors view the employee role as an optimised understanding of mutual obligations and expectations from an employer perspective and that of the employee.

Secondary objective 2: To explore the supervisor's obligations and expectations as an employee

The researcher explored what supervisors perceived as obligations and expectations in their employee role, with individuals referring to employee benefits as part of the expectations within this role. These employee benefits were translated by Anastasiadou and Zirinoglou (2015) with reference to the Maslow hierarchy theory, specifically, as self-actualisation demand (training, hybrid environment), security demand (pension, group insurance), physical demand (performance bonus) and social demand (employee wellness programmes). With the aforementioned benefits tasked to increase employee performance (Siyal & Peng 2018), consequently individuals highlighted performance as one of the obligations identified in the employee role.

Article 2: Exploring the psychological contracts of supervisors in the role of employer representatives

Secondary objective 1: To explore how supervisors experience their psychological contracts in their role as employer representatives

There has been inadequate research regarding the role of managers (employer representative) in strategically implementing and managing psychological contracts in the workplace. Accordingly, Rousseau (1995) cited that the successful functioning of organisations primarily depends on psychological contracts created by managers (supervisors) between employees and employers. Individuals alluded to the words by Kent (1994), that employer representatives should differentiate between an employee's capabilities to fulfil the job assigned and the employee's ability of knowing what is expected when it is not said. Consequently, the relationship between the employer representative and their subordinates in relation to the psychological contract reflects the employees' psychological contract with the organisation, and the employer representative is the custodian of the organisation's expectations and obligations.

Secondary objectives: To explore the supervisor's obligations and expectations as an employer representative

In both articles (secondary objectives), the researcher discovered that the expectations embedded in each are the same because individuals reiterated being an employee first and that the employer representation role is just an extension of his/her employee role, and therefore the characterisation by Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl, and Solley (1962) of the psychological contract being a "series of mutual expectations" is relevant. Therefore, it has to do with what the employee expects from the organisation and what the organisation expects from the employee, who is also an employer representative in the capacity of an employee of the organisation.

The findings of this research provided insight into distinguishing between the psychological contract of supervisors in their role as an employee and in their role as employer representative. While highlighting the similar and different expectations and obligations embedded in each role, researchers can use the findings from this research to further explore this phenomenon and organisations can use the findings from this research to guide and allow their employees, particularly supervisors, in understanding their dual roles and the psychology contract of each role and perhaps linking the information obtained with staff development or training on understanding employment conditions beyond written employment contracts.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION PAMPHLET

Introduction

I am conducting research on *exploring the psychological contracts of supervisors in their different roles as employees and employer representatives*. The research aims to attain new knowledge and a better understanding of the supervisory roles (senior managerial roles) within the context of psychological contracts and explore how supervisors distinguish between their roles as an employer representative and as an employee.

You are invited to take part in this research project. You were invited because you met the criteria of participants required. Therefore, participants need to be supervisors who fulfil senior managerial roles as defined by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 as “a senior managerial employee as an employee who has the authority to hire, discipline and dismiss employees and to represent the employer internally and externally”.

Kindly read below further information regarding the research for a better understanding.

Purpose of the research

Psychological contracts are a process (Eichler, Lemos, & Neves, 2019) as it changes based on the occurrences of substantial proceedings, which will lead to a change of one’s psychological contracts and changes in the organisation’s psychological contract. In essence, psychological contracts are linked to specific expectations and obligations linked with specific roles. Employees can act in very different roles within the same position, such as supervisors who represent the employer in the workplace, with unique expectations and obligations, but are also employees with very different expectations and obligations. Therefore, the research will explore role differentiation and psychological contracts that come with each role fulfilled by the supervisor. Consequently, the data collected from this research will contribute to the final dissertation, including for both articles.

Data collection process

Data will be collected through digital interviews (semi-structured) via an online platform, namely Zoom. The interviews will be semi-structured to enable the researcher's reciprocity with the participants and allow for follow-up questions. The questions asked in the interview will be brief, applicable to all participants, and not offensive to the participants.

Interview duration

Each interview will not exceed 45 minutes with each participant. Therefore, the researcher will allow 30 to 45 minutes for each interview.

Voluntary participation

Kindly note that your participation in this research project is voluntary, and should you wish not to take part, you have the right to do so. If you decide to take part and later wish to withdraw from the research project, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. Should you decide to take part in this research project, you will be issued a consent form to sign, and you will be given a copy to keep, or you may agree to verbal consent.

Possible risks benefits and potential risks

In your participation in this research, it is not anticipated that there are any risks and or potential harm. The benefits of participating in this will include furnishing the researcher with deep rich information pertaining to the phenomenon being researched. Suppose there may be any adverse reactions from the participants due to questions asked during the interview. In that case, the researcher will stop the interview and apologise for having upset the participants in any way and offer external psychological assistance should the participants need such assistance. In essence, the researcher will try and minimise, eliminate, and isolate any potential risks.

Privacy and confidentiality

The researcher will ensure the confidentiality of the participant's identity. The researcher will ensure that the data collected from the interviews will be securely stored in the researcher's computer (password encrypted), and it will only be available to the researcher and the supervisor at all times, and it will solely be used for the purpose of the research. The researcher will protect the privacy of participants, thereby keeping any of the participants' information anonymous.

Contact details

To obtain further information, regarding your participation and the research.

Main researcher: Miss Nompumelelo Mqina

081 046 0385

34832548@nwu.ac.za

Supervisor: Prof Bennie Linde

bennie.linde@nwu.ac.za

ANNEXURE B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The researcher will follow the below-mentioned interview process to ensure effective data collection for the purpose of the research.

Participants

At least 30 interviews (N=30) will be conducted to allow for efficient data saturation. The selection criteria of the participants that will be interviewed will be based on the research's intent, which is to understand supervisors' perception of psychological contracts based on the different roles they fulfil as employees and employer representatives. Therefore, participants selected to participate in the research will be supervisors who hold senior managerial roles (as depicted in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, number 75 of 1997).

Upon receiving permission from the organisation to conduct the research, the researcher will contact the participants to discover if they will be willing to participate in the research, which will require them to be interviewed and arrange suitable times for the interviews based on their availability. Considering that the interviews will be conducted via Zoom, the researcher will obtain email addresses from the participants to send them Zoom meeting invites as per the interview schedules, preferably a week before to allow the participants to be prepared. The researcher will inform the participants that the interviews will take 30 minutes. They need to have a secure internet connection and be in a quiet room to avoid any disturbances.

Confidentiality

The POPI Act

The Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act (No. 4 of 2013) is a South African government-regulated act intended to protect the personal information of South African citizens. Therefore, for this research project, the researcher will ensure adherence to this act by,

- ensuring that the identity of the participants will be kept anonymous,
- the data collected will be securely saved on the researcher's computer
- the data collected will only be accessed by the researcher and the supervisor

Pre-interview process

- The researcher will professionally commence by introducing themselves to the participant.
- The researcher will proceed by giving the participant a brief summary of the research, the intent of the research, and why they were selected and the purpose of interviewing them.
- The researcher will advise the participant of the interview process that will be followed and that the interview will be recorded using the Zoom recording function.
- The researcher will then ask the participant if they have any questions before proceeding.
- The researcher will then obtain a written and/or recorded consent from the participant.

Post-interview process

- The researcher will thank the participants for agreeing to be part of this research and reiterate how the data collected will be used and saved as alluded in the participant information pamphlet.
- The researcher will conclude by asking if the participant has any questions.

ANNEXURE C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE



Question 1: How do you experience your current work environment as an employee? And how do you view your role as a supervisor/manager/employer representative?

Notes:

Question 2: Do you differentiate your role as an employee and as a supervisor/manager/employer representative?

Notes:

Question 3: How do you differentiate your roles as an employee and a supervisor/manager/employer representative?

Notes:

Question 4: Can you identify expectations that you have as an employee in your company?

Notes:

Question 5: What are your obligations as an employee?

Notes:

Question 6: Are your expectations and obligations as a supervisor/manager/employer representative different? Please elaborate.

Notes:

Question 7: Do you feel that your company met these expectations as an employee? And as a supervisor/manager/employer representative?

Notes: _____

Question 8: Do you think that you fulfil the obligations you made to your company as an employee? And as a supervisor/manager/employer representative?

Notes: _____

Question 9: Do you perceive yourself as loyal to the employees as a supervisor/manager/employer representative? And to your company as an employee?

Notes: _____

• **Additional notes:**

-
-

ANNEXURE D

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEACH STUDY TITLED: Exploring the psychological contract of supervisors: The conflicting roles of being an employee and employer representative.

I confirm that I have read and understand the purpose of this research study

I consent to being recorded.

I understand how the interview recording will be used in research outputs.

I understand who will access to the data will have provided during the interview, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any point

I give permission for you to contact me again to clarify information.

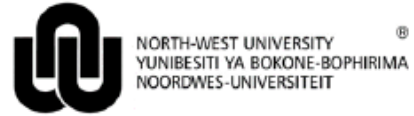
I agree to take part in this research study.

SIGNATURE

DATE

ANNEXURE E

ETHICS LETTER



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Economic and Management Sciences Research
Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)

30 August 2021

Prof B Linde
Per e-mail
Dear Prof Linde,

EMS-REC FEEDBACK: 27082021

Student: Mqina, N (34832548)(NWU-00940-21-A4)

Study leader: Prof B Linde – MA in Human Resource Management

Your ethics application on, *Exploring the psychological contract of supervisors: The conflicting roles of being an employee and representing management*, which served on the EMSREC meeting of 27 August 2021, refers.

Outcome:

Approved as a minimal risk study. A number NWU-00940-21-A4 is given for one year of ethics clearance.

Please note that the ethics approval of this application is subject to the Covid-19 protocols.

Kind regards,

Mark
Rathbone

Digitally signed by Mark Rathbone
DN: cn=Mark Rathbone, o=North West
University, ou=Business management,
email=mark.rathbone@nwu.ac.za, c=ZA
Date: 2021.08.31 10:18:25 +0200

Prof Mark Rathbone

**Chairperson: Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee
(EMS-REC)**

TABLE 3

SUMMARY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT OBLIGATIONS AND PROMISES BY EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS: GLOBAL THEMES

Employee expectations	Employee promises	Employer expectations	Employer promises
Job performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good service • Professionalism • Satisfying performance 	Job content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility • Flexibility • Varied work
Loyalty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not putting the company name in disrepute • Discretion 	Rewards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job security • Recognition • Fair salary
Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty • Cost effective 	Management policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair discipline • Procedural fairness
Extra-role behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social participation • Respect company time 	Social aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good working environment • Social network
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work overtime • Conformity • Geographical mobility 	Career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills development • Reaching true potential • Promotion abilities
		Organisational support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for private life • Trust in management • Good Human Resource Management

TABLE 1

THEMATIC ANALYSIS PROCESS

<i>Phase 1: Familiarise yourself with your data</i>
The researcher will continuously familiarise herself with the collected data, thereby allowing for a prolonged and repetitive engagement with the data.
<i>Phase 2: Generate initial codes</i>
In this code-generation phase, the researcher will be involved in noticing similarities and patterns evident in the data, thereby simplifying detailed data features into categorised codes.
<i>Phase 3: Search for themes</i>
The researcher will develop themes from the developed codes, thereby collapsing, grouping and merging codes into meaningful themes.
<i>Phase 4: Review themes</i>
The reviewing themes phase is considered a quality control phase, so the researcher needs to ascertain that the themes developed align with the research questions or objectives and are a true reflection of the data collected.
<i>Phase 5: Define and name themes</i>
Defining and naming themes; this phase will allow the researcher to outline the interpretive inclination of themes derived from the data, thereby providing summaries of each theme and data characteristics each theme resonates with.
<i>Phase 6: Write a report</i>
The researcher will then produce a report that will provide in-depth knowledge of the analysis, as well as theoretical and methodology reasoning encompassed in the research in a way that is easy for the readers to understand.

Figure 1: Thematic representation of how the participants viewed their expectations both as employees and as employer representatives

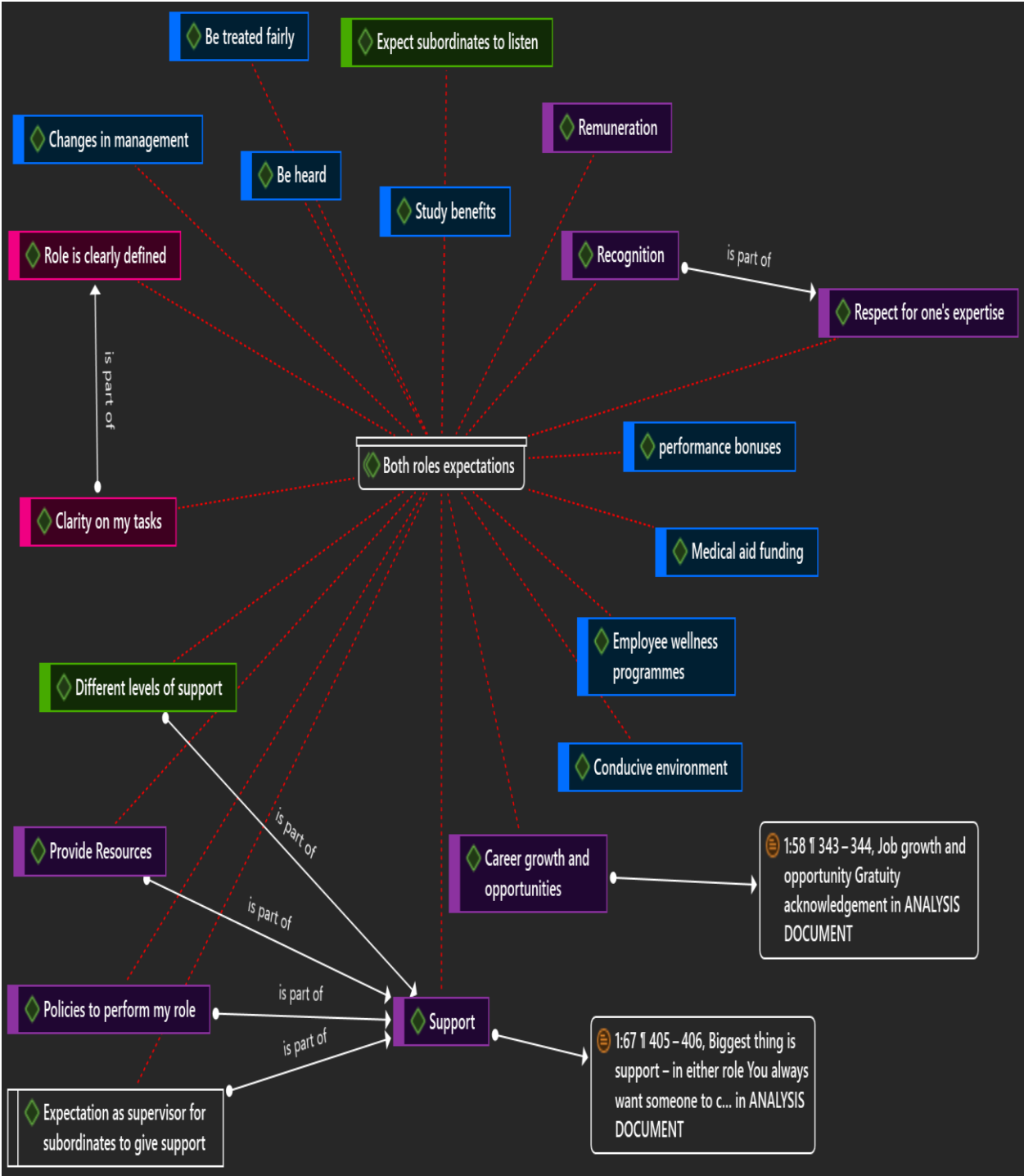


Figure 2: Thematic representation of how the participants viewed their obligations as employees

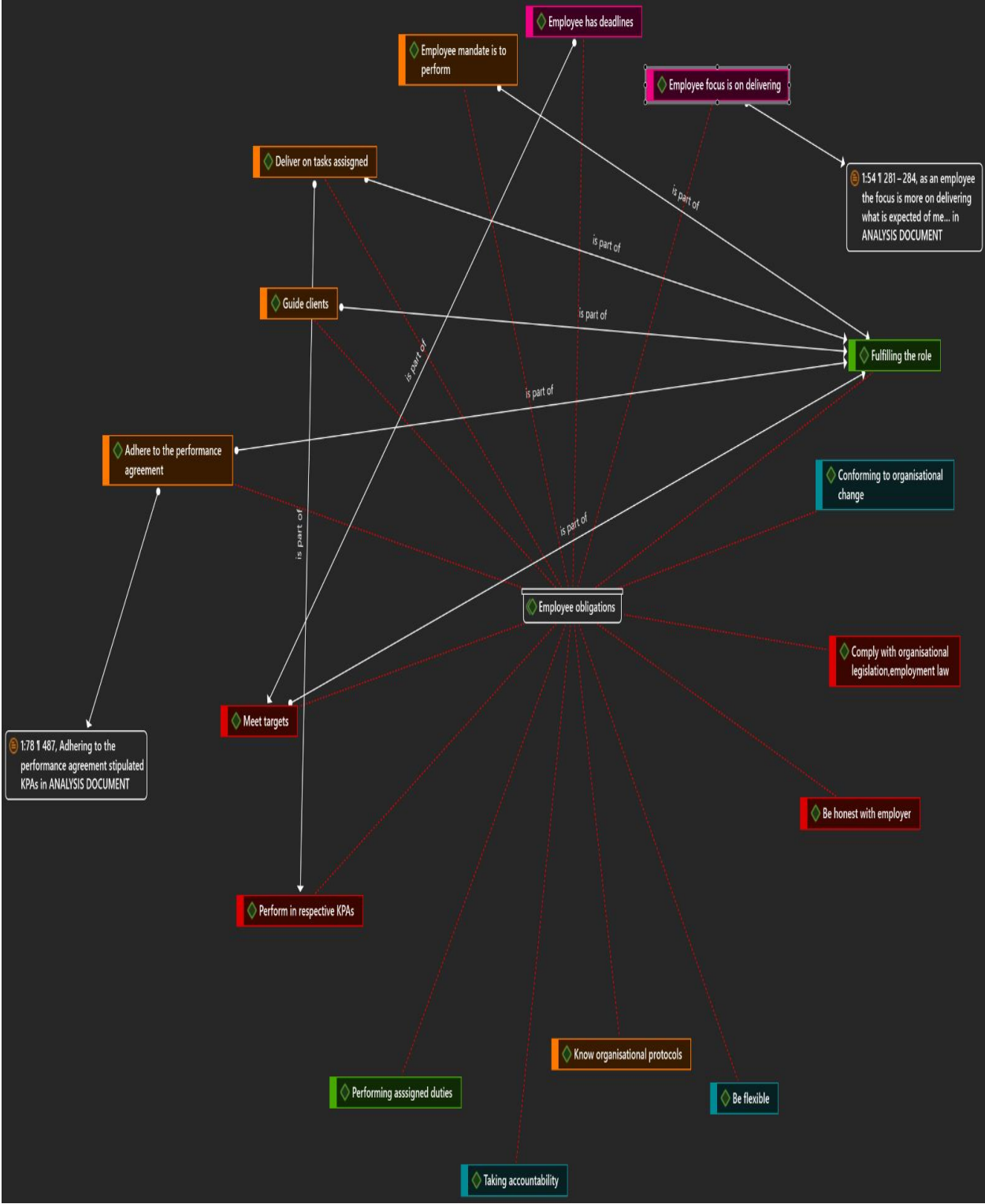


Figure 3: Thematic representation of how the participants viewed their expectations as employer representative



Figure 4: Thematic representation of how the participants viewed their environments both as employees and as employer representatives

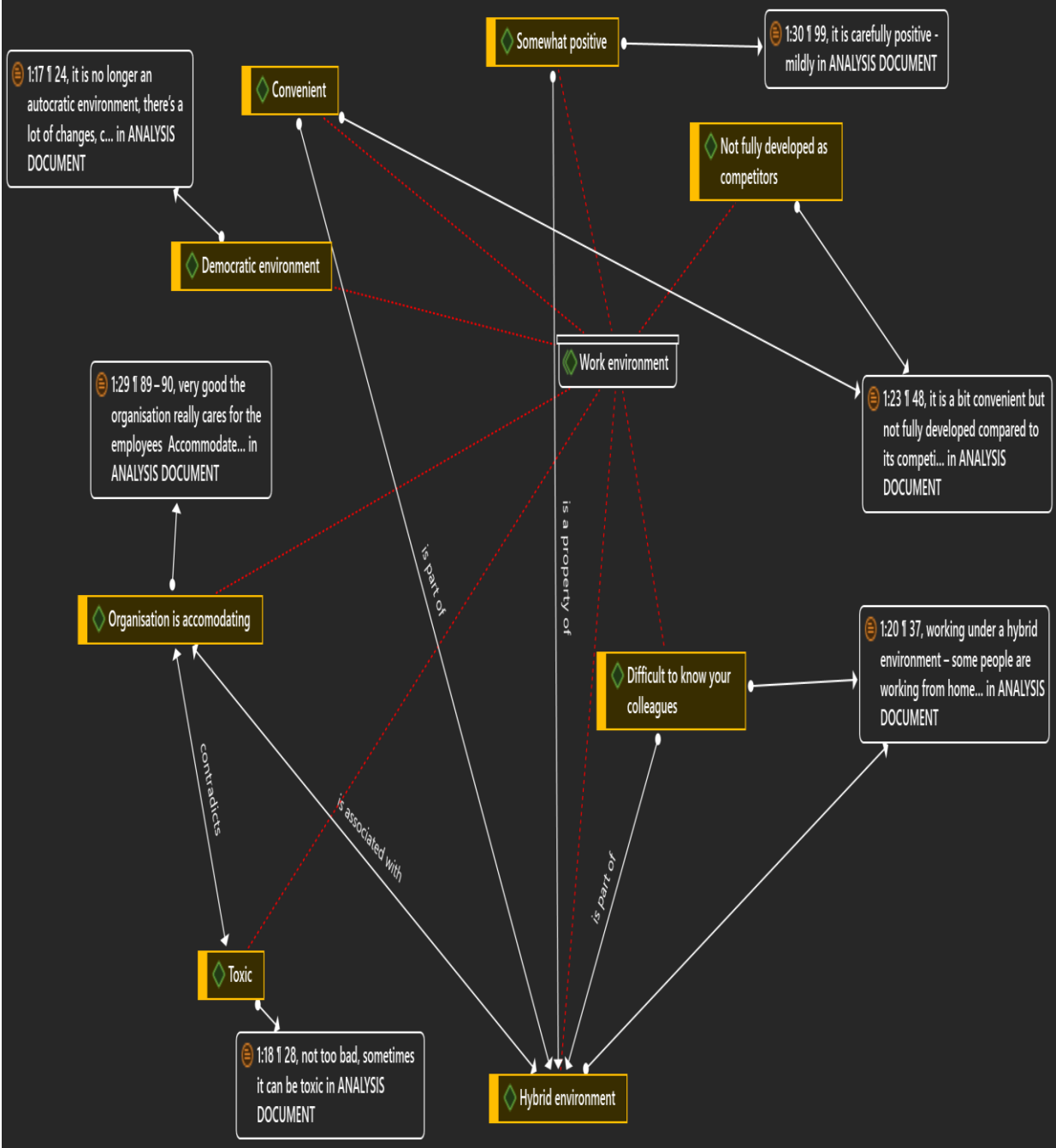


Figure 5: Thematic representation of how the participants viewed their role as employees

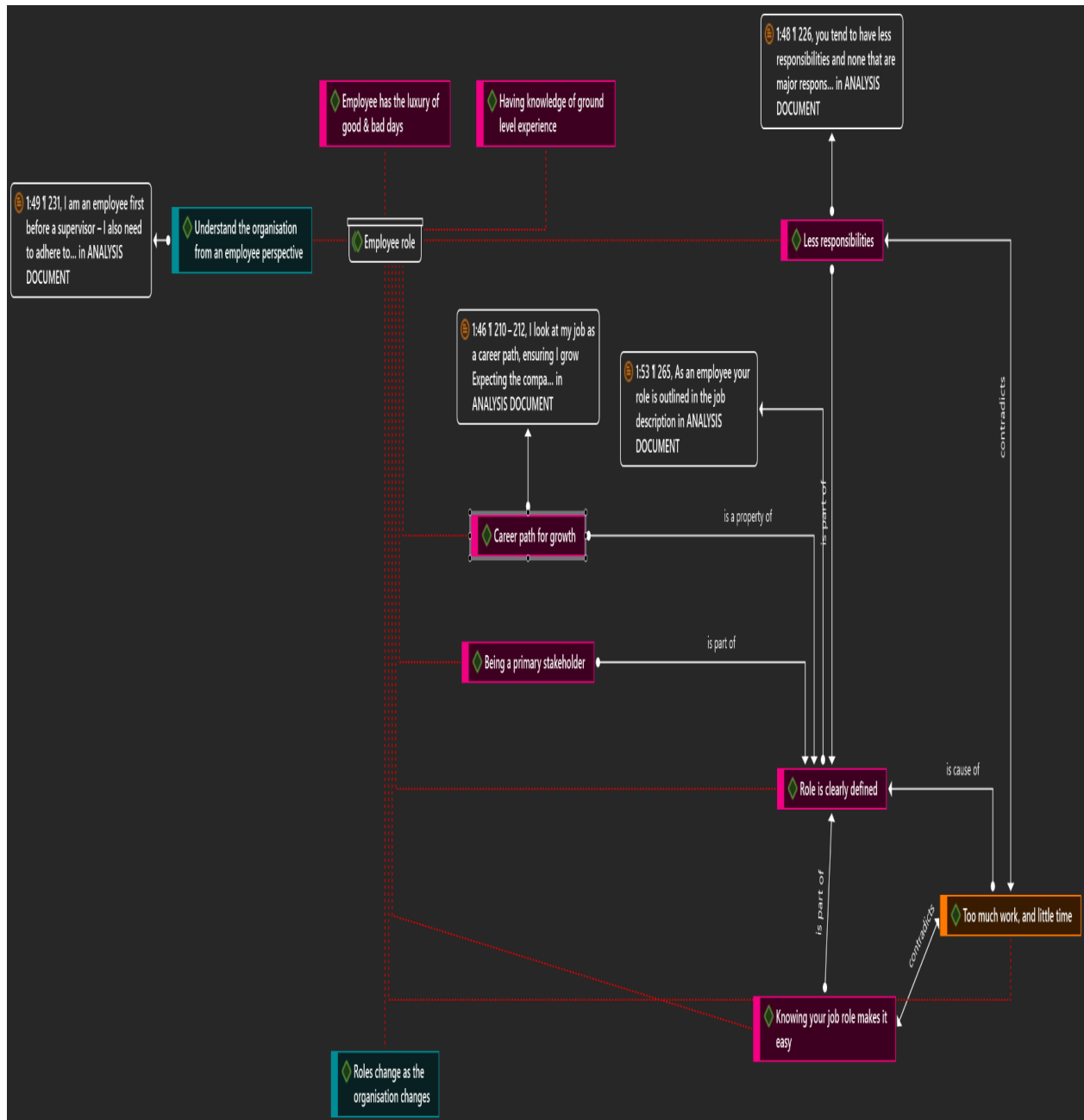


Figure 6: Thematic representation of how the participants viewed their role as employer representatives (supervisors)

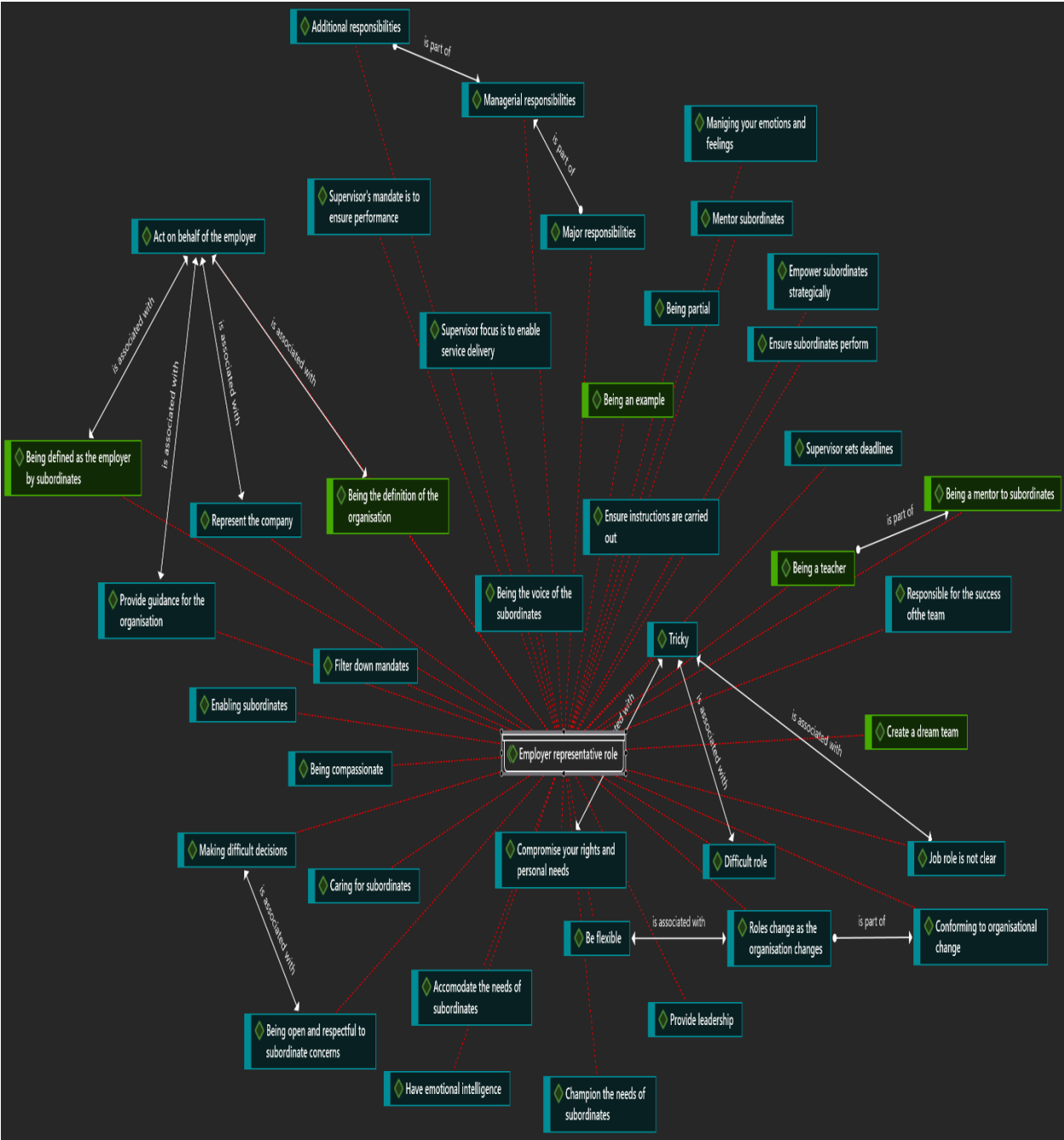


Figure 7: Similarities in the employee role and employer representative role

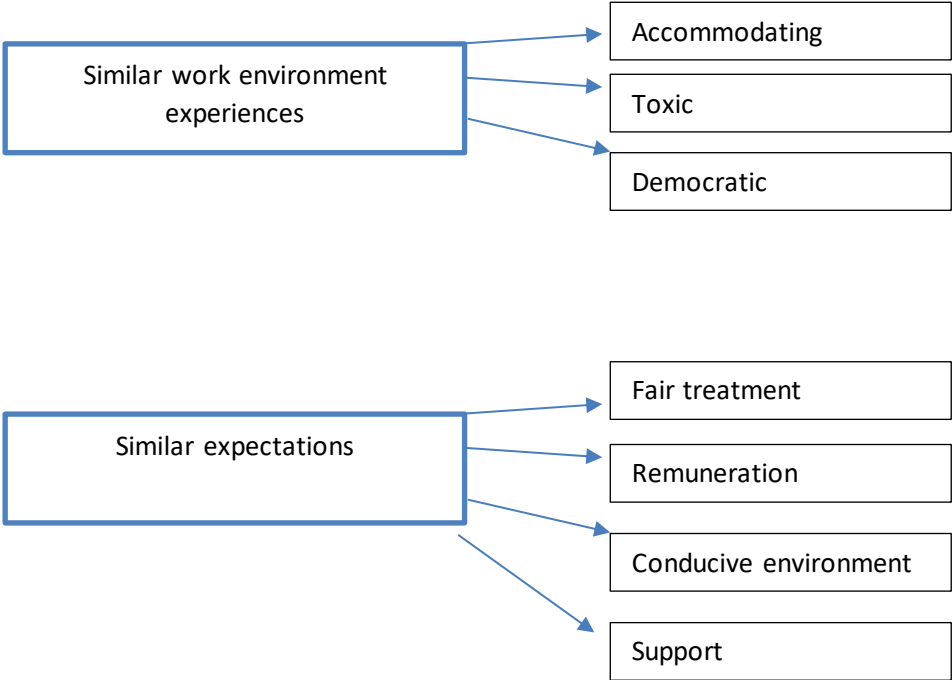


Figure 8: The employee role and employer representative role

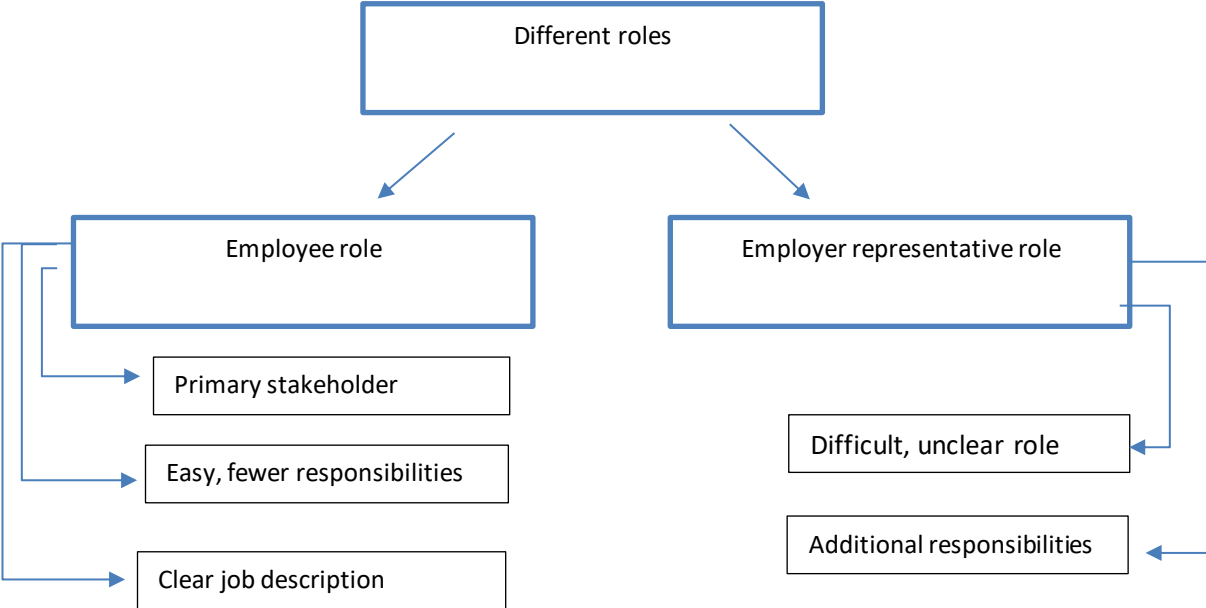


Figure 9: Obligations in the employee role and employer representative role

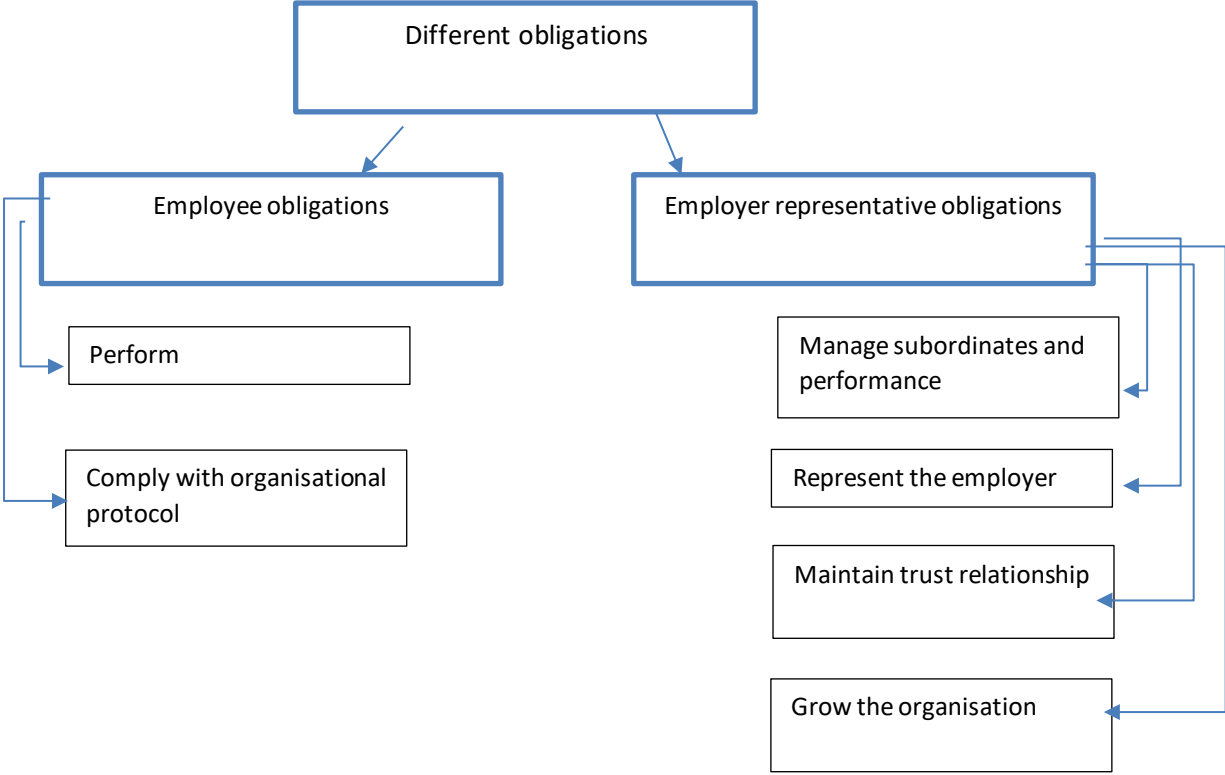


Figure 10: Thematic representation of how the participants viewed their expectations as employer representative

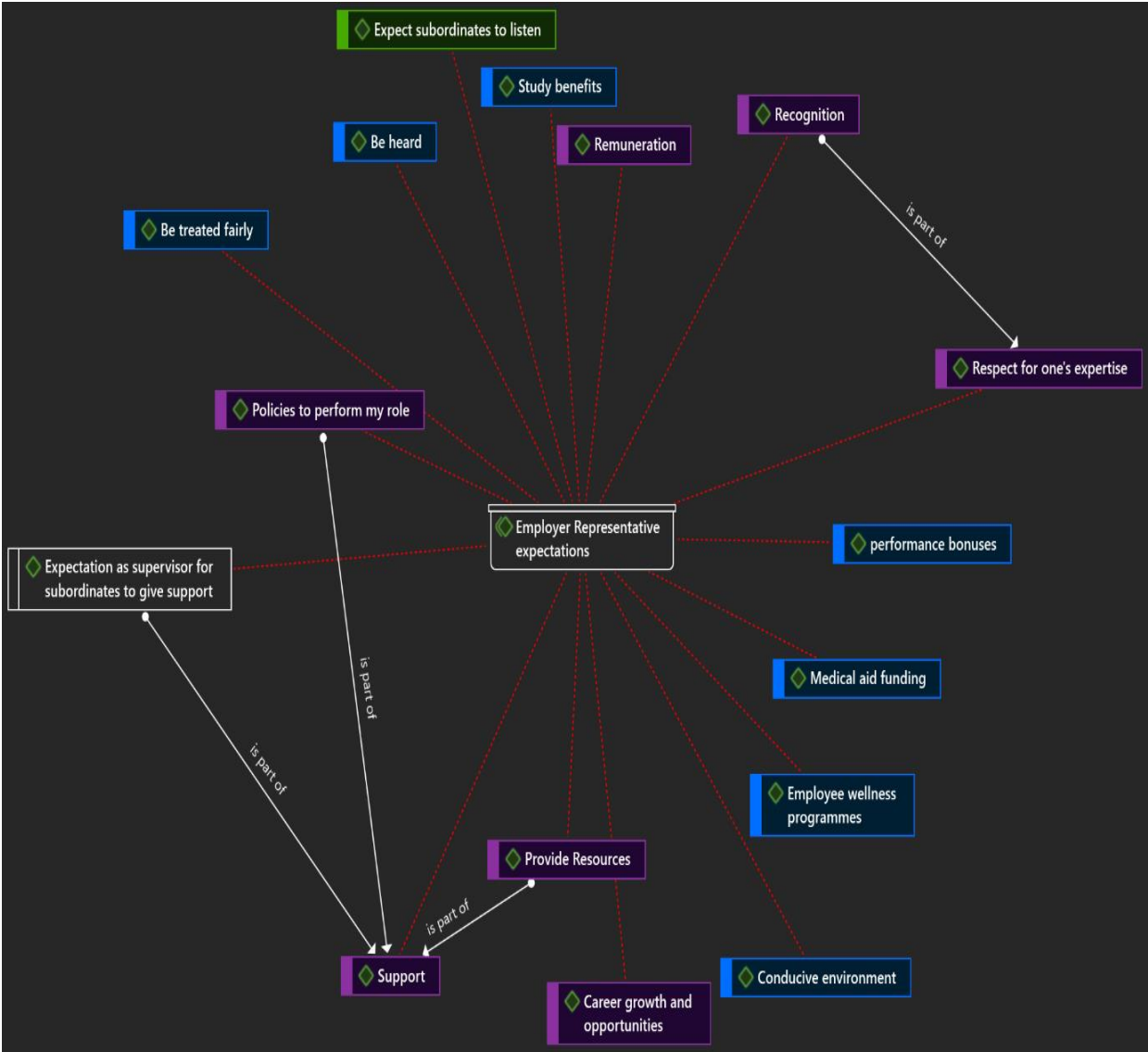


Figure 11: Thematic representation of how the participants viewed their expectations as employees

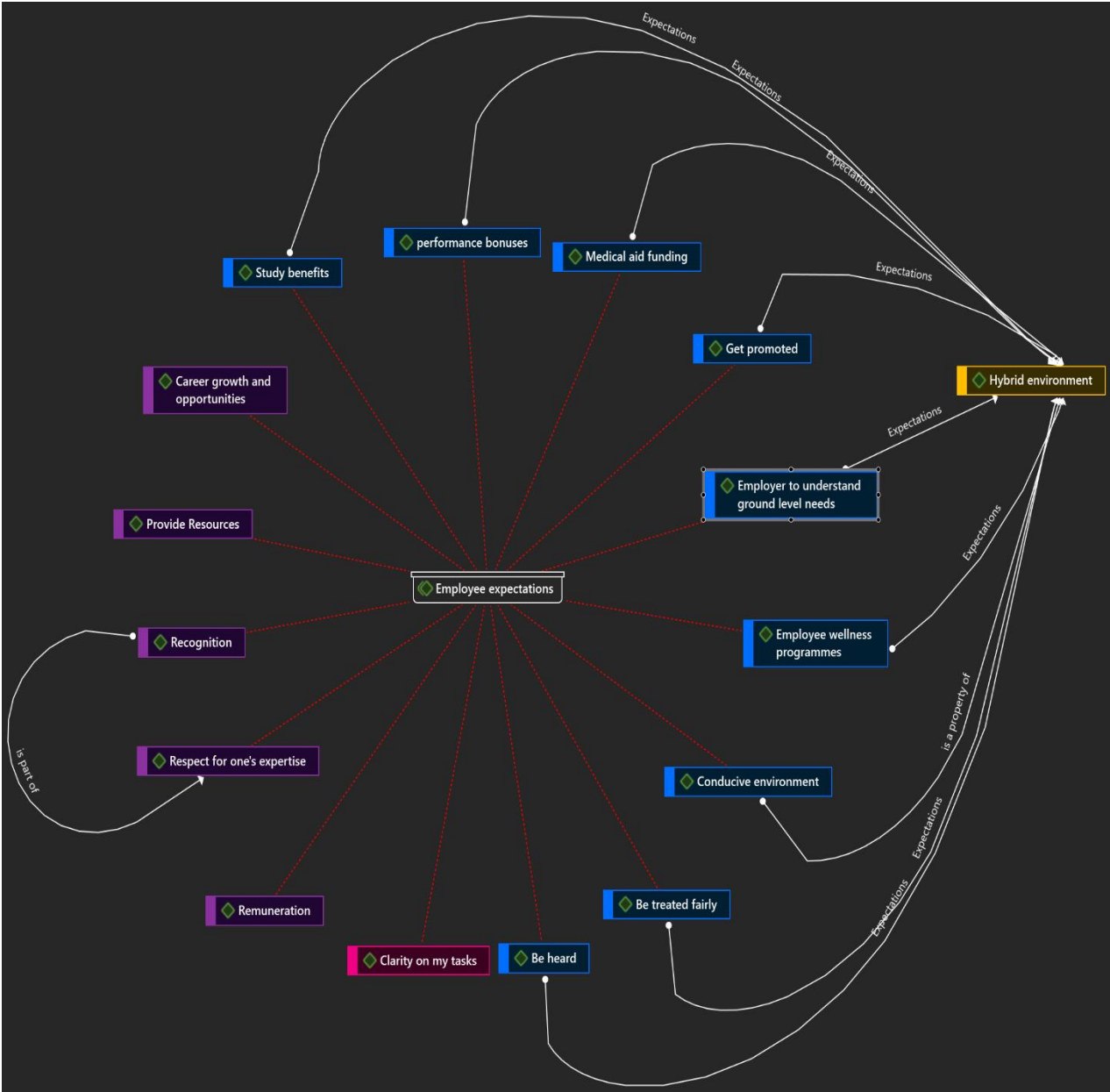


Figure 12: Central research questions and sub-research questions

